

Translation Studies in Banská Bystrica: Facts and Figures

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THE TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING PROGRAM

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING PROGRAM

From the temporal, institutional point of view, the Translation Studies Centre at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (Univerzita Mateja Bela, Banská Bystrica) is the youngest institution of its kind in Slovakia; however, it is the one that is developing dynamically. The translating and interpreting program, as well as academic research in the field, dates back to 1997 when the Philological Faculty, the only one of its kind in Slovakia, was established in Banská Bystrica. Its founders were Michal Mika, Pavol Plutko and Sergej Makara. Another two prominent scholars who joined the faculty staff soon after the faculty had been established were Ján Vilikovský, a translator and scholar, and Juraj Dolník, a well-known linguist. None of them teaches at the faculty anymore; however, they will always be remembered as patrons of translation studies in Banská Bystrica. Their wisdom and erudition were a driving force for teachers as well as students, they were always very helpful and encouraging and they always trusted in teachers' abilities. They played a crucial role in the professional education of several young scholars working on their PhDs, in establishing priceless contacts with scholars and in providing us with opportunities to publish our research papers in

significant journals. During his term in office as the Dean of the Faculty, Ján Vilikovský (note his answers to the poll in this issue) significantly contributed to the general development of the institution as well as to its scientific and research orientation. In listing people who have helped to shape translation studies in Banská Bystrica, we cannot omit the significant Czech scholar and specialist in the theory and history of Slavic literatures, comparative literature studies and genealogy (mainly focusing on the development of Russian literature in the 20th century), Ivo Pospíšil, whose role in the academic education of several young scholars at the Faculty was immense. He also arranged many contacts with scholars abroad and provided teachers from Banská Bystrica with opportunities to publish their research papers in prominent journals in the Czech Republic.

In 2007 the Philological Faculty merged with Faculty of Humanities. The *Translation and Interpreting program* is now being taught at six departments of the Faculty of Humanities (the Department of English and American Studies, the Department of German Studies, the Department of Hungarian Studies, the Department of Romance Studies, the Department of Slavic Languages and the Department of Slovak Language and Literature). In order to complete the picture of the original structure of the Philological Faculty, we also need to mention the Department of Oriental Studies. This was a Master's program and its students usually combined it with a Master's program in English, German or French, thus having better chances of securing relevant working positions in various social and business spheres. The English language was very useful for them in approaching study materials in the field of Oriental Studies. Two names should be mentioned in connection with the development of Oriental Studies in Banská Bystrica – Ladislav Drozdík, an expert in Arabic linguistics, and Karol Sorby, an expert in Arabian history, particularly focusing on the modern history of the Arab world. The main goal in the early formation of the Philological Faculty was to provide students with needed theoretical and practical knowledge, systematically structured for successful implementation in the fields of translating and interpreting. As for publishing activities, the Department of Oriental Studies achieved remarkable results during its short existence. In 1998 and 1999 it published two volumes of a textbook of the Arabic language entitled *Modern Arabic 1* and *2*, a course book which is still being used in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. During its short period of existence, the Department of Oriental Studies successfully organized several significant events – one of them was an international academic conference called *The 1952 Egyptian Revolution and Its Impact on Egyptian and Arab Society in the Last 50 Years* (Egyptská revolúcia 1952 a jej vplyv na egyptskú a arabskú spoločnosť za posledných 50 rokov), which they organized in cooperation with the Department of Oriental Studies at the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the Society of Slovak–Arab Friendship in June 2002. Karol Sorby was the coordinator of the conference. It is important to note that the graduates of the Department of Arabic Studies are active in the field of translating and interpreting; some of them are living and successfully working in Arabic countries. Among them we can mention Marek Brieška, who has taught Slovak as a foreign language at Ain Shams University in Cairo and is an active translator from Arabic into Slovak. In 2007, BAUM publishing house published his translation of the novel *Rihlat Ibn Fattuma* by Egyptian Nobel Prize winner Najib Mahfuz.

