



# INGSA INCLUSIVE PROJECT EVIDENCE

## REVIEW

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND  
TRANSLATION IN POLICY NEGOTIATIONS

A view from International Relations and Political Science

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## INTRODUCTION

As part of INGSA's INCLUSIVE<sup>1</sup> project, this review looks to investigate the impact that language, culture, and translation can have on policy negotiations as discussed within the international relations and diplomacy literature. The review is structured around three research questions and undertakes a qualitative and semi-systematic approach. The review draws from academic as well as “grey” literature and includes representation from non-English literature including French and Polish. This approach provides a broad survey of language, translation, and culture and how they are understood and addressed in the context of international negotiations.

The first section provides insight on the question “what are the implications of language choice and multilingualism in negotiation, looking at lingua franca(s), regional and minority languages?” Findings opened-up a discussion about the politics of language, or of “language ideology,” and how language choice can deeply impact the outcomes of negotiation. One key insight that emerged looked at what it means to debate in the lingua franca, how that choice can affect the “coolness” of discussion, and when it might be inappropriate to use a second language.

The second section focuses on the cultural aspect, addressing the question “what impact does “cultural difference” have and how should it be considered in negotiation?” Results here provided a basis for understanding how “culture” can impact negotiations, and the strategies that can be employed to mitigate cultural friction and miscommunication. The literature, for instance, distinguished between various “cultures of negotiation,” and how those can be understood in terms of general characteristics or by in-depth and immersive cultural knowledge. These findings offer a roadmap for navigating cultural differences, and developing a strategy tailored to the needs and means of negotiations.

The final section addresses translation itself, discussing the question “what bearing can translation and interpreting have in negotiations, considering its technical or specialized aspects?” Here the literature emphasizes the importance of translation as the basis for effective communication. Multiple examples point to translations, and the translators, as making the difference between finding common ground and conflict. Overall, this section indicates the need to prepare for translation when working across linguistic and cultural divides.

The insights produced by this review underline both the importance of concepts like culture and language, and how they can apply to policy dialogues and advice giving. These results also go a step further by providing strategies for conducting multilingual and intercultural negotiations. While the scope of this review was limited, it is clear that language culture and translation are crucial components in the negotiation process, and that further consideration of these issues may prove fruitful.

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<sup>1</sup> INCLUSIVE project: The INfluence of Culture and LangUages on Science adVice in Europe

## METHODOLOGY

Research questions will be addressed by conducting a “systematic” literature review, defined as “*a specific methodology that locates existing studies, selects and evaluates contributions, analyses and synthesises data, and reports the evidence in such a way that allows reasonably clear conclusions to be reached about what is known and what is not known*” (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009: 672). Within the field of Political Science systematic literature reviews are a relatively new method, adopted from their original application in clinical and health sciences (Dacombe, 2018). The systematic approach chosen for this review builds on approaches found within recent articles from Political Science and Sociology (Attafa, Renaud, De Paoli, 2020; Schwemmer & Wiczorek, 2020; Hunger & Paxton, 2022). This follows a general methodological structure outlined in Dacombe (2018):

- **Problem formulation.** Clarifying the question(s) addressed by the review and preparing a protocol governing the review process.
- **Data collection.** Literature searching and information gathering.
- **Data evaluation.** Exclusion of studies, quality assessment.
- **Data analysis and interpretation.** Interpreting the results of collected studies, meta-analysis (where appropriate).
- **Report preparation.** Presentation of findings in a clear and accessible manner.

This general form will be further modified to fit the needs of this review where the priority is to provide insight into the research questions presented rather than assessing the state of literature in general. The review will focus on the qualitative interpretation of results, and on insights provided by selected literature. This approach to the systematic review, which is not intended to be exhaustive, is considered a “rapid review,” limited in scope but conforming to a set systematic protocol (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the implications of language choice and multilingualism in negotiation, looking at lingua franca(s), regional and minority languages?
- 2) What impact does “cultural difference” have and how should it be considered in negotiation?
- 3) What bearing can translation and interpreting have in negotiations, considering its technical or specialised aspects?

