

From the International Exchange of Publications to the Exchange of Experience – a Polish Contact

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Abstract

This paper, having defined what international exchange of publications is, compares the exchange activities of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library in Cluj with that of the Wrocław University Library. This service was initiated in 1923 in the Romanian library and in 1954 in the Polish institution. The partnership between the two university libraries began in 1985 and has continued ever since, the most important exchanged publications being the different series of the two university periodicals, *Studia Universitatis "Babeș-Bolyai"* and *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis*.

The exchange of publications being a complex activity with several phases, it is natural that the work method of the two exchange offices is slightly different. However, there are many common aspects and tendencies. For both institutions the exchange of publications is important as by its means the library collections are enriched and it promotes a favourable image of the institutions.

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1. Exchange of publications – defining the notion

I would like to present the international exchange of publications service from the Acquisitions Department of the Wrocław University Library, Poland in comparison with the office of internal and external exchange from the department responsible for developing, organizing and processing the collections of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library, Cluj-Napoca. This comparison is founded on the systematic research activity that I was able to perform due to a scholarship awarded

by the Ministry of Education and Research through the National Office of Scholarships Abroad, Bucharest.

The first section of this study has as its objective to outline the theoretical aspects, focusing upon the conceptual diversity necessary for an effective collaboration in publication exchange. The second perspective intends to present comparatively an experience from the point of view of the publication exchanges that can take place in Romania and Poland.

Generally, through publication exchange different contacts are established with universities and institutions of higher education, research institutions, central university libraries, national libraries, cultural and scientific societies, international exchange centres, Rector's offices etc. International exchange represents a specific and widely used method for procuring foreign publications.

Publication exchange was promoted by the UNESCO, organization, which in the work entitled *Handbook on the international exchange of publications* (first edition from 1950) stresses the necessity of a process of exchange in detail and argues for the significance and value of a perspective of relationships between nations. Initially, international exchange was conceived as an accord or contract by which the parties reciprocally grant a varied range of printed materials. But in time the entire project became an important source for developing collections (by procuring current and older publications).

Central university libraries are among the institutions most interested in publication exchange, but the main objective remains for them the exchange of their own publications: university textbooks, yearbooks, periodicals, reports, manuscript or exhibition catalogues, guides etc.

From the '90s, in order to improve the practice of exchange activities, step by step, we began to put on electronic data some specific exchange applications. Exchange activities take place by the means of the modules incorporated by these applications. The applications require: a card index of the exchange partners; a module with the register of the sent and/or received publications. The entire register remains centralized on central or branch institutions. Putting together and dispatching the parcels concretizes the partnerships and the related titles offered for exchange. This process is finally quantified by drawing up different statistics.

The entire publication exchange activity requires the following operations: drawing up the lists of the publications that are to be exchanged with other institutions; transmitting these lists; receiving the

answers containing the wishes of the partners to whom the lists were sent; registering and centralizing the sent publications; drawing up and checking the bordereaux; preparing and dispatching the parcels, receiving the publications from the exchange partners and registering these in the exchange database.

2. The analysis of the publication exchange between the two libraries. Differences and similarities

Before starting the second section of my study, I must mention the historical circumstances in which the publication exchange between the two university libraries was established. The first concrete initiatives regarding the development of an international publication exchange activity in the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library, Cluj-Napoca were discussed during the meeting held on 24 October 1923. The project was proposed by the Professor Emil Racoviță and supported by the *University Library Board*. The first results of national and international exchange were registered in the *University Yearbook* from the year 1929–1930. In this the following details were statistically presented: the University Library had exchanged materials with 125 Romanian and foreign universities and other scientific institutions, and it had received 103 parcels containing yearbooks and doctoral dissertations, as well as 124 printed volumes since its setting up.¹

The periodical of the "Babeş-Bolyai" University, having initially the title *The Bulletin of the Victor Babeş and Bolyai University*, since its first issue in the year 1956, has represented the most important publication sent by the international exchange service from Cluj. In the year 1985, it was decided to publish the content of the periodical *Studia Universitatis "Babeş-Bolyai"* in languages of international circulation (English, French etc.) too. This initiative was the result of the collaboration of university teachers with the librarians employed in the exchange office.