In spite of its young age (12 years), the Translation Studies Centre in Banská Bystrica can already boast some successes. It has become an inseparable part of the field of Slovak and Czech translation studies. Despite all the difficulties connected with the establishment of a new institution and the development of academic research (lack of teachers, problems with accreditation and guarantors, no tradition in the field in Banská Bystrica, lack of study materials etc.), the teachers in Banská Bystrica have not limited themselves to the process of education but have also identified research goals and sought to establish cooperation with academic and research institutes both in Slovakia (the Faculty of Arts at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra/Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre, the Philosophical Faculty at Comenius University in Bratislava/Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave, the Institute of World Literature of Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava/Ústav svetovej literatúry Slovenskej akadémie vied v Bratislave) and abroad (the Philosophical Faculty at Ostrava University/Filozofická fakulta Ostravskej univerzity, the Philosophical Faculty at Masaryk University in Brno/Filozofická fakulta Masarykovej univerzity).

THE PROGRAM OF TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING STUDIES

Nowadays, translation studies in Banská Bystrica is well established among Slovak and Czech research and academic institutions providing education in the field. It offers nine Bachelor's and Master's programs (English language and culture, French language and culture, Hungarian language and culture, German language and culture, Polish language and culture, Russian language and culture, Slovak language and culture, Spanish language and culture, and Italian language and culture).

One of the successes of translation studies scholars in Banská Bystrica is the establishment of the tradition of the international academic conference called *Translation and Interpreting* (Preklad a tlmočenie). Originally the conference was held annually; however, under the pressure of changes taking place at the university, the conception of the conference had to be changed and it now takes place every other year. Proceedings from the conference are a tangible contribution to Slovak translation studies: *Translation and Interpreting 1*, *Translation and Interpreting 2*, *Translation and Interpreting 3*, *Translation and Interpreting 4*, *Translation and Interpreting 5*, *Translation and Interpreting 6* (Preklad a Tlmočenie 1 - 6), *Translation and Interpreting 7*, subtitled *Socio-Cultural Aspects of Translation and Interpreting: Present and Future* (Sociokultúrne aspekty prekladu a tlmočenia: prítomnosť a budúcnosť, Preklad a tlmočenie 7), *Translation and Interpreting 8*, subtitled *Interdisciplinary Reflections on Translation and Interpreting* (Preklad a tlmočenie v interdisciplinárnej reflexii, Preklad a tlmočenie 8). We would particularly like to pay tribute to Pavol Plutko and Imrich Sedlák, who put great effort into organizing the conference in its early years and established a well-organized forum for foreign and national participants. The conference will celebrate its 9th anniversary in 2010 and the title of the conference will be *Contrastive Analyses of Texts and Their Impact on Translation Practice* (Kontrastívne štúdium vecných textov a jeho dopad na prekladateľskú prax).

Another achievement of translation studies in Banská Bystrica has been the organization of the international conference under the title *Analytical Probes into the*

Text (Analytické sondy do textu). The idea to analyze texts from various perspectives first emerged in 2003. The conference's theme was variability in text interpretation, and the means of its creation and analysis was identified as the main compositional approach. The proceedings from the conference were published in 2004 under the title *Analytical Probes into the Text 1*. (Analytické sondy do textu 1). The conference and its findings were well received in academic circles, and thus in 2005, a second conference was held. The papers presented at the conference and published in its proceedings in 2006 under the title *Analytical Probes into the Text 2* mainly focused on translated texts and interpreted speeches. The third year of the conference took place in September 2007, and its proceedings were published in 2008 under the title *Analytical Probes into the Text 3*. It is divided into four parts:

1. changes taking place in the development of contemporary European languages,
2. comparative views on text and processes of translation and interpreting,
3. contemporary views of European literature,
4. synchronous linguistics and literary development in the process of education.