This review will centre around these three questions and will attempt to provide insight into how these questions have been addressed, how they have been answered and whether there are useful lessons to be taken from existing literature on relevant issues. The answers to these questions will be formatted in such a way as to summarize recommendations from literature and provide illustrative case examples.

The first question will focus on the perspective of the project and thus will emphasize results that contribute insight to cases in Europe, with representation of the target languages of French and Polish. The concept of negotiation is central to this question and will be viewed in the context of international relations and diplomacy. More specifically this question will explore the significance and connotation of language choice, in single cases but also more generally the potential impact that language choice can have. This can apply to the use of *lingua franca*, multiple official languages, and minority languages, the use of vernacular languages, the use of English, or Global English.

The second question will provide an overview of the roles which “culture” can play in the negotiation of meaning and intra-cultural dialogue. “Culture” itself is a very broad category but this review will use a narrow definition, looking specifically at pitfalls that may occur from insensitivity or ignorance of custom, and of political and historical contexts. Specifically, these questions can provide insight into the function of social taboos, norms, and values in dialogue and negotiation.

The third question, which is not as closely tied to specific geographical or lingual and cultural contexts, will explore the need for expertise in the translation process itself. This will pertain to highly specialized or technical issues, the importance of the translators and interpreters knowing the field, and the importance of not only translating the words but effectively translating and conveying meaning.

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## DATA COLLECTION

The literature review search will be conducted looking for key words associated with the three research question themes (language, culture, and translation). The challenge is to perform a literature search which, while being relevant to the questions at hand, remains open and unbiased in view of particular schools of thought or theories. To achieve this the search thread will remain more general, and the results will then need to be further refined to exclude works that do not meet the evaluation criteria.

Research Question one search thread: Language - Multilingual - Negotiation - Diplomacy

Research Question two search thread: Culture Conflict - Negotiations - Diplomacy

Research Question three search thread: Translation - Diplomatic - Negotiations

This search will be conducted with a focus on the fields of Political Science, International Relations, and 20th century History. Springer, Scopus, and Google Scholar will be used to collect data as commonly used databases in the relevant fields. Google Scholar will particularly contribute to the breadth of the search and may be useful with non-English sources.

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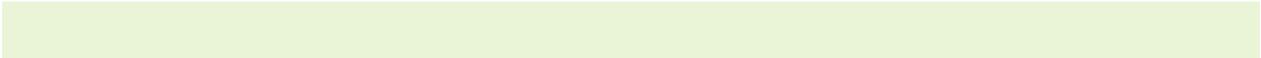
## **DATA SCREENING AND EVALUATION**

Screening will be based on abstracts, strict adherence to the scope of the research question will likely be critical considering the generic terms of culture, language, and diplomacy. Preferred sources will be peer-reviewed articles or books, though grey literature (NGOs, Think Tanks, Industry, Governments) may also be considered. Books reviews will not be eligible. The research questions are not time sensitive and will not discriminate based on the recency of publication if they fulfil the other criteria. Given the qualitative nature of this review and the target fields of study, no discrimination will be made for small  $n$  and anecdotal research.

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## **RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

Based on the result of literature searches and the subsequent screening process, literature will be classified by its relevance to each of the three research questions. This analytical section will then extract key themes which emerge from the literature and attempt to answer if not provide insight into the research questions.



## RESULTS

817 articles were initially identified based on the search threads. In cases where search results were ranked by relevance and impact but were otherwise open-ended searches (Google Scholar results show for instance tens of thousands of results in order of decreasing relevance), the first 100 results were screened for selection. Considering that this is a qualitative and non-exhaustive literature review only a reasonable sample is required from each source. The results included limited representations from grey literature but did find representation from both French and Polish literature for each question. The incorporation of non-English literature also suggested the utilization of a general search engine, such as Google Scholar, the functionality of which allows for searching in other languages.

