

DIGITAL DATA FOR THE SOCIOLOGY OF TRANSLATION AND THE HISTORY OF TRANSLATION

JITKA ZEHNALOVÁ

ABSTRACT

The study explores the interconnected topics of interdisciplinarity and the use of digital data in research on (literary) translation. Interdisciplinarity is conceived as cooperation between translation studies and other fields of study, specifically with sociology, history and digital humanities, i.e. as an “import” to translation studies, pointing simultaneously to its potential for research in other fields, i.e. an “export” from translation studies.

The main goal is to demonstrate the use of digital data (data obtained from online, publicly available, bibliographic databases on national and international levels) in translation research in terms of possibilities and limits. The analyses conducted verify the un/reliability of the UNESCO Index Translationum data sets by comparing them with results obtained from the databases of the National Library of the Czech Republic. As “byproducts”, these analyses produce surveys of fiction authors most frequently translated from Czech (into English, French, German, and Russian) and into Czech (from English). Several examples from our research exemplify the application of data sets extracted from the databases of the National Library and a qualitatively higher level of use of this data source is suggested.

Keywords: interdisciplinarity; sociology of translation; history of translation; digital humanities; UNESCO Index Translationum; databases; National Library of the Czech Republic

1. Introduction

Similarly to other humanities, translation studies (TS) relies increasingly on interdisciplinarity and on the use of digital data (DD). Interdisciplinarity, especially after the “interdisciplinary turn” (Snell-Hornby 2006), means cooperation with an ever growing number of disciplines, one of them being sociology. Within Czech TS, sociologically-minded research of translation goes back to the 1960s, thanks to Jiří Levý, who considers sociology a source for TS, explores the social functions of translation, and develops his socially oriented concept of norms of translation. In the international context, this approach, called “sociology of translation” (Chesterman 2006; Wolf and Fukari 2007), began to make an indisputable impact in the 2000s, after the “sociological turn” and the “power turn” (Wolf and Fukari 2007; Wolf 2014). Another fast growing research area within TS is the history of translation, and as translation is “socially and historically

embedded” (Hermans 2007: 74), the sociology of translation and the history of translation are closely related.

For research in both these sub-branches of TS, data sources are of course of key importance, as is the methodology of data collection, application and interpretation. Apart from textual analyses, the traditional core part of TS, other research methods, such as interviews, questionnaires, statistical surveys, bibliographic databases, ethnographic methods, etc. are used (for literature reviews, see e.g. Saldanha and O’Brien 2014; Zanettin and Rundle 2022). The interconnecting of textual and contextual data is a still discussed issue – both the tendency to overestimate textual analyses to the detriment of social contextualisation and the opposite tendency occur. Researchers who aim at combining these two data sources face the problem of how to proceed in a methodologically sound way (for further details, see Zehnalová and Kubátová 2022a).

In data collection, information technologies play a significantly growing role, and utilisation of DD, under the label Digital Humanities, has become a commonplace in many fields: “The importance of understanding computational approaches is increasingly reflected across a number of disciplines, including the arts, humanities and social sciences... something that can be termed a *computational turn*” (Berry 2012: 11). The present study focuses on data obtainable from public online bibliographic databases, partly also on statistical surveys provided online by public institutions, as data sources for social and historical research on (literary) translation. Its goal is to present these sources as effective and multifaceted, while considering their limits as well. Concerning the methodology of their application, the aim is to offer some examples, not to design a systematic approach.

The interdisciplinary nature of translation research can be approached from two perspectives. First, as an “import” to TS, i.e. the cooperation of TS with other fields, in our case sociology, history and, in the form of online available DD, digital humanities. Second, the application of translational data, possibly theories or models, in other fields, such as sociology and history, i.e. an “export” from TS (Snell-Hornby 2006: 164). So far, the second option remains sporadic and rather hypothetical as TS is still mostly “invisible” to other humanities, despite its interdisciplinary or even transdisciplinary potential (Schögler 2022). The sub-branches of the sociology of translation and the history of translation might be the ones to bring about a change, because they conceptualise translation as a historically conditioned social phenomenon influencing cultural exchanges on the national¹ and international/global levels. This conceptualisation opens up space for applying translation research results in the sociology of culture (e.g. in the area of cultural policies) and the history of culture (e.g. the sharing of translations in the development of literatures and cultures): “... it is no exaggeration to say that if we want to study cultural history, the history of philosophy, literature, and religion, we shall have to study translations to a much greater extent than we have done in the past” (Lefevere and Bassnett 1998: 6). TS might also contribute to exploring broader topics: “Typical issues concern language and/or translation policies in multilingual countries or institutions, or for minority languages. These issues have obvious relevance for language rights, democ-

¹ The notions *nation* and *national* are problematic in some contexts, yet difficult to replace in many cases (for a discussion, see Paloposki 2022: 71).

racy, and political development, all of which lie within the sphere of sociological interest” (Chesterman 2006: 17).