The published papers focused primarily on the modern methods of text analysis and the methodological perception of texts in time and space, and they presented various approaches to the analysis of different types of texts. Several pioneering papers in the field of pragmatic issues, related to interpreting and code-switching between two languages, were presented at the 2008 conference – *Text as the Central Notion of Textual Linguistics* (Text ako centrálny pojem textovej lingvistiky) by Lenka Mandelíková, *Specific Factors of Interpreting Related to Interpreting Errors* (Špecifické faktory tlmočenia vo vzťahu k chybám) by Miroslava Šramková, and *Cognitive Aspects of Interpreting* (Kognitívne aspekty tlmočenia) by Martin Djovčoš and Zuzana Bešinová. The research findings of translation studies scholars from Banská Bystrica, among others, have been presented in a professional philological journal called *Philological Revue* (Filologická revue). The journal had a pre-defined structure (Studies and Academic Papers, Essays, Reviews, Information) and was published regularly from 1998 to 2006. In 2007, the journal was renamed *New Philological Revue*. Due to the transformation process taking place at the university, the publishing of the journal was suspended in 2008; however, in 2009 the process was re-launched, and the renewed journal will be published in electronic version biannually under the name *New Philological Revue* (Nová Filologická revue) at www.fhv.umb.sk/app/index.php?ID=3382. The journal is primarily focused on contemporary problems of linguistics, literary studies, translation studies and cultural studies. The first 2009 issue is already available online.

Another significant publishing activity that has introduced translation studies in Banská Bystrica to both national and international audiences is the academic journal called *Translation Studies and its Connections* (Translatológia a jej súvislosti). It has been published since 2003 (1/2003, 2/2007, 3/2009); the initiator and editor of the project is Z. Bohušová. Juraj Dolník, a well-known linguist, supported the initiative as well and his contribution to the quality of the journals was immense. The journal was established with the aim of creating an international platform for the exchange of opinions and experience in the field of translation studies and to present translation studies at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica as an institution with great

potential. Papers published in the journals can be divided into three categories: those focusing on linguistic connections, those focusing on literary connections and those dealing with aspects of translation. Besides dealing with theoretical issues, authors also present their knowledge in the field of didactics and praxeology of translation and interpreting.

THE CONCEPTS OF TEACHING

Studies in the field of translation and interpreting are carried out through a combination of two academic programs, i.e. two foreign languages. However; students can also decide to take only one language within one academic program. Studies are divided into Bachelor's and Master's programs.

It is expected that students involved in all academic programs offered by translation studies at the Faculty must have some extent of basic knowledge, no matter which language they choose to study. Thus we have developed a program for acquiring basic knowledge – *General Foundations (Fundamentals)* – a package of subjects all students have to take. The program is mainly focused on the improvement of the correct usage of the Slovak language as an official language, while good command of all levels of systematic linguistics is an inevitable prerequisite for the successful studies of future translators and interpreters. Students' linguistic competence is required both in the written and oral forms of language. The concept as a whole stems from the condition that each translator and interpreter working for the institutions of the European Union may only translate and interpret into his/her native language. Thus all subjects related to the usage of Slovak constitute an essential part of teaching translation and interpreting. The General Foundations program includes two semesters of translation studies (general theory of translation and interpreting), the basics of linguistic communication, a seminar on literary translation and comparative disciplines imperative to the comprehensive knowledge well-versed translators and interpreters should have.

Bachelor's study programs are focused on the preparation of future qualified professionals capable of holding translated agendas, correspondence, administrative agendas and media communication. The aim of the program is to acquire a set of knowledge and skills in the area of contrastive linguistic fields of study, literature, theory of literature, culture, history, culture and institutions of English-speaking countries, as well as knowledge from the field of translation theory and the basics of interpreting.

A graduate of these academic programs is capable of using languages in reciprocal communication, both in written and oral forms. He/she has a good command of theoretical and methodological knowledge in the areas of language, grammar, lexicology and stylistics; he/she is well-versed in the theory, history and development of translation and thus can be effective in professional communication in a foreign language as well as in Slovak. He/she has acquired basic preparation in consecutive interpreting and can function as an interlingual editor (e.g. in the field of tourism, services etc.). Graduates of Bachelor's study programs can continue in Master's study programs at universities both in Slovakia and abroad.

