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The Discourse on Language in International Relations

Abstract: Little has changed since Stanley Hoffman declared International Relations (IR) an American Social Science and John Hobson highlighted the “lack of value-free and universalist theories of inter-state relations.” Since the 1970s in particular, with the end of the Cold War and developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), the discipline of IR has faced major challenges to its core conceptual and theoretical framework. Despite several systemic changes and the emergence of a new environment in international relations, the field is still heavily reliant on the old, inadequate and/or value-laden concepts of the early twentieth century. Moreover, the discipline has been overloaded by a set of Eurocentric and ethnocentric concepts which lead IR students to question its international character. It is debatable whether this is due to incompetence or misuse of language. This article aims to deconstruct mainstream and hegemonic concepts in IR in a constructive manner. This paper utilizes a qualitative method of discourse analysis to re-examine the relationship between the use of language and context, often taken for granted, which limits the understanding of the concepts used in the discipline of IR to promote innovation and progress in the field.

Key words: language, intellectual hegemony, periphery, multiculturalism, International Relations (IR)

Introduction

The language of every discipline has often depended on its unflinching ontology. Ontology is the idea of being, which influences the process of knowing. Ontology refers to the concrete referents of an explanatory discourse (Gaukroger, 1978, p. 39; Bhashkar, 1986, p. 36). This explanatory discourse, which is ‘structured,’ conceptualizes key concepts and theories which seek to explain the phenomena of the world (Dessler, 1989, pp. 441–473). In fact, Hartnack, Locke, Hume and Berkley debated naïve-realism, and their conflicting arguments raise questions on discourse and language. The meaning of language transcended mere *naming* and assumed a conceptual position amidst a discourse of ‘perception.’ Perception is not only part of the *object problem* but also part of the *subject problem* (Justus, 1977, pp. 239–246). In his classical work, *Critique of Judgment*, Immanuel Kant argues that human thought is as relevant as concepts. Interestingly, Kant did not disagree with Locke, and further argued that knowledge is achieved through human cognitive faculties and experiences. This includes both ‘innate’ (internal) conceptions and the (external) enculturation of an individual as a member of society. It is these knowledge conceptions which drive thoughts regarding understanding and predicting the future of the world.

The nature of the world is understood by humans through rational (*a priori*) and empirical (*a posteriori*) epistemology. Interestingly, Kant argues that there can never be pure synthetic *a priori* cognition without an *a priori* form of intuition (Guyer, Wood, 2001, pp. 6–86). This is clearly articulated in the Kantian popular maxim that “concept without intuition is empty; intuition without concept is blind” (Cassirer, 1994; Guyer, Wood, 2001). Interestingly, language is the source of and a medium through which an individual’s perception of their real conditions, phenomena and the nature of the world is expressed. This expression transcends concepts, ideas, logic, science, emotions and myths to include a larger cultural space (Cassirer, 1994, p. 44).

The dichotomy of language involves a narrative and a conceptual element rooted in ideas. This idea, according to Kenneth Waltz, is “fundamental to science” (Waltz, 1979: Preface). From Maurice Mandelbaum (1965, pp. 33–66), Quentin Skinner (1969, p. 53), Martin Wight (1966, p. 20), Stanley Hoffman (2017, p. 41–60), John Hobson (2012) to Lucian M. Ashworth (2014, p. 1), the issues of language use and interpretation of narratives, history, concepts and theories have assumed a central position in International Relations (IR). Following these scholars are non-Western (periphery) scholars who have also critically exposed the inapplicability of some theories, concepts, paradigms, epistemologies and meta-narratives to contexts other than those in which they were developed. This phenomenon is obvious, especially in relation to the conceptualization of foreign policy of nation-states and the emergence of cyber politics. This paper does not take the position of either a postcolonial or western narrative; it rather seeks to argue that both are guilty of being defensive, conservative and divisive. This intellectually hegemonic approach does not make the discipline ‘International’ enough.

