



IFLA
2005
OSLO

World Library and Information Congress: 71th IFLA General Conference and Council

"Libraries - A voyage of discovery"

August 14th - 18th 2005, Oslo, Norway

Conference Programme: <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla71/Programme.htm>

Code Number: 001-E
Meeting: 117 SI - Library and Information Science Journals
Simultaneous Interpretation: Yes

Library and Information Science journal articles, higher education and language

Linda Ashcroft

*Reader of Information Management
(Also Editor of New Library World)
School of Business Information
Liverpool John Moores University
98 Mount Pleasant
Liverpool L3 5UZ
UK
Tel: +44 (0)151 231 3425
Fax: +44 (0)151 707 0423
Email: L.S.Ashcroft@livjm.ac.uk*

Stephanie McIvor

*Researcher (Also Assistant Editor of New Library World)
University of Teesside
Email: s.mcivor@ulthwaite.net
(Contact via Linda Ashcroft)*

Abstract

Discusses the formal education of information professionals taking into account the diversity of information work in 21st century industrial economies. Many education programmes are becoming increasingly generalised, by providing a range of generic and specific skills together with an understanding of the underlying principles of information management, to

enable Library and Information Science (LIS) graduates to pursue various professional career paths. Research in progress is described with the larger research project focusing on the subject matter of articles from a large portfolio of LIS journals, considering common themes and niche areas for specific journals, and how their subject matter relates to LIS higher education in a number of countries. The pilot research project considers the extent of the contribution from different countries and subject matter which is of international interest regardless of country of origin, and the findings are included. LIS journals are produced in various languages, although those published in the English language are open to the widest international readership. There is a contribution to a large portfolio of English language LIS journals by authors whose first language is not indicated as English to reflect subjects which are topical and of international interest. Discusses issues arising, including LIS education, with attention to the international impact of the research and professional expertise of those in countries with national languages spoken by relatively few numbers. Various possibilities are suggested to bring the research and professional expertise from countries with minority national languages to the attention of the English-speaking world.

Introduction

Library and Information Science (LIS) journals are produced in various languages, although those published in the English language are open to the widest international readership. This paper discusses issues arising, with attention to the international impact of the research and professional expertise of those in countries with national languages spoken by relatively few numbers. Findings from a pilot research project are included. The larger research project focuses on the subject matter of articles from a large portfolio of LIS journals, considering common themes and niche areas for specific journals, and how this subject matter relates to LIS higher education in a number of countries. However, the pilot project considers the extent of the contribution from different countries and subject matter which is of international interest regardless of country of origin.

The research in progress

The aim of the research is to analyse the content matter of a portfolio of LIS journals over one year's volumes. This content analysis includes the identification of core topics found in variety of journals and 'niche' topics found only in certain journals. These topics will be analysed in terms of core areas of LIS curriculum in some countries.

Methodology

Selection of Emerald LIS journals for analysis

The Emerald portfolio of LIS journals was chosen to provide the sample for the following reasons:

- Emerald publishes the largest portfolio of LIS journals;
- Emerald is committed to encouraging publication of authors whose first language is not English, thus ensuring geographic spread.

The Emerald LIS journals selected for analysis are those journals current for 2004 from the Emerald Librarianship and Information Studies Library¹ which are also indexed and abstracted

in the LISA (Library and Information Science Abstracts) database. Of the 28 journals in the Emerald Librarianship and Information Studies Library list, 5 are not currentⁱⁱ, and 2 current awareness-type journals are not included in the LISA databaseⁱⁱⁱ, leaving 21 journals for analysis in the study^{iv}.

LISA database for downloading articles

The bibliographic details of articles from selected Emerald journals were downloaded into a bibliographic software package from the LISA database. The LISA database was selected because of the following advantages:

- easy downloading into bibliographic software, including keywords and abstracts (allowing for further in-depth analysis of content at a later stage in the research, if required)
- inclusion in the LISA database indicates that a journal is readily accessible to LIS students, as LISA is one of the main abstracting and indexing services used for the discipline. Given that the later phases of the research aim to analyse the relationship between areas of core LIS curricula and journal article content, accessibility to students is considered an important factor in the selection of journals for analysis.

Downloading bibliographic details

The bibliographic details of all the 2004 articles of the 21 selected Emerald journals in LISA, including keywords (and abstracts), were downloaded into the Endnote bibliographic software package^v. The use of a bibliographic software package facilitates the manipulation of the data and subsequent analysis of the subject matter of articles.