Similarly to the Bachelor's study programs, studies in Master's programs require a certain extent of knowledge common to students of all languages. Thus we continue

with the General Foundations program on the Master's level as well. It is an obligatory program for all students of translation and interpreting. The program consists of the following subjects: Praxeology of translation, Diplomatic protocol, Overview of the EU institutions and Intercultural communication.

Master's study programs are aimed at acquiring theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of translation and interpreting. The education process as a whole consists of a comprehensive, constantly developing system of acquiring academic knowledge and skills which reflects the most relevant contemporary research findings. Students acquire detailed theoretical and practical knowledge of the fields of linguistics, literature and translation.

A graduate of the Master's program has a broad knowledge of theoretical and methodological information from the fields of the theory of translation and the history of translation and interpreting. He/she has an excellent command of language and a good knowledge of comparative grammar, sociolinguistics and pragmatics as well as of literature written in the language he/she has studied. He/she can apply all methods, skills and strategies needed in the translation of literary as well as non-literary texts, as well as in consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. He/she has a basic understanding of the most important facts of the fields of economy and law and can apply this knowledge in translating and interpreting. He/she can cope with the entire process of both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting – from the preparation phase to the final output. Graduates of Master's programs can be employed as translators of literary and non-literary texts, consecutive and simultaneous interpreters, philologists, publishing editors, radio and television staff, editors in journals and newspapers, workers in the fields of linguistic and literary communication or academic scholars in the field of translation studies.

The teaching of interpreting is carried out in five rooms with excellent technical equipment which enables the teachers to simulate real interpreting situations. Each student interprets in a booth equipped with a control panel and an mp3 player. This enables him/her to record his/her output and subsequently analyze it with the teacher. The teacher uses a central control panel and is able to monitor the output of all the students. He/she can also use the widescreen connected to the Internet to play real videos of authentic speeches, political and otherwise. The technical equipment also allows the teacher to train students in relay interpreting (using an intermediary person) as well as organize simulated conferences on various professional topics.

THE MAIN TOPICS OF RESEARCH

Translation studies in Banská Bystrica can be characterized as an interesting set of cultural, translational and personal influences. In the works of scholars from Banská Bystrica, one can trace Ján Koška's approach to translation and thus the influence of the Institute of World Literature in Bratislava and its concept of reception tradition in translation, the influence of the Nitra school of translation as well as foreign schools of translation.

Academic research at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica is mainly oriented towards applied translation studies, the theory and history of translating and interpreting and the methodology of translation studies. All publishing and project activi-

ties are subject to these research goals. In order to provide a complete picture of the development of translation studies in Banská Bystrica, we would like to present a list of academic projects (mainly VEGA - agency for funding the research projects - and Leonardo da Vinci projects) that have addressed issues related to translation studies in its different forms.

All the members of the department are involved in research grants. The concept of the translation and interpreting study research is based on the cooperation with other universities and research centres and on the involvement of students and PhD students. The main topic is the mapping of contemporary studies with regard to social and cultural aspects of globalization and multiculturalism, and the notions and terms of translation studies today.

The projects include the following:

1. Project: Linguistic and literary basics of translating (2002-2002; head of the research team: Mária Bielíková)

2. Project: Translation and national culture: Circumstances, relations, most significant representatives and notions (joint project of the Faculty of Arts of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and the Faculty of Humanities of Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica; 2005-2007, member of the research team: Vladimír Biloveský)

3. Project: Probes into the present state of translation in Slovakia with an emphasis on social and cultural aspects/globalization, integration, plurality, multiculturalism (joint project of the Faculty of Arts of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and the Faculty of Humanities of Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica; 2005-2007, member of the research team: Anita Hufková)

4. Project: Comparative studies of non-literary texts in Anglophone and Slovak environments and their impact on translation (2009-2011; head of the research team: Vladimír Biloveský)

Leonardo da Vinci Program:

Project: Translation as national culture (2006); head of the research team: Elena Mončeková

Other activities related to translation studies:

On October 24-26, 2005 the translation studies program in Banská Bystrica cooperated in organizing an academic conference under the title *The pPast, Present and Future of Translating in Slovakia* (Minulosť, prítomnosť a budúcnosť prekladania na Slovensku) which was held on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting in Nitra.

