
What is the publication language in humanities? The case of Translation Studies scholars

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The use of English as a publication language is on the rise among multilingual humanities scholars, though local language is still the dominant choice.

Introduction

English is becoming the default language of knowledge construction and dissemination (Kuteeva & McGrath, 2014; Zheng & Gao, 2016; Fuentes & Gómez Soler, 2018). However, English as a monolingual and mono-rhetorical means of disseminating knowledge may maximize its ‘Tyrannosaurus rex’ side (Tardy, 2004; Espinet et al., 2015; Zheng & Gao, 2016). The use of English as an Academic Lingua Franca (EALF) is depicted as hegemonic, totalitarian, colonial and imperialistic, silencing other academic traditions, imposing Anglophone ideologies of norms and rhetorical conventions, and controlling other academic territories (Phillipson, 1992; Bennett, 2013). It is claimed that an orientation towards the norms and rhetorical conventions of the Anglo-Saxon discourse demotes non-English languages, cultures and rhetorical conventions (Tardy, 2004; Espinet, Izquierdo & García-Pujol, 2015), disadvantages non-native English-speaking scholars and their scholarship (Flowerdew, 2013; Zheng & Gao, 2016), erodes alternative forms of knowledge construction (Martín–Martín, 2005; Bennett, 2011), and reduces intellectual, cultural and epistemological diversity (Tardy, 2004; Bennett, 2011).

Although the trend of English as a lingua franca in the humanities is widely discussed (see Bocanegra–Valle, 2014; Kuteeva & McGrath, 2014; Zheng & Gao, 2016), there are few data-driven studies concerning the language choice of non-native English speakers in periphery countries. In the current paper I focus on multilingual humanities scholars in non-native English-speaking

countries such as Spain and South Korea, and ascertain the language in which they are publishing their research, and their motivations for doing so. Multilingual scholars refer to non-native English scholars who can use either English or their mother tongues in research communication. I examine the longitudinal evolution of their language choice and the reasons behind it.

Methods

To exclude the impact of disciplinary differences on language choice (Kuteeva & Airey, 2014), I limit the scope of the current investigation to



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Table 1: A list of the 24 journals

Journal type	Journal title	Since
Korea-based journals	<i>Forum</i> (published by John Benjamins as of 2016)	2003
	통역과번역 (<i>Interpretation & Translation</i>)	1999
	통번역교육연구 (<i>Journal of Interpretation & Translation Education</i>)	2003
	통번역학연구 (<i>Interpreting & Translation Studies</i>)	1997
	번역학연구 (<i>Journal of Translation Studies</i>)	2000
Spain-based journals	<i>Hermeneus: Revista de Traducción e Interpretación</i>	1999
	<i>Hikma: Revista de Traducción</i>	2002
	<i>MonTI: Monografías de Traducción e Interpretación</i>	2009
	<i>Quaderns: Revista de Traducció</i>	1998
	<i>Sendebarr: Revista de Traducción e Interpretación</i>	1990
	<i>TRANS: Revista de Traductología</i>	1996
International journals	<i>Across Languages & Cultures</i>	2000
	<i>Babel</i>	1955
	<i>Interpreting</i>	1996
	<i>Interpreter & Translator Trainer</i>	2007
	<i>Linguistica Antverpiensia New Series</i>	2002
	<i>Meta</i>	1956
	<i>Perspectives</i>	1993
	<i>Target</i>	1989
	<i>Translation & Interpreting Studies</i>	2006
	<i>Translation & Literature</i>	1992
	<i>Translation Review</i>	1978
	<i>Translation Studies</i>	2008
	<i>Translator</i>	1995

Translation Studies, a plurilingual discipline in humanities. Given the inter-lingual nature of Translation Studies, scholars may write up their articles in either of the two languages involved. Scholars in two countries, namely Spain and South Korea, were included. Both are active in this domain, as reflected in the early establishment of Translation Studies as an independent academic discipline, a large number of translation programs, and numerous publications of relevant journals.

Data collection was completed in two phases. In the first phase, data on the publication language of scholarly articles by Spain-based and Korea-based scholars were collected. Since authors' names do not always reveal their nationalities, the institutions they are affiliated with were taken into account. Three periods were selected to sketch

the longitudinal evolution of language choice in the two countries, 1999–2001, 2006–2008, and 2013–2015.

The data were sourced from two categories of journals (see Table 1), including both mainstream international and domestic peripheral journals (see Salager-Meyer, 2014). The mainstream international journals included 13 journals indexed in the SSCI (Social Sciences Citation Index) or A&HCI (Arts and Humanities Citation Index) databases. Eleven local journals were selected, including five Korea-based journals (about 45% of all academic Translation Studies journals in Korea) and six Spain-based journals (about 46% of all academic Translation Studies journals in Spain). The criteria for selection were that the selected journals should have an influential status

Table 2: Personal details of the participants

		Spain-based authors	Korea-based authors
Gender	Female	23	7
	Male	10	4
Years of being a scholar	0–3 years	1	0
	4–7 years	4	2
	8–11 years	2	5
	12 years or more	26	4

in the KCI (Korea Citation Index) or its Spanish versions.