IR evolves through space and time in a progressive global world. Therefore, it is logical to argue that comprehending IR is accomplished under the *conditions of space and time* (Cassirer, 1994, p. 62). IR theory in the cultural space produces conscious and unconscious ideologies ritualized into stories to seem true. These stories are what Cynthia Weber refers to as *Myth* (Weber, 2001, pp. 6–10). Ernst Cassirer describes language and myth as interrelated (Cassirer, 1944). Thus, the language of every discipline involves a certain myth, which ‘apprehends,’ ‘comprehends’ and ‘presents’ the growth of discourse in the discipline (Guyer, Wood, 2001). To paraphrase Gaukroger “IR is ‘in’ space and time, but space and time are not ‘in’ IR” (Gaukroger, 1978, p. 56). Thus, concepts and theories in IR are not timeless and static, but rather subject to the vicissitudes of change and transformation. Ironically, since its emergence in Aberystwyth in 1919, scholars have argued that the discourse of IR has largely been ‘Western-oriented,’ to the point of excluding non-Western thinking of Africa and Asia. Exclusively Western thinking on IR rather constrains our worldview, and also shapes not only concepts but the discourse which facilitates our understanding of the discipline. The argument is that the ‘Western’ ontological and epistemological discourse of concepts is not enough to determine the reality of IR discourse. This phenomenon presents a theoretical, historical, ethical and cultural gap in IR. Hence, the need to discuss and review concepts in the discourse of IR is clear. Interestingly, some scholars have questioned not only the relevance of the main theories of IR, but the applicability of major concepts such as ‘state,’ ‘power,’ ‘security’ and ‘self-help’ to non-Western societies (Tickner, Waeber, 2009, p. 1). For instance, the

essence and survival of the present nation-state order and its centrality as the basis of IR is currently being debated due to the dynamics and changes in the international system.

Furthermore, the 'America first' assumption of Trumpian politics has provoked a lively and open debate between two competing forces in the international political arena. The 'globalists' defend the established order against the 'quasi ultra-nationalists' in the current discourse of international politics. One of the focal points of this debate is centered on language, where cynicism is deemed as politically correct. The language of *political correctness* has assumed a critical space in the political, social, economic, diplomatic and ideological language in the West and most European countries. Opponents of political correctness have accused liberals of being politically correct to hide the negative impacts of globalist policies which trample on the very foundations of the existing states and their sovereignty.

Outside of the ideological debate is the controversial domain of Foreign Policy (FP) of nation-states which consist of multiple ethnic groups and states within what is called the modern nation-state system. In some instances, the whole foreign policy of a nation-state is designed by and limited to a royal family name or dominant ethnic group within the state. Thus, for instance the FP of the Kingdom of Saudi-Arabia Arabia, Russian FP, Turkish FP, Jewish FP, Armenian FP, German FP and Spanish FP raise the questions of language appropriateness and reflectiveness in understanding foreign policy better by IR as a discipline. The question is whose foreign policy? For whom? And by whom? 'National'¹ interest here becomes vague, abstract and ambiguous, which feeds to the anarchical system of IR through the forces of parochial ethnic nationalism. The diversity of the forces of ethnic national interest within a nation-state critically challenge not only the Westphalian nation-state system, but also some of the established theories of IR. It is worthwhile to argue that a well-understood common language would help to shape IR.

Paradoxically, many scholars argue that the current wave of globalization will diminish the world's subtle ethnic tensions which emerged from a bitter past of violence, religious wars, ethnic cleansing, genocide, slavery, colonialism and all forms of imperialism. Interestingly, in the twenty-first century, all forms of terrorism, migration, Islamophobia, ethnic nationalism and ethnic tensions across the globe have reverberated in the debate of ethnicism, ethnocentrism, religious extremism, racism and identity politics, which are all shaping global international relations and geopolitics. Thus, the language of IR must evolve to reflect the changing world rather than a sect, group, state or ethnicity.