1.1 The Sociology of Translation

Within international TS, the sociology of translation “finds in Even-Zohar, Toury, Hermans and Lefevere its main precursors” (Buzelin 2013: 195). Before them, however, the social (and historical) conditioning of translation, its functions, and its norms belonged to the main tenets of Levý’s approach. Toury drew on these, admitting it as late as after 2000 (Toury 2008: 402) (see also Jettmarová 2016: 7). Nevertheless, it seems that contemporary international TS is at least partially aware of Levý’s pioneering role: “Levý ... prefigured Even-Zohar’s and Toury’s ideas when he argued that translations cater for cultural needs in certain periods” (Vandaele 2022: 104). In Even-Zohar’s polysystem theory, translated literature, similarly to Levý, is primarily a phenomenon of the target literature, includes all literary genres (not just the “canon”), forms part of the cultural polysystem and keeps evolving (Even-Zohar 1990). Even-Zohar instigated Toury’s orientation towards the social, cultural, and historical conditions, and the essence of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) is thus empirical research of translation as a social and historical fact of the given target culture, although Toury’s priority is still translated texts themselves. Only gradually, within DTS and elsewhere, the social contextualisation deepens and contributes to a better understanding of the cultural dimension of translation due to the development of its sociologically oriented research:

... introducing into TS methods of research other than text analysis, drawing mainly on sociology and anthropology. Consequently, it expands the focus of interest of TS from the products (the translated texts) as such, to the interdependencies and exchange relations between products, persons (producers and consumers), institutions, and the translation market. ... Instead of viewing information about translators and translation institutions as marginal facts subjugated to explaining phenomena in translated texts, indications of translatorial decisions in end-products should be used as data for exploring cultural processes. (Sela-Sheffy 2000: 348)

The sociology of translation draws conceptually and methodologically on influential sociologists, mostly on Pierre Bourdieu, but also on Bernard Lahire, Bruno Latour, Niklas Luhmann, and others (for surveys, see Wolf 2010; Buzelin 2013; Milani 2022). At present, it is a well-established research area offering a significant amount of research (for surveys, see e. g. Sela-Sheffy 2005; Wolf 2010; Tyulenev 2014; Xu and Chu 2015; Buzelin and Baraldi 2016; Milani 2022; Zehnalová and Kubátová 2022a). Its research interests include agents, primarily but not exclusively translators, their agency and habitus, the roles that institutions play in intercultural exchanges and a number of other social factors, e.g. ideological, economic, and power relations and pressures in areas such as policies and strategies of language industries and publishing houses, book market conditions, inequalities among languages and literatures, functions of (literary) translations, or cultural policies. These aspects transpose translation research from the level of individual (target) cultures/nations to the international/global level: “... we can argue that significant features of target cultures derive not so much from their intrinsic properties but from their specific

position within the world system of translation” (Heilbron 2008: 188). Heilbron’s model (Heilbron 2008; Heilbron 2010; Heilbron and Sapiro 2007) describes the global positions of languages, based on the amount of translations from them, and the connections between the position of a language in the world system on the one hand and the status of translation and translators and the norms of translation in the given target culture on the other. It enables developmental predictions of book markets, and explains how the unequal global power relations bear upon the book markets of individual countries.

1.2 The History of Translation

Another reference to Levý is necessary here, due to his 1957 *České teorie překladau* [The Czech Theories of Translation], “at that time perhaps the most comprehensive history of translation and thinking on translation” (Jettmarová 2011: xv), and also due to his consistently applied historical approach to translation and its functions in different time periods: “In tracing history Levý saw translation in service of the culture, he saw translation hampering domestic literary production, he saw contradictory pursuits and methods and a great variation of output in terms of representations accepted as translation” (ibid, xxii). Internationally, the dawn of the history of translation is believed to have come later: “History, then, is one of the things that happened to translation studies since the 1970s, and with history a sense of greater relativity and of the greater importance of concrete negotiations at certain times and in certain places...” (Lefevere and Bassnett 1998: 1), although Levý’s inspiration is not overlooked here either (Paloposki 2022: 70). His approach demonstrates that the history of translation can be perceived from two inter-related yet distinct points of view – either as the history of theoretical thinking about translation, later the field of TS, or the history of translating (for surveys, see e.g. Bastin and Bandia 2006; Baker and Saldanha 2019; D’hulst 2022; Lange and Monticelli 2022; Footitt 2022a; Footitt 2022b; Paloposki 2022; Rundle 2022a); a case in point is Vandaele (2022), who addresses both the history of DTS *and* the historical contextualisation of translating within DTS. Rundle (2022a) treats the history of translation as a three-phase process that focuses first on texts (“how they were translated, and with the aesthetic discourse surrounding these texts”), later on translators (“as social beings and as people who played (an often unacknowledged) role in history”), and finally on context (“the history of the period/context in which the translation events being studied occurred”); moreover, he claims that “translation can also function as an approach to history rather than just being the object of inquiry: a translational lens through which to examine history and not just an object being examined through a historical lens” (Rundle 2022a, xxi). A detailed critical account of the idea that history of translation is/should be part of historiography is offered by Vandaele (2022). The cooperation, or even mutual interdependence, of the sociology of translation and the history of translation might take the form of the historical contextualisation of translating and translators, as well as the “use of translation as an approach, a paradigm and an interpretative key for transcultural and transnational interdisciplinary research” (Rundle 2014: 2). The links between the sociology of translation the history of translation and interdisciplinarity are discussed by e.g. Wolf (2022) and Milani (2022). Within the history of translation, similarly to the sociology of translation, the interconnecting of historical and textual interpretations is of key importance: “Only by correlating

