

Choosing venues for publishing research: a Thai perspective

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Abstract

With increasing pressure on academics to publish research, especially in international journals, understanding how and why academics choose where to publish becomes important. In periphery countries especially, academics in context-specific disciplines, such as language and social studies, are faced with choices of language of publication, venue type (such as international journals or national conferences), and specific venue (such as which national journal). This study investigates the reasons for the choices of four applied linguistics academics working at a Thai university, using interviews focusing on the reasons for choosing the publication venue for individual articles. The findings show that the academics have different individual research publication styles, such as storing completed research until an appropriate venue for publication becomes available and following others' advice on where to disseminate research. These individual styles appear to influence choices of where to publish more than other factors with few shared reasons for choices concerning venue of publication and language of publication.

1. The pressure to publish internationally

Publishing research has become a requirement for most academics throughout the world. While research publications have been expected from academics in core countries (e.g. the UK, the US) for many years, it is only in the last decade or so that publishing research has been required of academics in periphery countries, such as Thailand. This increased pressure to publish has been linked to the growing internationalization and commercialization of higher education (e.g. Li & Flowerdew, 2009), whereby universities need to build a reputation to distinguish themselves from their competitors which now include universities in other countries. Research publications are one of the most visible and easily measurable markers of competitiveness (Jaroongkhongdach, Watson Todd, Keyuravong & Hall, 2012) and so are usually included in university quality assurance and ranking exercises. With universities wishing to be ranked highly, reward systems to encourage or require academics to publish research are set up (Curry & Lillis, 2004) meaning that, in most situations, academics' promotion and tenure are based, at least in part, on their research publications.

A further consequence of the internationalization of education is that, with universities competing internationally, research publications in international publishing venues are preferred. With English as the established academic lingua franca and with the increasing anglicization of international journals (Swales, 1990), publishing internationally nearly always means publishing in English. The result is the establishment of national and institutional policies promoting research publication in English in international journals in a wide cross-section of countries, including Hong Kong (Braine, 2005), Italy (Gazzola, 2012), Poland (Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008) and Thailand (Jaroongkhongdach et al., 2012), to the extent that, even in countries like Bangladesh, publishing in English is seen as usual professional practice (Hamid, 2006).

A further reason for the promotion of publication in international journals concerns quality. University quality assurance and ranking exercises are not based solely on the quantity of research publications; they usually also attempt to account for quality of publications. There are two main ways of doing this. First, there is a publication hierarchy based on academic prestige

and weight (Curzan & Queen, 2006) with international refereed journals in major databases being at or near the top of the hierarchy. Second, the impact of research can be judged by the number of citations, and articles in international refereed journals with their wider readership of other researchers are more likely to be cited than other articles (Lillis, Hewings, Vladimirov & Curry, 2010). The main consequence of these various national and institutional policies is that academics in most situations are under pressure to publish research in English in international refereed journals regularly.

2. Other influences on where to publish

Although there may be substantial institutional pressure on academics to publish research in international refereed journals, a range of other factors may lead to academics, particularly in periphery countries, choosing other venues for publication. Perhaps foremost amongst these is the difficulty in getting research published in respected international journals, many of which have acceptance rates below 20% (Renandya, 2012).

To some extent, the difficulty of publishing in international journals may be due to the need to write in English, a second language (L2) for most academics in periphery countries (Salager-Meyer, 2008; Uzuner, 2008). However, many academics for whom English is an L2 actually find writing research articles in English easier than in their first language (Flowerdew, 2000; Hamid, 2006), suggesting that the need to write in English may not actually be the barrier it initially appears to be. Furthermore, there is some evidence that level of expertise in research is more important than language proficiency for successful international publication (Wood, 2001), and thus the quality of the research itself (Jaroongkhongdach et al., 2012) or a lack of research skills (Pham, 2006) may be more of a barrier to publication than language. This is especially true for junior researchers even in core countries who typically start by publishing in local journals or conference proceedings before moving on to international publications (Gong, 2009). Other issues which make publishing in international journals difficult include the parochialism or “failure to show the relevance of the study to the international community” (Flowerdew, 2001, p. 135) of much research originating in periphery countries, non-discursive constraints such as lack of funds or access to resources (Canagarajah, 1996; Curry & Lillis, 2010; Swales, 2004), and the potentially lengthy time delay between starting the research and publication (Curzan & Queen, 2006; Uzuner, 2008). These issues may lead academics, particularly in periphery countries, to seek alternative venues for publication even if they are under substantial pressure and may even desire to publish in international journals.

