

*Taiwanese University Teachers' Motivation and Language Choice for
Scholarly Publishing*

Shih-Chieh Chien, National Taipei University of Business, Taiwan

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Abstract

Within a global trend of academic publishing in English, publication in indigenous languages, nevertheless, in many contexts, continues to thrive. Multilingual scholars often need to negotiate international engagement and local commitment by publishing both in English and their first language. The study, based on individual in-depth semi-structured interviews with university bilingual teachers from social sciences in Taiwan, focuses on examining their motivation and language choice (i.e., first language only, English only, or both English and first language) for publishing their research articles, and factors that may influence their motivation and language choice. The study showed that (1) against the widely-held view of utility in getting published in English as the single most important driving force, it pointed to a complex picture of Taiwanese university teachers' motivation and language choice for scholarly publishing; (2) the privilege attached to publishing in internationally indexed journals stood out as the major factor orienting Taiwanese university teachers toward writing in English and using various strategies to facilitate successful publication; (3) international publication in English nonetheless increases, but Chinese would still retain its position as the language of research and publication; and (4) the tension in the negotiation was likely to grow with the continuous push toward the globalization of the academia which had a great impact on university teachers. This study provides useful insight into understanding university teachers' motivation and language choice for scholarly publishing. Some recommendations are made when guiding school planners for helping university teachers to cope with international publication versus local publication.

Keywords: Bi/Multilingual, Motivation, Language Choice, Scholarly Publication

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Introduction

As English becomes the global language of scholarship, the past few decades have witnessed an increasing interest in the research about researchers who use English as a foreign language (EFL) (e.g., Ferguson, 2007; Flowerdew, 2019; Lillis & Curry, 2010; Luo & Hyland, 2016; Salager-Meyer, 2008; Smirnova et al., 2021). The trend of internationalization in academia has significant implications particularly in the language choice between English language and the local language in writing for scholarly publication. It is mainly shown in internationalizing higher education, and marketizing academia (Altbach, 2009; Mok, 2006; Smirnova et al., 2021). Such changes exert a great impact on researchers. First, the internationalization of the higher education usually denotes an increasingly policy-explicit and assessment-driven requirement for researchers to get articles published in English. Second, it also leads to the favoring of international journal databases, including A&HCI, SCI, and SSCI. The marketization of academia indicates not only closer links between universities and business world, but also quality assurance of academic performance and educational services provided by universities (Mok, 2006; Postiglione, 2005; Smirnova et al., 2021). In view of this, universities are at the forefront of these movements, and internationally indexed databases increasingly become indicators in the assessment criteria for researchers.

Nonetheless, despite the internationalization and spread of English in writing for scholarly publication, researchers in EFL contexts may still want to write and get their articles published in local languages. Past studies show that writing for bi/multilingual scholarly publication takes place in different EFL countries, such as China, Hungary, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain (Casanave, 1998; Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008; Lillis & Curry, 2010; Muresan & Pérez-Llantada, 2014; Zheng & Gao, 2016). According to Altbach (2009), apart from the need to “function in the international languages of science and scholarship,” universities should also “have a responsibility to disseminate research and analysis in local languages” and “play a key role in supporting and developing local languages” (p. 25). In addition, previous studies also reveal the importance for multilingual researchers to get their articles published in their local languages besides publishing in English in order to engage with and contribute to different communities (Casanave, 1998; Curry & Lillis, 2004).

Given that the internationalization of academic publishing in the global world tends to be negotiated in the local society, a central question in the context of Taiwan is what the situation in getting articles published in English and Chinese might be for Taiwanese researchers. As suggested by Gnutzmann and Rabe (2014) and López-Navarro et al. (2015), relatively little attention in previous research was paid specifically to EFL researchers’ motivation and language choice in getting articles published. EFL researchers may be motivated to get articles published for different reasons, and different disciplines may influence their motivation and language choice (Baldauf, 2001; López-Navarro et al., 2015). In light of this, the present study seeks to extend the findings from previous studies to explore Taiwanese university teachers’ motivation and language choice in writing for scholarly publication in English and Chinese from social sciences.