historiographical insights with empirical evidence obtained from the translated texts will it be possible to produce a coherent and sound translation history” (Gómez Castro 2022: 38).

1.3 Digital Data in the Sociology of Translation and the History of Translation

Within the sociology of translation and the history of translation, the areas of interest and research thus include the socio-historical context of (literary) translation on the global level and on the level of individual countries/cultures/national or language communities/book markets. In both cases, the need arises to compare different languages, language areas, countries, genres and sub-genres, time periods, authors, translators, publishers, etc. The possibilities of this type of translation research are significantly limited by difficulties in obtaining the necessary data. While it is true that data sources on both the national and international levels do exist, there are considerable differences in their reliability and availability (in the structure and search options required). This is the reason why it is imperative for researchers to plan their projects carefully in terms of what DD, in what structure, in what way, and from what sources are available to them. This study presents various modes of obtaining and processing data from two sources – the UNESCO Index Translationum database (IT) and the National Library of the Czech Republic (NLCR) – and of two types – online bibliographic databases and statistical surveys. Priority is given to NLCR data, IT data are analysed mainly from the perspective of their un/reliability.

The main purpose is to demonstrate some DD application possibilities in translation research (for more details, see Pym 1996; Poupaud, Pym et al. 2009; Sapiro 2010; Wakabayashi 2012; Hacothen 2014; Wakabayashi 2019; Paloposki 2022). Concurrently, we aim at highlighting the relevance of the socio-historical viewpoint, of broadening perspectives to encompass the global level, and of interdisciplinary cooperation. The sociologists Bhambra and Holmwood state: “Interdisciplinary research, and international and cross-cultural collaborative research all require some degree of translation; translation not just across languages, but across disciplinary and cultural boundaries as well” (2011: 4). Rundle comments on this: “What is interesting..., is how translation is being used not so much as a physical object of study or as a practice to be analysed, but rather as a means to understand and interpret transnational and ‘global’ sociological contexts and as the defining paradigm of an interdisciplinary approach” (2014: 2).

2. Publicly Available Data Sources on the International Level

2.1 UNESCO Index Translationum

The League of Nations began to record book translations in 1932. Since 1948, the IT database has been under the auspices of UNESCO and since 1979, the records have been digitalised (Todorova 2010: 3). Up until the present, they have been available online² (the

² <https://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsform.aspx> (access: March 2023).

bibliographic database and statistical surveys), but according to Pym (2022: 97), IT discontinued its activities in 2015. In translation research, the use of this data source is relatively frequent, as on the global level, it is the only non-profit publicly available source of data on book translations. Its main advantages include online availability, a user-friendly interface, and a large number of languages. The enormous disadvantages, however, are data unreliability (Heilbron 1999; Sapiro 2010; Poupaud, Pym, and Torres Simon 2009; Ginsburgh et al. 2011; Paloposki 2018; Benmessaoud and Buzelin 2018; Paloposki 2022) and the fact that data on Czech (and many other languages) obtained in 2009 are being processed at present³ (IT itself does not indicate the discontinuation of its activities): “... one of the most popular translation databases, the UNESCO Index Translationum, a thematically organised inventory consisting of upwards of two million translation entries. The Index... has become increasingly less useful since then [2008] due to irregular updates and a diminishing number of entries” (Milani 2022: 244).

Statistical Surveys

Figure 1 shows the IT interface and the statistical surveys available.

