

## THE SPECIFICITY OF TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH LITERATURE IN ACADEMIC INTERLIBRARY EXCHANGE

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*Abstract. Achieving discipline in the universe of information means acknowledging the concept of transdisciplinarity, as well as the complexity and unity of knowledge. Modern Romanian education promotes this concept because the space between and across disciplines is full of information, and because a total, rather than totalitarian vision is wanted, with direct reference to values. However, what will accelerate inter-university transfer of information will be sharing publications between libraries, the specific solution, provided today in the form of library collection development and boosting knowledge, as an effective means of interlibrary cooperation supporting and developing research. The librarian accommodates the user's needs and provides on-demand, customized services, managing information quickly and effectively, in a specific way, while promoting quality contents: scientific and research-oriented, academic rather than non-value.*

**Keywords:** *research, transdisciplinarity, interlibrary exchange of publications*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

It is necessary to intervene in the informational universe for the purpose of "disciplining knowledge." Theorist Basarab Nicolescu said that there are now 8,000 disciplines, and hyperspecialization in one of them inevitably involves ignorance and incompetence in the other 7,999; hence, the concept of *transdisciplinarity* was born (meaning acceptance of complexity, and the unity of knowledge).

Transdisciplinarity is not, however, a new discipline, and should not be confused with any of the following terms :

- *interdisciplinarity* – the transfer of methods from one discipline to another
- *multidisciplinarity* (or *pluridisciplinarity*) – crossing of disciplines
- *encyclopaedism* – the incursion into all disciplines, horizontally, gathering all the knowledge accumulated by them
- *adisciplinarity* (or *antidisciplinarity*) – denial of disciplines (or subject matters), studying only what lies between and beyond disciplines.

Transdisciplinarity stands in direct relation to the aforementioned terms, and fully covers its object and subject: self-knowledge and direct access to knowledge, necessarily having a total or overall vision, rather than a totalitarian one, in relation to values. Modern Romanian education is based on such a concept and tries to promote it, because the space between disciplines and across disciplines is full of

information. The first approach to such literature was undertaken by Jean Piaget, Edgar Mills, Paul Cilliers, Basarab Nicolescu, etc. One should mention, as the first publication in the field, the journal titled "T" – an online transdisciplinary education review edited by the Centre of Transdisciplinary Applications in Education of the National College "Moise Nicoară" in Arad. Along the road to establishing literacy with respect to this concept perhaps the first that should be mentioned is the "Transdisciplinarity Charter", adopted by the participants in the First World Congress of Transdisciplinarity, worked out by Lima de Freitas, Edgar Morin and Basarab Nicolescu – *Convento da Arabida*, 6 November 1994 (translated into French, English, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, Arabic, Turkish and Russian at <http://ciret-transdisciplinarity.org/chart.php#ro>).

Margareta Petrea, in the paper *Sharing publications at the SMI Library – mutual interest, or general mood?* says: "From a strict purity of the book stock, theorized and practiced for a time, the Library of the Mathematical Seminar has diversified its interests due to the imperatives imposed by inter-disciplinary, and the applicative and speculative fields have begun to be represented in its collections. This fact has turned its attention towards new sharing partners, the addressability shifts bringing mutations in the book stock structure as well. Approximating the intimate nature of the related sciences, experts consider them to be effective and useful within the larger book framework because, far from fragmenting the much desired organicity into a flimsy, inconsistent mosaic of disparate works and areas, it enables the multidisciplinary upsurge to lead, as much as possible, to comprehensiveness instead of incoherence" (SMI Library = the Library of the Mathematics Seminar in Iași).

We cannot but subscribe to the above considerations, while also emphasizing the idea that what will accelerate the transfer of information between universities will be interlibrary exchange of publications. This will be the actual situation in the crisis that we are going through at present; exchange, sharing will be an opportunity for library collections to develop, knowledge enhance its dynamics.

### 2. INTERLIBRARY ACADEMIC EXCHANGE AND TRANSDISCIPLINARITY

In Romanian legislation, internal exchange of publications has appeared ever since the first regulations of schools, and still appears in the current laws of libraries and the Legal Deposit. As far as the international exchange of publications is concerned, the first agreements that were concluded were the

various conventions (the one signed in Brussels in 1886, and ratified by Romania in 1923, the Paris Convention, signed in 1858 and ratified by Romania by Decree 835/1964), and currently to exchanges are being conducted under general cultural agreements – Romania has signed 124 such agreements (some including a clause on exchange or dissemination of cultural and scientific publications, others are agreed between the heads or directors of the institutions seeking to establish a relationship of international exchange ). It appears therefore that the exchange of publications has been constantly included, over time, in the regulations issued both in this country and abroad, providing specialist librarians with the opportunity of being abreast of what is happening in the coordination of the exchange.