Literature Review

Due to the consideration of the primacy of English and the preference of international journal databases in research assessment, international English publication is usually more admired compared with local language publication (Salager-Meyer, 2014). Past studies reveal that

EFL researchers' motivations to get articles published in English are related to utility, self-concept, cost, and intrinsic satisfaction (López-Navarro et al., 2015). For instance, first of all, their motivations to get articles published in English tend to be linked to utility, such as having promotion (Martín et al., 2014), gaining international recognition (Luo & Hyland, 2019), and receiving monetary incentives (Hanauer & Englander, 2011). Other than utility, EFL researchers may also get articles published in English to build international networks (Curry & Lillis, 2010).

Nonetheless, EFL researchers' self-concept and perceived cost may deter them to get articles published in English in spite of utility (Lillis & Curry, 2010). For example, in the past, a large body of literature shows language disadvantages of writing for scholarly publication in English perceived by EFL researchers (e.g., Burgess et al., 2014; Flowerdew, 1999; Li, 2002; López-Navarro et al., 2015). For example, a majority of the doctoral students in mainland China (Li, 2002) and the researchers in Hong Kong (Flowerdew, 1999) reported feeling disadvantaged in comparison with native English-speaking researchers.

Moreover, research shows that getting articles published in English could be extra burdens for EFL researchers since writing English research articles tends to be more difficult and challenging (Hanauer & Englander, 2011; Shin et al., 2014) and also having the abilities necessary to get articles published in English entails additional time and effort (Burgess et al., 2014; Salager-Meyer, 2008). Despite such facts, some research indicates that EFL researchers do not essentially feel disadvantaged (Ferguson et al., 2011; Hyland, 2016). Native English researchers may encounter challenges alike since writing for scholarly publication is more connected with specialty than with language (Hyland, 2016; Swales & Feak, 2012).

Unlike utilitarian motivations for getting articles published in English, EFL researchers in getting articles published in their first language tend to be linked to intrinsic satisfaction (Hanauer & Englander, 2011). For example, while researchers could be extrinsically motivated for its "greater symbolic capital in terms of recognition" in getting articles published in English, Gentil and Séror (2014) indicated that researchers could be intrinsically motivated for "the intellectual satisfaction of developing deeper insights through bilingual work" (p. 23). Moreover, EFL researchers may want to get their articles published in their first language due to their connection to their home countries (McGrath, 2014; Salager-Meyer, 2014).

In sum, in spite of previous research on EFL researchers' motivations in writing for scholarly publication, what remains unknown is between the privileging of English publication and the potential development of local publication in Chinese (i.e. the perceptions of Taiwanese researchers toward writing for scholarly publication in English versus Chinese). First, despite past research revealing EFL researchers' motivation to publish in different languages (e.g., Burgess et al., 2014; Hanauer & Englander, 2011; Martín et al., 2014), it is unclear about their motivation for getting articles published in English versus Chinese. In addition, there is a need for more research into the factors influencing EFL researchers' language choice in writing for bi/multilingual scholarly publication and most importantly, their rationales of language choices in writing for scholarly publication (Gnutzmann & Rabe, 2014; Huang, 2011; López-Navarro et al., 2015). In response to this call, the present study aims to explore Taiwanese university teachers' motivation and language choice in writing for scholarly publication, and factors that may affect their motivation and language choice in writing for scholarly publication for Taiwanese researchers. This study sets out to address the following scholarly publication for Taiwanese researchers. This study sets out to address the following

two research questions:

1. What are Taiwanese university teachers' motivation for research writing in English and Chinese?
2. What are their rationales of language choices in writing for scholarly publication?

Research Method

The method adopted to answer the research questions comprised individual in-depth semi-structured interviews. The interviews were used to explore Taiwanese university teachers' motivation and language choice in writing for scholarly publication. Ten university teachers from social sciences, including business administration, finance, political science, sociology, and social work in northern Taiwan participated in the interviews. They all had study abroad experiences and earned their doctoral degrees in English speaking countries, including United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada. The length of each interview ranged from one to two hours. Since each teacher was from different school, the location of the interview varied. In this study, each interview was prefaced with an informed consent statement informing participants of the purpose of the study, their rights not to participate, and the commitment to protect confidentiality and anonymity. Pseudonyms were used for teachers to protect their anonymity.