In the Wrocław University Library, the service of national and international publication exchange has been functioning uninterruptedly since 1954. The Polish periodical *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis, Bibliotekoznawstwo* (librarianship) series, printed and conceived for

¹ Octavian Petraşcu, *Schimbul internaţional de publicaţii între deziderat şi posibilităţi de realizare* (International Exchange of Publications between Desire and Practice), *Hermeneutica Bibliothecaria Antologie Philobiblon* (Hermeneutica Bibliothecaria Philobiblon Anthology), Cluj-Napoca, University Press of Cluj, 1998, p. 225.

publication exchange, was issued for the first time that year. The details presented above show that the publication exchange service began to function 33 years later in the Polish library than in our institution.

Looking more closely at the organizational structure of the two offices, we may observe that the Polish exchange office has two distinct sections: one dealing with the received publications, the other sending publications to other libraries. The librarians working in this office wish to preserve this dual specialization. In comparison with this, the two components are not separated within the international exchange section at Cluj; the publications are received and sent by the same office. Considering the measures taken in different European university libraries to unify international exchange activities within a single service, the university library from Cluj has the same objectives as these European institutions. However, the unification and restructuring of activities implies the accumulation of the librarians' tasks at the exchange service.

During the year 2005 the Polish library had approximately 350 foreign and 10 Polish exchange partners. I must acknowledge that I was surprised at the great number of active partners. I thought that the library operated with fewer partners than other such institutions. According to the explication given by the personnel of the reception department, this situation arose after all the partners had been checked. This operation finished some years ago and it led to a substantial decrease of partners. Those who had not respected the relationship of collaboration were transformed into the list of "passive" or "inactive" partners. This measure revitalized the cooperation with active partners and represented a positive aspect, worthy to be followed in order to maintain a balanced exchange.

In the year 2005 the exchange office of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library, according to statistics, collaborated with 1227 active partners. Among these there are some who had sent no publications, but whom we cannot transfer to the group of passive partners as they belong to the following categories: Romanian cultural centres, Rector's offices of Romanian language. Publications are sent to these people in order to spread Romanian science and culture abroad. A concrete centralization that may reflect the real number of active partners can be made only after the partners have been checked. The finished centralization will implicitly result in a revaluation of the agreements.

Cultural and scientific exchange has a central role in the collaboration between Romania and Poland. By sending publications cultural relationships may substantially increase in value in the future. In

this context it is desirable to accentuate the international exchange of publications between the two university libraries.

The partnership began in 1985 and has continued ever since, even if this collaboration implies manifold activities: correspondence with the exchange partner; transmitting the list of publications destined to exchange; registering the sent publications; drawing up the bordereaux; preparing the parcels; sending them; receiving and registering the publications sent by the exchange partner.

On the strength of the partnership between the two libraries, the exchange service of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library sends the Polish library the periodical *Studia Universitatis „Babeş-Bolyai"* having the series „*Oeconomica, Biologia, Geographia, Philologia, Mathematica, Chemia, Jurisprudentia, Historia, Philosophia, Psychologia-paedagogia etc.*", as well as other periodicals present on the Romanian editorial market. In addition to these we send some 70 books, published by the most prestigious publishing houses from Cluj: University Press of Cluj, Accent, Argonaut etc.

