

2007 Multi-lingualism & Multi-culturalism Annual Report

ADHO Standing Committee on Multi-lingualism & Multi-culturalism

Report on activities and matters which have arisen

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ADHO Standing Committe on Multi-lingualism & Multi-culturalism

Members of the Committee

Since the beginning of July 2006, when the ACH representative was made known to me all the positions of the committee have been filled. The ALLC representative is Concepción Sanz Miguel and the ACH representative is Peter Liddell. As Peter Lindell will be retiring on July 1 2008 the ACH might have to look for a new representative.

Both representatives were added to the mailing list which John Unsworth had set up for the Committe in July. A welcome message was sent out at the end of July.

At the beginning of November another message was sent to the members of the committee approaching the question of the working language to be adopted. To adopt a working language is necessary, because writing different language versions every time takes up too much time. As Peter could only contribute to discussions in English or German but can read French, and Concha can only really contribute to discussions in French and Spanish, but can read English, we had agreed by the middle of December that it would be best for Concha to write her messages in French, while Peter and I write in English. It was understood that we all try to be as considerate to others as possible and will ask if there is anything we do not understand.

Since then, apart from Concha and me helping with some translation John needed to be done for the Conference Website, there was hardly any communication. One of the reasons is certainly that I was so much under stress that I was not really capable of initiating a discussion. Another reason might be that policy discussions cannot be done as long as the aim remains at the level of "giving some added weight to developping the international multi-lingual - multi-cultural agenda". There is need for some concrete activities.

Co-opted members

Just before coming to this meeting I managed to do what I had wanted to do ever since last December. I invited [Jan Rybicki](#), a translator of the Pedagogical University of Cracow and

[Christian Wittern](#), a sinologist of Kyoto University in Japan to serve on the committee as co-opted members. Both of them agreed to accept this invitation.

Protocol

There is nothing to report on the protocol which since last July can be found at <http://digitalhumanities.org/view/Adho/MultilingualismProtocol>.

Matters which have arisen

Internationalization editor (I18N) of Digital Humanities Quarterly - relevant experiences and results

From September 2005 until August 2006 I served as the first internationalization editor of DHQ. In August I stepped down because the internationalization editor was not only supposed to advise the journal on strategy for handling multilinguality, and to help to develop a plan for translating whatever parts of the journal seem most useful, but also to lead a group of volunteers who would represent a range of languages and would be willing to identify reviewers in specific languages, help with the translation of parts of the journal web site, article abstracts, etc. which I was and am not in a position to do.

Furthermore, after having been chair of this committee for nearly a year, I had come to realise that trying to tackle multi-lingual & multi-cultural matters on two different levels, i. e. on the level of the Steering Committee of ADHO and on the level of DHQ was too demanding.

Although this point does not really concern my role as chair of ADHO's Standing Committee on Multi-lingualism & Multi-culturalism there are results of this experience which according to me are relevant for this Committee.

In fact, the experience and above all the discussions we had with respect to DHQ brought to light that there is a division of issues, i.e. that there are issues which need attention at the level of ADHO like

- ADHO's goals and expectations with respect to MLMC over the next 2, 5, 10 years
- funding methods and resources: what resources is ADHO prepared to devote to this area, and what other methods of fundraising will it undertake?
- the provision of some organizational structure: e.g. establish a volunteer program for interpretation and translation, or establish a funded program for translation functions that are considered essential

and there are issues which needed attention at the level of DHQ like :

- the development of DHQ's strategy for implementing ADHO recommendations on MCML, including decisions about what should be translated and by whom
- the recruitment and maintenance of a volunteer translation group, either as part of an ADHO group or separately
- the management of the workflow of translation so that the interface, abstracts, and any other material to be translated is dealt with promptly
- the maintenance of coherence between the treatment of MCML issues and the other

- technical progress: so that new search features, etc. take MCML into account
- the development of fundraising plans together with the other editors, to support I18N activities that cannot be accomplished by volunteer labor

Furthermore it became evident that it is no use to develop policies which do not take practical issues into account and that in order to gain awareness of such practical issues it would be a good idea to remain on the DHQ-list as an observer.

Work placements / Internships - Translation & Interpretation

John Unsworth and myself had the idea of an experiment offering students work experience in simultaneous interpretation via the ether at the moment of DH 2007.