Journal language policies would not have been a factor that impacted scholars' language choice. Scholars may have chosen to publish their research in either English or the local language. If they had written up their articles in English, they may have submitted them to international journals or local ones because all journals publish English articles (*Meta* accepts English and French articles). If they had written up their articles in the local language, they may have submitted them to the local journals because they have a bilingual language policy, accepting articles in the local language alongside those in English. This is true except for *Forum*, which became an international journal as of 2016 and publishes articles in English or French.

In the second phase, an online survey was completed by 34 Spain-based and 11 Korea-based authors to explore the reasons of language choice. The questionnaire items were based on the literature on publication motivations (Gentil & Séror, 2014; Muresan & Pérez-Llantada, 2014; Zheng & Gao, 2016; Fuentes & Gómez Soler, 2018). It consisted of two sections, the first one concerned with participants' personal details, and the second one with their publication motivations. To avoid possible bias favouring English or the local language, only those who published in both English and their local languages were selected as participants. This was done by tracing the scholars' publication records.

In total, 94 scholars (69 Spain-based scholars and 25 Korea-based scholars) were selected as participants. The number of participants from the two countries was uneven because there are many fewer scholars who publish both in the local language and in English in Korea. A web link to the survey was distributed via email. 34 scholars in Spain and 11 in Korea responded. The response

rate of 49% and 44%, respectively, is acceptable. To date, the literature on survey research has not reached a consensus on the standard for a minimally acceptable response rate (Fowler, 2002). The data from one scholar who uses English as the mother tongue were removed. After data cleaning, data from 33 Spain-based scholars and 11 Korea-based scholars were used (see Table 2).

Results and discussion

Language selection in research publication is usually impacted by a series of factors, including disciplinary expectations, national or institutional policies, language competence, research networks (center vs. periphery), and individual ideological factors (Gentil & Séror, 2014; Zheng & Gao, 2016; Fuentes & Gómez Soler, 2018). In this section, I report on and discuss the findings.

The local language is the dominant choice

Figure 1 indicates that the local language is generally the most frequently selected language for research publication, particularly in South Korea where more than two-thirds of the articles are published in the local language. The reasons for publishing in the local languages are presented in Table 3.

One reason for publishing in the local language relates to the fact that scholars need to establish and maintain connections with the local research community. 50% of the participants agree that they need to publish in local languages to connect themselves with local researchers. This is because they are more involved in local research activities and networks than in international ones (Salager-Meyer, 2014).

Ideological factors also play a role. 50% of the participants believe that publishing in the local language can help them communicate their research

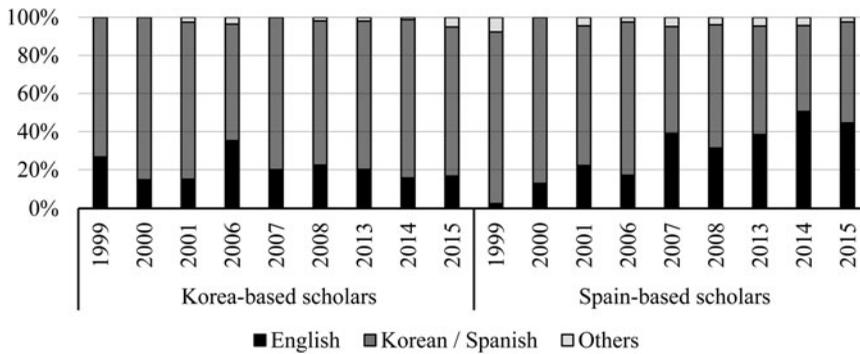


Figure 1. The publication language of articles by Korea- and Spain-based scholars

findings to the local scientific community. 39% of the participants admit that publishing in the local language can preserve its status as a scientific language in terms of local research norms, rhetorical conventions and forms of knowledge construction. One of the participants commented that:

Cultural and linguistic diversity must be promoted; the use of a single language can lead to a reductionist look of the world.

This finding that Translation Studies scholars publish in the local language to keep its identity as a scientific language and take it as their responsibility to communicate their research to the local scientific audience is consistent with the literature (see Linder & De Sterck, 2016).

Another factor is related to research assessment policies. 48% of the participants think that publishing in the local languages can also help them to

achieve professional promotion. For humanities and social sciences scholars, they can achieve promotion by publishing in either domestic journals or international journals, although publishing in the latter is valued more (Lee & Lee, 2013; Salager-Meyer, 2014). Therefore, they may choose to publish in the local languages.

