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Coda. Toward the Construction of Counter-hegemonic Structures of Knowledge in Academic Research Publishing in the Hemisphere: A Call for Linguistic, Epistemic, and Ontic Plurality

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The editors of this volume invite readers to reflect on their own beliefs and practices when it comes to the degrees of pluralities cited, and this invitation affords me a way to begin my coda with a story of the founding of a peer-reviewed plurilingual e-journal of translation studies based at the Collège universitaire Glendon of York University. The journal was the brainchild of María Constanza Guzmán, a distinguished scholar of translation studies and Latin American studies, and it was named, at my suggestion, *TUSAAJI* (n.d.), an Inuktitut word composed of the elements "tusa-" (to listen) "-a-" (intently) and "-ji" (agent), so "the one who listens intently." This word refers to (oral) interpreters and, by extension, translators of written texts. The relevance to the theme of this volume is the journal's distinctive commitment to plurilingualism as stated in its invitation to prospective contributors:[1]

> We invite papers in Spanish, English, French, Portuguese, or any other language of the Americas that deal with this issue's theme. Given TUSAAJI's hemispheric focus, papers discussing the experience of translation in the Americas from this perspective are welcome; however, this issue is not restricted

1 Others might use the term "multilingualism" for this meaning, reserving "plurilingualism" for individual text production in which several codes are used and/or fused within the same text or oral performance.

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> geographically so submissions about all languages and regions will be considered. In addition to scholarly articles, we also invite submissions of visual art and of translations in any genre, and from/into any of the languages of the journal.

TUSAAJI's openness to scholarly papers 'in any language of the Americas' as well as to multi-modal submissions and translations (we publish both the original and the translation) is in keeping with the spirit of this volume's commitment to plurilingual perspectives, plural positionalities and plural onto-epistemologies. However, there's another aspect to this story which is extremely relevant to the concerns of this volume: TUSAAJI is Open Access.

In these two respects, *TUSAAJI* is markedly different from the mainstream trend—referred to by Altbach and de Wit (2024) as a "broken publishing ecosystem"—which since the 1980s has achieved a dominating position—a hegemony—over the world's academies and the global production of scientific and academic knowledge. The key characteristic for our purposes is that this hegemonic publishing industry operates using metrics biased in favor of global English. This hegemon is essentially an oligopoly of five corporate publishing conglomerates: Elsevier, Wiley-Blackwell, Sage, Routledge, and Taylor & Francis, each of which report annual profits of over $2 billion (Larivière et al., 2015). The metrics these globalized corporations use to measure academic quality and impact are biased toward articles written in English. Furthermore, since more and more universities are becoming obsessed with their own world ranking, these anglo-biased metrics have downstream effects, strongly conditioning the Academy's assessment of the quality (and by extension the chances of funding support) of faculty members' research publications. It is a cloud market-driven world knowledge creation and circulation system whose parasitical effect is to consolidate the hegemony of global English; meanwhile, the world's universities, as nodes of the system, hurtle dangerously toward linguistic singularity.

But not without a counter-hegemonic reply, such as one put forward by a group of European academics based at Leiden, who in 2015 in *Nature* published the Leiden Manifesto, which proposed 10 principles to counteract the tyranny of excessive reliance on metrics in the world's universities (Hicks & Wouters, 2015). Their third principle is relevant to our discussion:

> **3) Protect excellence in locally relevant research.** In many parts of the world, research excellence is equated with English-language publication. Spanish law, for example, states the desirability of Spanish scholars publishing in high-impact journals. The impact factor is calculated for journals indexed

> in the U.S.-based and still mostly English-language Web of Science. These biases are particularly problematic in the social sciences and humanities, in which research is more regionally and nationally engaged. Many other fields have a national or regional dimension—for instance, HIV epidemiology in sub-Saharan Africa.
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> Pluralism and societal relevance tend to be suppressed to create papers of interest to the gatekeepers of high impact: English-language journals. The Spanish sociologists highly cited in the Web of Science have worked on abstract models or study data from the United States. Lost is the specificity of sociologists in high-impact Spanish-language papers: topics such as local labor law, family health care for the elderly or immigrant employment. Metrics built on high-quality non-English literature would serve to identify and reward excellence in locally relevant research.