Equally important is to gradually include the language of cyberspace as a political genre in IR. Cyberspace is wide, vague, and discreet. The level of anarchy is intense and complex (Akyeşişmen, 2016, p. 38). Thus, bringing into focus different disciplines in the confluence of IR with a series of emerging concepts, paradigms, methodologies, epistemologies and theories which ultimately seek to challenge the existing discourse is fundamental in understanding IR. In today's cyberspace world, the actions of a single person (a hacker or cyberbeing) can escalate conflicts through digital media and even alter the foreign policy of a state and relations with other states. In this way, cyberspace is beginning to occupy a greater space in the future of IR, possibly altering actors in the system.

¹ 'National' is used here as 'ethnic national.'

This paper focuses first on the discourse in IR, then provides a theoretical framework to examine the language of this discourse. In the third section, it focuses on some claims put forward by post-colonial studies and some conceptualizations of IR. It ends with some analysis and suggestions for making IR a more inclusive and universal discipline.

Literature Review

The literature on the discourse regarding language in mainstream IR has always been limited, fragmented, scattered and vague. This paper draws its inspiration from how scholars have attempted to understand and interpret the meaning and the structure of IR as a field of study, its concepts and the nature of language employed from the works of Hellman (2011, pp. 1–28), Holsti (1964, pp. 179–194), Amitav Acharya (2014, pp. 647–659) Mandelbaum (1965, pp. 33–66), Quentin Skinner (1969, p. 53), Martin Wight (1966, p. 20), Stanley Hoffman (1977, p. 41; 2017, pp. 41–60), John Hobson (2012) and Lucian M. Ashworth (2014, p. 1). Nevertheless, it is important to mention that the theories labelled as post-colonialist consider the narrative of IR as being exclusive. The pessimism with which poststructuralists treat mainstream IR narratives and theories is exposed by the same range of arguments. The critical evaluations of IR by neo-Marxist or Gramscian perspective and other reflective theorists suggest that a language gap exists.

The subject of this paper is to challenge scholars by claiming that the ontology of problematizing IR narratives as nationalistic, ethnocentric, racist, regionalist, and imperialistic is rooted in language context. Language is approached not as a distinct element but in terms of its conceptual usages and the meaning espoused in the field of IR. In fact, language is at the heart of all debate, as it forms the basic content and material of ideology (Fairclough, 1995, p. 43). There are different ideas included in the form of ideologies, which are deeply rooted in theories in the field of IR. Theories, according to Kenneth Waltz (1979), are fundamental to science. Therefore, there are contradictions in the meanings of words and terms used in theories. The meaning of terms such as power, force, pole, relations actor, stability, structure and system varies in terms of context, subject, persons and approach (Waltz, 1979, pp. 11–14). Of course, language usage in terms of time and space is subject to change. Thus, understanding and focusing on language in IR while developing a new approach to foreign policy as a result of intense globalization, cosmopolitanism and cyberspace is appropriate. Notwithstanding, the debate around IR as a discipline on its own, a field of political science or multi-disciplinary science results from the fact that the linguistic term used to describe the discipline itself has produced an even greater dispute and continues to challenge many IR scholars.

It should be noted that studies of IR have often drawn from the works of Western scholars, such as Plato's *Republic* and *Apology*, Cicero's *On Duties* and *De re publica*, Grotius' 1625 *Jure Belli et Pacis (On the Law of War and Peace)*, Aristotle's *Nicomacheans Ethics* and *Politics*, Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Machiavelli's *The Prince* and *Discourses on Livy*, Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, and Kant's *Principles of Politics* and the famous 1795 essay *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*. Few works from the non-Western world are considered influential in mainstream IR.