Considered to be the most economical and significant means of book acquisition, exchange of scientific publications, especially from abroad, is also an effective way of interlibrary cooperation. And that being said, expressing of course a variability characterized by a consistent analogic orientation, libraries triumph and are able to respond quickly to the new opportunities for the specific requirements of users who seem to be completely immersed in a world of technology.

Relations with neighbouring libraries can be subsumed to various strategies combined to consortium policies. The large-scale development of these interlibrary cooperation relations will further enhance the role and importance of the Library in the Science society. The following issues are to be discussed:

- free movement of ideas and information is favoured between libraries and countries
- books, in their traditional form, have and will still have a greater value to researchers and scholars, as well as bibliophiles
- information is acquired, retrieved, processed and disseminated by national and international experts
- scientific literature is promoted, in keeping with the users' interests, and hence, quality and progress in some areas, as well as professional improvement
- visibility of personalities in certain areas around the world – of course, as a type of propaganda for specialist Romanian culture, no less than a manner of projecting the image of the institution, and Romania's own image in the world.
- methodological and practical enhancement.
- permanent contact with the international market of intellectual values
- dissemination of Romanian scientific publishing output
- maintaining close cultural relations between nations
- supporting research, teaching and education
- researchers from richer universities compare their production with the views of colleagues from economically less developed countries, while researchers from universities with modest or small budgets do not lose contact with the cutting-edge knowledge in their field
- the degree of interest at the present moment, and presumed usability (in the future)
- helping to align teaching materials for students to the same quality standards.

Beyond the scientific content promoted, the exchange of publications will turn the profession into much more than mere routine; it will become dynamic performance, the path to *transdisciplinary knowledge*.

Unfortunately, the exchange could be less profitable for libraries, considering the related costs or the researchers' and university teachers lack of interest.

The principles of international book exchange are:

- being *free of charge* – publications received through exchange are often not displayed for selling, being own publications
- *reciprocity* – a principle enshrined in various agreements, treaties and conventions – the beneficiary undertakes to provide identical or equivalent treatment
- *diversity* – the publications should belong to the sphere of the monographs, periodicals, theses, manuscripts reproductions, and be on various media (paper, microform)
- operational efficiency
- *flexibility*
- *generosity*.

The exchange partners are:

- active partners, when they have done at least one exchange in two years
- passive, if they have failed to send publications over the last three years, have not responded to correspondence, or the documentary offer does not meet the criteria proposed for the selection of the library.

As far as higher educational institutions are concerned, domestic and international exchange of publications is conducted using the following categories of documents:

- publications and documents issued by the higher education institution concerned (annals, scientific papers, courses of lectures, manuals, etc.)
- purchases made especially for the same purpose.

Internal exchange of publications is primarily aimed at supporting the scientific information activities conducted by the university (own information tools, journals, books, courses, etc.).

International exchange of publications provides :

- knowledge by foreign partners of developments in Romanian education, research, culture and art
- bringing of valuable scientific information into the country
- hard currency savings to the state budget.

The exchange activity has its own forms of recording and evidence forms: sheets of partners, ordered by country, highlighting the publications sent, the publications received, etc. It is based on the following general rules:

- the exchange is a form of scientific dialogue between partners
- the exchange partners are chosen according to their profile
- the exchange is conducted based on the idea of how valuable the content is, rather than the amount of pure financial value
- every partner will be considered an individual case, even if the exchange technical operations are streamlined and standardized

- between the exchange partners a balance has to be established. Currently, libraries manage an exchange balance in three ways :

1. copy for copy exchange (book for book, subscription for subscription, etc.)

2. value-based exchange (i.e. based on price), in which each partner agrees to provide publications amounting to a certain sum based on a specific currency conversion rate over a given period of time (for multiple exchanges of books, periodicals, children's books, etc.). The parity may differ from the official exchange rate. As the price of books is extremely high in some countries, and in others very low, this method may pose problems. A solution could be establishing individual correlations, and ignoring the official exchange rates.

International exchange of publications is often done for publications which are in duplicate or in surplus quantity. Active cooperation between libraries will meet the increasingly ampler needs of research. Mutual support is provided for beneficiaries in consulting documents needed in their research, by easing access to the international sources of information. The role of exchange in the library system depends on the basis of the exchange – the bartered publication. Exchange partners often offer their own publications, which creates the possibility of maintaining stable (not just accidental) exchange relationships. They also offer a guarantee that no one outside the editor institute will exchange that publication. A constant and fixed number of partners will permit to determine the fixed number of copies to be printed.

