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D. van Bergeijk and M. Risseuw, "The International Translations Centre: An Example of Co-operation to Remove Barriers to Communication - The Language Barrier." *Proceedings of the IATUL Conferences*. Paper 20.

<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/iatul/1979/papers/20>

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THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATIONS CENTRE:
AN EXAMPLE OF CO-OPERATION TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

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The Language Barrier

I will not dwell on the importance of co-operation in general and between libraries in particular. With regard to the theme of this conference we are all convinced that co-operation is essential to contribute to the achievement of overcoming communication barriers. In the description of the theme and character of the conference it is stated that "IATUL has arranged meetings of librarians, organized excursions and made possible all kinds of seminars aimed at removing barriers to communication".

I should like to draw your attention to the aspect of removing a long existing and persistent barrier that hampers the dissemination of scientific and technical information: The language barrier. Removing a barrier, in particular, is a matter of utmost exertion which one cannot possibly cope with on its own and thus co-operation is necessary. Joint efforts are likely to give results, the more so as this barrier, the language barrier, reaches beyond frontiers and it is needless to say, that international co-operation is a necessity. It is obvious that this does not facilitate the success of the undertaking.

In the description of the conference is also stated that "it would seem to us, that now the time is ripe to harvest what we have sown". Can we speak, when removing or breaking the language barrier, of a "harvest time". Has any success been scored so far?

Today I should like to give you a state of the art of what is going on in this field. The language barrier still exists and it seems that the impact of this barrier is increasing rather than decreasing, whereas the access to information sources is widening. With the aid of rapidly growing data bases more often the searcher comes across literature which is inaccessible due to the language. A point that needs to be emphasized is the fact that in some countries the knowledge of other languages is decreasing.

I should like to draw your attention to the unique co-operation within the International Translations Centre (formerly the European Translations Centre (until Oct. 1977)).

The Centre, founded in 1961 under the auspices of the OECD, is the network of international co-operation of a number of outstanding libraries and information/documentation and translation centres. Participants in the network are organizations from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Portugal and the United Kingdom. Co-operation is not limited to the participants in the International Translations Centre only. The Centre co-operates with a large number of translation centres, research institutes, and organizations active in the field of translations; for instance, with the NTC (National Translations Center) of the John Crerar Library in Chicago, NRC/CISTI (National Research Council of Canada, Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information), the All-Union Centre for translation of Scientific and Technical Literature and Documentation, Moscow.

In the Rules and Regulations of the International Translations Centre, the object has been formulated as "to encourage, improve and facilitate the use of literature published in less accessible languages and of interest to science and industry, and also to promote international co-operation in this field. For the purpose of this object the Centre shall:

1. maintain as complete as possible an index of translations of publications;
2. publish lists of information on translations or arrange for their publication;
3. facilitate access to translations;
4. co-operate with institutions engaged in similar activities, and serve as the main co-ordinating centre of an international network for improved utilization of translations;
5. study new methods of facilitating dissemination of translations".

I would like to underline co-operation and promotion of international co-operation in this field. This co-operation has yielded results.

The Centre contributed in the preparation of the International Standard ISO 2384-1977 - Documentation - Presentation of Translations. The Centre therefore has a category A liaison with ISO TC 46/SC 7 and a category B liaison with ISO TC 46/SC 6.

The Centre proposed to UNIBID (Unisist International Centre for Bibliographic Descriptions) an amendment to the UNISIST Reference Manual for Machine-Readable bibliographic descriptions concerning descriptions of translations. This amendment resulted in a draft extension for information relating to translations and will be presented at the meeting of the Advisory Committee of UNIBID in September 1979.

Concerning the object of the Centre to maintain as complete as possible an index of translations of publications in less accessible languages, the Centre has got a new impulse when it was decided that the Centre would jointly spot scientific and technical translations with the Directorate General for Scientific and Technical Information Management of the Commission of the European Communities, Luxemburg, and the Scientific and Technical Documentation Centre of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in Paris.

As of January 1978, their former publications:

- World Index of Scientific Translations and List of Translations Notified to the International Translations Centre;
- Transatom Bulletin;
- Bulletin des Traductions

have merged into one common monthly publication entitled WORLD TRANSINDEX. At the moment negotiations are going on to bring the WORLD TRANSINDEX data base on-line.

Besides the co-operation of the Centre with the CNRS and the CEC, I like to mention the co-operation with the BLLD. A comprehensive bibliography on journals translated cover-to-cover, or selectively, together with journals which consist of translations selected from multiple sources was jointly published and appeared in December 1978. This publication is called JOURNALS IN TRANSLATION. A microfiche, or rather a COMfiche version of JOURNALS IN TRANSLATION is published by Instituto de Informacion y Documentacion en Ciencia y Tecnologia, ICYT, Madrid, the Spanish participant in the International Translations Centre network.