While the difficulties in publishing internationally may be viewed as constraints, there are other issues encouraging academics to choose non-international venues for publication which are volitional. The most important of these concern the need to reach a specific audience, since a key factor in selecting a venue for publication is the appropriateness of the venue and its readership for the research (Curzan & Queen, 2006). In cases where publication in a local venue is chosen, the downsides of low citation frequency and small readership (Salager-Meyer, 2008) may be more than offset by the targeting of a specific audience.

There are several reasons why academics may wish to target a non-international audience for their research. They may wish to educate the general public (Curzan & Queen, 2006), especially where the local general public may be affected by the research, such as with environmental studies (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). They may wish to influence policy making (Li & Flowerdew, 2009). They may wish to raise their profile in a local research network, especially when that network is large and influential, such as the humanities and social sciences

research network in China (Flowerdew & Li, 2009). These reasons mean that the more context-specific disciplines, such as humanities and social sciences, are more likely to favor local publication than the more context-independent disciplines, such as science (Fernández-Polo & Cal Varela, 2009; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999).

Other reasons for publishing locally are more personal. Academics may choose a local venue for publication for ideological reasons (Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008; Swales, 1990), for instance, if they view publishing internationally as involving a sacrifice in the need to conform to English and its scientific norms (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). The initial motivation for conducting the research may also lead to local publication. If the research was conducted for the purposes of personal growth and development (Burns, 1999; Edwards, 2005), there is no need to publish internationally, and, indeed, publishing locally may help develop research and publishing skills for later international publications.

Choosing a local venue for publication does not necessarily mean publishing in the local language and does not necessarily preclude also publishing internationally. More and more national journals are either publishing only in English (Wood, 2001) or allowing academics to choose between English and the local language by going bilingual (Kennedy, 2001). Academics can also engage multiple discourse communities by publishing their research both in English and in a local language (Li & Flowerdew, 2009), although the acceptability of translating articles for further publication is controversial (Wen & Gao, 2007). The conflicts between institutional pressure to publish internationally, constraints on achieving this, and volitional reasons for publishing locally imply that choosing a venue for publishing research is a complex issue that may vary on a case-by-case basis.

3. Core and periphery country differences in research publication

Much of the previous work on choosing venues for publishing research has focused on core-country academics. In academic disciplines as varied as medicine (Peleg & Shvartzman, 2006), microbiology (McGarva, 1999; Warlick & Vaughan, 2007) and real estate (Ziobrowski & Gibler, 2000), there are articles presenting research into publishing practices and giving advice to potential authors on where to publish. In targeting core-country academics, these articles focus on choosing the ‘right’ international refereed journal for publication, considering issues such as journal impact factor, and ignore other possible venues for publication.

For core-country academics, international journals are *the* place to publish, given their place in the publication hierarchy. These academics are less likely to be constrained by the difficulties of publishing in international journals than periphery-country academics. In the core countries, English is usually the first language, there are few non-discursive constraints, and the core-country dominance of academia means that parochial research conducted in core countries is still considered appropriate for publication.

These issues favoring core-country academics publishing in international journals, together with general levels of publishing experience and research skills, mean that there is a clear divide between core and periphery countries in international research publication (Salager-Meyer, 2008). Although in recent years following institutional pressure to publish internationally, there has been a massive proliferation in submissions to international journals from periphery countries, most of these are rejected in-house because of quality problems (Chun & Thompson, 2010; Collins & Dagenais, 2010; Zuengler & Carroll, 2010), meaning that there has been no concomitant increase in international publications from periphery countries. It seems reasonable to assume that the articles from periphery-country academics rejected by international journals

are submitted elsewhere for publication, perhaps in lower-ranked international journals, in conference proceedings or in local journals. How periphery-country academics choose their venues for publication, therefore, may be very different to the existing work focused on the choices of core-country academics.

