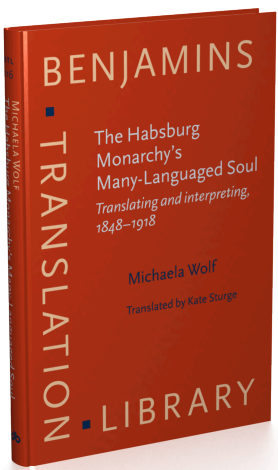
Chapter 3. The Habsburg Babylon

https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.116.03ch3



Pages 33–48 of
The Habsburg Monarchy's Many-Languaged Soul: Translating and interpreting, 1848–1918
Michaela Wolf
[**Benjamins Translation Library**, 116] 2015. xvii, 289 pp.

CHAPTER 3

The Habsburg Babylon

Translation as a ubiquitous phenomenon of transfer between the various cultures of the Monarchy, or between these and other European cultures, has so far been addressed at most through studies of isolated aspects of translation practice. However, it is impossible to reconstruct translation in the Habsburg Monarchy between 1848 and 1918 without understanding the complex setting of ethnic and cultural relationships in the Habsburg communicative space. This chapter investigates some of those relationships. After examining key aspects of the "nationalities conflicts" that began to arise in the second half of the nineteenth century and their implications for everyday language use, I trace how census surveys of "languages of common communication" and the language policy measures encoded in language-related ordinances impacted on the fortunes of language, and thus of translation, in the long term. The chapter closes with a study of trends on the book market in the Habsburg monarchy throughout the period.[1]

1. The multiculturalism debate, Kakania style

What may at first sight seem a kaleidoscopically "colourful" cultural environment in this plurinational space (Gottas 1993, 11) has been an object of research on the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy for more than 150 years, and the range of interpretations and representations is accordingly wide. Early on, the repressive tendencies of the hegemonic German-speaking part of the Monarchy were highlighted, with terms such as the Austrian "prison of the nationalities"; in a second phase, these perspectives were replaced by sometimes nostalgic idealizations of the Habsburg Monarchy as a "Pan-Europe in miniature" or even the "model for a future united Europe", emphasizing the shared ground between the nationalities rather than their divisions (Wandruszka 1980, xvi). More recent research has moved away from polarizations

1. For reasons of space, I focus here only on those developments and dynamics with the greatest impact on translation between 1848 and 1918. This is not to understate the importance of the associated economic, political, religious and, especially, societal issues, which I address only in individual cases.

and towards an interest in the actual workings of the coexistence of nationalities, thereby raising some searching questions around the politics of everyday life.

The label "multiculturalism" has frequently been applied to the Habsburg Monarchy's population, so large and so complex in cultural and social terms.[2] This is probably not surprising, given that multiculturalism – provisionally defined as the "togetherness" of cultures – was a constitutive feature of the culturally diverse Monarchy. If, though, we take multiculturality to be more than the "competent deployment of a range of different linguistic and cultural codes in a plural communicative situation" (Strutz and Zima 1996, 89, who also find this definition overly restrictive), it becomes clear that the mutual openness of multiculturalism is often overstated, and that the everyday reality is something more akin to a mere "coexistence" of heterogeneous cultural practices. Such ambivalences are perhaps inherent to the concept of multiculturalism, given its historical background:

> In one sense, … multiculturalism is simply a later ironic turn of the same history [of the Romantic-nationalist nation state]. Secure in their singular cultural identity, nation-states created colonial subjects whose descendants then joined them as immigrants, thus jeopardizing the cultural unity which had helped to make empire possible in the first place. (Eagleton 2000, 61)

This history may explain the "double bind" attached to expectations of multicultural behaviour: it is not possible simultaneously to assimilate and to preserve one's identity, nor is it possible simultaneously to enrich oneself and to leave others unimpoverished, as Dieter Lenzen perceptively writes (1991, 148). To acknowledge the multiculturality of societies like the Habsburg Monarchy, therefore, implies thinking the cultural Other in terms of asymmetrical relations of dominance between the participating cultures. Research on migration, testing existing notions of culture and unmasking "the exoticism of multiculturalism" (Bhabha 1994, 56), has brought the issue of multicultural tolerance right to the heart of debates in both politics and cultural studies. Given the close-range encounters with the Other that were generated by migration in the Habsburg Monarchy and contributed to myths of multiculturality, the question is whether these confrontations did not in fact lead to the very opposite of mutual acceptance. After all, it is in the course of such encounters that constructions of others are produced – and in some cases reinforced by legal regulations – which, at least on the face of it, give permission to be different. And if, in the philosophy of multiculturalism, such permission means an acknowledgement of difference,