From these 817 initial findings, 72 articles were selected in total. Articles 1-30 for question one, 31-58 for question two and 59-72 for question three. These articles were selected in the first case owing to the selection criteria but also by relevance to the questions and their contribution to the discussion of the research questions. In this case that means referring specifically to interlingual or intercultural dialogue and negotiations, added value was assigned if they approach these issues from the perspective of diplomacy and international relations. This approach offered an impartial selection of literature, which was not dominated by any school of thought or theoretical backing. The alternative method of “snowball” sample, based on citations, would have risked a narrower perspective on the sum of work that addresses these issues.

Overall, the search produced a substantial corpus of literature through this impartial selection process. The selected literature was also able to provide a coherent and insightful response to the research question, and while it may not be exhaustive it does provide a basis for further discussion and further exploration of the issues.

## DISCUSSIONS

### RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

#### **What are the implications of language choice and multilingualism in negotiation, looking at lingua franca(s), regional and minority languages?**

The literature revealed a wealth of information which can help provide insight into the first research question. A common theme was the role of what political scientists and sociologists call “language ideology” defined broadly as the “beliefs about language that are established in and shared by members of a community” (10. De Malsche & Vandenbroucke, 2022; 11. McEntee-Atalianis & Vessey, 2022; 13. Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2011; 14. Estival & Pennycook, 2011). This definition can relate to the perceptions of different languages, the importance of language issues, and the political function of language, among others. The concept of language ideology underpins the categories or classifications of

language considerations that emerged from the literature, those which will in turn have bearing on discussion of the role and reception of language in negotiation.

#### - *ENGLISH AS THE LINGUA FRANCA*

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A significant section of the literature was dedicated to the position of the English language internationally and within the domain of negotiation. Conclusions vary on the appropriateness of using English as the language of first choice, and at the very least the use of English must be context specific. The literature does, however, outline several key characteristics that can help inform the decision to communicate in English.

On the positive side, there were many arguments for the use of English as an “easy and cost effective” (10. De Malsche & Vandenbroucke, 2022) medium of exchange, or as providing “equal footing” (24. Grant, Maoz & Keysar, 2023) for negotiations. An illustrative example of this came from the EU administration in Brussels where “Finns preferred to use English as they found that negotiating in Swedish with the Swedes would put them in a disadvantaged position in terms of power while using English offers neutral grounds” (9. Krizsán & Erkkilä, 2014). A second example further explained the EU’s relation to English “this ‘rule’ is an unwritten agreement that in case of interpreters not being available at a negotiation each speaker should present his or her contributions either in English or French, but not in their mother tongue. That is, an English native speaker in this context is bound to use French and a French speaker must perform in English” (9. Krizsán & Erkkilä, 2014).

Likewise, English has been described, in a non-native setting, as providing “emotional distance” and may lead to “cooler heads” (24. Grant, Maoz & Keysar, 2023; 7. Ashraf, 2023) especially when discussing topics that may provoke controversy. However, in this same analysis it was found that “hidden barriers” can emerge from using the *lingua franca* “rendering proposals less palatable to the other side” (24. Grant, Maoz & Keysar, 2023). In this context, debating issues that have an inherently “emotive” aspect, in the *lingua franca*, can trigger backlash and even be construed as insulting.

This opened the discussion of the potential pitfalls of using English, and the contexts where the use of English can negatively impact the outcome of discussion. The central concern regarding the use of English is its perception as a “triumph of globalization and a loss of identity” (27. Gaboriaux, Raus, Robert, & Vicari, 2022) and furthermore that English is not “neutral” but rather imposed (6. Hornberger, 2002) and benefits “natives” (30. Želazny, 2010) at the expense of others (28. Marác, 2015). Given this, it is important to be aware of the historical and cultural context of the discussion or negotiation, specifically the relation to the English language as the language of the oppressor or of imperialism.

#### - *POWER DYNAMICS AND LANGUAGE*

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The concept of “language imperialism” (7. Ashraf, 2023) itself was a recurring theme in the literature though this does not necessarily refer to English or the *lingua franca*. Instead, it relates to how specific

languages can be associated with legacies of imperialism or of oppression, whether that be by external powers or even internally by the ruling elite.