Our library due to this partnership with the Polish Wrocław University Library receives all the series of *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis: Anglica Wratislaviensis, Antiquitas, Bibliotekoznawstwo, Biblioteka Judaica, Bibliothecalia Wratislaviensia, Classica Wratislaviensia, Dramat-Tatr, Ekonomia, Estudios Hispanicos, Ethnologia, Filozofia, Germanica Wratislaviensia, Gory-Literatura-Kultura, Historia, Historia Sztuki, Hydrologia, Język a Kultura, Kształceanu Językowe, Literatura i Kultura Popularna, Logika, Musicologica Wratislaviensia, Neerlandica Wratislaviensia, Niemcoznawstwo, Nowe Media-Nowe w Mediach, Politologia, Prace Botaniczne, Prace Geologiczno-Mineralogiczne, Prace Kulturoznawcze, Prace Literackie, Prace Ogradu Botanicznego Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Prace Pedagogiczne, Prace Psychologiczne, Prace Zoologiczne, Prawo, Probabilitz and Mathematical Statistics, Przegląd Prawa i Administracji, Romanica Wratislaviensia, Slavica Wratislaviensia, Sociologia, Studia Antropologiczne, Studia Archeologiczne, Studia Filmoznawcze, Studia Geograficzne, Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Studia Linguistica, Studia nad Faszyzmem i Zbrodniami Hitlerowskimi, Studium Generale Interdyscyplinarne, Wrocławski Studia Wschodnie. The series of *Studia Universitatis „Babeş-Bolyai"* and of *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis* are the forte of the exchange. I have mentioned them in order to show the interdisciplinary character of the two periodicals, as well as that*

researchers and teachers are interested in publishing in them. The sent and received publications undoubtedly promote culture and science in the university and intellectual circles of the two countries.

The exchange service of the Wrocław University Library does not use lists of offers as a work method. Exchange partners can select the publications, according to their priority needs, simply by accessing the site of the Wrocław University Press: www.wuwr.com.pl. In comparison, the exchange activity of our library is based upon the lists of offers in Word format. This is one of the differences between the Romanian and Polish exchange services.

The partnership with the Polish library improved palpably in the '90s when the "Lucian Blaga" University Library began to apply the new techniques and technologies of working with the publications. This led to the exchange of the traditional procedure for a modern one.

From the year 1996 international exchange activities have been centralized by applying FoxPro, a program incorporating four modules by the means of which the exchange activity takes place. By using this application we can update data (partners, titles, postal taxes), which allows us to introduce new registrations in the data files; we can modify existent registrations; delete registrations; process data in order to distribute the publications; establish relationships between titles and partners and extract reports and different statistical accounts.

Its application for the international exchange of publications was conceived by the specialists of the IT Department of our library. In the first part of the article, entitled *Informații generale privind instituțiile științifice cu care se întrețin relații de schimb de publicații* (General information on the scientific institutions exchanging publications with our library) (Bibliorev, 2005) the author emphasizes that "from the beginning the international exchange section had an essential role in starting computerized activity, providing entrance and exit data and testing the program. In this way the international exchange activity is almost entirely dependent on computers."¹

¹ Adela Mateuță, *Schimbul internațional de publicații al Bibliotecii Centrale Universitare „Lucian Blaga” din Cluj-Napoca. Prezentare generală* (International Exchange of Publications in the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library from Cluj-Napoca. General Presentation), Bibliorev, No. 12 (2005) <http://www.bcucluj.ro/bibliorev/arhiva/nr12/info4.html>

The Wrocław University Library has used the VIRTUA System, developed by the American organization, VTLS since 1994.¹ In time working in the VIRTUA System became unsuitable for the needs of the library, thus it was decided to elaborate the institution's own database.

From 2004 the library's new, independent database, entitled "Database of Acquisitions" can be accessed by all the employees of the library. It enables them to perform activities related to exchange, but also other library activities. If in our library the application FoxPro was created by the specialists of the IT Department, the database used in the library from Wrocław was elaborated by the personnel of the Information and Scientific Documentation Service of that institution.

As a conclusion we can say that both libraries have databases of their own, but while the application of our library has been devised specially for exchange activity, in the case of the Polish library it serves for the exchange and processing of the publications received as Legal Deposit or donation, as well as for other activities.

The centralized data system of the Wrocław University Library has six modules, which I would like only to mention:

- the role of the first module, entitled „wpisywanie”, is to create and modify registrations;
- the second module, „przeглядanie” makes possible to re-visualize the registration according to: author, title, editor, the sender of the registered publication and the name of the series;
- the third module „wyszukiwanie” makes possible the search in the database according to the following bibliographic fields: author, title, title of the periodical, publishing place, editor, ISSN, ISBN, the title of the series, the number of the series, pressmark, document type etc.;
- the aim of the fourth module, entitled „przekazanie”, is to transmit the registered publications to the Cataloguing Department of the central library or to the branch institutions. The publications sent to these two locations are marked with number “1”, while those that are not sent to the Cataloguing Department or to the branch libraries are marked with “0”. When the option is accessed, a list appears with the following information: current year; publication type; the number of the parcel; identification number of the respective publication;