PROFILES

Vladimír Bíloveský

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The above-mentioned stimuli of the Institute of World Literature can be seen in the works of Vladimír Biloveský, who primarily deals with the translation of non-literary texts and didactics of translation. He received his PhD from the Institute of World Literature in Bratislava where he was tutored by Mária Kusá. In addition to

many papers published both at home and abroad, he is also the author of the monograph *Term and/or Metaphor* (Banská Bystrica, 2005) with the subtitle *Translation of English-Written Non-Literary Texts with Elements of Literary Texts* (Termín a/alebo Metafora, preklad anglicky písaných neumeleckých textov s umeleckými prvkami). Nowadays Biloveský collaborates with his younger colleague Martin Djovčoš, preparing a two-volume translation studies textbook under the title *Selected Chapters from Translation Studies I., II.* (Vybrané kapitoly z Translatológie I. a II.). The comprehensive preparation of highly professional translators and interpreters requires the knowledge of resources published in the past. Students very often have difficulties finding them and are wholly dependent on quoting key scholars and researchers in the field of translation studies from secondary sources. It is not uncommon that teachers share their own books and resources with their students. This was one of the reasons that led Vladimír Biloveský and Martin Djovčoš to prepare the above-mentioned study materials.

Anita Hutková

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In the work of Anita Hutková, who defended her dissertation thesis entitled *Stylistic Problems of Translation and Translating* (Štylistické problémy prekladu a prekladania) at the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University in 2006, one can trace the influence of both domestic and foreign translation studies, especially of the Hungarian scholar Kinga Klauďy. Hutková primarily deals with the history of translation and translation of literary texts. As for her most significant works, in addition to dozens of papers published both at home and abroad, we can mention her textbooks *Selected Chapters from History of Translation of Literary Texts* (Vybrané kapitoly z dejín prekladu literárno-umeleckých textov), (Banská Bystrica, 2003) and *Selected Chapters from the Theory of Translation of Literary Texts* (Vybrané kapitoly z teórie prekladu literárno-umeleckých textov), (Banská Bystrica, 2003).

Zuzana Bohušová

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Zuzana Bohušová, another PhD. postgraduate from the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University, is primarily interested in the theory and practice of interpreting. She is the author of numerous papers published both at home and abroad as well as four monographs (two in German and two in Slovak). In her latest, *Neutralization as a Cognitive Strategy in Transcultural Communication*/Neutralizácia ako kognitívna stratégia v transkultúrnej komunikácii (Banská Bystrica, 2009), Bohušová uses a linguistic and translational basis for identifying the key strategy – the cognitive one – in interpreting. This strategy significantly helps to reveal the essence of decisions that need to be made in the process of interpreting.

THE STUDENTS' PROFILES

Translation studies in Banská Bystrica have produced a group of devoted students who remained in the academe after graduating from the Master's program and are now contributing to its further development. Miroslava Melicherčíková (born

Šramková), Ľubica Brenkusová, Martin Djovčoš and Martin Kubuš all teach at the Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Humanites, Matej Bel University.

Miroslava Melicherčíková

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In her academic research carried out in numerous papers published both in Slovakia and abroad, Miroslava Melicherčíková is devoted to the identification of errors in interpreting and their elimination. She is a PhD postgraduate student at the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava; her advisor is Taida Nováková. In cooperation with Biloveský, Melicherčíková wrote a significant study called *Anglophone Thoughts on Translation* (Anglofónne myslenie o preklade), which is included in the monograph *Thoughts on Translation* (Myslenie o preklade). The publication was awarded a prominent prize by the Literary Fund and its Section for Scientific and Non-literary Translation in 2007.