Results

The full sample of 686 individual references was downloaded from LISA into an Endnote library^{vi} from the 21 selected Emerald journals (2004 volumes). In total there were 3646 keywords applied to the references in the full sample, giving an average of 5 keywords per reference. Of the 3646 keywords applied, there were 1119 distinct keywords, with the maximum occurrence of a given keyword in the sample being 73 times. (This keyword was 'USA'.) 690 of the 1119 keywords occurred only once in the sample, and 958 keywords occurred less than 5 times. A sub-set was selected for analysis of the content matter of articles consisting of the keywords occurring 5 times or more in the full sample. These 166 distinct keywords appear on 2243 occasions in the sample of downloaded references.

Changing curricula

The formal education of information professionals has to take into account the diversity of information work in the 21st century. Thus, many education programmes are becoming increasingly generalised, by providing a range of generic and specific skills together with an understanding of the underlying principles of information management, to enable LIS graduates to pursue various professional career paths (Brine & Feather, 2003). Gorman (2004) suggests that many library educators have been enticed by the lure of modern communication technology to concentrate on that technology and to dismiss areas of librarianship that do not fit within these technological boundaries. The 'lure of modern communication technology' has taken a large role in LIS education. A survey by Liu (2004) analysed course syllabi relating to education for digital libraries in North America, Europe and

Asia and found that courses offered on this subject have drastically increased over the past four years. Other studies have focused on e-learning, for example Newton (2003) discusses staff attitudes to e-learning and Gregory (2003) discusses student perceptions of e-learning. Gorman (2004) also points out that the American Library Association (ALA) accredits courses based on the school's own vision and mission rather than on national standards. Thus a librarian at an ALA-accredited school need not take any courses in cataloguing and classification, which Gorman argues is of extreme importance to the profession. Aspects of this theme have been well discussed in the professional library journals. Terris (2003) to some extent endorses Gorman's comments. Arguing that the increasing dominance in electronic media has resulted in the disappearance of traditional cataloguing and classification in some UK library schools, Terris goes on to point out that the Semantic Web brings some recognition of the need to impose some sort of logical structure on the Web, which is the field of expertly trained cataloguers.

Gorman (2004, p.377) takes another step with his argument to say that "The gap between what is being taught in many LIS schools and what is being practiced in most libraries is wide and widening." Johnson et al (2001) also identified some type of mismatch between employers' expectations and library schools' priorities when considering results of surveys of library schools in the Caribbean and Latin America – although it was found that the library schools seemed to be meeting the employers' 'key' requirements. Another angle was taken by Audunson et al (2003), who focused on the 'complete librarian' when looking at redesigning the curriculum, and reported on the consensus of practising librarians who saw the core areas for librarians as knowledge organization and retrieval, promotion of culture and knowledge, knowledge of literature, organization and management of libraries and information technology. Yet another angle was taken by Mortezaie & Naghshineh (2002), who undertook a comparative study of graduate LIS courses in UK, USA, India and Iran. They found diversity in the courses offered, a correlation between the efficiency of the courses offered with the state of the information industry in each country and a widening chasm between LIS education in the developed and developing countries studied.

There are many factors coming into play in terms of the LIS curriculum. Whilst it could be assumed that accreditation by the professional bodies has the potential to lead to some consistencies in core educational areas which meet employers' requirements on an international basis, this is not necessarily the case. As stated above, Gorman (2004), the ALA accreditation process is not based on national standards. However, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) in the UK states:

In assessing a course the professional body will be primarily concerned with its relevance to current and developing practice in librarianship and information science, rather than purely academic issues. In view of the wide range of skills and expertise now needed for the efficient provision of information and the effective management of library and information services, the professional body does not seek to stipulate precise requirements for course content. Courses submitted should, however, provide students with appropriate knowledge and skills to enable them to enter the profession.

However, CILIP's course accreditation documents include a content checklist, so that those applying for accreditation can indicate how core requirements are covered in their courses.

Such varying viewpoints and concerns indicate that the relationship between library education

and library work requirements is a topic likely to be discussed in LIS journals and to be of interest to both academics and practitioners on an international basis. Hence the relevance of LIS journal content to professional education has the potential to optimise the international expertise of countries with national languages spoken by relatively few numbers.