What the Leiden Manifesto group are arguing from the example of the Spanish sociologists is especially relevant to the Quebec French-, Latin American Spanish-, and Brazilian Portuguese-speaking regions and nations of our hemisphere, where too the perniciousness of the English-language academic publishing hegemony is especially acute in social science and humanities disciplines "in which research is more regionally and nationally engaged." (Hicks & Wouters, 2015, p. 430)

The Manifesto's observation of the loss of specificity in local topics (Hicks & Wouters, 2015) is crucially important, since it relates to an important feature of the globalization of English, analyzed well by Norman Fairclough as *re-scaling* of non-global topics and the languages in which research is carried out on them:

> Globalization is not just a matter of the construction of a global scale; it also is a matter of new relations between the global scale and other scales and wider changes in the set of scales and relations between them caused by the construction of a global scale (Fairclough, 2006, p. 55).

The re-scaling effect of an aggressively globalized language such as English on the other languages of the hemisphere is not a sudden totalizing effect, but one that proceeds gradually by gaining a foothold in specific domains of commercial interest to the global hegemon, which, in turn, serve as vectors for gradual penetration, market sharing followed by market dominance, with

academic publishing being one of the most vulnerable domains.

The notion of construction of counter-hegemonic structures to oppose a hegemon derives from Antonio Gramsci (Cox & Shilthuis, 2012; Gramsci, 1995). The main Gramscian strategy for our purposes is the *war of position* in which alternative structures, value orientations, and principles are set up and communicated through appropriate networks creating an alternative informational ecosystem to undermine and delegitimize the authority of the hegemon.

This counter-hegemonic structure and network exists in Latin America and the Caribbean: the Open Access Movement, committed to digital activism, community media, and sustainable communication throughout the region. According to Maximiliano Salatino, Professor at UNCuyo in Argentina and member of the Research Program on Academic Dependence in Latin America (PIDAAL), this is a war of position to counter the effects of the global publishing hegemon: academic dependence, scientific imperialism, eurocentrism, and the coloniality of knowledge.

Salatino's (2020) thesis is that the corporatization of academic publishing and management of databases is linked to the explosion of indexation of quantitative indicators determining the "quality" of scientific research as well as tenure and promotion decisions at universities. Even more pernicious, though, is the commercialization of scientific publishing globally through the oligopolitical system denies regional and local communities from having access to this research. It is a classic mainstream/periphery dichotomy, and what is needed is a critical approach such as that which underlies the Open Access Movement in Latin America.

Salatino describes the development of the Open Access Movement as follows:

> The expansion of Open Access in Latin America has been made possible due to the activism of researchers and intellectuals who fought to make visible the scientific advances produced in Latin American countries. This work has been supported by organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS), Centro Latinamericano y del Caribe de Informacion en Ciencias de la Salud (BIRIME), Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLASCO), Universidad Autonoma de Mexico (UNAM), many academic specialists, and the development of the first regional databases (Latindex, SciELO, and RedALyC) (Salatino, 2020, p. 127).

It is not surprising that there would be tensions among Latin American

scholars around these developments, as Salatino documents. Some wish to prioritize the integration of Latin American scientific research into mainstream science—a position which would lead to normalizing publications in English. Others wish to challenge the hegemonic biases of world science, and favor publishing in Spanish or Portuguese. These opposing epistemological orientations are at least united on the value of open access, but one desires to bring Latin American academic writing into the English-medium mainstream while the other wishes to focus on the needs of the region for relevant research, which speaks to the Latin American experience. Of course, the two orientations are not neutral when it comes to the increasing reliance by Latin American universities on mainstream evaluative metrics to measure the quality of the region's scientific production.