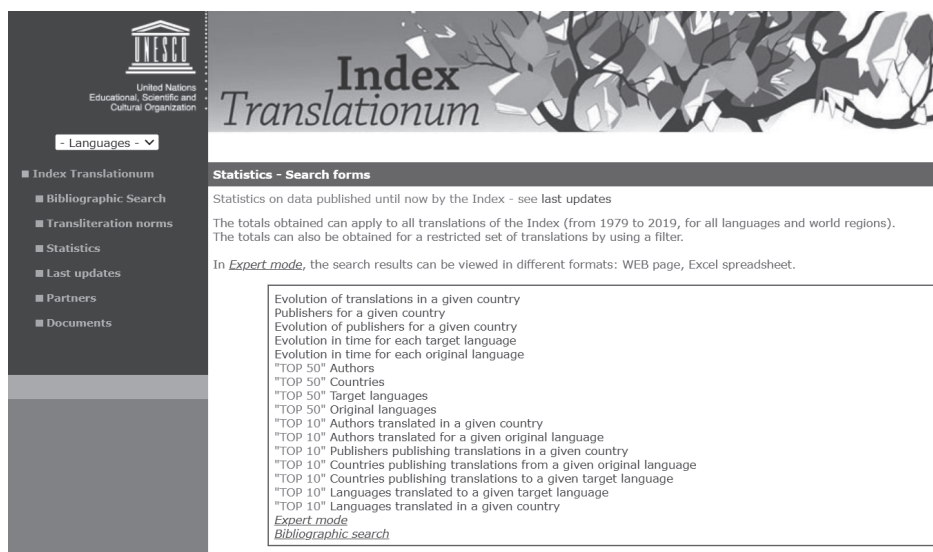


Figure 1 – The IT interface (Source: The IT interface, menu point *Statistics*⁴)

The Bibliographic Database

The bibliographic database is available from the menu point *Bibliographic Search*. Apart from the usual search fields (*author, publisher, year of publication, place of publication*), it features the fields *translator, original language, target language*, which is crucial for translation research (see below).

³ <https://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bscontrib.aspx?lg=0> (access: March 2023).

⁴ <https://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsstatlist.aspx?lg=0> (access: March 2023).

2.2 IT Data Reliability: Translations from Czech

Given the above reservations, it is necessary to evaluate the reliability of data from this source (even at first sight, serious doubts are caused by items 9 and 5 in Tables 1 and 3 respectively). We do so by comparing, in two steps, IT data with NLCR data. The first step deals with translations of Czech fiction authors from Czech to different languages. Based on the IT statistical survey, the authors are selected (Table 1), data on them are retrieved from IT and NLCR bibliographic databases (*Bibliographic Search* and *NKC – Electronic Catalogue of NLCR* respectively)⁵. For the purpose of comparing IT and NLCR data, we narrow down the number of authors to five and the number of languages to four (English, French, German, Russian). The column *Difference* indicates the differences in numbers of translations obtained from NLCR and IT.⁶ Aside from evaluating data reliability, the analysis results in an overview of Czech authors most frequently translated into these languages.

Table 1 – Most translated authors from Czech according to IT (into all languages, overall numbers without time limit) (Source: IT – *Statistics on Index Translationum database for “Original language = ces”*)

Rank	10 most translated authors	Number of translations
1	Kundera Milan	714
2	Hrabal Bohumil	382
3	Čapek Karel	360
4	Hašek Jaroslav	324
5	Havel Václav	222
6	Miler Zdeněk	199
7	Škvorecký Josef	147
8	Klíma Ivan	121
9	et al.	114
10	Stingl Miloslav	111

Table 2 – Most translated authors from Czech according to IT and NLCR (into English, French, German, Russian, overall numbers without time limit) (Sources: IT: *Bibliographic Search*, NL CR: *NKC – Electronic Catalogue of NLCR*)

IT rank	5 most translated authors	Number of translations IT	Number of translations NK CR	Difference NK CR/IT	NLCR rank
1	Kundera Milan	263	159	-104	3
2	Hrabal Bohumil	110	133	+23	4
3	Čapek Karel	245	383	+138	1
4	Hašek Jaroslav	129	266	+137	2
5	Havel Václav	106	110	+4	5

⁵ Data were manually checked against the criteria *author*; all entries containing a different name/no name at all were excluded.

⁶ The + sign signals a higher number given by NLCR than IT, the - sign vice versa.

⁷ <https://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsstatlist.aspx?m=11> (access: March 2023).

