"The Role of Language in International Relations"

Abstract

Material perspectives have long been taken as dominant ones in International Relations (IR) studies, focusing more on physical aspects of interstates relationship, while putting cultural factors like symbolic signs such as language into the secondary position of political analysis. This practice does not fully reflect the typology of power in IR, and restrains a better understanding of complex and profound consequences produced by both physical and symbolic power in world politics.

The fact is that language and discourse (or language use) is always there in IR. A concern of the role language plays in IR adds an alternative perspective in IR studies. With Chinese and other philosophies of language as its intellectual inspirations, this perspective takes more interest in how language (ab)use can become sources of (in)security as well as in the ontological nature of discursive and social (re)construction of world politics.