

EDITORIAL

A recent online analysis of all documents published in 1982 which were included in *Library and information science abstracts* (3615 records) revealed to the editors the following language distribution: English, 73 per cent; German, 7 per cent; Russian, 3 per cent; French, 2 per cent; remaining languages, 15 per cent. Admittedly, the overwhelming predominance of English language documents may in part be explained by a language bias in LISA: an abstracting journal produced in London might be expected to identify English language documents more readily than those in more 'obscure' languages. Nevertheless, the dominance of English as the language of communication in library and information science cannot be denied.

To some extent, the widespread use of English may be explained by the literary fecundity of librarians and information scientists in the English-speaking world. It is also a consequence, however, of a tendency, perhaps a growing tendency, for library and information science journals outside the English-speaking world to adopt English either as the only medium of communication, or at least as a second language for abstracts and titles. The *Scandinavian public library quarterly*, for example, is published entirely in English, whilst the *Journal of educational media and library sciences* (Taiwan) includes articles in both Chinese and English. *International forum on information and documentation* has opted for two separate language editions, one in Russian and the other in English, whilst the Czech journal, *Technická knihovná* includes summaries in English.

Education for information, like the *International library review*, is intended for an international audience, and has opted for English as its sole language of publication. Such a policy undoubtedly places readers in the non-English-speaking world at a disadvantage, and assumes a widespread reading ability in English amongst its subscribers. On the other hand, the very dominance of English is itself a consequence, as well as a cause, of the widespread and increasing use of this language as a vehicle for international communication in many fields. No other language could have reached such a potentially wide audience throughout the world. The simultaneous publication of all articles in several languages would have been prohibitively expensive, while at the same time still not catering for speakers of all other languages not so selected. Unfortunately, the language barrier is a real problem for any enterprise seeking world-wide acceptance, and the editors can only hope that *Education for information* is reaching out to all corners of the globe despite this linguistic obstruction.

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Editors