Data Collection

University teachers were invited to participate in the present study. In contacting potential participants, the study began by viewing the webpages accessed through the link of 'staff' found on the respective departments' homepage at universities. In order to gain as wide a spectrum of participants as possible, the researcher took into consideration the potential participants' disciplines, age, academic rank, as well as their research productivity (as seen in the publication list and information of research activities provided of the person at his/her homepage). The researcher also included, where possible, some acquaintances in the potential pool due to convenient access. Emails were sent to the potential participants explaining the research purpose and inviting them to participate in the research by accepting an interview at a time of their convenience.

To examine the influence of publication language, background, and study abroad experience on teachers' research writing motivation, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted. Open-ended explanatory questions were used for teachers to reflect on motivation for research writing in their language choice, either in Chinese only, English only, or in both Chinese and English. The interview questions ranged from teachers' disciplinary backgrounds, study abroad experiences, motivation and language choice in writing for scholarly publication, to opportunities and constraints for their scholarly endeavors in the context of academic internationalization.

Data Analysis

Qualitative interviews were analyzed and interpreted in an attempt to understand Taiwanese university teachers' motivation and language choice in writing for scholarly publication. Miles and Huberman (1994) argued that one major feature of qualitative research is its focus on "naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings" so researchers and those reading the work have a good sense of what "real life" is like" (p. 10). Data were analyzed using a

general inductive approach for qualitative data analysis (Thomas, 2006). The goal of data analysis was to identify and generate categories in response to research questions, grounded in the data. The next stage was to manipulate the categories, identifying segments that were then dispersed into different relevant categories and/or research questions or text that was not relevant to those areas. This analysis process provided appropriate quotes from the research to identify specific factors related to motivation and language choice in writing for scholarly publication specified by each teacher.

To make the study credible and rigorous, two different techniques were achieved using participation review and coding consistency check. First, participation review was achieved by presenting teachers' voices under each theme and by providing detailed description of each of the cases. Triangulation were used consistently with each teacher in general. Each of the teacher interviewed was asked to review the transcribed interviews to add, delete, or amend any statements made. The transcribed interview documents were then emailed to each teacher and requested an email response with any comments included in their interview document. To make sure validity and reliability (Merriam, 2002), member checks were used by sending interpretations back to teachers by email or via hardcopy to ensure that they were accurate. In this return email each teacher was asked to give consent that the information provided in the transcribed interview document was accurate and aligned with their views and opinions.

Results

The comments made by the teachers about motivation and language choice in writing for scholarly publication were explored. In the study, the following two main categories resulting from the transcription and coding of teachers' responses in the interview data showed motivation and language choice in writing for scholarly publication from the teachers' perspectives.

Getting Articles Published in English/internationally indexed journals

In the discussion of getting articles published in English/internationally indexed journals, the teachers tended to refer to their motivations and the strategies they used. They also articulated some criticisms of the status quo.

Motivations

The teachers' motivations for getting articles published in English/internationally indexed journals can be categorized into three major purposes, i.e. to fulfill the assessment criteria, to reach a wide readership, and to target for a high standard.

Assessments are required for teachers who are expected to be proactive in research productivity. The expectation on teachers to get articles published in internationally indexed journals is explicit. It is generally well understood and is assimilated by new teachers. As the teacher, Jenny put it:

When our colleagues discuss with each other, naturally the topic would come up. Potentially there is pressure coming from the school. Therefore, we may refer to, which journal did you submit to? I say I submitted to this journal. 'The journal is not SSCI,' they respond. Such a piece of advice is passed down to a new teacher.