It is clear from looking more broadly into the context of how scientific articles are evaluated in the political economy of universities in the global south that Gramsci's observation on how any investigation of language is tied to the notion of hegemony is applicable:

> Ogni volta che affiora in un modo o nell'altro, la quistione della lingua, significa che si sta imponendo una serie di altri problemi: la formazione e l'allargamento della classe dirigente, la necessità di stabilire rapporti più intimi e sicuri tra i gruppi dirigenti e la massa popolare-nazionale,cioè di riorganizzare l'egemonia culturale (Gramsci & Gerratana, 1975, p. 2346)
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> Every time that the question of language surfaces, in one way or another, it means that a series of other problems are coming to the fore: [such as] the formation and enlargement of the governing class, the need to establish more intimate and secure relations between the governing groups and the national-popular mass, in other words to reorganize the cultural hegemony (Ives, 2004, p. 82).

But we cannot underestimate the power of the hegemon we are facing. The political economy of global English is embedded in and essential to the flourishing of the oligopolistic commercialization of the world's communication ecosystem, and its harnessing of AI, Big Data and cloud capital is not going to go away any time soon.[2] John O'Regan (2021) in a recent history of

2 One recent observer argues that neoliberalism has gone into overdrive with cloud capital replacing market capital and the concentration of wealth in the hands of an oligopolistic billionaire class consolidating power at the global level (Varoufakis, 2024). The linguistic consequences are significant: total consolidation of global English hegemony but also AI translation capable of extending to all human languages. See also Ostler (2010).

the topic argues that despite the flowering of interesting vernacular varieties of superdiverse translingualism implicating english, the political economy of the formal written variety of English is based on the exigencies of global capital, and this state of affairs is not going to be overturned by anything short of a collapse of global capitalism, aided and abetted by a massive collapse of the world's ecosystems as a consequence of climate change.[3]

Cox and Schilthuis (2012) argue that counter-hegemonic projects come in two types: nativist (which I will touch upon later) and a movement for a global civil society. The role of global English and other major languages in building a global (or at least hemispheric) civil society of the "Another World is Possible" type is, in my opinion, a justification for reinventing English (as english) alongside Quebec French, Latin American Spanish, and Brazilian Portuguese as we work on a thought experiment: how to act as applied linguists in the face of the needs of our hemisphere. Our thought experiment should try to sketch out a hemispheric language policy (*sans* hegemons) which would include a language-in-academic-publishing policy and recommendations for a language-in-education policy in the schools across the hemisphere.[4]

As I see it in Nuestra America / Our America, there are two orders of potentially problematic language contact which fall into the thematic scope of this thought experiment and by extension, this volume.[5] There is the matter of the hegemonic relationship between English and the hemisphere's three other Euro-origin languages, which gave the book project its initial impetus and also which is likely the most relevant to its readers. The language contact situations between each of the four Euro-origin languages and the remaining Indigenous languages also, I believe, need to be brought into the circle of concern to the hemisphere's applied linguists. And yes, the languages of the Africa-origin descendants of the Middle Passage, the slave

3 I am distinguishing between english (lower case) and English (upper case), following the practice of Ashcroft et al. (1989), in which this method was used to distinguish vernacular (oral) from institutionalized standard varieties (written). For O'Regan, global capitalism depends on capital-E English exclusively. And, I would add, on the basis of the political economy of the academic knowledge system, vice versa.

4 Full disclosure: For 20 years or so, I coordinated a program at Glendon, the Certificate in the Discipline of Teaching English as an International Language (Cert D-TEIL), a program concerned with preparing undergraduate students to teach English (non-hegemonically) in Cuba.

5 Of course, Nuestra America comes from Jose Martí (1939) and refers to the part of the hemisphere south of the Rio Bravo (Rio Grande). It's the 21st century and the term can be extended right up to Nunavut, in my opinion, and it's a nice feeling for an Anglophone to say out loud "Our America" using the term with the scope of the term used in Latin American Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese. Don't you feel a gust of oxygen entering the room?

trade, as well as the multicultural languages of immigrant settler communities must also be brought in.