---

2. When Crown Prince Rudolf instigated work on the ambitious encyclopedia known as the *Kronprinzenwerk* (1885–1902), his aim was partly to create a sense of supranational affiliation to serve what would today be called multiculturalism; see Zintzen (1999).

it also entails a denial of parity. Undeniably, then, the right to alterity intrinsic to the multiculturalist model does not in itself secure the fundamental right that is really at stake, equality – "unfortunately, the logic of multiculturalism does not overcome the dialectic of inclusion and exclusion" (Weibel 1997, 12). However, if the acknowledgement of difference is embedded in an understanding that alterity is never something "natural" but the product of the very social constructions that draw symbolic and territorial borders, then the subjects involved in these border-making processes will also be seen as resistant to fixed and immutable definition. Culture in this view is no longer a medium of exclusion, but serves the crossing of borders that makes "multicultural societies" possible in the first place.

A glance at the table of contents in the two-volume study *Die Völker des Reichs* (Wandruszka and Urbanitsch 1980, v–x), part of the monumental survey *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, gives an initial impression of the Habsburg Monarchy's cultural and linguistic diversity. After German speakers and Magyars, accounting for the largest part of the population in numerical terms, come Czechs, Poles, Ruthenians (Ukrainians), Romanians, Croats, Serbs, Slovaks and Slovenes, followed by Italians and Jews; in 1910, this added up to a total population of 51,356,465 in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy including Bosnia-Herzegovina (*Österreichische Statistik* 1912, 34*). For comparison, the population of the German Empire in 1910 was 64,903,423. It is little wonder that the Monarchy has been described as a "hothouse" for endeavours to accommodate and arbitrate between nationalities (Brix 1986, 176).

After the revolution of 1848, the constitution drafted by the Kremsier parliament[3] set out parity between all the Monarchy's nationalities, but – as Karl Renner wrote in 1902 – the ideal of equality, articulated in the "struggle of the Austrian nations for [and not against] the state" (quoted in Wandruszka 1980, xvi), proved unsustainable. The conflicts among nationalities in the second half of the nineteenth century took place along a wide and fractious spectrum between the legally anchored claim to equal rights and the immense regional diversity of conditions for its realization. The social and economic "realities" so meticulously documented by the Habsburg administration reflected discrepancies between the nationalities and thus, inevitably, between different perceptions of the nationalities conflict and different approaches to pursuing the nationalities' respective demands.

---

3. The first elected parliament was the Austrian Reichstag or Imperial Council, which relocated to Kremsier (Kroměříž) after the October Revolution of 1848. It drew up a draft constitution that would have replaced the crownlands by "federal lands" of the Habsburg Monarchy's individual peoples. The draft was an attempt to mould the Monarchy into a kind of federalist "league of nations". To forestall definitive negotiations on the draft, on 7 March 1849 Emperor Franz Joseph and Prince Felix zu Schwarzenberg dissolved the Kremsier parliament (AEIOU 2010).