When it is about the time to report research output or apply for a grant, teachers are aware of the importance of having internationally indexed journal articles to report. For instance, as Bill put it, “I know which publications really count. The common response to the need to get articles published in internationally indexed journals is to fulfill assessment criteria.” He further stated:

Generally, I aim to submit my articles to the top internationally indexed journal, and preferably, the best journal. However, while I am occupied with loads of teaching and bulk of service, time is limited for me. As I do not have much time and there are many things to do, I do not avoid submitting my work to local journals.

In light of Bill’s situation, promotion tends to be an urgent need for him. He further made such a remark: “If submitting to local journals leads to promotion and a salary rise, then I would do it. Since submitting to local journals also achieves similar objectives, submitting to internationally indexed journals may not be the necessary option.”

Apart from striving to fulfill the assessment criteria, the internationally indexed journal is usually the optimal choice in view of reaching a wider readership. For example, John indicated: “When I write an article, I need to think about where to submit in order to appeal to a wide readership with academic rigor.” For John, getting articles published in internationally indexed journals becomes gradually necessary, mainly because of the assessment pressure and his consciousness of the need to interact with researchers worldwide:

I feel I should let more researchers know my thoughts and let those who are interested in the topic see my work all over the world. Getting articles published in internationally indexed journals would be an easier avenue for them to read my work.

In addition, getting articles published in internationally indexed journals is an indication of a high quality of research. As noted by Sue, “it is good for Taiwanese researchers to have their articles published in the world’s top-notch journals in their field since it shows the scholarship can reach the world’s high-quality level.”

Strategies

The strategies adopted by teachers about the ways that they positioned themselves were through the use of Anglo-American research framework. Three kinds of strategies included researching issues related to Greater China, using Anglo-American frameworks for exploring research issues, and enhancing Anglo-American theories.

First, when asked about how Janice chose her research topic, she suggested that Taiwan may not be of interest to the academia in the global world. “Taiwan is a small island. Researchers may not be much interested if your research topic is about Taiwan. On the contrary, Greater China could be of great international interest.” Janice added:

Taiwan may not grab much attention in the globe. Anything that happens in Taiwan could be unique, but not many researchers may cite it. Nonetheless, if you conduct a study related to Greater China, a large number of people might be interested in reading what is happening since their government may have trade with Greater China. They want to know more about it.

Second, in order to get published in internationally indexed journals, a strategy mentioned by Tom is that he should redesign and conduct the research based on Anglo-American theories. He commented his approach in writing articles in economics. “In order to get my articles published in internationally indexed journals, the studies of local issues need to be framed by Anglo-American theories.”

Finally, Bob noted the importance of enhancing Anglo-American theories. “If I just show some results, I will not get my articles published.” To get articles published in journals in his field (political science), he intended to enhance theories by explaining the uniqueness found in Taiwan:

In the field of political science, the political climate may vary from region to region. For example, what happens in Eastern societies may not be similar in Western societies. I put much emphasis on this aspect, something absent in Western societies but existing in Taiwan. This could be a big selling point and thus enhance theories.

The above three strategies can be interpreted that universities demand teachers to get their works published in internationally indexed journals. However, as suggested by Braine (2005), such journals usually center on audiences in Anglo-American contexts and may not be much interested in research from non-Western contexts. Since researching issues related to Greater China, using Anglo-American frameworks for exploring research issues, and enhancing Anglo-American theories are highlighted in particular, it seems to indicate that practicing such strategies may be significant for the peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in the international academic community.

Struggle

As stated in the previous section, getting articles published in internationally indexed journals increasingly becomes a requirement. However, it could also be a struggle in response to such assessment. For example, Jenny indicated concern about the veneration of internationally indexed journals. “Some of the research topics fit within the Chinese context can be best written in Chinese rather than in English. Also, not all articles published in English are of an international standard.” The idea of what is ‘international’ may also denote hegemony. Jenny added:

In the English speaking countries such as UK and US, markets are large enough to be international, although most of the articles published in social sciences are basically about research in the local context. Certainly, there is a kind of hegemony due to language and scale of the research community. Consequently, people from other places need to be affiliated with such research community in order to be international.