Investigating periphery-country research publication is problematic. Given the very low proportions of periphery-country research that is published in international refereed journals, at best 1% of research publications (Jaroongkhongdach et al., 2012), the well-known research databases such as *Scopus* may not be much use. Even databases with much wider coverage, such as *Google Scholar*, may include only a minority of periphery-country research publications. The low profile of much periphery-country research means that most is never cited, the so-called dry holes of research (Laband & Tollison, 2003). Bibliometric investigations of periphery-country research are therefore unlikely to produce a valid picture. Combined with the case-by-case nature of choosing venues for research publication, investigating the motivations and bases for decision making of periphery-country academics is perhaps best conducted using in-depth, publication-specific methods.

4. Focus of the study and methodology

This paper focuses on the choices of venue of publication for research of four academics working in one faculty at a well-known university in Thailand, a periphery country where pressure to publish internationally has increased markedly in the last decade. While such an approach clearly restricts the generalizability of the findings, it does allow a case-by-case approach to be taken in that the academics can be asked about their choices of venue for individual articles as well as the broader issues such as attitudes towards language of publication and impact of institutional policies covered in previous surveys (e.g. Flowerdew & Li, 2009; Pham, 2006; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999).

4.1 The context

In terms of research, Thailand is a periphery country. In the academic discipline focused on in this study (applied linguistics), Thailand is ranked 47th for language and linguistics, being responsible for 0.03% of the world's research output (SCImago, 2012). In *Scopus*, one of the main academic databases concentrating on international journal articles, in arts and social sciences, there are 3,660 documents originating from Thailand. As can be expected from an international academic database, the vast majority of these (3,508) are in English, with 155 in Thai (all from the same Thailand-based journal) and a few in other languages such as Japanese and French. Focusing on arts only, there are only 291 documents originating from Thailand, all in English. For other journal articles, Thailand maintains a database of recognized national-level journals, the Thai-Journal Citation Index, which lists 260 journals in the humanities and social sciences. Of those relevant to the discipline in this study which have active websites, 13 publish only in English, 10 publish only in Thai, and 10 publish in either language. There is no national-level data on other venues for publication such as conference proceedings.

The university focused on in this study, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT) is the highest-ranked Thai university (Times Higher Education, 2013), although not the best-known, and one of nine designated national research universities. As its name suggests, KMUTT focuses primarily on engineering and sciences, although there is an arts faculty. The School of Liberal Arts (SoLA), consisting of the Department of Language and the Department of Social Studies, primarily provides support courses in languages and social studies

for students from other faculties and has no undergraduate students of its own, although it does run Masters and PhD programs in applied linguistics. There are about 60 academics working in SoLA, 40 in language and 20 in social studies.

As part of a designated research university, SoLA encourages its staff to conduct and publish research. Biannually, staff are evaluated on their work, including research output, as part of consideration for salary increases, academic promotion is based mainly on research output, and every year staff receive extra remuneration based on their research evaluated according to quantity, quality and personal development in research output. Between 2007 and 2012, SoLA staff produced 338 research and academic publications which are categorized into type in Table 1. Many of these publications are not accessible through databases, a fact perhaps typical of many periphery-country universities and the rationale for choosing SoLA as the site of this research given that the full data of publications is accessible. In addition to encouraging staff to conduct and publish research, SoLA also helps to promote published research to the general public by organizing a booth at the National Research Exhibition (attended by over 20,000 people every year) and by including a section on recent research in its regular radio program on a local community station, suggesting that wishing to educate the general public may be less of an issue in choosing a venue for publication for SoLA staff than for staff in other similar circumstances.