Besides non-linguistic factors, there are also linguistic impediments. As can be seen in Table 3, 36% of the participants believe that writing in the local language is less challenging than writing in English. Language competence is one of the major barriers faced by scholars in Spain and South Korea who want to publish their articles in English. Compared with privileged scholars who use English as their mother tongue, Spain- and Korea-based scholars are disadvantaged because they speak English as a foreign language. The ability of Spanish and Korean scholars to use English as an academic language in producing rhetorical

Table 3: Reasons for publishing in the local language

Reasons for publishing in the local language	Number of participants / percentage		
	Spain-based authors	Korea-based authors	Total
Establishment of connections with the local research community.	16/48%	6/55%	22/50%
Communication of research findings to the local scientific community.	15/45%	7/64%	22/50%
Still rewarding in terms of promotion though not as valued as publishing internationally	15/45%	6/55%	21/48%
Preservation of the identity of the local language as a scientific language	14/42%	3/27%	17/39%
Writing in the local language is less challenging than writing in English	11/33%	5/45%	16/36%

and argumentative discourse is not as strong as their Anglophone counterparts (Cho, 2009; Moreno et al., 2012; Salager-Meyer, 2014). To publish in English, scholars in the two countries may rely on language editors. This is not an acceptable solution because it takes a long time to complete a satisfactory manuscript. As mentioned by one of the participants, publishing in the local language ‘takes less time and effort’.

The linguistic difficulties faced by humanities scholars who want to publish in English are even greater considering the nature of humanities studies. Unlike scientific domains which have more universal rhetorical moves and rely more on facts or data, the rhetorical structures found in humanities articles are more culture-specific and are very demanding in terms of convincing language and rhetorical skills (Connor, 1996). It is believed that Anglophone and non-Anglophone scholars in the same discipline may produce articles with quite different rhetorical features (Ingvarsdóttir & Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2013).

The rhetorical conventions found in Spanish and English research articles are quite different (see Moreno, 1997; Martín-Martin, 2005). The same is true for such distant cultures as the case of Korea and North America because each has its own intellectual traditions (see Nisbett, 2003; Hu & Cao, 2011). Due to such differences, Spain- and Korea-based scholars may transfer the rhetorical features of their mother tongues to their English writing, resulting in low-quality academic discourse which might be seen as inferior by their Anglophone peers. Equally possible, if they resort

to translators, the huge rhetorical differences between Korean or Spanish and English pose serious challenges.

The use of English is on the rise

Figure 1 indicates that while the percentage of English articles has remained stable in Korea diachronically, the use of English for research publication is experiencing an increase in Spain, where almost half of the publications were in English in 2014 and 2015. This echoes a previous claim that 50% of the articles in the domain of Translation Studies are published in English, making it the most widely used language in research dissemination in the field, although many scholars still write and publish in their mother tongue (Agost, 2015). The reasons for publishing in English are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that more participants in Spain believe that publishing in English means higher visibility and better dissemination of research results to the international community than those in Korea (93% and 91%, respectively, compared with 55% and 64%). This finding is consistent with that of Bocanegra-Valle (2014). This is particularly true in Spain, since more Spain-based scholars take this viewpoint than Korea-based scholars. As one Spain-based participant commented:

I started writing mostly in English in 2010. As you may see in Google Scholar, my citations rose consistently ever since.

Table 4: Reasons for publishing in English

Reasons for publishing in English	Number of participants/ percentage ¹		
	Spain-based authors	Korea-based authors	Total
Higher international visibility	31/93%	6/55%	37/84%
Better communication of research results to the international community	30/91%	7/64%	37/84%
Institutional research assessment policies	22/67%	7/64%	29/66%
Requirements for professional promotion	17/52%	6/55%	23/52%
Familiarity with the language usage and structures of English articles	10/30%	5/45%	15/34%
Benefits of membership in research groups (collaboration in research and writing, peer reviews and feedback, etc.)	7/21%	1/9%	8/18%

The same participant also expressed the view that publishing in local languages means dissemination of research to only the local readership and no access to the international community, which may lead to the risk of reinventing the wheel. Therefore, reaching a wider readership in the international community and obtaining international recognition and citation may explain why the use of English for research publication is increasing, particularly in Spain.

Moreover, research assessment and promotion exercises may also explain why Spanish scholars are publishing more in English. In [Table 4](#), both Spain-based and Korea-based scholars believe that the two factors have affected their language choice in academic publication. The Spanish research assessment and promotion system gives priority to publications in international journals which are mostly written in English over Spanish publications (Muresan & Pérez-Llantada, 2014). As one Spain-based participants expressed:

Most indexed journals in my discipline publish in English, and I am assessed on the number of articles in indexed journals.

Another Spain-based scholar commented:

It was the beginning of my career and I was not aware of the importance of English in my academic career. Now I only publish in English.