One of the instruments of the "struggle of the nationalities" was, without doubt, the language regarded as constitutive of each ethnic group. The drafting of Article 19 of the 1867 constitution,[4] which aimed to secure each group's basic right to the "preservation and cultivation of its nationality and language" and remained the foundation of nationalities legislation in the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy until 1918, was accompanied by much discussion on language philosophy, educational theory and nationalist politics. The historical context of these debates may be sought in Herder's concept of the "peculiarity" of a nation's language, in nationalist models of education, and especially in the foundational statements of important statesmen such as František Palacký or Baron József Eötvös.[5] When Herder wrote that "*jedes* Volk ist Volk; es hat *seine* National Bildung wie *seine* Sprache" ("every people is a people; it has its own national development and its language"; quoted in Anderson 1991, 67–8; Anderson's emphasis), he was articulating an idea already widespread in the late eighteenth century: that nationhood was dependent on a single and exclusive language. This notion would later impact significantly upon the various European models of nationalism (see ibid., 67–82). Whereas Eötvös, writing in 1850, saw equal rights for the nationalities as nothing but a mask for hegemonic ambitions, in 1866 Palacký adduced principles of natural law to support his call for "complete equality of rights". Eötvös also pointed out the contradiction between the structure of a constitutional, centralized state and the full equality of all languages in legislation and public administration. For each people, he argued, language was not simply a means of communication, but the symbol of its entitlement (quoted in Stourzh 1980, 995–6). During debates on the nationalities conflict in the nineteenth-century multiethnic state, language use gradually came to be fully identified with national affiliation. As Eötvös showed, this development arose from the fact that, in practice, the battle for language was always a weapon in the battle for political power.

---

4. Article 19 of the 1867 constitution, valid in the western, Austrian part of the Dual Monarchy, corresponded to Article 44 of the Nationalities Law of 1868 in the eastern, Hungarian-dominated part. Whereas Article 19 assumed that all the Monarchy's peoples enjoy equal rights, and thus also the right to use their own mother tongue, Article 44 in the Hungarian half of the Empire followed the Jacobin tradition of a unified nation state, and gave Hungarian the status of an official language. More will be said below on German as the official language of state in the Austrian lands.

5. František Palacký (1798–1876), a historian and politician, led the Czech nation in the Kremsier parliament in 1848/49, and drew up plans for a federalist reorganization of the Austrian imperial state. The Hungarian writer and politician Baron József Eötvös (1813–1871) was the liberal intellectual leader of the nationalist, centralist Hungarian reform movement. He served as Minister of Education in 1848 and from 1867 to 1871.

This conjunction can be observed in the efforts of various private associations, such as the German School Association (DSV), the Verein Südmark (which aimed to "protect" the Monarchy's Germans), the Slovene-nationalist Cyril and Methodius Association and many more, which presented themselves as "guardians of the nation" (Judson 2006). Such associations arose in response to census results from 1880 to 1910 that revealed a widespread indifference to nation-based identification among people living along "language frontiers", borders that in fact themselves now seemed to be imaginary. The organizations were driven by activists – whether teachers, civil servants or telegraph operators – who set out to counter "indifference to or ignorance of the idea of nation" (ibid., 3) and to strengthen national identification by arranging school activities, promoting Protestant settlement in the German–Slovene "language frontier" area or encouraging tourism, for example in southern Bohemia. However, their success was modest, limited mostly to contexts where nationalist discourses were backed by the prospect of economic development. Nationalist rhetoric and agitation appears to have had only a minor impact, and national self-identification to have been a "fragile and contingent phenomenon" (ibid., 176) – not a moral or historical choice but a form of affiliation that operated primarily through occupation, locality, religion or very specific social networks.[6]

2. Does the state count heads or tongues?

The "overemphasis on language as a national differentiator" (Brix 1982, 14) made itself felt in the Cisleithanian[7] census of 1880, the first one to be held after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. The census included a language survey in the shape of a question on "language of common communication" (*Umgangssprache*), a term derived from early nineteenth-century statistics (see Goebl 1997, 108). Both the census respondents and the statisticians responsible evidently took it to mean the language that predominantly defined an ethnicity, a conclusion favoured by the fact that the rules allowed each respondent to name

6. Judson's analysis thus casts doubt on the close link often posited between nationalism and modernization, and on the idea that the emergence of nation states is an inevitable process (see also Deak 2008).

7. After 1867, the name Cisleithania was colloquially given to the western half of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (officially called "The Kingdoms and Lands Represented in the Imperial Council"). Literally it means "on this side" of the River Leitha, as opposed to Transleithania, on the "other side".

only one *Umgangssprache*.[8] As a result, the data collected could easily be used to draw conclusions regarding the ethnic composition of the Cisleithanian half of the Dual Monarchy. Indeed, the objective of the language surveys between 1880 and 1910 had been to gather information on the distribution of nationalities within the population that would be at least approximately reliable for administrative purposes. The census question's de facto identification of language with nationality matched "the equation of language of common use and national affiliation that had already become established in the minds of parts of the population" (Brix 1982, 14–15).[9] This is strikingly illustrated by the reaction of Vienna's Christian Social municipal government to the 1910 census: it threatened sanctions against those Czech citizens who had entered Czech rather than German as their language of common communication on the census form (John and Lichtblau 1993, 278).