Ľubica Brenkusová

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Ľubica Brenkusová, a PhD postgraduate student at the Institute of World Literature at Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, mainly focuses on the issues related to the reception of American literature in Slovakia between 1945 and 1968. Her approach to translation studies is influenced by the research findings of the scholars from the Institute of World Literature as well as her advisor, Ján Vilikovský. In addition to issues related to reception, she also addresses aspects of translation of academic terminology; in cooperation with Vladimír Biloveský, she is preparing a monograph on the translation of academic terminology in Slovak literary space.

Martin Djovčoš

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Martin Djovčoš is another PhD postgraduate student at the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava; his advisor is Edita Gromová. In his academic research, Djovčoš primarily deals with the translation of non-literary texts and the methodology and didactics of translation and interpreting. His approach to translation and interpretation is interdisciplinary, and he pays particular attention to cognitive aspects and their impact on the processes of translation and interpreting. His teaching experience includes both Slovak and Czech universities and he is a great supporter of the involvement of non-academic professionals from the field of translating and interpreting into related curricula. In cooperation with Ľubica Brenkusová, they carry out a research on the ways of implementing relevant exercises into the training of interpreting, with the aim of increasing its efficiency. They hope to publish their research findings soon.

Martin Kubuš

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Martin Kubuš is the youngest of the group of graduates. Already during his stud-

ies he was deeply interested in the translation of literary texts. In 2006 he was awarded the 1st prize in a translation competition that annually takes place at Comenius University in Bratislava for the translation of the short story *Tobermory* by Saki. The story was later broadcasted by Radio Regina. In his dissertation, Kubuš deals with the distinctive features of the translation of humor in Saki's works of fiction. He is a PhD postgraduate student at the Faculty of Arts of Prešov University; his advisor is Jaroslav Kušnir.

Other teachers from the former Philological Faculty deal with various aspects of translation in their work as well. Apart from the translation of literary texts (M. Bieliková) or the reception of Italian literature in comparative studies (I. Šuša), we can mention other interesting topics, such as the linguistic aspects of translation (M. Hardošová), translation of legal terminology and legal texts (E. Vallová), didactics of interpreting (J. Lauková), or translation of non-literary texts (J. Miškovská, N. Ďurníková). They all contribute to the dissemination of modern research findings to the Slovak as well as international academic community and make translation studies in Banská Bystrica seen and heard.

TRANSLATOLÓGIA V BANSKEJ BYSTRICI: FAKTY A POSTAVY

Štúdium prekladu v Banskej Bystrici. Všeobecný základ. Vyučovanie prekladania. Lingvistické štúdium prekladu. Preklad právnych a ekonomických textov. Tlmočenie. Literárny preklad. Translatologický výskum. Vedecká spolupráca. Publikácie. Konferencie. Doktorandské štúdium.

Autorka podáva vznik a stručný vývin Inštitútu prekladateľstva a tlmočníctva na Filozofickej fakulte Prešovskej univerzity. Štúdium prekladateľstva a tlmočníctva je postavené na systéme štúdia dvoch cudzích jazykov a spoločného základu. Spoločný základ tvoria: Teória a dejiny umeleckého prekladu, Teória odborného prekladu, Didaktika prekladu a tlmočenia, Kritika prekladu a Prekladateľská prax. Ďalej sú to disciplíny materinského jazyka, Európske inštitúcie, Slovenské inštitúcie, Základy práva, Základy ekonómie, Informačné technológie. Jazykové katedry vyučujú praktické zvládnutie jazykov B a C (kabínkový a tlmočnícky tréning, simulácia konferenčného prekladu a tlmočenia v podmienkach EÚ). Inštitút prekladateľstva a tlmočníctva zabezpečuje aj vzdelávanie doktorandov a okrem didaktických zreteľov sa sústreďuje aj na výskum prekladu. Počas štyroch rokov existencie inštitútu boli vyriešené štyri projekty VEGA a jeden projekt KEGA. Základnou orientáciou školy je kritika a teória prekladu so špecializáciou na konkrétne literárne žánre. Pracovníci Inštitútu pravidelne publikujú, prekladajú, tlmočia a zúčastňujú sa na konferenciách doma a v zahraničí.

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