The value of the article published also depends on the quality of the respective journal. Internally, journals and reviews are classified as follows:

- Category A: ISI journals
- Category B+: BDI indexed journals
- Category B: journals with recognition score
- Category C: journals with potential recognition
- Category D: journals on record by NURC

Externally, they are classified as:

- ISI journals (with or without an impact factor).
- BDI indexed journals.

The selection and evaluation is conducted by *Thomson Scientific*, which record, and delete items from the database every two weeks. Each year the editorial board of Thomson Scientific evaluates over 2,000 periodical titles and selects only about 10-12% of them for inclusion in the database. Those which are already included in the database are assessed on a permanent basis.

What matters in the evaluation of periodicals is:

- **regular issues** (the rate of publication should be the same as the frequency / periodicity declaration)
- **the international standards of editing** (informative title of the periodical, full description of title and abstract of articles, complete bibliographic information for all cited references, complete information for each author (e- mail, affiliation data, etc.)
- **language** of editing (full publication in English)

- request of the **peer review** process (concerning the quality of the research presented: it is recommended that each article should provide information about the primary source on which the research presented is based)

- **editorial content** (whether or not the field has been already covered)

- **international diversity**,

- **citation analysis**

- **type of periodical.**

So, a long way has to be covered, and many rules observed, in which process the library gives both support and conformity. The importance of national and international interlibrary exchange for academic research becomes, in this context, vital. And, as scientific progress is analyzed in relation to scientific research, and access to information is analyzed, open access to information becomes a prerequisite for achieving the quality of scientific research. The Internet will be used to communicate scientific work, and the considerations of authors, publishers and those involved in academic communication are presented in accordance with all the stages of publication, on both traditional and electronic support. Those who should produce scientific papers are often the typical users of open access, of scientific repositories (in universities the implementation is suggested of institutional deposits to store the scientific production). The members of the academic community are present both as researchers and users.

Research brings about the scientific foundation of the knowledge gained through practical experience, which thus constitutes the deposit of scientific memory. Combining the effort of all libraries in bringing quality products and services to the users they are serving, can be found in all activities in the domains of library management, but especially in interlibrary exchange and loan, in shared book purchases, bibliographic projects etc.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Teaching and research must be permanently supported. Bringing a project to a close does not mean that it has to be completely forgotten: rather, it should be rendered visible, the target audience should have access to it, which means sustainability; and in doing so, the part played by libraries becomes essential. The articles arising from the research study of the project will take shape in an objective, usable form, and that route should not stop there.

Today, when people are increasingly hurried, they ought to be ever more well-informed; when publishing houses are closing because of sales syncope that are hard to predict, and libraries have little storage room, a special role in supporting intellectual work is held by well managed information, provided fast and efficiently by the future librarian, an information expert. Educational reform and excessive techno-industrialization have changed the functions of libraries, forcing them to offer formal and informal educational support, to stimulate open and distance learning, to provide opportunities for training in a user-friendly environment, and

to accommodate the needs of users by providing on-demand, customer-tailored services.

In this context, the inter-library exchange service will acquire new values compared to previous forms of organization, corroborating it with document purchase services will be moderated by consortium policies and strategies, while solitude and traditionalism will no longer be viable options. This will also support the document postulating the fundamental principles of academia: *critically transmitting culture through research and education, respect for university autonomy and academic freedom, moral and scientific independence in relation to political and economic power* (excerpted from *Magna Charta Universitatum*, the document considered to be the Constitution of all universities: issued in 1988 to celebrate 900 years since the founding of the University of Bologna, covering two pages and translated into 43 languages including Romanian, the document is signed by 583 universities from all over the world).

EIT (the European Institute of Innovation and Technology) promises to adopt guidelines for the management of intellectual property, so that its mutual agreements can be concluded on the management and use of intellectual property for the benefit of all partners. However, for the time being

publication exchanges are being conducted based on bilateral agreements, rather than based on a clear methodology. IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) recommends the following steps:

- writing a letter of offer
- sending the list of publications on offer
- submitting the application
- response to the application
- sending the publications
- the balance of the exchange.

Interlibrary exchange of publications is conducted only between partner libraries that have agreed to collaborate. To do the follow-up of the exchange relations specific evidence instruments are used, in which are recorded, by partners and countries, both the publications sent and those received. The aim of this collaborative activity is boosting the specificity of the scientific research literature, thus promoting content quality (research-oriented, academic, and definitely not non-value). And, because the space between disciplines and across disciplines is full of information, **transdisciplinarity** it also sought, the final purpose of understanding the present world, the imperative of **the unity of knowledge**.

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