I therefore started to talk to various colleagues from our Translation Department about the possibility of offering their students such a work experience. Each time the reaction was very positive and there was consensus that such a project should be taken further.

At the meeting I had the 18.10.2006 with some representatives of the Department of Translation Studies these colleagues argued, however, that such work placements cannot be realised, because as soon as unpaid work of students contributes to something like a congress where people pay conference fees, the question of exploiting students and doing away with real jobs arises and professional organisations would therefore protest.

After having left the matter pending for a while at present there are signs that colleagues have been considering the proposal in the meantime and that it might be possible to take the issue further.

However, before we can proceed with the idea of experimenting with work placements and of working towards their professional recognition some aspects of the whole matter have to be cleared up. Such aspects are among others

- As it turned out at the mid-term meeting of the ALLC, in fact, the conceptions of the role and treatment of work placements / internships and the levels of their acceptance differ considerably from European country to European country. At the same time European countries cannot help but take part in the Bologna process which is supposed to bring about homogenization of requirements with respect to degrees and qualifications. And Bologna attributes quite a lot of importance to work placements. It would be good to know how work placements are integrated into the new BA- and MA-programmes, how they are treated, remunerated etc.
- Is ADHO in a position / prepared to invest some money into that? Do conference organisers see possibilities of acquiring funding for translation and interpretation?
- What measures do we have / are we willing to set into place in order to turn the issue of Multi-lingualism and Multi-culturalism into an issue of formation and qualification?

As I see it, work placements should consist of a bundle of different translation and / or interpretation tasks (abstracts, calls, web pages for example, direct, indirect etc.). ADHO should develop its own certificate for such a work placement. Subdivisions corresponding to certain specialities might be envisaged (DHQ, conferences, associations). Certainly much more discussion is needed.

Programme committee - reviewers - proposals

Although the programme committee and the local organizer have done their best to turn this conference into a linguistically and culturally more inclusive event it would seem that a) our community does not rely on our policy and thus does not present papers in the languages which according to the call were acceptable and b) linguistic and cultural differences play a critical role when it comes to reviewing and accepting proposals.

As ConfTool, the conference management system which this year was used for the first time, allows to gather a lot of information and gives access to a lot of information I proposed that once the final programme was on-line, the process in which the programme committee had been involved was analyzed in order to create some awareness of the linguistic and cultural problems involved. It was hoped that the data we would produce could be used by the standing committee on multi-lingualism and multi-culturalism as basis for its further actions.

Sara from Urbana Champaign took on one of the most important questions, i. e. the question of the language our reviewers feel comfortable with. In order to find out, she sent the following mail to all the reviewers registered in the system:

"In order to improve upon the reviewing process for DH2008, we are asking each reviewer to take a few moments to log into his or her conftool account and update the areas of expertise field so that it includes a listing of the languages that he or she would feel comfortable reading and reviewing abstracts in."

The question of the languages our reviewers know is very important, because if we do not have reviewers for a certain language this language cannot be listed among the languages which can be used when writing a proposal.

This is, however, only one of the important questions we have to try and answer if we want to find out something about the linguistically and culturally inclusive or exclusive nature of our community and about the effects linguistic and cultural differences have on the acceptance of proposals and thus also on the composition of the population of the conference.

Proposals

In order to be able to determine ADHO's goals and expectations with respect to MLMC over the next 2, 5, 10 years and the resources needed to realise these expectations and goals we need to find out first of all who we are and where we are in linguistic and cultural terms. Thus the Standing Committee on Multi-lingualism and Multi-culturalism needs to undertake / initiate a bottom up approach and

1. analyze thoroughly the data already contained in ConfTool,
2. monitor the submitting of proposals and the process of reviewing them when preparing for the next conferences
3. monitor / observe the practical issues arising with DHQ and analyze their relevance for the question of how to put MCML in place,
4. study ways of integrating translation and interpretation studies,
5. collect data on the role, treatment, recognition, funding of work placements above all in

those European countries which are going through the Bologna process. Obviously some of these activities, above all 1, 2 and 5 cannot be done without funding. I propose to undertake these activities.

According to my calculations between € 1.000 - 1.500 would be needed. This would allow to employ a student for 2-3 hours a week for a whole year and cover also the analysis of the data collected during the preparation of the next conference.