An "invention of nation" is clearly at stake here, given that not all the Habsburg inhabitants who had to state their "language of common communication" will necessarily have identified with the nation-based form of categorization on offer. Such surveys called for unambiguous statements that were rarely likely to correspond to local realities. As Anderson notes, this was the source of the census authorities' "intolerance of multiple, politically 'transvestite', blurred, or changing identifications" which revealed "the fiction of the census": that "everyone is in it, and that everyone has one – and only one – extremely clear place. No fractions" (Anderson 1991, 166). The request to state a single language of common communication is one indication that the practice of censuses generally, and of the Habsburg census around the turn of the twentieth century in particular, is deeply imbued with the constitution of cultural difference and thus the constructedness of ethnic classification as such. Censuses have contributed significantly to the process of cementing identities and promoting national ascriptions.

However this may be, large segments of the population in practice equated their language of common communication with their nationality. In this sense, the results of the 1910 census, the last to be carried out by the central administration of the multiethnic state, reflect the complexity of the Monarchy's ethnic make-up, as shown in Table 1.

---

8. Discussing the 1910 census, Heidemarie Uhl (2010, 14) speculates that "the Monarchy was destroyed by a form: the census form".

9. However, various supreme court judgements show that in legal practice the identity of language use and nationality was far from being accepted (see Stachel 2001, 21).

Table 1. The nationalities of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1910, percentages (Rumpler 1997, 557)*

	German speakers	Magyars	Czechs / Slovaks	Poles	Ruthenians	Slovenes	Croats / Serbs	Bosniacs	Romanians	Italians, Latins
Austria-Cisleithania	35.58	(–)	23.02	17.77	12.58	4.48	2.80	0	(–)	2.75
Lower Austria	95.91	(–)	3.75	(–)	(–)	(–)	(–)	0	0	(–)
Upper Austria	99.70	0	(–)	(–)	(–)	(–)	0	0	0	(–)
Salzburg	99.73	0	(–)	(–)	0	(–)	(–)	0	0	(–)
Tyrol	57.31	0	(–)	(–)	(–)	(–)	(–)	0	0	42.10
Vorarlberg	95.37	0	(–)	(–)	(–)	(–)	0	0	0	4.41
Styria	70.50	0	(–)	(–)	0	29.38	(–)	0	0	(–)
Carinthia	78.61	0	(–)	(–)	0	21.24	(–)	0	0	(–)
Carniola	5.36	0	(–)	(–)	0	94.40	(–)	0	0	(–)
Trieste	6.21	(–)	(–)	(–)	(–)	29.80	1.26	0	(–)	62.30
Gorizia and Gradisca	1.80	0	(–)	(–)	(–)	61.85	(–)	0	0	36.00
Istria	3.30	0	(–)	(–)	(–)	14.26	43.52	0	(–)	38.20
Dalmatia	(–)	0	(–)	(–)	(–)	(–)	96.19	0	0	2.84
Bohemia	36.76	0	63.19	(–)	(–)	(–)	0	0	0	0
Moravia	27.62	0	71.75	(–)	(–)	(–)	(–)	0	0	0
Silesia	43.90	0	24.33	31.72	(–)	(–)	0	0	0	(–)
Galicia	1.13	0	(–)	58.55	40.20	0	0	0	(–)	0
Bukovina	21.24	1.31	(–)	4.55	38.38	(–)	0	0	34.38	0
Kingdom of Hungary	10.40	54.50	0 10.70	(–)	2.50	(–)	1.10 2.50	0	16.10	0
Croatia-Slavonia	5.10	4.10	0 (–)	0	0	(–)	62.50 24.60	0	(–)	(–)
Bosnia-Herzegovina	1.22	(–)	(–)	0	(–)	0	43.49 22.87	32.25	0	0
Austria-Hungary	23.90	20.20	12.60 3.80	10.00	7.90	2.60	5.30 3.80	1.20	6.40	2.00

* The table excludes minorities making up less than 1 per cent of the population. On the distribution of languages in the individual parts of the Monarchy, see Wandruszka and Urbanitsch (1980, III.1 and III.2). Jews were not regarded as a separate nationality, so that Yiddish does not appear in the list of possible "languages of common communication". In the census of 1910, Yiddish was subsumed under German as a German "dialect", so that Yiddish-speaking Jews were counted as Germans (Janik and Toulmin 1973, 59).