Subjects of articles

The content matter of articles using non-English language geographic descriptors was analysed from the abstracts of these articles. The most frequent article topic related to the Web, although this included various aspects of the Web, such as finding reliable information on the Web, Web evaluation, Web library presence, supplying information via the Web, virtual libraries, etc. It is interesting to note that some Web-focus articles related to both Webmasters and to delivering training for librarians over the web, including building multinational teams for teaching and learning. Only marginally less frequent was the topic of training, which included training programmes and delivery (for staff and users), continuing professional training/education and LIS higher education. Together the two topics reflect professional changes driven by the Web and the need for all levels of training/education to keep pace with this change. Other frequent topics included collaboration/co-operation/consortia working and performance measures, indicating the increasing need for professionals to work together and to work to standards for service delivery. This frequency of article topic reflects that of the total articles in the research sample (reflecting both English and non-English language descriptors). Thus these topics are of interest to both practitioners and academics on an international basis.

LISA language coverage

LISA includes a range of publications – journals, peer-reviewed journals, conferences, websites, books, chapters/essays, book reviews, reports, dissertations, patents, maps, catalogues and news – from a variety of publishers. A search in LISA for English language articles from peer-reviewed journals for 2004 gave a total of 5179. However, a similar search for non-English language articles from peer-reviewed journals for the same period gave 287 - just 5.25% of the total number of peer-reviewed articles (5466). This indicates that only a small number of non-English language peer-reviewed journals are covered in a major LIS indexing and abstracting service. Furthermore, it is debatable how many non-English language peer-reviewed articles will be sought by those using only English language who have found these items via a primarily English language database. This indicates that other means might be required to disseminate peer-reviewed articles written in languages other than English.

Geographic descriptors

The keywords, in particular geographic descriptors, used for articles can convey a sense of whether English is the first language of journal article authors. However, it must be stressed that geographic descriptors are not used for all articles. The impression is that geographic descriptors are used only where the content of the article is country or region specific. It is assumed, for the purposes of this research, that a country as a geographic descriptor will indicate the language of the author. Whilst this might not always be the case, it will be the highest preponderance. For this purpose all geographic descriptors were considered rather

than narrower focus on the sub-set of articles consisting of the keywords occurring 5 times or more in the full sample. Thus geographic descriptors which occurred only once were included to provide a fuller picture.

Language

Even when a particular country is specified in terms of a geographic descriptor for a journal article, it is difficult to ascertain the first language of the author. In some cases this is straightforward, such as USA, UK, France. However, a variety of languages are used in some countries, and 'the' national or first language can be difficult to determine. For the purposes of this research, language information was obtained from the CIA World Factbook (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/xx.html>). For example, India has 16 official languages.

English enjoys associate status but is the most important language for national, political, and commercial communication; Hindi is the national language and primary tongue of 30% of the people; there are 14 other official languages: Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Malayalam, Kannada, Oriya, Punjabi, Assamese, Kashmiri, Sindhi, and Sanskrit; Hindustani is a popular variant of Hindi/Urdu spoken widely throughout northern India but is not an official language.

South Africa has 11 official languages:

11 official languages, including Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu.

Malta has two official languages:

Maltese (official), English (official)

And whilst English is the official national language for Uganda, a variety of other languages are used.

English (official national language, taught in grade schools, used in courts of law and by most newspapers and some radio broadcasts), Ganda or Luganda (most widely used of the Niger-Congo languages, preferred for native language publications in the capital and may be taught in school), other Niger-Congo languages, Nilo-Saharan languages, Swahili, Arabic.

In Tanzania, the situation is even more complex with 2 'official' languages and various other local languages.

Kiswahili or Swahili (official), Kiunguju (name for Swahili in Zanzibar), English (official, primary language of commerce, administration, and higher education), Arabic (widely spoken in Zanzibar), many local languages

note: Kiswahili (Swahili) is the mother tongue of the Bantu people living in Zanzibar and nearby coastal Tanzania; although Kiswahili is Bantu in structure and origin, its vocabulary draws on a variety of sources, including Arabic and English, and it has become the lingua franca of central and eastern Africa; the first language of most people is one of the local languages.

Thus, even when a country is specified in terms of a geographic descriptor, it can be difficult to determine the first language of an author.

Types of geographic descriptors

Geographic descriptors can be used in terms of regions, such as Africa, Latin America, Europe. However, these regional descriptors are not used frequently, and are unhelpful in

terms of language as a variety of languages can be used within these regions. Furthermore, a regional geographic descriptor can be used in addition to a country geographic descriptor. Other geographic descriptors which can be used in addition to a country descriptor are cities (used even less frequently than regions), libraries (not used frequently) and universities. Universities are used much more frequently (45 occurrences), but it is assumed that this would be in addition to a country descriptor as location is not always apparent from a university name. Thus, for the purposes of this research, regional, state, city, library and university geographic descriptors have been excluded.

Within this research, it is interesting to note that the most frequently used keyword (overall, not just geographic) in this sample is 'USA'. This was used 73 times. When the geographic descriptor Canada (7) is added to present the picture from North America, the total is 80.

