Linking to a bilingual Web space

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The goal of this research is to study whether there is a significant correlation between how bilingual municipal Web sites receive links to their two domains in two languages and the extent of these languages among the population in the municipalities. It is shown that the domain in the majority language receive the majority of the links. Statistically significant correlations are found, suggesting that those creating the links are well aware of the language situation in the municipalities and use that knowledge when creating the links. Search engine Yahoo is found to give the most accurate results of link counts to the researched bilingual web space. Yahoo can therefore be recommended for webometric studies where language is a factor.

Keywords: Linking, Bilingual Web Space, Municipal Web sites.

1. Introduction

Keeping in mind the nature of the Web, where anyone can claim their own little corner and publish anything on it without any censorship or quality control, it is remarkable that results from webometric studies can correlate so strongly with other information sources of known value. Webometric studies have successfully used the amount of links as a measure of visibility [1, 2] and impact of a collection of Web sites [3, 4] or different academic subjects [5]: the more inlinks a site receives, the more it has been recognized and linked to by others. More inlinks mean that a site or a page is easier to find, partly because it is easier to find a link when there are more links to be found but also because we can assume that at least some search engines use the number of inlinks as part of their ranking algorithms [6]. Links have been used to trace patterns of informal scientific communication [7] and they have been found to correlate with research ratings in universities [4, 8, 9, 10, 11]. Geographic patterns have also been shown to have an impact on linking.