Although language was accorded a crucial differentiating role in the multiethnic state, the emergence of a linguistic consciousness ran counter to the Monarchy's implicit self-image, which sought to preserve ethnolinguistic or ethnocultural diversity within a single empire. The process of national classification inscribed in linguistic practice was therefore highly charged politically, and soon became a *sine qua non* for the assertion of national rights. In the final decades of the Monarchy's existence, the social and cultural practices of individuals and societal groups increasingly acquired a politically motivated, identity-defining role, up to the point that "virtually every action could be interpreted as a 'political statement'" in the densely woven ethnic and cultural tapestry of the Habsburg state (Stachel 2001, 20).

The instructions appended to the question of language in the census form insisted that only one language must be named – "the" language of common communication – without distinguishing between the different shares of communication within, for example, the family or workplace (*Österreichische Statistik* 1912, 13*). In fact, however, plurilingualism was part of everyday life in much of the Monarchy, an actually practised sociocultural reality (Stachel 2001, 20).[10] Then as now, the notion of plurilingualism was treated with great ambivalence, on the one hand as something to be aspired to, often a source of prestige to be achieved by deliberately learning a second language; on the other as a principle enshrined in constitutional law, often pitting minority language against national language. The richly varied forms of multilingualism, traced by Mario Wandruszka in perhaps somewhat idealistic terms (Wandruszka 1981), cannot hide the fact that language use is usually inextricable from questions of power and status: what counts most is social success. Multilingualism in the Habsburg context cannot be captured in statistics because of the highly heterogeneous and sometimes overlapping settings in which it appeared, as exemplified by the existence of multilingual regions within the Monarchy or the polyglossic situations resulting from migration, especially in the larger conurbations. The functional differences in use of the various languages show a hierarchy that reflects power relations within the individual domains of society and raises the question of each language's social prestige in its own context of use. Assuming that speakers' language choices – if "choices" they were – were determined by social interaction and the "market value" of the varieties (Helfrich and Riehl 1994, 1), then the analysis of such interactions may uncover the power structures of the Habsburg Monarchy's societal and cultural macrosystem. In this sense, the phenomenon of multilingualism bears a potential for conflict that arises,

10. Examples of this are documented for all areas of life. For instance, a ceremony to swear in recruits at a Viennese barracks, shortly before the First World War, was held in ten languages and attended by military chaplains from seven religious communities (Wandruszka 1985, xi).

on the one hand, from language use in contexts of social distinction (see Bourdieu 1984, 459–65) and, on the other, from the historically and sociopolitically defined antitheses and ambiguities of the Monarchy's cultural or ethnic composition.[11]

This is the backdrop of a campaign launched against the "multi- and polylingualism" – *Mehr- und Vielsprecherei* – anchored in Article 19 of the constitution, on the grounds that multilingualism threatened national identity. Leading educationists, additionally, cited Rousseau's *Émile* to assert that the parallel acquisition of more than one language in childhood overburdened the child's memory and caused emotional damage. The education encyclopedia *Encyklopädie des gesamten Erziehungs- und Unterrichtswesens* (1881, quoted in Burger 1997, 38) sets out the unequivocal position of educational theory in the closing years of the nineteenth century: "the foreign language remains foreign to the child, and so it should". The father of German gymnastics, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, even argued that bi- or plurilingualism amounted to a "rape of the memory and castration of the language faculty" (1884, quoted in Burger 1997, 38). Yet despite these and many other critical or admonitory voices, the principle of equality between the languages was one of the unassailable foundations of the Monarchy. Indeed, it apparently harmonized so well with public ideas of justice that it was able, time and again, to prevail over the immediate interests of the most powerful nationalities (Burger 1997, 40). Multilingualism seems, then, to have been relatively well regarded in the historical context of the Habsburg Monarchy, though it must be viewed as part of the interplay of multiple socially and politically motivated interests, and their instrumentalization by nationalist forces.