Table 3 – World authors most translated into Czech according to IT (overall numbers without time limit) (Source: IT – *Statistics on Index Translationum database for “Original language = CZE”*⁸)

Rank	10 most translated authors (into Czech)	Number of translations
1	Vandenberg Patricia	938
2	Unger Gert Fritz	764
3	Dark Jason	437
4	Courths-Mahler Hedwig	300
5	et al.	275
6	Kirby John	198
7	Mark William	179
8	May Karl	146
9	Gardner Erle Stanley	144
10	McBain Ed	142

IT reports a higher number of translations only for Kundera. For all the remaining authors, NLCR gives higher numbers, despite the fact that these are translations from Czech into other languages and thus (mostly) published in the given countries; NLCR, as the legal depository library of the Czech Republic, is not legally obliged to catalogue them. It also means that NKCR data cannot be considered complete. If more precise data on book translations from Czech were to be obtained, other sources would have to be used. On the international level, WorldCat or Amazon might be considered, but these are commercial databases, they gather data from unknown sources, and their data management is probably automated. Data obtained from them would have to be checked manually, which is feasible for small data sets only. Another option is to access online resources of national libraries of the countries concerned (in our case countries where English, French, German, and Russian are official languages). However, by making inquiries in the national libraries of several European countries, in the British Library, and in the Library of Congress, we established that in many cases, their interfaces do not allow for searching by the fields *translation/translator* and the combination of fields *source language* and *target language* is not immediately available (separately, these fields may be available in later stages of the search). It is of course possible to make queries based on fields such as *author*, *title*, *ISBN*, etc. If we know e.g. specific book titles, we can search bibliographic databases of the national libraries of different countries. To give an example, we searched the bibliographic databases of the national libraries of the Czech Republic, Germany, and Russia for translations of books awarded the (Man) Booker and Pulitzer Prizes to compare the harshness of the Communist censorship in these countries (Zehnalová and Kubátová 2022b). The databases, however, of the national libraries of many countries cannot be used, on a user-friendly basis (i.e. by a translation researcher without a higher level knowledge of IT and bibliographic database management), for research requiring different types of data, e.g. amounts of translations between specific languages, in specific time periods or genres, in terms of translators, publishers, shares of translated and non-translated literature. This significantly limits their applicability for translation research.

⁸ <https://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsstatlist.aspx?m=10> (access: March 2023).

Table 4 – Most translated English writing authors (numbers of translations into Czech according to IT and NLCR) (Sources: IT and NLCR)

IT rank (most translated into Czech)	Author	Number of trans. IT	Number of trans. NL CR	Difference NLCR/IT	NLCR rank (most translated into Czech)
9	Gardner Erle Stanley	157	234	+77	4
10	McBain Ed	153	230	+77	5
IT rank (most translated overall)					
1	Christie Agatha	107	319	+212	2
3	Shakespeare William	131	926	+795	1
5	Cartland Barbara	126	184	+58	8
6	Steel Danielle	95	179	+84	9
9	King Stephen	80	214	+134	6
12	Roberts Nora	86	156	+70	11
14	Doyle Arthur Conan	60	211	+151	7
15	Twain Mark	27	140	+113	12
21	Stine Robert L.	41	64	+23	15
22	London Jack	32	271	+239	3
24	Asimov Isaac	49	97	+48	14
25	Dickens Charles	21	165	+144	10
26	Stevenson Robert L.	20	121	+101	13

2.3 IT Data Reliability: Translations into Czech

The second step of the IT data reliability analysis deals with translations of fiction of English writing authors into Czech. Similarly to step one, we make use of two types of DD from two sources: IT statistical surveys to select authors and bibliographic DD from IT (*Bibliographic Search*) and from NLCR (*NKC – Electronic Catalogue of NLCR*). The outputs are again an IT data reliability evaluation and a list of authors who are, according to IT and NLCR, the most translated (and in what numbers of titles), this time into Czech. The selection of authors is based on two IT statistical surveys. The IT survey of the ten world authors most translated into Czech (*TOP 10 Authors translated for a given original language*) underlies Table 3, English writing authors are highlighted in bold and are taken over to Table 4.

As only ten authors are listed in Table 3 and only two of them are English writing authors, another 13 authors are taken over from the IT statistical survey of 50 most translated authors (into all languages) (*TOP 50 Authors, Statistics on data published until now by the Index*⁹) as the highest ranking English writing authors. These, along with the two authors from Table 3, are listed in Table 4. The numbers of translations are extracted from IT and NLCR (*Bibliographic Search* and *NKC – Electronic Catalogue of NLCR* respectively).

Due to the two selection criteria, the results presented in Table 4 are not completely comparable – the authors ranked 9 and 10, based on translations into Czech, are not listed in the survey of 50 most translated authors based on translations into all languages (according to IT). Nevertheless, the column *Difference NKCR/IT* fulfils the main goal of the analysis by indicating the unreliability of IT data. Even so, the IT statistical surveys may be useful for selecting authors (the delay/termination of updating is most likely not relevant here), the numbers of translations can be extracted from bibliographic databases (in our case, IT and NLCR) and the ranks verified. As in step 2 we consider translations into Czech published (with some possible marginal exceptions) within the Czech state territory and as such catalogued by the NLCR, the NLCR data can be considered exhaustive¹⁰ and reliable. The list of the most translated authors into Czech (according to NLCR) and their ranks thus reflect reality.