Table 1 SoLA research publications by type 2001-2012

<i>Type of research publication venue</i>	<i>Total number</i>
International conference proceedings	146
National journal	80
National conference proceedings	50
International journal not in major database	26
International journal in major database	14
Chapter in book by international publisher	10
Chapter in other book	8
Other venue of publication	4

4.2 Subjects and their research publications

To identify reasons for choosing venues for publishing research, ideally we should focus on academics who have published regularly in a variety of venues, and thus who are aware of the choices. To this end, four academics from SoLA were selected on the basis that they had published at least eight articles in at least three different types of publishing venue (from Table 1) in the last five years. All four subjects are Thai female English teachers from the Department of Language (Subjects A to D). Together, they had published 49 articles in the previous five years, 29 of which had the academic as first author. In the interviews, Subject D talked at length about another article which had been accepted but not yet published, giving a total of 30 articles for which reasons for choosing the venue for publication were investigated. Table 2 provides a summary of the articles by subject.

Of these publications, all were in English. Only one of the publications is in *Scopus*, and only 11 are in *Google Scholar*. Ignoring self-citations, only three articles have been cited (one twice, and two once).

Table 2 Summary of articles and subjects investigated

Subject	International journal in major database	Other international journal	International conference proceedings	National journal	National conference proceedings	Other
A		2	3	2		
B	1		6	2		2
C		1	1	3		
D			3	2	2	

4.3 The interviews

The main purpose of the interviews is to elicit, on a case-by-case basis, the subjects' reasons for choosing the venue for publication of each of the 30 articles. The interviews were conducted individually with each subject by the researcher. As a long-term colleague of the subjects, I believe that I have a good working relationship with them which would be reflected in the interviews, a point confirmed by the subjects' willingness, in some cases eagerness, to share, and by two of the subjects, towards the ends of the interviews, swapping roles and asking me about my reasons for choosing venues for publishing research. At the start of the interviews, subjects were given a choice of language in which the interview could be conducted, with all subjects choosing English. Interviews took between 18 and 27 minutes each.

The interviews followed a three-stage protocol. First, the purpose of the interview and of the research was explained and an opportunity provided for questions and withdrawal as a subject. At this point, two of the subjects started giving reasons before any questions had been asked.

Second, a list of the full references for the articles in Table 2 had been prepared for each subject, and, on an article-by-article basis, the subjects were asked for their reasons in choosing the venue for publication, both for venue type and for specific venue. Third, some broader issues identified as being of potential importance in previous research were covered, including choice of language for publishing research, broad principles guiding venue choice, the stage in the research process at which the choice was made, and the impact of institutional pressure to conduct and publish research, especially in international journals.

As far as possible in the interviews, an active listening approach was used, especially the use of paraphrasing for clarification and confirmation, to allow the subjects some control over the discourse (Louw, Watson Todd & Jimarkon, 2011). To illustrate co-construction issues in the interviews (Mann, 2011), where relevant, the researcher's turns in the interview are included in the extracts shown below (where R is the researcher).

4.4 Data analysis

The data in this study consists of the interview transcripts. These were examined in three ways for three purposes.

First, taking each subject individually, do the different subjects have different general approaches to conducting and publishing research and different bases for choosing venues for publication? In other words, for a given subject, is there a reasonably consistent pattern of research publication decision making that differentiates that subject from the others? This could

be termed the research publication style, analogous to the various teaching styles of teachers. Styles result from the proportion and frequency of occurrence of particular features together with the presence or absence of contrasting units, and are not easily operationalized. Following Katz's (1996) work on teaching style, I will use metaphor as a research tool to illuminate the subjects' various research publication styles. In doing this, it is hoped that the metaphors can act as heuristics for capturing the essence of the research publication practices, but care needs to be taken to avoid reification of the metaphors (Potter, 2002).

Second, regardless of whether subject-specific patterns exist or not, the subjects may have similar reasons for choosing a given type of publication venue, such as international conference proceedings, which differ from their reasons for other types of venue. The subjects' reasons for choosing each venue type were therefore collated in an attempt to identify shared reasons.

Third, the broader research issues identified in the literature as being potentially important (especially choice of language for publishing research and the effects of institutional pressure) were examined.

5. Findings

5.1 Research publication styles

The first issue concerns whether there are subject-specific patterns regarding choosing venues for publication, or the subjects' research publication styles. The data concerning this will be presented on a subject-by-subject basis using metaphors as the research tool.