3. Language policy promoting ethnic rapprochement[12]

The linguistic diversity I have sketched, a distinguishing feature of the Habsburg Monarchy's everyday social and political life, was regulated by a complex body of central and provincial laws. The major staging points of this legislation map out the landscape within which translation took place, showing how closely the "language question" in the multiethnic state was associated with translation activity of many different kinds.

---

11. The problems of multilingualism were exacerbated by the Monarchy's religious plurality. For detail on this, see Wandruszka and Urbanitsch (1985).

12. An application to introduce obligatory teaching of a second national language, presented in 1913 by the Bukovina education authority, cited the need for rapprochement between the various nationalities or ethnic groups (*Volksstämme*); see Stourzh (1980, 1147).

Article 19 of the constitution enacted on 21 December 1867 remained the foundation of nationalities legislation until the end of the Monarchy. The controversy surrounding the article in routine legal practice stemmed in part from the vagueness of its formulation:

> All the state's ethnic groups [*Volksstämme*] are equal, and each has an inviolable right to preserve and cultivate its nationality and language.
>
> The state recognizes the equality of all languages current in a region [*landesübliche Sprachen*] within schools, administration and public life.
>
> In those lands which are home to various ethnic groups, the institutions of public education shall be organized in such a way that each of these groups receives the means to be educated in its own language, without being forced to learn a second regional language. (Article 19, *Reichsgesetzblatt*, hereafter cited as *RGBl,* 142/1867)

The law thus gave primacy to no single language, yet value judgements were constantly made, especially as to the relationship between German and the other languages of the Monarchy. Partly on the basis of an assumption of German speakers' cultural superiority, German in effect took priority over all the other languages. In the decades that followed, repeated attempts were made to challenge this preeminence of German, resulting in bitter disputes in parliament; in 1880, the conflict prompted the German-nationalist liberals to call for German to be enshrined as the state language. In 1887 a further foray of this kind claimed that German, as the language of administration, enjoyed a customary right which should carry the same force as a statutory right. None of these or similar plans bore fruit,[13] and Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand, too, failed to achieve his goal of having German codified as the "state language" (*Staatssprache*) (see Stourzh 1980, 1041–43).

In these discussions, a distinction was made between an "external" and an "internal" official language (*Amtssprache*). The "external official language" was that used between government authorities and the public, in other words for everyday communication in the state's offices both orally (for interviews, hearings, and so on) and in writing (lawsuits, official decrees, judgements). The "internal official language" was used for communication within the administration, for example in correspondence, file notes, or minutes not designed for public circulation (Rumpler 1997, 505). For the use of both types of official language, the definition of the "language in common use in a land" (*landesübliche Sprache*) or "language of a land" (*Landessprache*) was pivotal. Opinions differed on the precise distinction between these two terms; they were not explained in the relevant laws, and were

---

13. The German nationalist delegate Georg von Schönerer submitted several questions to parliament on this matter, including one during the session of 12 February 1901, when he called for a "new bill to safeguard the *German official language* as the necessary foundation for all economic reform" (AVA, carton 3, no. 7938/01; emphasis added; see also Hugelmann (1934, 152).

thus interpreted differently from case to case. Gerald Stourzh (1980, 983) concedes that even today there appears to be no agreed distinction, while Karl Megner (1985, 256) simply takes the problem as given and makes no further comment. Robert Kann (1964a, 190) draws on legal interpretations of Article 19 according to which the term *Landessprache* referred to a language used by at least 20 per cent of the population of a crownland, in other words by recognized nationalities, whereas *landesübliche Sprache* meant the language used to communicate with the authorities, in the schoolroom and for cultural events. Dieter Kolonovits (1999, 96–7), in contrast, points out that in the Imperial Court's judgements, a language was considered *landesüblich* if "it is in common use in the respective land at all – even in just particular towns, villages or districts of that land". In this sense, *landesüblich* means something like "in common use in a court, district or parish".

