

# Translation: Obscured Site of Language Policy Implementation

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*This presentation will discuss academic translation in relation to institutional, ideological, and governance dimensions drawing on an expanded concept of language policy and planning (Lo Bianco, 2025). The practice of scholarly translation mediates between communities of scholars (in their disciplines and across disciplines in academies and networks), and functions as de facto language policy in academia. The de facto or non-declared nature of translation serves to obscure how it functions as an instance of language policy. The dominance of English in research publication is an enabling condition of this de facto status, and has led to asymmetries in translational practices, such that knowledge flows outward from English but rarely inward, establishing what economists and innovation scholars call 'path dependency'. Translation practices reflect this, how initial choices and historical contingencies over time lock us in to trajectories that become difficult to dislodge, even when shown to be inefficient, culturally problematic or unjust.*

*The language translation imbalance constitutes an implicit policy of linguistic hierarchy, determining whose ideas circulate globally, what semantic patterns become normalised and how new problems are named and understood. Translation policies impact on epistemic inclusion, especially regarding which scholarly traditions count as legitimate, and which are rendered intelligible or erased.*

*UNESCO's "Recommendation on Open Science" (2021) calls for multilingualism in scholarly communication, to make science and circulation of knowledge more equitable and inclusive, yet implementation remains weak. National research policies can support plurilingual publication incentives, open translation grants, and multilingual metadata infrastructure, but a robust understanding of language policy processes treating translation as a tool of language rights in knowledge production may rapidly improve practice.*

*In this presentation I will pose the following questions:*

- How do institutional policies (universities, funding bodies, journals) regulate or devalue translation?*
- What mechanisms could ensure reciprocal translation among scholarly languages, not only into English?*
- Is translation treated as dissemination, collaboration, or subordination?*
- How can contemporary understandings of language policy and planning theory foster improved cultural policies for scholarly translation?*