Thus, scholars such as Kautilya, Sun Tzu, Ibn Khaldun, Jawaharlal Nehru, Franz Fanon or Kwame Nkrumah, whose theoretical or practical influence on the field could be fundamental to comprehending concepts, theories and methodology in IR, should be studied in the West as well. These scholars' approach to the use of language is quite different. The outcome is that the wider and more inclusive the IR discipline becomes, the less it can be accused of being 'colonialized or colonial' (Jones, 2006, pp. 23–38), or of lacking impartiality and universality or internationality. It is axiomatic that the appraisal of language in the discourse of IR is relevant for the future development of the discipline.

Arguments on Language in International Relations

To understand the relevance of language, major arguments and the discourse on language in IR, one needs to appreciate the connotations and meaning of the word 'international.' In this regard, Lucian Ashworth critically examined the *international* nature of IR through periodization and identifying major developments in world history. IR goes back a long time, drawing parallel references from distant civilizations, and largely draws from the foundational writings of Kautilya, David Hume and Machiavelli. Interestingly, nations have always referred socially and politically to the Greek period, to Europe's political and economic development in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, then to the colonial domination in 1880–1900, and the subsequent inter-war period which paved the way for the IR discipline (Ashworth, 2014, pp. 8–9).

It should be noted that, when referring to the different periods and the evolution of IR as discipline taking into consideration history, methodology and theory, the understanding of IR provides a distinct ontological, epistemological and methodological approach which is different from the way IR is studied and practiced today. The 'international' today consists of a complex symbiotic system of economic, political, cultural, social, and ideological aspects in virtual world of cyberspace. In this world, the nature and structure of *Man, State and War* (Waltz, 2001) keep evolving amidst the critical role of a new virtual reality that cyberspace creates today in the international system. We therefore agree with Schmidt that concepts are not timeless, but rather should be understood from different perspectives by different societies that provide us with the opportunity to discover ourselves in relation to one another (Schmidt, 1998). For this reason, this paper re-examines and studies language in IR in order to further the progress of the discipline. For a more balanced discipline that could not be accused of ethnocentric and anti-imperialistic driven perspectives, we argue for a new approach towards the language of IR.

It is very interesting to observe that, when non-Western scholars of IR accuse their Western counterparts of bias and discriminatory narratives in either theory or historiography of the discipline, some scholars aggressively respond by suggesting that the discipline is built and developed on Western ideals. As a result, such arguments which seek to criticize this narrative, thought or language are not valid in the context of the academic discipline of IR. If so, the discipline requires a new name, because their arguments diminish the 'internationality' of the discipline. The pursuit of domination, cooperation and fight for survival is present in every nation in the world. Thus, IR scholars, particularly in the West, must leave their comfort zone to study other cultural areas. Ole Waever

et al. (2009, p. 2) observe that: "One ought to have some sense of how the discipline looks on a global scale, but so far there has been no such overview available."

It is interesting to note that a majority of the world population are not affected by international politics. In fact, most people are not even aware of any international 'world order.' What makes this possible are geographical and cultural differences. Tylor (1871) argues that culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" is relative, unique and dynamic. These capabilities include language and thought, which shapes socioeconomic and political life. Indeed, this means that there is an inextricable link between culture, society and language. Although sociologically these concepts might seem mutually inclusive, peoples' acquisition and use of language is mutually exclusive and relative. Language here is used in a sociological sense, related to how IR discourse affects people.

The discourse on language in most disciplines has often ignited a scholarly debate which poses difficult challenges not just to the theory, methodology and historiography of any study area, but also questions related to the relevance of its pedagogical, epistemological and ontological existence in academia. Thus, many scholars of academic disciplines chose to ignore the subject or are less focused on the language of the discipline.

Psychologists have often debated the issue of language based on the relationship between an individual's personality and thoughts (Crosby, 2010, pp. 15–25), while sociologists have examined the relations between language and the society's values, anthropologists have focused on language and culture, and political scientists have studied language and politics. Anthropologists have begun to question the language of the field, arguing that the use of terms such as 'primitive' (Hsu, 1964, pp. 169–178), 'tribe,' 'fetish' and 'heathen' to describe earlier, simpler societies is inappropriate.