The case of Belgium illustrated this point where, as part of a “historical and protracted language struggle, language remains a controversial topic and source of conflict in Belgian politics and society up to this day (10. De Malsche & Vandenbroucke, 2022). Speaking about this case, another article provided an example based on interviews that “If I am in the Walloon part of the country, I use French [but] if I’m in the Flemish part of the country I will always speak in English. I will never speak in French because they won’t like it (9. Krizsán & Erkkilä, 2014).

In a broader context, challenges can arise from a “monolingual view of modernization and internationalization” (5. Hornberger, 2002), this goes hand in glove with the notion that a certain language becomes the “technical” global language, as opposed to the “emotive” native language. An example from a discussion of HIV/AIDS in Uganda found “that beliefs and practices perceived to be “western” should be negotiated with care” (12. Norton & Mutonyi, 2010). The perception of “Western” in this case being highly associated with the legacy of imperialism.

This is also seen in the context of class power dynamics an example from Pakistan shows “this system is class-based one for the well-off people who send their children to high-level English-medium schools and one for the toiling masses whose children go to poorly organized and poorly equipped desi schools, where they get no idea how much science has progressed (7. Ashraf, 2023). In this case English is taken as the *lingua franca*. This case would suggest that the class background of the discussion partner be taken into consideration when choosing the language of communication.

#### - *TYPES OF NEGOTIATION*

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In a slightly different vein, the literature has also indicated that even the type of conversation can have bearing on which language, whether native, *lingua franca* or otherwise, may be best suited and most appropriate. This dimension rests heavily on the either “technical” or “emotive” qualities of language that we have already discussed. This distinction is further developed where “in technical or commercial talks, where interlocutors share a stock of expert knowledge, semantic problems are relatively easily overcome”, and alternatively “in emotive and complex negotiations to resolve protracted international conflict, however, intriguing problems of interpretation arise” (2. Cohen, 2001). We have seen that in the “technical” context, English, or the *Lingua Franca*, may have the advantage as a common ground, and potentially facilitating the “coolness” of the conversation, though of course the context should be taken into account (24. Grant, Maoz, & Keysar, 2023; 7. Ashraf, 2023). Likewise, with high tension discussion, where the “emotive” element is inherent in the subject of debate, use of the native language may come off as more genuine and effective. The “emotive” side can, however, be used to facilitate even “technical” discussions, demonstrating appreciation and respect for the local language, “even a few words pronounced in the local language may break the ice and create a positive atmosphere” (25. Kurbalija & Slavik, 2001).



The final recurrent theme that emerged from the literature, focused on the position and role of minority languages, and how that status can influence perception of either their use or neglect. This discussion ties directly into the earlier discussion of imperialism.

In many cases the use of minority languages can be an effective means of establishing rapport within the conversation, it is noted that “minority languages, or at least some of them, are more appreciative of the potential contribution of their maintenance or nurturance (6. Tannenbaum, Shohamy & Inbar-Lourie, 2022). This paralleled the example of using the Flemish language in certain parts of Belgium, where a positive atmosphere can be easily established by use of the local language. One main difference however, between using “official” languages and using “minority” languages is the political dimension that comes into play. In the extreme case where “identification with one nation demands an identification with one language” (15. Duncan, 2004). This piece went on to elaborate on the potentially conflicted relationship between minority languages and the official or “majority” language; “imbalanced language policies may be characterized as *structural violence*, as social injustice: unequal institutions yield unequal chances in life for the victims. This can be seen if we consider the opportunities available to a speaker of a national language, as opposed to one of a local minority language (15. Duncan, 2004). For our purposes, this understanding of the position of “minority language” explains why the use of the language may be well received. However, this also opens upon another problem, where use of the “minority language” may be received as an insult or as a confrontation with the “official” language. This conflict with the “majority,” as a result of using the minority language, has been observed where nationality or ethnocentrism remain key political issues, “where nationalism continues to be a major force there is still majority rejection of minority language use in the public sphere” (16. Wright, 2004). It follows again that the context must be understood before the value of using a minority language can be weighed against the potential backlash from the “majority.”

## RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

### **What impact does “cultural difference” have and how should it be considered in negotiation?**

Within the context of diplomatic negotiations and of multilateral international debates, “culture” and cultural knowledge is widely viewed as critical elements in achieving common understanding. “Culture” is, however, a very broad term, and in the context of this review we are looking for a functional definition which highlights the role of culture in debate. In the literature several definitions were used, but a common thread focused on interpreting the world and assigning meaning. For example, culture has been defined as the “categories, plans and rules people employ to interpret their world and act purposefully in it” (42. Murtezaj, 2013). Likewise, it has been explained as “a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures, and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people's behaviour” (38. Anagondahalli, & Zhu, 2016). These are of course minimal definitions of culture, but ones which are tailored to the theme of intercultural negotiations. With this as a basis, there are several ways in which “culture” can impact negotiations, both in terms of form, or the “cultures of negotiation” itself, and the content or what is the subject of discussion. The literature reviewed here provides insight into both cases and can further propose several solutions or insights into how to appropriately address cultural concerns in negotiation.

#### *- CULTURES OF NEGOTIATION*

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This first section takes a deeper look at the process negotiation itself, the effect of what is called “diplomatic culture,” and further, what bearing that may have on the effectiveness of intercultural discussion.

One useful and recurring framework for understanding culture’s impact on negotiations builds on the work of the Dutch social-psychologist Geert Hofstede (1980, 1991) who conceptualized cultural variations along five dimensions: “individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity, and long/short-term orientation” (38. Anagondahalli & Zhu, 2016; 45. Huang, Y.-H & Bedford, 2009; 50. Morris & Fu, 2001). In the context of intercultural negotiations, this framework can be applied in interpreting reactions of interlocutors, as well as in strategizing for effective communication. An example which builds on this framework is seen in observation of Chinese diplomatic culture; “the collectivistic characteristics of Chinese culture and Confucian traditions that emphasize long-term relationships, harmony, interpersonal relationships, face, loyalty, order, and harmony contribute to particular Chinese conflict management styles (45. Huang, & Bedford, 2009). The “positivist” approach of Hofstede builds on and classifies observable characteristics, and the resulting concrete “traits” are functionally valuable for negotiators. However, this approach is limited, especially in view of culture’s idiosyncrasies and dynamic nature. This positivist, “traits” focused, approach has been further identified, or criticized, as itself being a characteristic of “western” diplomatic culture “a basic

assumption of many Western diplomats and social scientists is that there are generic principles of human behaviour. Such minimization of cultural differences may be culturally based” (44. Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus, 2006; 46. Kimmel, 1994).

The positivist culture of Western diplomats is an example of how impactful your own cultural background can be in the negotiation process. The literature goes on to explain the effect of your own culture as *“conditioning one’s perception of reality, blocking out information inconsistent or unfamiliar with culturally grounded assumptions, projecting meaning onto the other party’s words and actions, and possibly impelling the ethnocentric observer to an incorrect attribution of motive.”* (48. Strimling, A., 2006) The “Americans” are for instance seen as defining “negotiation as a business, not a social activity” where “the objective of a negotiation is to get a job done which usually requires a mixture of problem-solving and bargaining activities” (46. Kimmel, 1994). While this approach may itself be rooted in American business culture, it can go on to influence how negotiators look at problems and how they seek solutions.

Another cultural influence that can affect negotiations is in the professional background of the negotiators. For instance, *“professional diplomats, probably as a result of both training and self-selection, often understand conflict in terms of realpolitik, in which power dynamics drive both conflicts and their resolution. Private facilitators, for similar reasons, tend to focus on the political and social-psychological dimensions of conflict and the importance of transforming attitudes and relationships”* (48. Strimling, 2006).