Most readers will likely see the asymmetricality of the hemisphere's language contact situations as inevitably hierarchical or broadly diglossic, with "big fish eating small fish, and small fish eating even smaller fish," a process normalized in the mainstream as a sort of sociolinguistic Darwinism and tending toward the survival of the fittest, meaning the threat of language extinction or at least domain loss or restriction, especially in formal, written domains such as academic publishing. And yet, asymmetricality is normal (our brain hemispheres are asymmetrical, after all), and it can be seen in a less deterministic way: not as a hierarchy but ecologically, as a *heterarchy*. Looking at the hemisphere's languages as belonging to a heterarchy allows us to see each scale in the ecosystem supporting a worthy and Good-Life-sustaining purpose for its speakers. Seen from an ecological perspective, small languages and their communities can be sustainable despite being confined to a local scale.

The question is: what about language contact across the scales? Here, I draw upon a concept developed and circulated in the writings of the Catalan eco-sociolinguist Alfred Bastardas-Boada, a concept called *subsidiarity*, described as follows:

> Research should focus on the study of the application of the principle known as "subsidiarity" in the field of linguistic communication. We could translate this politico-administrative category into a gloto-political one that, in a general manner, would establish the criteria that a more global language should not do anything a local language can do. This is to say that we would allow and promote an effective, massive understanding of other languages, while always accepting whenever possible the functional pre-eminence of the language of every historically constructed linguistic group. The languages known as "foreign" would be used for exterior contacts but everyday local functions would be clearly assigned to each group's own language. These preferent or exclusive functions of the group's code should obviously not be limited to informal oral communication, but rather should encompass the maximum number of formal and written functions with the aim that the individual representations and valuations were not seen to be diverted towards other languages that are external to the group (Bastardas-Boada, 2017, p. 17–18).

The subsidiarity principle is one which needs to be added as a corollary

to plurilingualism, especially when we are dealing with an ecosystem's repertoire of languages including codes belonging to asymmetrical scales (global, regional, national, and local). In operational terms, with respect to the academic domain and in particular to academic publishing, it would mean that in order to choose between English and Spanish or Portuguese or French in order to perform a formal or written academic function, a "subsidiarity test" would need to be applied. Before uncritically launching into an e-journal intending to reach a hemispheric readership, or setting an essay question in your course, or publishing an academic article, you should ask whether limiting submissions to English-only is the best way to go.

The subsidiarity test asks this question: "Can this text be written and published in Spanish, Portuguese, or French instead of English?" If it can, the subsidiarity decision would be "don't publish only in English,' even if (especially if!) the prevailing habitus has been to uncritically default to publish only in English. Even if the eventual decision is to write and publish in English (with abstracts in the other languages, hopefully, or in some plurilingual fashion), the subsidiarity test will have done its job: to introduce an ecological factor—which is also an ethical factor—into the decision.

There are ways to problematize Bastardas-Boada's (2017) subsidiarity proposal, and it is one which has been the topic of heated discussions in my fourth-year English as a World Language course at Glendon; to what extent is global English "a foreign language"? In large measure, the contemporary global English paradigm has moved away from English as a foreign language (EFL) to English as a lingua franca (ELF), characterizing it as a "relatively neutral" lingua franca, or even "an essential 21st century skill" devoid of perniciously ethnic Anglosphere content and everywhere "a way to get ahead." The move from EFL to ELF as well is said to embrace translanguaging and the multilingual turn (Rose & Galloway, 2019). Dubious as these claims are, the underlying ideologies are a key driving force toward the world-wide use and attraction of English in the Academy. Perhaps with plurilingualism's embrace of plural personal identities, the professional globally-networked identity of the users of global English as an academic-professional lingua franca is as much part of their identity package as an ethnic one, or in some cases (mine as a secular lower-case anglophone, for example) even more.

To conclude, I congratulate the editors and contributors of this excellent and thought-provoking volume. Much more can be said than I have been able to squeeze into this coda. Perhaps there needs to be a small, applied linguistics e-journal, quadrilingual, open access, and with a hemispheric readership. It's not obligatory for York e-journals to have an Inuktitut name, but if you are leaning in that direction, James, you have my email.

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