Furthermore, in a related area of study, there have been efforts by Afro-centrists to deconstruct what they perceive as a 'Eurocentric narrative' of African history, also questioning the language of African history in the decolonization period. These African revisionist scholars' arguments went further, seeking to discredit historical hypothesis and methodologies. A growing number of contributions have emerged from this in African literature which have shaped African discourse, culminating in the development of African and world history studies.

Aristotle argued that there had always been a relationship between politics and humans, and part of human nature is 'language,' or 'speech.' Thus, the central premise of this paper is that language should be broadly viewed in the context of international and global studies. In order to study the discourse on the language of IR, the concepts, narratives, and discourse from non-Western cultures should be considered in its theoretical approaches and be included in the objectives of scholars to improve the discourse of IR as a discipline. Academic culture is dynamic, and the dynamism of language today must reflect the thought-provoking discourse and trajectory of the discipline of IR. Indeed, the speed with which the international system keeps fluctuating in a more complex world exposes the shortfalls of IR as a limited field. It is against this backdrop that Barnett et al. postulate that the discipline is shifting "from International Relations to Global Society" (Reus-Smith, Snidal, 2010). A 'global society' discipline without globally accepted language and discourse undermine IR's worldwide prestige as an academic discipline.

Theoretical Framework

Locke argued that “[l]anguage is the conduit through which people share their thoughts and intentions and thereby acquire the knowledge, customs and values of those around them;” it “allows knowhow to be shared at low cost” (Proudfoot, 2009, pp. 163–183). Some scholars argue that a person’s ability to understand the world is based on their conception of the language in which they enculturate. The bigger the limitation the more it affects their worldview. Since IR is mostly conducted within the space of Western languages, it is fair to claim that majority of the world narrative is either misunderstood or less understood due to language limitations. Again, the use of rhetoric has shown that language is not only a tool for people to react to their socio-economic and political reality but also a determiner of state behavior. Language as a form of ideology influences state thought, which is its identity (Seargeant, 2009, pp. 345–359).

This paper refers to the Whorfian thesis which emphasizes the three ways language influences society. The paper applies this thesis in the international context instead of individual space since people can also play a very important role in the society in which they interact, socialize and relate. Firstly, language determines the thinking of the individual, the state and the society. Secondly, the perception of the person who is a member of international society is greatly influenced by language. Finally, people document themselves through language (e.g. influencing their memory) (Whorf, 1940, pp. 227–31). The idea of IR in this context is that it is a language (ideology), while much of its thought (identity), narrative and documentation is driven by Western channels and media in the international society. In fact, international society, which is sometimes interpreted as an international community, comprises only Western countries and their allies. This has influence on the legitimacy of governments, political leaders and elections in the eyes of the wider world. The recent report on *Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid*, commissioned and published by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and launched in Beirut, was rejected by the United Nations. However, if such a report in the language of IR was delivered by the European Union, it would have carried much more weight and most probably would have been accepted by the UN. This prompted the ESCWA leader Rima Khalaf to resign (Al Jazeera, 2017).

A Post-Colonial Perspective on International Relations

International Relations (IR), which seeks to study the socio-political, economic, cultural, religion and diplomatic power relations among people across states on different continents, should reflect the entire global story within the ambit of international community. Unfortunately, the language in this field of study uses concepts, terminologies and/or narratives inappropriately, and therefore lacks the appeal of internationality. Thus, many scholars brand such narratives, terms and concepts as racist, ethnocentric, xenophobic and, to some extent, orientalist. For Tickner and Waever, the “discipline of International Relations (IR) is ironically not ‘international’ at all” (Tickner, Waever, 2009, p. 2) due to the fact that even theorizing is American, or rather European.