To summarise the results, we can claim that the reliability of IT data is limited.¹¹ If need be, they might be used to trace long-term overall tendencies (up to 2008), but in terms of individual authors, translators, shorter time periods etc., they are imprecise. Given the delay/termination of updating, the deviation from real numbers is so substantial that using them is likely to be misleading.

3. The National Library of the Czech Republic

NKCR is one of the Czech legal depository libraries, and Czech publishers are thus legally¹² obliged to deliver there copies of all non-periodical publications they publish. This means that translation researchers have at their disposal reliable data on translations published within the Czech state territory, both in the form of statistical surveys and bibliographic databases, in our case Czech translations of English written fiction (translations into Czech can of course be published abroad and under the Communist regime they were, but the numbers were extremely limited). In the opposite direction of translation, from Czech into English, most titles are published abroad, yet they are in many cases catalogued and appear in NLCR databases, definitely in a more systematic way than in IT (see Table 2).

⁹ <https://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsstatexp.aspx?crit1L=5&nTyp=min&topN=50> (access: March 2023).

¹⁰ Yet subjected to possible changes as NLCR keeps adding titles (published in the past and newly acquired) to its catalogues.

¹¹ A more detailed analysis (not presented here) revealed that IT data are not reliable even before 2008, after 2008 their reliability decreases significantly.

¹² Act No. 37/1995 Coll. Civil Code. Available at: <https://www.nkp.cz/sluzby/sluzby-pro/povinne-vytisky/pv> (access: March 2023).

The availability of reliable data without the necessity for the researcher to collect them is the main advantage of the NLCR sources. Their reliability is the result of the legal deposit library status and of the personal and technical resources enabling methodologically sound and systematic cataloguing and data management.

3.1 NLCR: Statistical Surveys

On the NLCR website, statistical surveys *Annual Reports on Non-periodical Publications* have been available¹³ since 1993. Up until 1997, the numbers of titles are given only according to the language of publication (i.e. foreign language books published in the Czech Republic), since 1998 the numbers of translations from different languages into Czech have been made public.

DD on numbers of translated languages and/or of numbers of published book translations from different languages¹⁴ can be used as an indicator of the language diversity of the book market and its development in a given time period (Sapiro 2010), or to observe the development of the numbers of translations from a language/languages. Graph 1 is an example of tracking the developments of the language diversity of the Czech book market from 1998 to 2002.

3.2 NKC – Electronic Catalogue of the National Library of the Czech Republic

As stated above, NLCR databases are searchable according to the fields *source language/original language* and *target language/language of the document*. In the *Advanced Search* mode of the NKC Catalogue,¹⁵ these search fields can be set up along with many others, e.g. *time period*, *type of document*, *key words*. The search results can be narrowed down via *Refine*, in several sequential steps if need be, to remove genres, sub-genres, target groups, etc. and then sent or saved via *Save/Mail*. When searching for translations into Czech (published within the Czech state territory), we obtain complete DD, in the opposite direction they are not likely to be complete.