Other geographic descriptors for countries where English is the first or national language (see as above <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/xx.html>) include UK (40) plus Scotland (4) –total 44, Nigeria (14), Australia (10), New Zealand (6), South Africa (5), Ghana (4), Botswana (4), Ireland (1), Kenya (1) and Uganda (1)

Thus the total geographic descriptors used in this sample relating to English as a first or national language totals 170.

In contrast, numerically fewer geographic descriptors relating to first or national languages other than English were found in this sample. They include India (10), Denmark (5), Germany (4), Norway (4), Greece (4), Israel (4), China (3), Kuwait (3) Pakistan (3), Taiwan (3), Netherlands (3), Tanzania (3), Singapore (3), Sweden (2), Slovenia (2), Croatia (2), Iran (2), Vietnam (2), Armenia (1), Brunei (1), Bulgaria (1), France (1), Hong Kong (1), Iceland (1), Indonesia (1), Italy (1), Lebanon (1), Maldives (1), Russia (1), Saudi Arabia (1), Spain (1), Turkey (1), Venezuela (1) and Malta (1). This total is 78.

Whilst this use of geographic descriptors indicates a predominance of authors from English language countries, it also indicates the presence of the work of authors from countries where English is not the first language in the professional literature – and not in inconsequential numbers – 31.45%. This suggests that these authors either have a good command of English language as well as their home country language or that they have used a translation service. It also indicates that some authors from non-English speaking countries prefer to publish in English language journals, presumably for better international readership and recognition.

However, this sample identifies small frequencies in terms of some of the country geographic descriptors – particularly for those countries where English is not the first language. However, the country geographic descriptors also identify a larger range of countries where English is not the first language (34), compared with descriptors for countries where English is the first language (12).

Possible solutions

Publishing in English

There are opportunities for authors from countries where English is not the first language to

publish in the broader English language journals. Some publishers offer translation services, see for example Emerald:

As an international publisher, Emerald is committed to publishing a wide range of papers reflecting a truly diverse global representation of research in management and related fields. However, we also acknowledge that not all papers submitted for publication are given the due consideration they deserve due to poorly written English. Emerald values its authors extremely highly. We feel not enough publishers help their non-English speaking authors to achieve their full potential in terms of assisting them to get their work published. With this in mind, we are very proud to introduce a new feature of the Literati service to authors. It is primarily but not exclusively aimed at those authors whose first language is not English. We have carefully selected (by assessing a sample of work and obtaining references) various editors whose skills are of a high enough quality that we are willing to advocate them on our website. These editors have extensive experience in either the business and management or scientific and technical fields and we list some of their additional specialities below. Please click the name for further details.

<http://hermia.emeraldinsight.com/vl=3731109/cl=24/nw=1/rpsv/editingservice/index>

Thus this service is easily accessible and reliable if not free of charge.

However, there is a spectrum of levels of competency in English language. Some potential articles may be lost because the English is virtually unintelligible, and an editor could reject such an article as not suitable to be sent for review. Yet, whilst editors and editorial staff tend to have limits on the amount of time available for correcting grammar (because of their range of editorial duties) they are generally willing to make modest adjustments in terms of language, grammar, style and terminology.

Editors of these journals can also offer opportunities, such as a themed issue of a journal on, for example, the LIS curriculum. Such an issue would invite contributions from all countries and would not relate only to educators because, as indicated in the section on curriculum, the views of practitioners regarding what is valuable in the curriculum for future information professionals are welcomed. Translation services could help for such opportunities. An example of recent themed issue of a journal is *Library Management*, which focused on 'Repository print libraries: vital strategies in the digital world' (2005), an area of interest to most information professionals. Some journals should be considered for publication because of their specific coverage, for example *Collection Building*.

Joint authorship and working together

Given that information professionals today need to work together, a topic frequently written about in LIS journals, another potential for publishing in an English language journal is that of joint authorship, bringing together both authors whose first language is English and authors whose first language is not English. An example of this is the article 'Change and innovation in European LIS education' by Virkus and Wood (2004), which discusses case studies in both Estonia and the UK in the context of facing challenges such as globalisation, competition and responses to changes in higher education. This can work in the other direction with an English speaking author working with a non-English speaking author to publish in a non-English language journal, with the intention of drawing the attention of readers to a particular non-

English journal. If such an article could be published in both languages it would maximise readership.