As a global discipline, IR should be a 'complex whole' whose theories, concepts and narratives should be inclusive rather than exclusive of non-Western discourse. This brings to question the discourse in the discipline of IR. Afro-centrist and post-colonial study inspired scholars such as Franz Fanon (Goodey, 2001), Kwame Nkrumah (1964) and Edward Said (1978), who presented some perspectives of the Gramscian concept of cultural hegemony. They observed that the Western marginalization of 'Subaltern states' or non-Western states found within the domain of the discourse on language in IR is one of the machinations through which Western powers advance their political and ideological dominance to ensure their survival. Even when the dynamics of the international system has proved most theories, concepts and meta-narratives in IR to be inadequate, Western scholars overtly and persistently employ the same old language in a fast changing international system in an attempt to integrate it into their conceptual frameworks (Brukan, 1978, p. 10).

Thus, there is a greater misuse and misappropriation of terms and concepts which affects the narrative and analysis of international development. Since the ontology of narratives is built on faulty concepts, there is much to be concerned about in the discipline.

The Concept of the 'Tribe'

Terms such as 'tribe' are often used to refer to non-Western ethnic groups and cultures such as Arabs, Africans, Latin Americans and Asians, despite the observations of scholars that this is a misleading stereotype. Lowe argues in *Talking about 'tribe': moving from stereotypes to analysis* that the use of the term in academic discourse perpetuates the idea that people's identities (especially African culture, politics and conflicts) to some extent exhibit 'primitiveness' (Lowe, 1997). Nevertheless, neither Arabs nor the Latino people of the Amazon still live in the forest and rely on hunting and gathering. The argument is that, depending on the context, alternative words such as 'nation,' 'ethnic group' and 'people,' should be used extensively in the IR narrative.

In particular, scholars of African studies argue that the word 'tribe' continues to be misused to represent ethnic groups which are not static and fixed in the past, but are evolving in terms of their identities, social dynamism, political progress and economic development. For instance, the Akans population in Ghana is around 12 million, which is far more than the population of European countries such as Belgium, Greece, Hungary, Sweden, Switzerland and Austria. However, we do not use the word 'tribe' to label these European ethnic groups in the countries above. Using the word 'ethnic group' instead of 'tribe' to refer to Akan people of Ghana is more appropriate. Despite enormous development in places such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the word 'tribe' is still frequently employed in IR discourse to describe Arab-Bedouins. Ironically, such a term is not used to designate any Western or European enclave where ethnic tensions are even more rife, such as Ukraine, Russia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Armenia, Georgia and Spain.

The changing nature of the world has not only transformed people's lives across the globe but has shaped the dynamic nature of the 'World Order' in different times and, to a large extent, continues to shape the discourse on language in many disciplines, including IR. The transatlantic slave trade (1645–1850), the colonial domination of Africa around the 1880s, and the 1950s struggles for independence ushered in proxy conflicts

in the form of military interventions and political instability in the 1970s as a result of the Cold War. Africa has moved on dramatically since the 'lost decade' (1980–1990) in terms of democracy and development, yet the discourse on language in IR has changed only slightly. Further, despite the growing wealth and immense development of Latin American, Arab and Asian countries, whose societies are mostly non-Western, these regions still fall victim of the misapplication of terms used to designate their respective countries in a derogatory sense in terms of ethnicity in IR discourse.

The Term 'The Third World'

As indicated in the above discussion, non-Western labels for either people or territories are mostly discriminatory, Eurocentric and ethnocentric. A typical case is the historical construction of non-Western states as the 'Third World,' 'Developing World,' and the later global classification of 'Global North' and 'South,' and now the idea of 'majority' and 'minority.' The examination of the international system changing as a result of the influence of new emerging powers such as Brazil, South Africa, India and China in the political economy of the world raises a new debate on the relevance of the world dichotomy. The concept of 'Third World' was first coined by Alfred Sauvy in 1952 in the article entitled, *Three Worlds, One Planet* where he drew the world's attention to a 'Third World' beside the 'East' (Second) and the 'West' (First World).