An extension of the services of the International Translations Centre to all "interwestern" translations in the field of science and technology is being considered. A proposal, prepared by the International Translations Centre is under discussion in the EEC's Committee for Information and Documentation on Science and Technology, CIDST Working Group Multilingual Aspects.

The Commission of the European Communities gives a high priority to co-operation in overcoming the language problem in its plan of Action for the improvement of the transfer of information between the European languages. Methods and tools to break the language barrier must be made available. The Commission of the European Communities undertook the implementation of an action plan covering the years 1977-1979. In this action plan attention will be paid to a.o.:

- Automatic- and semi automatic translation;
- terminology data banks;
- multilingual thesauri;
- encouragement of multilingualism.

For the planning and implementation of this work, the Commission set up the Committee of Experts for the Information Transfer between Community Languages (CETIL).

The International Translations Centre maintains narrow contacts with both CETIL and CIDST. Staff members of the International Translations Centre are on the Committees.

Co-operation on an international level largely contributes to the objects of the Centre.

The language barrier is still a real barrier in the flow of scientific knowledge. A barrier of which the impact will be more and more felt now that the means of communication are improving more and more and the establishing of contacts is becoming easier every day. Today we live in a time where it is possible to contact colleagues in other countries, in other parts of the world, within a few seconds. But to communicate with them, in a language we both understand, is not always possible. New data bases, springing up like mushrooms, refer to more and more literature in more and more languages. And when the document has reached the customer eventually it is not impossible that it is written in a language he cannot read.

International co-operation is the password to break barriers and in particular the language barrier.

Now it is time to harvest what we have sown. Perhaps at the moment the harvest seems to be small yet, but let co-operation be the means to have a large harvest soon.

DISCUSSION

Mr. C.G. Wood: Recalling that one of the first and major approaches to airing the difficulties of scientists was at The Royal Society Conference, in 1948, have you not felt discouraged about the slow progress in this field?

van Bergeijk: No, the consolidation of achievement in these later years has been real; a substantial part of the impetus has come from the need to tackle the European situation - which has been radically affected since the early days.

Dr. V. Jarc: Nearly all international commercial databases are English-based. What possibility do you see for translating these bases and making them more available to none-English speaking nations?

van Bergeijk: First, we are starting by translating the instruction manuals for the various systems. This has been stimulated by the development of EURONET.

Miss Furuzan-Olsen: We pay a great deal for subscriptions to translation journals. Is the provision of translation journals a possible function of your centre?

van Bergeijk: A translation made in a cover-to-cover centre translation journal is cheaper than a specific translation made for an individual.

Dr. Z. Kováts: I do not agree with that answer. The language barrier operates quite differently for a nation like Hungary, which contributes less than 1 % to the world's scientific literature. For us the translation of papers into English is little help.

Prof. A.J. Evans: Do you get involved in transliteration problems and, if so, what standards do you use?

van Bergeijk: We have been using British Standards but we are moving towards ISO in the hope that they will be attaining a series of standards acceptable to all.

Wood: It seems relevant to ask Mrs. Durairaj, who has told us about the sizeable number of interlending requests to West Germany, what the language barrier means to her.

Mrs. J. Durairaj: There are 14 different official languages and, unlike in Europe, which has the common Latin script, the scripts of these languages are different.

Dr. N. Fjällbrant: Could you give us some information, Mr Bergeijk, on the present development of international terminological data-banks?

van Bergeijk: There is, at present, a rapid increase in the production of terminological data-banks. A lot of work is going on at INFOTERM, Vienna.

I want to add a few numerical data to this subject.

I registered the interaction of the Veszprém University Library and other special libraries, especially that of the TU Budapest and TU Miskolc. Besides the two TU libraries in Hungary, we are in permanent contact with about one hundred special libraries, interested in our services: computerised DB, interlibrary loan and reprography services, as well as our translation service.

The table below shows the figures relating to the main information services supplied to each other bilaterally.

Table: Interlibrary loan and Reprography Services Supplied between the Veszprém University Library and the Other Two Hungarian Technological University Libraries

Veszprém supplied to	Budapest	Miskolc	Others	Altogether
originals	3	6	45	54
/in per cent/	1.8	11.6	86.6	100
reprographics	48	152	2558	2758
/in per cent/	1.17	5.54	93.29	100

Veszprém received from	Budapest	Miskolc	Others	Altogether
originals -	18	4	321	343
/in per cent/	1.96	0.97	97.07	100
reprographics	478	51	2438	2967
/in per cent/	16.44	1.72	81.84	100

First of all, it can be seen that neither the bibliographical services, nor the translations are sufficient. I must state that there is no need for co-operation in translation services. The TU Miskolc Library runs a translation office staffed with a qualified personnel similarly to that of the TU Veszprém Library, both are able to fulfill not only the needs of their own universities, but the greatest part of their capacities, up to 90% beyond their own needs in the region. The TU Budapest library has its own translation office but has sufficient access to the various transitory services available in the capital.