3.3 NKC – The Topical Map of NLCR Collections

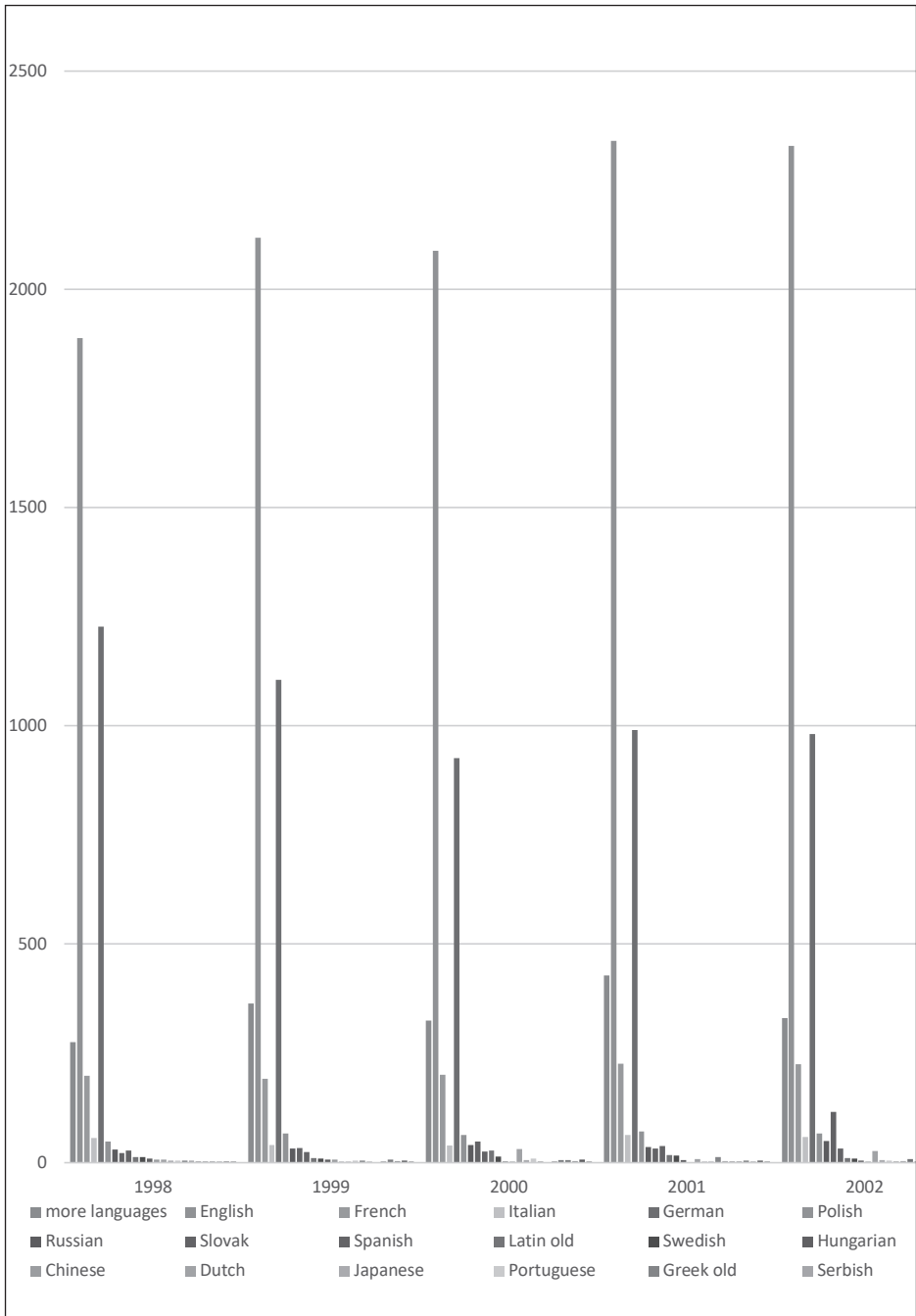
The Topical map of the collections (TMC) of NLCR¹⁶ makes it possible to filter DD according to topical categories, time periods, countries of origin, genres, and sub-genres. The query begins by selecting one of the 26 topical categories, e.g. *Fiction*. In the following step, based on the source language, genre, possibly the country of origin, relevant sub-category/categories are selected, e.g. *American Fiction*, along with other relevant cri-

¹³ <https://www.nkp.cz/sluzby/sluzby-pro/sluzby-pro-vydavatele/vykazy?searchterm=statistick> (access: March 2023).

¹⁴ For the most translated languages, the numbers are also available in *Reports on the Czech Book Market* published online by The Association of Czech Booksellers and Publishers. Available at: <https://www.sckn.cz/zpravy-o-ceskem-kniznim-trhu/> (access: March 2023).

¹⁵ https://aleph.nkp.cz/F/S54RM8DGP1RPN9T64PPVDAMTYGPIJDAFCCGC9AC5XESP2KRR75L-11447?func=file&file_name=find-d&CON_LNG=ENG (access: March 2023).

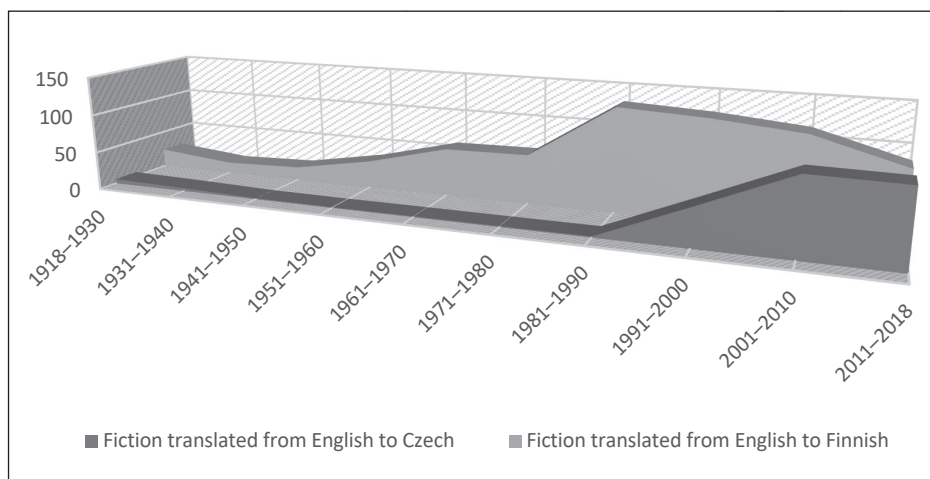
¹⁶ https://aleph.nkp.cz/F/?func=file&file_name=konsp-nkc. Available in Czech.



