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The discipline of International Relations long has been identified and characterized as ‘American’ or ‘Anglo-American’.¹ While recent work contests this assumption, either by giving a platform to different types of ‘regional IR’,² or by bringing to light the interconnected colonial origins of the discipline,³ the discipline of International Relations remains dominated by US-based journals, scholars, and top-ranked programmes.⁴ The fact that all of this work is produced and carried out in the English language underpins and supports the US dominance in the field.

What are the effects of such a dominant linguistic perspective in the academy? While a unified *lingua franca* plays a crucial and positive role in enabling and fostering academic exchange across linguistic boundaries, its dominance also raises a number of issues. First is the question of accessibility: scholarship predominantly carried out in English will remain closed to anyone who cannot speak or read the language well. Given

1. The most famous reference is Stanley Hoffmann, ‘An American Social Science: International Relations’, *Daedalus* 106, no. 3 (1977): 41–60. For an overview of the literature on this theme, see for instance Peter Marcus Kristensen, ‘Revisiting the “American Social Science” – Mapping the Geography of International Relations’, *International Studies Perspectives* 16, no. 3 (2015): 246–69.
2. See for instance Arlene Tickner and Ole Wæver, *International Relations Scholarship Around the World: Worlding Beyond the West* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Jörg Friedrichs, *European Approaches to International Relations Theory: A House with Many Mansions* (London: Routledge, 2004); Knud Erik Jørgensen and Tonny Brems Knudsen, eds., *International Relations in Europe. Traditions, Perspectives and Destinations* (London: Routledge, 2006); Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, *Non-Western International Relations Theory. Perspectives On and Beyond Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
3. See for instance Vineet Thakur, Alexander E. Davis, and Peter Vale, ‘Imperial Mission, “Scientific” Method: an Alternative Account of the Origins of IR’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 46, no. 1 (2017): 3–23.
4. Peter M. Kristensen, ‘Dividing Discipline: Structures of Communication in International Relations’, *International Studies Review* 14, no. 1 (2012): 32–50.

its increasingly global constituency and subject matter, we believe that the discipline of International Relations should take measures to reflect linguistic diversity. Secondly, the dominance of the English language in the academy reflects and reinforces the power dynamics inscribed in the world that the discipline studies. The status of English language illustrates the reproduction of centre-periphery relations 'where the preoccupations, theoretical and methodological frameworks and solutions considered at the centre have a greater chance of being judged important and universal than those that emerge at the margins, which are more often than not, considered as particular, culturally related and secondary'.⁵ Finally, restricting scholarship to a specific language limits the scope of our imagination. Considering the connection between language and the ability to think,⁶ as well as the connection between language and its context of origin,⁷ it is unsurprising that a restriction of IR to English limits our ability to think and to understand the politics of others.

However clear the issues and concerns relating to linguistic hegemony might be, what to do about it is less so. None of the top-ranked IR journals have yet implemented the strategy of language translation,⁸ a potential solution increasingly practised by other journals and disciplines. Non-English language journals, incidentally, often translate their abstracts into English.

Both the potential and the difficulties attached to translation are well-known throughout the humanities and the social sciences. More than a translation, Talcott Parsons's rendering of Max Weber was a transformation of meaning.⁹ Because of the uneven power-political terrain on which language exists, translation is bound up with issues of representation and the reproduction of cultural hegemony, no matter how well intended;¹⁰ to use Spivak's words, 'translation is necessary but impossible'.¹¹

Hence, a number of practical, political and theoretic questions arise when engaging in language translations. Should the same language(s) be chosen for all manuscripts or

5. Francine Descarries, 'The Hegemony of the English Language in the Academy: the Damaging Impact of the Sociocultural and Linguistic Barriers on the Development of Feminist Sociological Knowledge, Theories and Strategies', *Current Sociology* 51, no. 6 (2003): 625.

6. For a discussion of this connection, see for instance Kyle Grayson, 'Dissidence, Richard K. Ashley, and the Politics of Silence', *Review of International Studies* 36, no. 4 (2010): 1005–19.

7. H el ene Pellerin, 'Which IR Do You Speak? Languages as Perspectives in the Discipline of IR', *Perspectives* 20, no. 1 (2012): 59–82.

8. Following Kristensen's analysis, these journals are considered the most dominant in the discipline: *International Organization*, *American Political Science Review*, *World Politics*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *International Security*. See Kristensen, 'Dividing Discipline'.

9. Ute Gerhardt, 'Much More than a Mere Translation: Talcott Parsons's Translation into English of Max Weber's "Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus": An Essay in Intellectual History', *The Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie* 32, no. 1 (2007): 41–62.

10. The classic statement on these problems is Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1986).

11. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Translation as Culture', *Parallax* 6, no. 1 (2000): 13.

should they vary according to the contents and audience? Here, editorial concerns for regularity across all issues stand in tension with the broader desire to reflect the specifics of the manuscript in the chosen languages of translation. How many languages should be chosen? The more the better in terms of diversifying the discipline; however, the more languages the more costly and complicated the editorial process becomes. Should only widespread and commonly spoken languages be chosen, or does the negligence of minority or endangered languages work against the original goal of counteracting language hegemony? Selecting a hegemonic language, such as one of the official UN languages, does increase the availability of the content to a large audience. However, doing so also comes at a price: it means supporting and reinforcing the power dynamics that lead it to acquire its dominant status in the first place. Finally, the efficacy of translation itself is limited, in that it can only ever reflect the questions and answers put forward in the English language originals. It does not offer a new perspective or angle, but simply spreads and reproduces the existing dominant perspective.

After reflecting on these difficulties, we have decided, for this inaugural volume of *Millennium's* translation practice, to translate all abstracts into French and Spanish.¹² We hope that this will allow the content of *Millennium* to reach readers who will find it meaningful, but would not otherwise read it. While we are unable to translate entire articles for reasons of both space and financial resources, abstracts give the general sense of an article and have the greatest potential to reach a wide audience, as they are available online free of charge. Moreover, we hope that by making those who read our content accustomed to seeing abstracts not written in English, on a habitual basis, we will help to denaturalise the idea of English being the only language of scholarship. While we acknowledge the importance of a common language of exchange in the academy, it is the extent of its dominance, which is so rarely reflected upon, that we wish to challenge. Many of us with power to alter the linguistic practices of the discipline, whether through journals, scholarly associations, or otherwise, especially those who speak only English, may not realise or reflect on this power until confronted with non-English text in a journal of International Studies.

Mounting a serious challenge to the rarely questioned dominance of the English language within the field of International Relations will require more than this effort, but we hope that it will inspire thoughts, conversations, and further efforts from others.

Sarah Bertrand, Kerry Goettlich and Christopher Murray
Editors, Vol. 46

12. We have also experimented in our first issue with adding additional abstract translations into Afrikaans, Hindi and Xhosa for one article, thereby reflecting the wishes of the authors. See Thakur, Davis, and Vale, 'Imperial Mission'.