It stands, that depending on who the negotiations involve different strategies can be deployed to accommodate both sides of the discussion. That article goes on to illustrate the “official” vs “private” distinction by saying that “officials tend to emphasize status and rank, while private intermediaries, although also attentive to status, tend to emphasize equality and informality” and further that “officials often employ more formal mechanisms (e.g. carefully scripted meetings, with a strong chairperson and predetermined seating) and private intermediaries, less formal ones (e.g., facilitated dialogue at a round table” (48. Strimling, 2006).

Another important point mentioned in the literature is the power dynamic that underpin negotiations. This dynamic can come into play both in the ethnocultural sense, but also based on professional background and even class background. As the literature indicates, “without exaggeration, it can be said that the problem of negotiation under conditions of power inequality is one of the toughest problems currently confronting scholars in this area.” (48. Strimling, 2006). The response to imbalance is then to be aware, to understand your own positionality in the discussion, and to create a common or equalizing platform for the negotiation process.

In terms of finding a basic understanding or a platform for the negotiations, the literature warns about the distinctions between “understanding” and “accepting” different cultures, the latter being akin to “cultural” or even “moral” relativism. This argument continues that “rather a “microculture,” an ad hoc agreement on norms and standards, [be] fitted to the negotiation at hand (44. Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus, 2006).

This approach can help to bridge crucial gaps in culture and in “power,” that may otherwise impede the basic functioning of negotiations.

Diverging from the previous section, here the discussion will focus rather on the “content” of debate rather than on its form. “Culture” as we understand it, can also strongly impact the objects of negotiation, how they are received, and the likelihood of their acceptance.

The literature points out that “cultural contexts and legacies may prove extremely relevant to understand the logic behind local policy-making and political practices” (33. Acosta, 2012). A pertinent example looks at the case of LGBT rights in the context of international human rights negotiations, “positions can be contested or rejected by using “culture” as an excuse ‘claims to the cultural difference and specificity of communities’” (32. Janoff, 2022). This referral to “culture” as a justification for opposing certain positions, can be crucial in negotiations, and it highlights the importance of being prepared to discuss the cultural underpinning of disagreement. The challenge lies in acknowledging the cultural basis of negotiating position on both sides, or reflexively: “since different scripts can create barriers to negotiation, negotiators should select “culturally responsive” negotiation strategies” (48. Strimling, 2006).

Having in-depth knowledge about your negotiating partners, and their cultural and historical background can also be essential. One illustrative example of cultural content is seen in the case where “a contract involving sales of a perfume called “Opium” would have no particular associations for American negotiators, but it might trigger associations of exploitative colonialism for Chinese negotiators and, in turn, a win-lose frame for conceptualizing the negotiation” (50. Morris & Fu, 2001). The colonial framing evoked by “opium,” in this case, casts the negotiations in the light of one-sided exploitation making it more difficult to visualise any potential mutual benefit. This example also builds on the idea that cultures can be understood in terms of various “traits” or characteristics and demonstrates that there are context specific considerations that can be made.

This echoes the previous section on the impact of language where the choice of language can evoke reactions based on legacies of imperialism, exploitations. This opens the discussion about a more “constructivist” approach to negotiations, looking at the particularities and idiosyncrasies of various cultures. For instance, “the Japanese reluctance to say ‘no’ directly in several international cases has been another cause for misunderstandings between negotiating nations, so are the differing emphases placed on bargaining by nations in the Arab world and India” (38. Anagondahalli & Zhu, 2016). This understanding could also be applied to for instance the importance of religion, or of gender roles, all of which could have grave bearing on how topics are received. This constructivist approach can be summarized as the “cultural filter” involving “mechanisms of identity, domestic salience and the construction of knowledge, including persuasive engagement, venues for dialogue and argument, and the transference and status of ideas” (31. Manners & Whitman, 2013).

In contrast to the observed “traits” based approach of Hofstede, when looking at the “content” of negotiation, the literature emphasizes the importance of case-by-case knowledge. This approach offers a more complete understanding of “culture” and its potential impacts, at the cost of time and labour.