According to Lee and Lee (2013), in South Korea, humanities and social sciences scholars seeking promotion can publish either in journals indexed in the SSCI or A&HCI, which accept English articles, or in journals found in the Korea Citation Index (KCI), which accepts mostly Korean articles. The impact of research assessment policies on the privileging of English as the language of research dissemination among multilingual scholars is also felt in other countries such as China, as found in one recent study by Zheng & Guo (2018).

Highly specialized networking may be another reason why Spain-based scholars are more productive in English publications than their Korean counterparts (21% compared with 9%), as reflected in [Table 4](#). According to the website of the European Society for Translation Studies, there are about 15 Spain-based research groups specializing in different branches of Translation Studies, for example, Process of Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation (PACTE), Mediation and Interpretation: Research in the Social Area (MIRAS), and Translation and Audiovisual Media (TRAMA), to name a few. Such networking may

increase Spain-based scholars' chances of publishing in international journals because members can collaborate on research and writing, receive rhetorical and language support, and obtain assistance in responding to feedback from journal referees (Curry & Lillis, 2010). The associations of Korea-based scholars, for example, Korean Association of Translation Studies, Korean Society of Conference Interpretation, Ewha Research Institute for Translation Studies, etc., are based on a general research direction or an institution and are less specialized, which may not promote collaboration and mutual support as efficiently as their Spanish counterparts.

Familiarity with the language usage and structure of English articles is also partially responsible for the increasing number of English articles by Spain-based scholars. [Table 4](#) shows that a higher proportion of Korea-based scholars (45%) reported confidence in writing in English compared with Spain-based scholars (30%). This is not consistent with [Table 3](#), where more Korea-based scholars reported difficulties in writing in English than Spain-based scholars (33%). The academic performance of Spain-based scholars in the international community is better than that of Korea-based scholars (Li, 2015). This may be attributed to their familiarity with the features of EALF. Although English is spoken as a foreign language in Spain, Spain-based scholars have experienced the Bologna process initiated by the European Commission in 2007 to promote researcher mobility, transnational knowledge flows and academic internationalization through bi-literacy in both English and Spanish (Muresan & Pérez-Llantada, 2014). An increasing number of scholars, though bilingual, are more familiar with the organization and structures of English research articles (Bocanegra-Valle, 2014). By contrast, Korea-based scholars have not gone through the same experiences of bi-literacy and their command of academic English is comparatively weak compared with their Spanish counterparts (Cho, 2009). It would be worth exploring further in the future why the percentage of English articles by Korea-based scholars has remained stable while that of their Spanish counterparts keeps rising and whether different degrees of familiarity with the language usage and structure of English articles have played a role.

Conclusion and implications

This study suggests that both the local language and English are used by Spain- and Korea-based scholars in knowledge dissemination. While the local

language is still the most frequently selected language for research publication, the use of English is on the rise, particularly in Spain. Considering such factors as national research assessment and promotion policies, language competence, research networks and individual ideological aspects, I have also attempted to explain the reasons.

The concurrent use of English and the local language in research publication is consistent with the ecology of multilingualism, linguistic diversity, or coexistence of international English and local languages in presenting and disseminating knowledge (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2008). Such an ecology represents a way to strike a balance between criticizing EALF as linguistic and ideological imperialism and taking it for granted that English is the only legitimate language for knowledge dissemination. This compromise is in favour of multilingualism as a source of richness and treating different research traditions as complementary imperatives (House, 2003; López-Navarro, Moreno & Ángel Quintanilla, 2015). From the perspective of Fitzsimons (2000), promoting multilingualism represents a pluralistic vision of globalization where local languages and cultures thrive, contributing to a diversified world, instead of a unitary vision where a new social order is created to unify the world and consequently some cultures are dominant over others. Schluer (2014) also believes that maintaining and promoting academic multilingualism seems to be a more recommendable solution than 'English only'.

To encourage and maintain a sustainable coexistence of English and local languages, two proposals can be made. Firstly, national research assessment and promotion policies need to be changed to place equal emphasis on publications in local languages and English. Scholars can decide in which language they should disseminate their findings depending on the nature of their research, conventions of their disciplines, and intended audience, instead of being driven by the pressure to maximize the reward. Secondly, scholarly journals may consider presenting papers in both English and local languages to promote their coexistence, for example, in the form of bilingual abstracts, key words and extended summaries, or parallel presentation of papers through translations (Agost, 2015; Zheng & Gao, 2016).

Note

1 The percentages in Table 3 represent the proportion of participants, most of whom have selected more than one reason. In the first row, 31/93% means that

31 of the 33 Spain-based authors (93%) have selected the first reason. 6/55% means that 6 of the 11 Korea-based authors (55%) have chosen the first reason. Most of the participants have also selected other reasons. If each of them had selected only one reason, the percentages would add up to 100%.

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