Over the years the concept has become popular to the extent of assuming a new plethora of synonyms such as "underdeveloped world', 'developing countries', 'less developed countries,' 'former colonies,' 'Afro-Asian and Latin American countries,' 'the South' (of the North-South division) and so on" (Muni, 1979). It is interesting to note that in 1955, at the Bandung Conferences, the term 'Third World' was understood in a different context by the Afro-Asian bloc as not just carrying negative associations such as "political powerlessness, economic poverty and social marginalization" (Thomas, 1999, p. 225) but rather a 'Third Force,' a kind of counter-defensive force consisting of Non-Aligned Movement member states, formally under colonial domination, against the East-West Cold War dichotomy.

Paradoxically, in the current international order none of these concepts is appropriately applicable, whether geographically, economically, or politically. Geographically, Rafael X. Reuveny and William R. Thompson in *The North-South Divide and International Studies: A Symposium* argue that some so-called 'First World states,' such as Australia and New Zealand, were located south of the equator, whereas Russia is in the North. Again, it is also misleading to classify non-Western States as 'poor' when some of the Western countries in the global North labelled as 'rich' are themselves fraught with an economic crises, conflicts and/or poverty. Imperatively, such a conceptual dichotomy of the world divided into North/South, developed/developing is not sustainable amidst increasing sudden changes in the international system. Thus, IR scholars must concentrate on developing a universally acceptable discourse on language to address the conceptual problems in relation to language in the discipline. It is in light of this that post-colonial and subaltern IR scholars question discriminated narratives in IR. Ole Wæver et al. argue that "scholars in the discipline must look up to converging two crucial neglected

areas of critical importance: criticism and disciplinary self-reflection at the core and the periphery's revolt against IR concepts, language epistemology and perspectives" (Tickner, Waever, 2009). In fact, this could only be achieved if the language of the discipline were universalized in a more global context.

Terrorism

One may ask, what the relationship between a criminal act by a person, or a group of people, and the word 'terrorism' is. An assassination is an assassination, a killing is a killing – is terrorism now assuming the status of a criminal act? At what point in time do we draw the line between a criminal act and terror? Does one's ethnic/religious/regional affiliation change the crime into an act of terrorism? These questions continue to enrage many people, due to the inappropriateness of the use of this term to describe criminal acts. Many discerning scholars are now questioning if indeed there is a war on terror, because of the vagueness of the term. Many scholars, including Western academics, have also accused the Western media of championing the phantom of terrorism. They argue for the discontinuation of the term in the media, and discuss criminals rather than terrorists as a way to deal with crime. A murderer is often euphemistically labelled as terrorist, as a way to glorify them and provide them with a justification for their actions, thus drawing further attention to them.

For the past sixteen years, following the 9/11 attacks in the United States, the term 'terrorism' has received more attention and is identified as a negative concept in academic, professional and practical usages. The issue about terrorism is not its definition but its usage, since the concept defies definitions. For the purpose of achieving the objective of this study, the understanding of terrorism by Christopher Mitchell et al. (1986) is adopted. He argued that "terrorism by the state (or non-state actors) involves deliberate coercion and violence (or the threat thereof) directed at some victim, with the intention of inducing extreme fear in some target observers who identify with that victim in such a way that they perceive themselves as potential future victims. In this way, they are forced to consider altering their behavior in some manner desired by the actor" (pp. 1–2).

'By all means necessary' (Essayworld.com, 2007), the realpolitik ideology is used by interested domestic and international actors as a means of 'self-help' to achieve their aims. However, when non-states actors use these tactics to draw the attention of governments to address their socioeconomic and political dissatisfaction, they are branded as devils and traitors. In the same vein, 'peripheral countries' in the 'South' resisting core (North) imperial subjugation have been labelled terrorists. Interestingly, these resistant groups often consider themselves freedom fighters. Tickner and Weaver (2009) argue that "the invisibility of a large portion of global warfare makes it easy to delegitimize southern resistance by labelling it as terrorism and to place it on a lower moral scale than Western war and policing" (Barkawi, Laffey, 2006, pp. 329–330). Thus, it is easy to overlook atrocities and war crimes committed by Western countries against non-Western countries, which does not provide us a complete and a comprehensive understanding of IR. In making history of the world, we need the acknowledgment of European and non-European *mutual constitution* (Ibid.).