On the other hand, Alice argued that internationally indexed journals may not be all appropriate for social sciences researchers. She indicated that it is questionable to privilege getting articles published in internationally indexed journals. Such board criteria adopted in natural sciences (i.e. SCI) are applicable, but may blindly extend across social sciences (i.e. SSCI). In other words, the means of evaluation in the scholarship of social sciences could be different from those in natural sciences. For instance, Alice noted:

I think adopting SSCI as the only criterion may somehow be inappropriate. In social sciences, a lot of research is on local issues and thus should use local discourses to

exchange among colleagues. A single-minded concern with publishing in these indexed journals may impede disinterested quest of scholarship and limit academic vision.

Being under pressure to publish particularly in the internationally indexed journals makes James feel perplexed. The feeling was articulated by him as follows:

It is hard to escape from the evaluation yardstick. The pressure comes all the way from the school research and development division to the department. In order to survive, I need to set a good example to my younger colleagues and get articles published in internationally indexed journals. It is very difficult to break out of this dilemma.

Getting Articles Published in Chinese

Although getting articles published in internationally indexed English journals is almost the default target that university teachers aimed at for evaluation, nevertheless, they held a positive attitude toward getting articles published in Chinese. It is noted that generally university teachers had different purposes in mind.

To bring in western perspectives and transform the local academia

Helen, apart from seeking to get articles published in English, also wrote in Chinese and submitted papers to journals in Taiwan. She pointed out that she wanted her work to be seen by international as well as local readers. She felt the need to get articles published in journals in Taiwan since it would help to bring western perspectives into Taiwan:

I think there is a need of writing in Chinese for journals in Taiwan. I hope Taiwanese will know about western perspectives. They can compare and contrast similarities and differences between east and west, and gain some insights to make changes. Different perspectives can be complementary.

In view of this, her commitment to the local academia is clear. She aimed to participate in the conversation in the local academia, by targeting to make a difference, in particular on the research in Taiwan. In other words, it was important for her to write in Chinese to bring in western perspectives and to transform the local academia.

To influence policy making

Another motivation to write in Chinese is articulated by Sandy, hoping her research to facilitate discussion and have an influence on policy making in Taiwan. "I hope that I can get my articles published in Taiwan and play a role in policy making. Since my research interest is in such an area, it may expedite discussion in Taiwan."

Sandy has got her articles published in a number of journals written in Chinese. In addition, she wrote articles in local magazines and newspapers. She also served on several committees for the university as well as the government. In other words, she was keen to take part in the local society and her publications in Chinese showed what she aimed to promote in policy making.

To guide practice for local readers

Jason pointed out that in addition to fulfilling the requirement in getting articles published in internationally indexed journals, due his own personal interest, he also wrote guidebooks in Chinese for local readers:

I do not care much about whether guidebooks written in Chinese are counted by the university or not. Nevertheless, writing guidebooks helps me earn reputations for local societies. I feel a need to propagate my research and ideas to local readers.

Indeed, Jason considered that writing in Chinese allowed him to fulfill his own personal aspiration and delivered messages to local readers. He derived great satisfaction from a collegial link to local societies.

To serve and educate Taiwanese people

Jean served as a member of the academic board in a Chinese research journal in Taiwan. Although the journal was faced with the difficulty of survival, nonetheless, she put stress on its importance in educating Taiwanese people. "Although the concepts of globalization and internationalization are vital, nevertheless, the importance of localization cannot be overemphasized. After all, many people are reading Chinese. We need to produce some Chinese materials to serve and educate people, and let them read and learn." With her service-mindedness, she tried to forge the nexus between research and education. By reaching a wide readership in the local society, she foresaw the possibility of nurturing the readership, fostering discussion, and making an impact.

