



To pursue these problems, study is made of four renowned scholarly journals in the field of classics. All of them were established to be of a high academic standard. Articles from three periods, with intervals of 15 years between them, are scrutinized in one German, one French, one British, and one American journal. The periods start in 1960, 1975 and 1990 respectively.

The discipline of bibliometrics, specifically citation analysis, is applied and data were collected according to the accepted practice of citation analysis. For each article the frequencies of its references are divided into categories according to languages: German, French, English, and other languages.

Thus a picture emerges of the language-use by classical scholars, including changes over time.

Results show interesting patterns. As hypothesized, the own language, i.e. the language in which the journal is published as well as of the country of affiliation of the article's author, dominates in all four groups of scholars. It is always cited more often than any other language. That is to say, classical scholars do not differ from researchers in other fields in that they prefer to cite sources which were written in their own language.

Other notable findings are increasingly greater use of German citations in USA articles than in UK ones, and a growing use of French for the UK. Finally, the findings show that German scholars are prone to a relatively greater linguistic isolation than their French colleagues: French classical scholars appear to use more German and other non-English foreign languages than German scholars use French and other non-English foreign languages.

It is possible to conclude that the findings show the existence of a foreign language barrier among classicists, as observed through the varying citation patterns in the four periodicals chosen. It appears that each linguistic group of scholars cites own language sources in excess of their hypothetical weight to be expected relative to world production in this field, if one assumes the free flow of information in this context. In other words, even among classicists a preference for their own language-use is striking. After all, their command of languages in general and linguistic aptness in particular may be assumed to be more outspoken than this is the case among researchers in the exact sciences.