Information professionals, regardless of country or language have a wealth of information to share. Conferences such as IFLA bring together information professionals from a variety of countries, and conference presentations, whilst not in all languages, can be in any of the accepted IFLA languages – English, French, German, Russian, Spanish. IFLA conferences present wonderful opportunities to network with people from other countries, which leads to the potential for future joint authorships to be explored – and for conference papers to be expanded and developed for future article publication

Double publication (publishers working together)

Publication of the same article in two journals in two different languages raises copyright issues. However, many publishers are open to suggestion, and if they could come to a copyright agreement with the correct acknowledgements, there is the potential for the same articles to be published in two journals. Journal editors would be the first point of approach. English language readers could then be alerted to a potential wealth of information in non-English language journals.

Another possibility is for publishers to work together directly towards dual publication. For example, in Croatia, a most prestigious national journal for publication is *Vjesnik Bibliotekara Hrvatske*, which is published by the Croatian Library Association. As it is included in LISA, and special issues edited by important professionals serve as mandatory exam literature for the two Croatian library schools, and if authors aspire to publish in this journal of their professional association, then it would seem that publishers of English language journals would be interested in the content, which published also in English could be brought to the attention of the English-speaking world. This is an area which has potential for publisher collaboration. The contents could be more widely disseminated and the publisher could gain access to another source of copy and gain recognition for such an initiative.

Conclusions

Findings of a pilot research project have identified the contribution to a large portfolio of English language LIS journals by authors whose first language is not indicated as English to reflect subjects which are topical and of international interest. This includes LIS education, which is an area of focus not only for academics but also for practitioners in terms of changing professional skill requirements. Various possibilities are suggested to bring the research and professional expertise from countries with national languages spoken by relatively few numbers to the attention of the English speaking world.

References

- Audunson, R. et al (2003) The complete librarian – an outdated species? LIS between profession and discipline. *New Library World* 104 (1189), 195-202
- Brine, A & J Feather (2003) Building a skills portfolio for the information professional. *New Library World*, 104 (11/12), 455-463
- Gorman, M. (2004) Whither library education? *New Library World* 105 (1204/1205), 376-380

- Gregory, V (2003) Student perceptions of the effectiveness of web-based distance education. *New Library World*, 104 (10), 426-431
- Johnson, I. M. et al (2001) Management education in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Education for Information* 19 (1), 3-18
- Liu, Yan Quan (2004) School education for digital libraries. *New Library World*, 104 (1/2), 60-68
- Mortezaie, L. & Naghshineh, N. (2002), A comparative study of graduate courses in library and information studies in the UK, USA, India and Iran: lessons for LIS professionals. *Library Review* 51 (1/2) 14-23
- Newton, R (2003) Staff attitudes to the development and delivery of e-learning. *New Library World*, 104 (10), 412-425
- Repository print libraries: vital strategies in the digital world. (2005) *Library Management*, 26 (1/2)
- Terris, O. (2003) Chaos in compromise: cataloguing and indexing in a digital age. *Multimedia Information and Technology* 29 (3) 79-81
- Virkus, S. & L. Wood (2004) Change and innovation in European LIS education. *New Library World*, 105 (1204/5) 320-329

ⁱ Emerald Librarianship and Information Studies Library online at:

<http://ninetta.emeraldinsight.com/vl=400820/cl=108/nw=1/rpsv/library/index.htm> (accessed 09.02.05)

ⁱⁱ [Asian Libraries](#) ; [Electronic Resources Review](#); [International Journal on Grey Literature](#); [Library Consortium Management: An International Journal](#) ; [Librarian Career Development](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Reference Reviews](#); [Performance Measurement & Metrics](#)

^{iv} Journals in sample are as follows, with number of references downloaded in brackets:

Aslib Proceedings	(30)
Bottom Line	(20)
Campus-Wide Information Systems	(22)
Collection Building	(22)
Electronic Library	(54)
Information Management and Computer Security	(30)
Information Technology and People	(22)
Interlending and Document Supply	(26)
Internet Research: Electronic Networking Applications and Policy	(31)
Journal of Documentation	(34)
Library Hi Tech	(46)
Library Hi Tech News	(75)
Library Management	(42)
Library Review	(38)
New Library World	(39)
OCLC Systems and Services	(31)
Online Information Review	(33)
Program	(28)
Records Management Journal	(15)
Reference Services Review	(30)
Vine	(18)

^v Endnote Version 7. For further information on Endnote see: <http://www.endnote.com/eninfo.asp>.

^{vi} Although the references were downloaded on 7/8th March 2005, not all the issues for the 2004 volumes of the selected journals were included in the LISA database by that date. Enquiries were made to LISA as to when the 2004 volumes would be complete, and a date of 25th March 2005 was given.