The stipulations of language policy (see also Sutter 1960; Rindler-Schjerve 2003) affected translation in many different ways. The place of translation activities in the domain of the Habsburg administration was therefore exposed to the meandering course of language-related legislation. As soon as bilingual official business was permitted, to whatever degree, a drop in demand for translation was likely to result. In some cases this was probably, at best, accompanied by increased verbal communication between speakers of different languages for the sake of optimizing everyday work processes. So far we have no evidence to support or contradict any of these assumptions. However, it can safely be assumed that the bi- or plurilingualism of civil servants themselves[14] will have buffered, at least to a certain extent, the problems arising from the fluctuations in translation activity as it tracked the changing legal situation. Apart from some narrowly delimited fields within the ministries, of which more will be said in Chapter 4, neither the courts nor the public or autonomous administrations maintained their own professional translation or interpreting departments.

4. The polylingual book market

Multilingualism gave rise to many layers of intersection between ethnic groups, and this was reflected not only in everyday language use, but also in the cultural products generated by such interactions. A study of the site where these cultural

14. A decree issued by Alexander Bach upon his appointment as Minister of the Interior appeals to civil servants to "watchfully ensure that in those parts of the crownlands that include several nationalities, every civil servant acquire knowledge of the languages commonly used there" (*RGBl.*, Ergänzungsband 1849, Section 4, 644). Whether that was actually put into practice is a question I return to throughout the present book.

products were traded – the book market in the Habsburg Monarchy – and the collation of detailed statistics on literary production reveals how strongly the foundations of literature were influenced by language policy measures.

Anyone investigating the history of the Monarchy's book trade is bound to encounter Carl Junker, probably the most erudite authority on bookselling and publishing in the Habsburg Monarchy around the turn of the twentieth century. Junker was a trained lawyer, legal adviser to the Austro-Hungarian book-trade association, editor of the association's paper *Österreichisch-Ungarische Buchhändler-Correspondenz*, and a leading contributor to the cultural magazine *Österreichische Rundschau*. Remarkably, the findings presented in his essays and monographs have in many cases still not been superseded (Hall 2001, 9; Junker 2001). Junker frequently notes the lack of a comprehensive statistical record of literary publications in the Monarchy. This was lamented as early as 1886 by statistician Ernst Mischler: "The statistical study of the intellectual and moral development of the peoples is far less advanced than that of their material development" (Mischler 1886, 1).[15] Alexander von Oettingen, too, the author of a book on "moral statistics" containing valuable statistical material, identifies an "impenetrable darkness" in this respect (Oettingen 1882, 547), and in 1897 Junker complained that the situation in Austria was worse than "in any other European country" (Junker 1897, 5). In the present day, the scarcity of information on the book market has received little remedy, though a useful beginning has been made by recent efforts such as the study *Geschichte des Buchhandels in Österreich* (Bachleitner, Eybl and Fischer 2000) and various individual publications by Norbert Bachleitner (for example Bachleitner 2002). Probably the most serious obstacle to retracing book production in the period is posed by the changing frontiers of the Habsburg Monarchy and the effects of the 1867 Compromise, which make it difficult to identify trends and almost impossible to draw up the comparable data that would be necessary for firm conclusions to be drawn.

The problem, then, is not a dearth of data but (as in all statistical records) their dubious quality. The starting point for a systematic documentation of book production is the imperial patent of 27 May 1852 which required publishers to submit a deposit copy of their new titles. The relatively large number of deposit copies required – one each had to be sent to the Interior Ministry, the Imperial Library in

---

15. Mischler's comment appears to allude to a complaint by Alexander von Oettingen: "It is a sad sign of our era's materialism that the official organs and statistical bureaus are more interested in discovering how many pigs and sheep, oxen and calves are eaten per head of the population than how much substantial intellectual nourishment is consumed by the collectivity or by all individuals" (Oettingen 1882, 553).

Vienna, and the regional university or research library – caused resentment in the book trade, especially since the expense did not seem likely to be compensated by any new and effective book production statistics. Soon after legal deposit was introduced, the ambitious overview *Bibliographisch-statistische Übersicht der Literatur des Österreichischen Kaiserstaates* appeared (Wurzbach 1854–57), covering the years 1853, 1854 and 1855 and edited by Constant Wurzbach von Tannenberg, well known as the author of a standard dictionary of Austrian biography. Further important motors in the creation of publication statistics were international statistical congresses. Wurzbach, in particular, was anxious to present as impressive as possible a body of data to the Third International Statistical Congress, held in Vienna in 1857 (Wurzbach 1857, viii).