It is noted that the Jean did not regard English and Chinese publications as mutually exclusive. In particular, she stated that Chinese scholarship had much to offer to the West. For example, recently she had a publication of a translated version of her Chinese book into English. She hoped that the English version could serve as a reference for potential English readers. As she pointed out, "I do not think that only the West has theories to provide. Taiwan can offer a lot to be explored." The above comment obviously aimed to change the status quo that marginalized non-English scholarship. She believed her translated book (from Chinese to English) could facilitate mutual understandings between East and West scholarship.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the study is to investigate Taiwanese university teachers' motivation and language choice in writing for scholarly publication. The findings indicate that getting articles published in internationally indexed journals was a major reason leading the Taiwanese university teachers to write in English, despite the fact that the teachers also wanted to have their publications reaching as wide a readership as possible and showing a high quality scholarship. A number of strategies were adopted with the aim of successful publication in internationally indexed journals, including researching issues related to Greater China, using Anglo-American frameworks for exploring research issues, and enhancing Anglo-American theories. However, there was an obvious struggle in response to assessment to get articles published in internationally indexed journals. What the teachers considered that this struggle was the adoption of Western criteria or criteria in internationally indexed journals more suitable for natural sciences than for social sciences. Meanwhile, the teachers sought to get articles published in Chinese to bring in western perspectives and transform the

local academia, to influence policy making, to guide practice for local readers, or to serve and educate Taiwanese people.

The above results can be explained and interpreted as follows. First, apparently, getting articles published in internationally indexed journals is the process of the internationalization of the academia in response to globalization of higher education (Mok, 2006; Smirnova et al., 2021). In the case of Taiwan, this may denote a reproduction of Western criteria in evaluating scholarship since getting articles published in Anglo-American journals is usually viewed a higher status than local publication. In spite of this, it is particularly worth noting that the teachers in the study also tried to get articles published in Chinese, for the purpose of serving Taiwanese society. In particular, they may also seek to get articles published in local magazines and newspapers with insights mainly from their research disciplines. The result coincides with what Altbach (2009) indicates the university's responsibility "to disseminate research and analysis in local languages" (p. 25). To enhance visibility of scholarship such as Taiwanese scholarship in the global world with the center in Anglo-American academia (Galtung, 1971), efforts can be made such as encouraging researchers' participation in international academia, with particular reference to Greater China.

Second, although university teachers need to accommodate the assessment that favors internationally indexed journals over local journals (Chou, 2008; Chou & Ching, 2012), nonetheless, it seems that publication in English may be encouraged without either sacrificing their beliefs in getting articles published in Chinese or eroding Chinese as an academic language. This is not to deny the problem about the struggle in seeking to get articles published in internationally indexed journals for Taiwanese university teachers and in overcoming the English language obstacles encountered by them when it comes to writing for publication in English. The finding of the study also indicates that the university teachers would try to strike a balance between international participation and engagement "in civic discourse on topics of societal importance" (Altbach, 2009, p. 22) in the local society.

Finally, despite the spread of English as an international language for research (Liu, 2017), Chinese still remains to be a vibrant language for publication for Taiwanese university teachers, and getting articles published in English and Chinese tends to be a common practice. Their past study abroad experiences coupled with their abilities to write in English were likely to be the major reasons leading university teachers to get articles published in English. However, it is worth noting that in spite of such tendency, the teachers did not to get their articles published in English only. This may in turn suggests that English has not replaced Chinese as the language for publication for Taiwanese university teachers (Huang, 2011). Publishing in languages other than English in academic writing thus deserves attention, in view of the fact that the publishing activities in different languages all over the world are vibrant (Curry & Lillis, 2022). Along with other findings discussed earlier, the current study offers evidence against the spread of English for scholarly publication and the widely-held view of utility as the single most important driving force, and reveals a complex picture of Taiwanese university teachers' motivation and language choice in writing for scholarly publication.

The findings of this study can provide some useful implications. First, the connections between past study abroad experiences and abilities to write in English provide Taiwanese university teachers with the possibility of getting articles published in both Chinese and English rather than in Chinese only. In addition, against the backdrop of international scholarship, as noted in this study, because of the assessment pressure to get articles

published in internationally indexed journals, Taiwanese university teachers need to prioritize writing in English, which could lead to inform a wider public and make an impact in the global world. They also start to use Anglo-American frameworks for exploring research issues and enhancing Anglo-American theories. The ideological gap between Eastern and Western scholarship may therefore gradually be reduced.

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