Conclusion

The above discussion demonstrates that language is an expression of thinking in terms of conceptions of the world. Once the discourse is skewed one way or another, an alternative critical discourse, intellectual advancement and knowledge production will be compromised, and alternative paradigms and concepts will be neglected to the detriment of the intellectual development of the discipline. In the same vein, parochial positions motivated by emotions, either ethnocentric or anti-imperial tendencies, are anathema to the development of the discipline. Therefore, a central position devoid of subjectivity needs to be taken to ensure the advancement of the discourse on language in IR.

Language should be broadly viewed in the context of international and global studies. In order to study the language of IR, the concept, narratives, use of rhetoric and the application of language in its theoretical approaches should be included in the objectives of scholars of IR to improve language use in the discipline. Academic culture is dynamic, and the dynamism of language today must reflect the thought-provoking discourse and trajectory of the discipline of IR. Indeed, the speed with which the international system keeps fluctuating in a more complex world exposes the shortfalls of IR as a limited field. It is against this backdrop that Barnett et al. postulate that the discipline of IR shift “from International Relations to Global Society” (Reus-Smith, Snidal, 2010). A ‘global society’ discipline without a globally accepted language and discourse deprives IR of its worldwide prestige as an academic discipline.

The world has moved on subtly from a unipolar to a more multipolar world, driven towards a dynamic world order, and this is expected to influence the discourse on language in many disciplines including IR. It is worthwhile to note that tremendous changes have taken place in international systems since the turn of the twenty-first century, yet the discourse of IR on language has only slightly changed. Furthermore, despite the growing wealth and immense development of Latin American, Arab and Asian countries, most states from these regions (mostly non-Western societies) still fall victim of the misapplication of terms used to describe their respective countries in terms of ethnicity in the discourse of the discipline. Thus, IR scholars must concentrate on developing a universally acceptable discourse to address the conceptual problems in relation to the language of the discipline.

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Dyskurs nad językiem w stosunkach międzynarodowych

Streszczenie

Niewiele się zmieniło od czasu, gdy Stanley Hoffman ogłosił, że stosunki międzynarodowe (IR) są amerykańską nauką społeczną, a John Hobson podkreślił „brak bezwartościowych i uniwersalistycznych teorii relacji międzypaństwowych.” W szczególności od 1970 r., wraz z końcem zimnej wojny oraz rozwojem technologii informacyjnych i komunikacyjnych (ICT), dyscyplina IR stanęła przed poważnymi wyzwaniami w stosunku do swoich podstawowych ram koncepcyjnych i teoretycznych. Pomimo szeregu zmian systemowych i pojawienia się nowego środowiska w stosunkach międzynarodowych, dziedzina ta nadal jest silnie uzależniona od starych, nieodpowiednich i/lub obciążonych wartościową koncepcji z początku XX wieku. Co więcej, dyscyplina została przeciążona przez zestaw eurocentrycznych i etnocentrycznych koncepcji, które prowadzą studentów IR do kwestionowania jej międzynarodowego charakteru. Można dyskutować, czy wynika to z niekompetencji czy niewłaściwego używania języka. Artykuł ten ma na celu konstruktywną dekonstrukcję głównych i hegemonicznych koncepcji w IR. W pracy wykorzystano jakościową metodę analizy dyskursu, aby ponownie zbadać związek między użyciem języka i kontekstu, często uważaną za pewnik, co ogranicza rozumienie pojęć stosowanych w dyscyplinie IR w celu promowania innowacji i postępu w tej dziedzinie.

Słowa kluczowe: język, hegemonia intelektualna, peryferia, wielokulturowość, stosunki międzynarodowe (IR)