Looking at these two highly interconnected categories of the “cultures of negotiation” and “culture in negotiation,” the literature offers several insights into how these concerns can be addressed in practice, and how a balance can be struck between detail and generality.

At the base, establishing an atmosphere of both respect and openness is vital, for instance the process of “getting to know the 'other'” can “awaken curiosity” (55. Langowska, 2018) bypassing the traps of stereotyping and oversimplification. In this, “communication” plays a key role “in fostering mutual understanding and respect, building a common language, identifying potential opportunities for complementarity, and dealing with differences of interests, priorities, culture, and power” (48. Strimling, 2006). One proposed technique for addressing these issues is so-called “intercultural exploration” (46. Kimmel, 1994). In this method *“the negotiators consciously identify the major cultural assumptions and values that are affecting their own perceptions and behaviours in the negotiations; communicate these assumptions and values clearly as an explicit part of their negotiations; encourage and help other negotiators identify and communicate clearly their major cultural assumptions and values; and then move toward creative and collaborative problem solving”* (46. Kimmel, 1994). Another approach, called the “links in the chain” (43. Kelman, 2008) model uses a two-step process, beginning with a “workshop” to co-develop common solutions to problems, and then having these conclusions or insights be transmitted back in each party's domestic political process and public discourse. The idea in this case is to affect the “normalization” of certain topics over time, having them become more familiar and potentially more acceptable to each group.

Another section of the literature outlined a set of questions or considerations that can be taken into account before opening cross-cultural negotiations.

- 1) What is the predominant conception of negotiation (functions, role, rules of the game) in the culture of the opposing party?
- 2) Can the opposing negotiator be considered representative of her or his group's culture (which would mean drawing up a social and cultural profile)? and cultural profile?
- 3) What is the usual method of decision-making in the culture to which the opposing party belongs?
- 4) To what extent is negotiation likely to be influenced by the self-image of the negotiators, by their stereotypes?
- 5) Do the notions of "agreement", "compromise", "commitments", "renegotiation" have the same meaning for the parties involved?
- 6) What is the usual style of the negotiators with whom you are dealing, and in particular their behaviour and techniques?

- 7) What impact are differences in value systems, beliefs, and ideologies likely to have?
- 8) Are there significant differences in thinking and reasoning patterns between negotiators?
- 9) What specific cultural factors are likely to create specific cultural factors likely to create barriers or 'noise' in communication or negotiation? communication or negotiation?
- 10) Are there any potential problems with language use and interpretation? (54. Radtchenko-Draillard, 2018)

The guidance provided by the literature, steers negotiations to find a balance, and to understand the applicability or appropriateness of approaches based on context. Both the generalized “positivist” framework, and detailed case by case understanding provide a toolkit to negotiators. The literature also demonstrates the important role that “culture” can play during negotiations, and that assuming a common understanding can lead to avoidable conflicts and miscommunication.

### RESEARCH QUESTION 3

#### **What bearing can translation and interpreting have in negotiations, considering its technical or specialized aspects?**

Translation and interpreting in international negotiations are vital in establishing a common foundation of understanding and ensuring that information is accurately disseminated. The difference between an “interpreter” and a “translator,” in the case of international relations, can be understood along two lines. First, according to the time at which the translation is being done, either concurrently with discussion or *post hoc* utilizing transcripts, and secondly by their medium, where translators work with the written word and interpreters with oral communications. Despite this, for the purposes of this review, both terms will be used largely interchangeably, with the focus being, rather, on how the acts and actors of translation mediation can influence negotiations.

The literature emphasized the importance of accurate communication, and that the effectiveness of translation can make the difference between a successful negotiation and a damaging *faux pas*. Several examples emerged showing how even the Presidents of the United States have found themselves in compromising situations based solely on the challenges of translation (65. Albl-Mikasa & Tiselius, 2021). In one case Richard Nixon’s misunderstanding of Japanese PM Eisaku Sato nearly caused a trade row, and in another case while visiting Poland, Jimmy Carter accidentally expressed his “desire” for the Polish people. Both cases demonstrate how small mistranslations can have big effects, and while not always dire, they can cause unnecessary barriers between interlocutors.

