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Translation as a *Lingua Franca*

The East Asian Response to Global English

Venue: Queen's Building E

Time: 15:00-17:00

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Translation as a form of resistance to globalization can be studied in relation to the quest for a common language in East Asia, the fastest-growing regional community in the world in the last few decades. The region has seen at least three *lingua francas* used in its history, including English, Chinese and Japanese, and the roles of these “languages of wider communication” have been variously documented and studied. In particular, English, the present-day language of dominance, has troubled the East Asian community. The successes of over a century of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) notwithstanding, there is still skepticism concerning the amount of time and effort spent on acquiring a foreign, Western language. In this light, translation becomes a much valorised solution. The role that translation can play in the preservation of local (as opposed to global) values has been underscored by mainstream translation theorists. In the face of the global spread of the English language, it seems that English should be the “language of translation.” But what about Chinese, whose characters have infiltrated Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese, and which has been empowered through the rapid rise of China? Obviously, too, there are historical lessons that should be learnt from the spread of Japanese throughout the region during the colonial period. The choice of a language for translation will be the focus of serious debate in the years to come, and the present paper attempts to outline some of the implications involved.

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