Tables 2 and 3, showing book production by number of titles and by language, draw on a range of sources (Wurzbach 1854–57; Gerold 1861; Schimmer 1877; Mischler 1886; Junker 1897, 6; Junker 1900, 87–92; Goldfriedrich 1913, 577–8; Drahn 1923; Schneider 1923, 273; Charle 1996, 166; Bachleitner 2002, 9). Regarding the individual entries, it should be noted that shifts in the Monarchy's borders, due to territorial losses or gains, entailed dramatic changes in book production. This becomes particularly clear in the case of Italian book production, which in 1853 is almost identical to German production (German being the largest language in every year studied here) but fades into insignificance after Italian independence. Book production in the Slavic languages appears – as far as can be established from the very patchy records – to have taken a diametrically opposite course, growing continually as nationalism gathered strength and new printing technology spread to the crownlands. Information on Hungarian book production is sparse, making it difficult or impossible to compare production before and after the Compromise of 1867. As commentators on the various statistical sources have observed again and again, the book trade often suffered severely from war and economic crises (see, for example, Mühlbrecht 1867).

The publication statistics for the Habsburg Monarchy between 1848 and 1918, reconstructed as fully as possible here, reflect the close links between historical events and cultural production (especially evident in the growth of publications in Slavic languages). One of the most important connections is the profusion of language-policy regulations designed to steer the complex workings of the Habsburg multiethnic state in a direction that all parties would find reasonable and acceptable. This enterprise was put to the test every day by routine communication, and in the end actually contributed to exacerbating the conflicts. For the domain of translating and interpreting, as fundamental tools of communication, that situation posed very particular challenges.

Table 2. Total book production in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848–1918, and relative to Germany and Switzerland

Year	Area	Number of titles	Area	Number of titles	Area	Number of titles
1848			HM + D + CH	9,942	France (1850)	9,891
					Britain (1850)	2,600
1853	HM	6,824	HM + D + CH	8,750		
1855	HM	4,673	HM + D + CH	8,794		
1860	HM	2,688	HM + D + CH	9,496		
1865	HM	3,183	HM + D + CH	9,661		
1870	HM	2,906	HM + D + CH	10,108	France (1875)	19,068
					Italy (1878)	5,096
					Russia (1878)	7,366
1883	HM	3,521	HM + D + CH	14,802		
1896	HM	5,200			Italy (1898)	7,993
					Britain (1901)	6,000
					Russia (1901)	10,318
1908	HM	2,876	HM + D + CH	28,225		
1910			HM + D + CH	31,281	Britain (1911)	12,379
					Russia (1912)	27,400
					France (1913)	32,834
1918			HM + D + CH	14,743		

HM = Habsburg Monarchy
D = German territories/from 1871 German Empire
CH = Switzerland

Table 3. Book production in the Habsburg Monarchy by language, 1853–99

Language	1853	1855	1860	1865	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1883	1889	1895	1896	1898	1899
Croatian		29	59	187								144					300
Czech		208	274	511	781	490	645	637	571	496	369	864		1,439			
German	2,787	1,806	1,447	1,401	1,413	1,584	1,491	1,679	1,614	1,704	1,902	2,035			3,200		2,100
Hungarian	428	640	465	486	454											1,650	
Italian	2,723	1,497	287	404	11	16	10	8	9	12	19	33					200
Polish		116	132	162	199	291	317	198	192	224	323	329					1,850
Romanian		25													104		
Ruthenian		13	24	32									263				450
Serbian		31	12									41					250
Slovakian			2		59												
Slovenian		41	11									14					106
Other*	227	267	1									61					
Total	**6,165**	**4,673**	**2,714**	**3,183**	**2,917**	**2,381**	**2,463**	**2,522**	**2,386**	**2,436**	**2,613**	**3,521**	**263**	**1,439**	**3,304**	**1,650**	**5,256**

* Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Armenian, French, English