

# MULTILINGUALISM

## Premise

Research dissemination is undeniably boosted by the use of the English language. However, language is not a neutral medium, but a means

to set limits and possibilities for the scientific thinking and for scholars' communication.

In addition, the choice of a language system often implies the choice of a frame of references, of a methodology, of a school.

Consequently, the usage of a *lingua*

*franca* implies for a non-native speaker not only an impoverishment of expressive means, but also the narrowing of the reach of certain research fields. This is particularly sensitive in the area of Social Sciences and Humanities.

A *lingua franca* can, therefore,

be seen as a necessary evil rather than a resource. One might even suspect that the emancipation from the ideal of *lingua franca* could unleash the creative potential of disciplines that are otherwise often accused of simply following the consolidated mainstreams.

## Challenges for OPERAS

to support researchers that want to continue publishing in their own language and develop transnational scientific cooperation at the same time.

## Intervention areas

1.

### Translation

Open Access indirectly supports the translation into different languages, as there are no longer rights and licenses to pay for the translation of the work. OPERAS could accompany initiatives of advocacy for

” mediation between authors of Open Access publications and translators

Open Access with targeted support for translation activities. Mediation between authors of Open Access publications and translators has to be stimulated and embraced.

2.

### Multilanguage Discovery Tool

The creation of a multilingual search tool, so that when someone looks for a concept in one language, that person may be referred to the same concept in other languages within a corpus of works. Such a process

” the creation of a multilingual ontology

presupposes the development of a collaboration procedure among authors and publishers, since, until now, the creation of a multilingual ontology is not fully automatable.

3.

### Protection of National Language Scholarly Literature

Most governments and organizations are not explicitly engaged in promoting national languages as alternative valuable modes of scientific expression.

This absence of high-level programmatic involvement, combined with global driving forces that affect everyday options of the scholarly community, lead to a general expression of resignation towards the usage of English as predominant scholar language.

” promote multilingualism as key

Given its multilingual and multinational nature, OPERAS is in a central position to promote multilingualism as a key-concept to enhance different ways of perceiving the world, of stimulating originality and ground-breaking ideas.

## Conclusions

OPERAS is in the frontline of a broad, international strategy to leverage multilingualism in scholarly production and research dissemination – thereof, also

recognizing other languages as plainly scientific. Multilingualism should not be envisaged as implying a kind of programmatic opposition between

English and other languages, but rather as complementary. The cost and the difficulty of this endeavor should not be underestimated as it requires continuous effort.

