

On the use of languages in IAHS publications.

For some time, we have debated the issue of having bi-lingual papers in our journals (HSJ and PIAHS) in English and French. The fact that our journals are bi-lingual cause a series of problems. The main problems are the low citation of French papers and the additional editorial burdens. In the IAHS Ltd. board we have discussed the transfer to English-only publishing, with the option of multi-language abstracts.

We realize that the decision to publish in English only (with translated abstracts) will be a difficult issue for the IAHS community. It may be particularly hard for Francophone Africa. But writing in English is not only hard for Francophone Africans but also for the French in general, the Germans, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Russians, the Polish, the Dutch, and others that don't use English as their native language.

We believe IAHS should be a real international society where the hydrological science is what we share. It is our task to provide to all hydrologists in the world access to hydrological science and to facilitate that they can grow and make a career in hydrological science. We should accept that English has become the international language of science. This may be to the advantage of the native English speakers, but on the other hand they suffer by the fact that they are no longer the sole owner of the English language. It has become ours, and this is not the perfect English that they may want to conserve. The other advantage we have above the English is that we are multi-lingual. The French hydrologists can continue to cherish their language, while being able to express themselves in English.

What we propose is far more fair to everybody (publishing in English but linking to abstracts in as many languages as the author is willing to provide) and allows hydrologists from different cultures to become known and be part of the international community. Publishing in your own language means that you will not be read, will not be cited and will not be known; at least not as much as you deserve. It is our task to facilitate this.

The IAHS office has always helped with English editing and we shall make sure that we can continue to do this. This is the real service that we as an association should provide and we should not stimulate people to publish in a language that will isolate them from the global community.

We propose the following items for discussion and decision to the IAHS Bureau:

1. The IAHS has three official organs: The Newsletter, The Proceedings of the International Association of Hydrological Sciences (Red Books), and the Hydrological Sciences Journal (HSJ).
2. It has been the custom that the Red Books and HSJ allow articles in both English and French and that, where possible, abstracts in both English and French are provided.
3. It has become commonly accepted that the language of international scientific publication is English. If one wants to be read or cited, or if one would like the world to be informed on one's research, then the most efficient way is to publish in English.

The reverse is also true. Papers in other languages than English don't get cited and are commonly overlooked, even within regions where this language is spoken.

4. It has always been the objective of IAHS to support scientists from anywhere in the world to take part in the scientific activities in the field of hydrology, and we have always tried to stimulate the participation of those who come from deprived or less endowed environments.

5. In order to stimulate those scientists to join the global community, it is imperative that they publish in English, and if they have difficulties in doing so, that IAHS helps them to overcome this difficulty.

6. Allowing francophone hydrologists to publish in French does not help them to become part of the global community. It rather inhibits their participation. Their papers will not be read and will not be cited outside a niche community.

7. Besides, why should we only allow French-speaking authors to write in their preferred language? Why not Russian, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish or German?

8. On top of this, the standard translation into French of abstracts of papers accepted in HSJ provides additional editorial burdens, which may lead to delays and additional work loads.

9. Therefore it is proposed that (as soon as implementable), French articles will no longer be accepted in HSJ and PIAHS, but that we start a web site (through iahs.info) where authors or communities can prepare translations of abstracts that are linked to our papers, in French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, or whichever language that has sufficient support by its community. The responsibility to provide these translations lies with the authors and with the language communities of IAHS members who would like to maintain a library of translated abstracts, which is openly available. Such an on-line library could promote the visibility of our journals in non-English speaking regions.

10. Finally, our journals should provide support for English editing. The modality of this needs to be further investigated. Until now our own editorial team provided this service, but maybe cooperation should be sought with Copernicus.