¹ Paweł Domino, *Baza rejestracyjna oddziału gromadzenia BUWr*, EBIB 4/2005 (65), <http://ebib.oss.wroc.pl/2005/65/domino.php>

allocation to the Cataloguing Department or to the branch institutions (0 or 1) and the branch library where the respective publication was allocated to;

- the fifth module, „*udostepnianie*”, is used by the personnel of the exchange service who are responsible for receiving the publications. Being in close collaboration with the information department, they make easier to loan the books received through exchange, without cataloguing them beforehand. It is intended thus to indicate the respective publications on the library website at the “novelties” sections. This detail shows a concrete and viable advantage of the Polish exchange service. Unfortunately, the exchange service of our library has not yet instituted a similar measure;
- the sixth module, „*raporty*”, can make different qualitative or quantitative statistics (e.g. the total number of books received from a partner and the prize of the publications received from the chosen partner). By accessing the operation „*raporty*”, for example, we can find out that during the year 2005 (until 27 December) by the means of the national and international exchange service, the Polish library received 696 periodical titles and 1989 books; 1461 books were allocated to the central library collections.¹

The activities of the Polish exchange office can be classified in this way:

- correspondence with exchange partners, which implies confirming that the publications were received; making complaints; selecting and ordering the publications from the lists of offers (this takes the longest time); answering the letters received from the partners etc.;
- receiving the parcels;
- allocating the publications received through exchange to the central institution or the branch libraries;
- registering the publications into the database;
- sending the publications to the Cataloguing Department or directly to the branch institutions. At the same time, the books selected by the branch libraries are directly transmitted without cataloguing them to the following institutions: Austrian library,

¹ I would like to thank Mrs Wacława Araszkiwicz for her kindness and good will she showed while coordinating my work during the three months I spent in Poland.

library of chemistry, library of Indian philology, library of classical philology, library of Dutch philology, library of computer science, library of mathematics, library of microbiology, natural history museum and library of law. Textbooks are catalogued by the Cataloguing Department of the central library, the other books by the branch libraries;

- preparing two copies of the bordereaux, which accompany the books that are to be sent to the branch libraries;
- registering the sent publications on traditional library cards and in Word;
- drawing up two copies of the bordereaux, which will accompany the books that are to be sent;
- printing the labels directly from Word;
- preparing the parcels;
- sending them.

The activities of national and international exchange are approximately identical in the two libraries; however, operation in the databases is different.

According to my experiences made in the office of international exchange, the exchange of publications is very important for supplementing and enriching the library collections, especially in the actual economic conditions which characterize Poland and Romania and which have negative repercussions on the educational and cultural policy.

The library subordinated to the University of Wroclaw enjoys the direct support of this institution. International exchange represents a priority in the managerial activity of the library. The exchanged Polish publications undoubtedly promote the general image of the two institutions. This holds good for the Romanian publications as well.

The integration of Poland into the structures of the European Union rendered necessary to reconsider the tasks of publication exchange, to reorganize the work, to identify new strategies and tendencies of development. The aim of the new strategies of the exchange service from the Polish library was to improve the exchange with the foreign partners, to find new exchange partners, obtaining new titles of periodicals etc. In this context work quality became emphasized. It was desirable to balance the sending and receiving activities and to have a better control upon partners.

The present priorities of the exchange office of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library are: to check partners, to divide them in two groups (active/passive), to find new partners, to improve the

exchange with Romanian partners, to diversify the lists of offers (this implies a good knowledge of the publications that are appearing on the Romanian editorial market) and to reevaluate the exchange activity with some of our partners.

At the end of this article, we specify that both institutions have tried to transcend the linguistic barriers that are often invoked without taking into consideration the cultural and scientific values of the sent or received publications. I hope that the collaboration between the two institutions will remain an active one in the future and that the consolidated partnership will reciprocally be maintained from the perspective of both Romanian and Polish priorities.