Graph 1 – The survey of languages (up to 25th rank) translated into Czech and numbers of book translations from these languages into Czech (1998–2002) (Source: NLCR: *Annual Reports on Non-Periodical Publications 1998–2002*)

teria, e.g. *time period*. As the search results can include titles published in the original language, these have to be removed (via *Refine* using the *Document language code (cze)*). Then they can be gradually narrowed down and saved or sent.

DD obtained from TMC can be applied for a research project directly, or can be further processed. Graph 2 is an example of the direct use of DD from the NLCR, combined with DD from Fennica, a Finnish database, comparing the Czech and Finnish productions of book fiction translations from English in the time period 1918–2018.



Graph 2 – Book Production: Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic and Finland 1918–2018 (fiction translated from English) (Source: Zehnalová and Kubátová 2022b)

As an example of further NLCR DD processing, the creation of a representative sample of book translations of adult fiction (without fantasy and sci-fi) from English into Czech from 2000 to 2016 can be given (Zehnalová and Kubátová 2019). Based on the definition of the target population, DD were filtered and downloaded from NLCR (15 381 titles), the size of the representative sample was calculated (867 titles), and the representative sample was created using the Excel random number generator; after a manual check-up, it contains 854 titles.

Another processing option, which is however not the topic of this study, is to use the NLCR DD, filtered according to the needs of the given research project, to build a “mini-database” searchable for specific criteria and their combinations. In this way, the possibilities of NKCR DD can be elevated to a qualitatively new level. In this case, an advanced level of IT skills and bibliographic data management knowledge is necessary, thus probably cooperation with an expert is needed. If we download the relevant DD in the international MARC21 format, we acquire an additional advantage in terms of having at our disposal DD with the same structure as DD from all libraries utilising this standard. Most libraries in the world do, but the specific MARC21 fields applied and their number is again a matter of their decision and thus varies for different libraries.

4. Conclusions

The study demonstrated the possibilities and limitations of collecting DD from public online available sources on national and international levels for sociologically and historically oriented (literary) translation research. It documented the considerable differences among these sources from the point of view of their reliability and usefulness for translation research, the limited possibilities of using IT and the varied levels of applicability of international sources. As the key criterion of usability for a non-expert user, the availability of the search options *source language* and *target language* was established. Specific NLCR DD application cases exemplified the effectivity and usefulness of NLCR databases and statistical surveys, especially for translations into Czech, even on the non-expert level, and in different modes of working with DD (the use of one database, more databases, combined with statistical surveys, direct use of DD, manual and automated processing of DD). It also pointed out the potential opened up to translation researchers in the form of cooperating with IT experts to build a database tailored to the needs of a specific research project.

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RESÜMEE

Digitale Daten für Translationssoziologie und -geschichte

Die Studie befasst sich mit den ineinander verwobenen Themen der Interdisziplinarität und des Usus von digitalen Daten in der Forschung zum Thema (literarische) Übersetzung. Die Interdisziplinarität wird hier im Kontext des translatologischen Kontakts mit anderen wissenschaftlichen Disziplinen, so wie etwa der Soziologie, Geschichte oder dem Bereich der „Digital Humanities“, von wo es zum „Import“ in die Übersetzungswissenschaft kommen kann. In Betracht wird auch der Einfluss des „Exports“ von der Translationswissenschaft aus gezogen, und zwar in die anderen Disziplinen.

Das Hauptziel des Beitrags ist es, zu demonstrieren, wie die digitalen Daten (unter Berücksichtigung von öffentlichen Online-Datenbanken auf nationaler und internationaler Basis) zur translatologischen Forschung beitragen und wo dann die Möglichkeiten und Limits zu beobachten sind. Die Analyse bezieht sich auf die (Un)Reliabilität des UNESCO Index Translationum im Vergleich mit der Datenbank der Tschechischen Nationalbibliothek. Als „Nebenprodukte“ dieser Analyse entstehen dann Übersichten von meistübersetzten Belletristik-AutorInnen aus dem Tschechischen (ins Englische, Französische, Deutsche und Russische) und ins Tschechische (aus dem Englischen). Angegebene Beispiele zeigen die Anwendung von Datensätzen, erworben in der Datenbank der Tschechischen Nationalbibliothek. Ebenfalls wird eine qualitativ hochwertigere Nutzung (um eine Ebene höher) dieser Datenressource vorgeschlagen.

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Mgr. Jitka Zehnalová, Dr.

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky, Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci

jitka.zehnalova@upol.cz