The literature also pointed out the persistent “myth of the interpreter being ‘invisible’ and ‘neutral’” (62. Zhao, 2021), while in reality they can have an active and sometimes unpredictably role in discussion. This article goes on to outline rules for dealing with intermediaries “Rule Nr.3: stay on guard. The negotiation expert Prof. Salacuse tells business executives to be alert to interpreters who try to take control of

negotiations or slant them in a particular way because of personal interests or ego. He also gives a warning about interpreters adding in personal business advice.” This may be an extreme case, but it does shed light on the power of an intermediary's position.

The “agency” of a translation intermediary (an interpreter or translator depending on the context) was a recurring theme in the literature. This idea draws attention to the subjectivity of translation, how personality or identity can influence the choice of words and specific meanings that are imparted. One article stated that “there is no act of translation that is not also an act of negotiation” (61. Tessicini, 2014) and as such the meaning that is conveyed is always impacted by the translation process. A specific case referenced in the literature, shows how for instance “expertise” can influence the process: “we also wanted to avoid the possibility that an interpreter with medical training or an experienced medical interpreter may modify the interviewer’s questions, insert their own questions or statements to make them more medically ‘correct’” (59. Ballantyne, Yang & Boon, 2013). Another article emphasized how “trustworthiness” and “competence” (62. Zhao, 2021) are essential traits which must be proven through various means such as body language and tone, throughout the course of negotiations. From this perspective, interlocutors should consider not only the professional background, but also the personality and candour of the interpreter or translator they employ.

The questions of “expertise” and “professionalism” were, as well, recurring topics in the literature. It was emphasized that translating effectively “requires not only mastery of knowledge of the culture in question and its application in practice, but also familiarity with the vocabulary specific to negotiation discourse” (72. Dargiewicz, 2020). It was further noted that, overall, the fields of translating and interpreting have been chronically “under-professionalized” (60. Sela-Sheffy, 2023), which opens further room for unpredictability. With this view on the role and position of the intermediary, the literature points toward establishing a rapport and mutual understanding with the intermediary prior to formal negotiations. It is essential that intermediaries understand the context of the negotiations as well as the various positions involved.

In summation, the role of the translator or interpreter is a vital component of intercultural and interlingual negotiations. However, the representations and analysis of this issue, in the context of international relations and negotiation was not as forthcoming in the literature as were the subjects of the previous two sections. This research question on translation and interpreting, may well deserve a more in-depth analysis in the future, and a clearer picture of how to approach challenges and forge more effective solutions.

## CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this review was to investigate the roles which culture, language and translation may have on negotiations in the international context. The review confirms that each concept is impactful and owed consideration before serious negotiations can be undertaken. Language, and specifically the choice of language, was shown to influence how negotiations are perceived, and the emotions involved in that process. Culture, likewise, was found to underpin not only the customs and standards of negotiation, but also whether and how certain topics might trigger unexpected responses. Finally, translation was seen to be a source of significant unpredictability unless measures have been taken to guarantee a common ground of understanding. With that, the importance of these concepts becomes clear, but it is also clear that more work must be done to fully incorporate and account for these concerns.

This review took a functional approach to these topics, providing food for thought and discussion. This review was not, however, meant to be a definitive overview of the literature in question, and it also cannot guarantee a full representation of views and opinions on the subject concepts. Based on these preliminary findings it would be advisable to follow-up on each concept individually, to achieve a more complete understanding that captures the breadth and depth of each school of thought and theoretical angle.

The review also revealed that these concepts have been tackled in discrete fields such as academia, diplomacy, and business, but it has also hinted that there may be a lack of cross-over and shared understanding between them. That is to say that insight is often isolated, or endemic, to either one of these fields. It stands that there may be value and applicable insight to be gained if these disparate strands are collected and analysed as a whole. With the established significance of language, culture and translation, the field of science advice may be well aided by learning from these experiences.

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