# Session 1: Summary of the discussion

Philippa Moss reported, in response to a question from Peter Barber, that there was little discussion of future standardisation of the coding of Cyrillic, Greek and Eastern European Roman character sets. Such harmonisation would be particularly beneficial for exporting and importing texts between the different levels of the pyramid described during the presentation, and between different WP systems. Vuman's approach is to provide conversion utilities for mapping between its own product and major WP packages. A conversion program for WordPerfect should be available in six months.

Ms Moss further reassured delegates that West European character sets, such as French, were not being neglected; indeed, a version of Vuwriter[II] entirely in French – including menus – was already available.

Reassurance on the Polish authorities' determination to tackle software piracy was given by Bogdan Chojna to Isabella Moore, who was concerned by its deterrent effect on potential WP/DTP suppliers. Experience with measures against home video piracy led him to predict that the 'tough action' taken by the authorities would contain the problem within one or two years. The measures were supported by a user community fearful of the spread of viruses.

The need for software houses to provide product training for customers in the Eastern European market was highlighted in the context of post-experience training generally. Although attractive, the suggestion that Polish linguists could attend short courses and profit from temporary secondments in Western Europe was financially less feasible than 'importing' instructors to transfer their expertise.

In the case of English, it was observed that the British Council does not play a sufficiently 'aggressive' role and that UK investment in language training lags behind that of Western Europe and North America. For example, language skills are not addressed by the British government's 'Know-How Fund' for supporting manufacturing industry in Poland and Hungary.

At university level, Polish language specialists were educated in both literature and linguistics, the latter discipline comprising elements of translating and interpreting at some universities. Only at Warsaw is there a separate department of interpreting, producing some fifteen graduates annually with combinations of English, French, German and Russian. These students are trained in consecutive and simultaneous interpreting and usually decide to specialise in one or the other mode after three years of professional activity.

The high demand, especially in the business world, for the skills of articulacy and fast thinking which are the hallmarks of the interpreter goes a long way towards explaining why only 50 per cent of Polish graduate translators/interpreters actually enter that career.

**RAPPORTEUR**

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