# Editorial 32(1): (i) Translated from ... to English; (ii) To ban, or not to ban?

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As has occurred a few times in previous years, this editorial space is divided between two large topics. The first, concerning translating into English, has always been important for IIER, which has a high proportion of authors who learned English as a foreign or second language ("EFL/ESL"). However, advances in technology and artificial intelligence-based translation software have prompted renewed attention. The second large topic, headlined as "To ban, or not to ban?" is a completely new topic for IIER, as we have always sought to avoid any discrimination or bias based on country of origin. Whilst the Russian invasion of Ukraine may overturn that principle, or is even highly likely to overturn it, for the time being we retain it.

## Translated from ... to English

In a recent submission to IIER (we will avoid stating a date or outcome), we found a text box in its page 1 header (MS .docx format) containing the phrase "Translated from Indonesian to English - www.onlinedoctranslator.com". A surprise, it being very rare for authors to provide tangible evidence of their use of a translation service, whether human or an artificial intelligence-style service such as *Google Translate*. However, we hasten to reassure prospective authors that we do not regard use of a translation service as a "negative" against their submission. On the contrary, IIER urges authors to use all scholarly research avenues and tools to improve their submissions.

From the perspective, "use all ... avenues", Online Doc Translator is a service provider that could be considered further. We sense that the word "Free" is attractive to many prospective authors, as we have a good number who advise us in their submissions that they have not received any funding for the research they are hoping to publish. Online Doc Translator offers to:

> Instantly translate and preserve the layout of any document format into any language.
> Free.
> [and uses "awesome", a word not often encountered in academic discourse]
> Doc Translator uses the awesome power of Google Translate to translate your
> documents. (Online Doc Translator, n.d.).

Perusal of Online Doc Translator suggests extensive use of "Terjemahkan Inggris ke Indonesia" (Translate English to Indonesia) as well as translating Indonesian to English. Whilst Indonesian to English (or Spanish to English, etc.) may help ESL or EFL authors to refine their submissions to an English language journal such as IIER, English to Indonesian (or English to Spanish, etc.) does raise some concerns. There is the risk that phrases translated from English to Indonesian, then rephrased in Indonesian, and finally translated from Indonesian to English, may become misleading, unless carefully checked

by readers who are reasonably well-versed in both languages and, most importantly, in the scholarly discourse typical of the international educational research literature.

Perhaps many readers are familiar with the acronym 'TESOL' (Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages)? Investigating the topic of "Translated from ... to English" tempts us to suggest a new acronym, 'TEWOL' (Translating into English for Writers of Other Languages), but that has not happened, sadly, because there seems to be much anecdotal evidence that reliance upon TEWOL is widespread (documenting this is another potential work in progress, when time permits). The word "sadly" is used, because attaining a high level of familiarity with the scholarly discourse typical of the international literature requires that aspiring authors *undertake much reading and composing in English.*

The "much reading" aspect is promoted, as best we can, in IIER editorial staff advice and external reviewer advice to aspiring authors. One tactic is to suggest to authors that their article's References list needs "updating", and help them with a Google Scholar search string, a tactic described in detail in Editorial 31(1) (Atkinson, 2021). Another tactic sometimes used is to suggest reading specific articles in IIER. This arises from routine use of Google Scholar searches of recent volumes of IIER to check on a potential criterion for rejection, "topic and context already well-represented in IIER", as discussed in Editorial 30(2) (Atkinson, 2020). To be open with aspiring authors, we give them the search string, state the number of "results", and also nominate the "most notable" results, if any. The main purpose is giving advice on targeted extra reading, which is based on the general advice often issued to researchers inquiring about publication in IIER. We urge a "... self-assessing the quality of your proposed submissions, ... search IIER using keywords that are relevant for your articles. The main question will be, 'Can I do as well as, or perhaps even better than, similar articles already published in IIER?'", as suggested in Editorial 29(2) (Atkinson, 2019). We hope that aspiring authors considering review feedback will regard "most notables", if any are nominated, as "must reads", though we have to be careful to avoid any impression that "must reads" should become "must cites".

The promotion of "much reading" is complemented by frequent use of suggestions about seeking local support from "... colleagues experienced in reading and writing academic English. Another complement is advice about developing reading aloud and listening skills, as outlined under the "Text-to-speech" heading in Editorial 31(2) (Atkinson, 2021). In particular:

> One way to work through the copy editing changes will be to have a co-author or other colleague read aloud the revised version that you submitted, from one computer screen, whilst you view the copy edited and formatted version (this version) on another computer screen at an adjacent desk. After completing (and taking notes as needed), swap places and repeat this process. (Atkinson, 2021).

## To ban, or not to ban?

In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a new, burning topic for very many journal editors, their editorial boards, and their societies or publishers, is whether to impose sanctions, or bans, or other actions upon Russian authors.

For IIER, "To ban, or not to ban?" is now in active investigation as time permits. The initial stage is much Google searching and reading of responses from many corners of academic journal and other kinds of publishing. There is considerable diversity of perspectives and proposed or actual actions (and torrential volume!), for example:

> I regret to inform you that your manuscript cannot be considered for publication in the *Journal of Molecular Structure*. The editors of this journal, in the full assumption of their responsibilities as scientists and academics, decided not to consider any manuscript authored by scientists working at Russian Federation institutions as a result of the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. (attributed to Bataev, 2022)

> Experts say possible sanctions could include a ban on British academics collaborating with Russian scientists, the freezing of any joint funding, and the exclusion of Russian scientists from reading or publishing in international scientific journals (Fazackerley, 2022).

> Acting Vice-Rector for Research and Organisational Activities of Peter the Great St Petersburg Polytechnic University (SPbPU) Yuri Klochkov said the limits on publication of domestic scientists in Western journals will affect the rankings of Russian universities. .... He said most scientists will be forced to switch to publishing in Asian and domestic journals (University World News, 2022)

Many more references will have to be found and studied (for example Coyne, 2022; Gaind & Else, 2022; Hinchliffe & Schonfeld, 2022; Leavitt, 2022; Milliot & Nawotka, 2022). From this and much other reading a small team of IIER associate editors will try to produce a succinct draft for discussion by IIER's Editorial Board and sponsoring Institutes. In the meantime, submissions from authors in Russian institutions will be reviewed in the same way as done in pre-invasion times.

Taking a guess, this draft for IIER may be something along the lines of seeking to align ourselves with a worldwide consensus, or near consensus, amongst the academic journal publishing community and other stakeholders, especially authors and all concerned with openness in scholarly inquiry. Possibly there will be a few journals resorting immediately to bans, as the *Journal of Molecular Structure* has done*,* but others may look into other measures, such as tighter criteria for acceptance, and also upon much increased "messaging" to governing figures such as President Putin, that their academic research sectors and personnel are being put on notice that exclusion from the international community of scholars is imminent.

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