Subject A: The storer

Subject A consistently conducts and publishes research within the same area, namely, Computer-Assisted Language Learning. Her priority seems to be conducting research more than disseminating it. By continually conducting research studies, she creates a store of completed research from which she can draw when opportunities for dissemination present themselves.

Extract 1

- R So why did you choose that conference? Did you want to go to Maha Sarakham or
A { did you think the conference title
A No no The topic of the conference, it match. Sometimes when I -
I have research, I didn't do anything. I finish it and keep it for a while and then
when I got the news that, ah!, here's a conference and the title match so I apply
R So generally you're constantly doing pieces of research and you just keep them
until you find an appropriate place to publish them
A Yes. It's like that, or to present them

The reasons Subject A gives for choosing the various venues her research is published in vary greatly, ranging from the match between the research topic and the conference theme mentioned in extract 1 to following a friend's recommendation to wanting to support the university's own journal. The distinguishing characteristic for Subject A is that nearly all of her research was completed and stored for a period of time before she chose where to publish it.

Subject B: The strategist

Subject B is the most rational of the subjects in terms of having clear criteria and principles guiding her choice of venue for publication. She is very aware of the differences

between venue types, adapts her way of conducting research depending on venue type, and uses different criteria in choosing the specific venue dependent on venue type (see extract 2). For these reasons, Subject B is the most strategic of the subjects in choosing venue for publication.

Extract 2

- R Before you do the research, do you have a clear place of publication that you're aiming for?
- B No, it starts from my interest
- R For all of these?
- B Uh, mostly for the journals I have, I started from my interest and I outline some ideas and then I look for the, uh, where to publish, but for the conference it starts from the announcements and then I look at the themes and see, OK, what kind of research that I can do for the presentation
- R So, what you're saying is that for the conference in effect the fact that it's a conference is dictating what research you do
- B Yes
- B [later in the interview] I try to look for the conference that I can have research to serve the requirements. The second thing that I look at is if the conference has proceedings or not, and if it's announced as international conference, it will be more interesting
- B [later in the interview] I think we have different reasons for local journal and international journal. For international ones, they look at the names, if they are well-known for people in the field or not, and the number of publications per year, also the issue of impact factor is very, they have to think about this as well. For Thai journal, for me I look at the issues per year and maybe the name of affiliation for this journal

Subject C: The upgrader

To meet institutional requirements, Subject C aims to produce one research publication each year. Her first publication was in KMUTT's own journal since she believed that as a staff member of the university her article was more likely to be accepted. She then moved on to publishing in the journal of another Thai university to see if her research was good enough to be accepted even though she was not a staff member, before challenging herself to publish in a Thailand-based international journal to see whether the standard of her research had improved (see extract 3). Subject C, then, has a long-term developmental view of her research publications and continually attempts to upgrade herself by moving upwards through the publication hierarchy.

Extract 3

- R So why do you think it's important to go for an international journal?
- C I think it's about the standard, we should improve and we will see about I mean the difficulties or the regulations or the different kinds of standard for the peer reviewing process to approve or I mean to give the different views of how can I improve my research

Subject D: The follower

Subject D has recently started her academic career, and, perhaps because of a lack of knowledge about disseminating research or because of a lack of confidence, she constantly seeks recommendations and advice about venues for publication. In fact, for all seven publications she was asked about in the interview, she reported that she had followed a colleague's advice in choosing the venue for publication (see extract 4). While some of the other subjects mentioned following a colleague's recommendation for one or two publications, Subject D's reliance on colleagues' advice is striking.

Extract 4

- D He told me about the conference and I just went there, submitted a paper and got accepted, and he took me there, just that, I don't know anything about it at all
R So it wasn't really your choice, it was his choice
D Yes

D [later in the interview] Actually, X [a colleague] she told me that let's go to Spain (laughs), no, no, no, we should develop ourselves by doing some research, and that is the Spain research, and she told me about the title, the theme of the conference

R [later in the interview] So why did you choose this conference?
D Y [a colleague] told me (laughs) he already submitted a paper and asked me to submit a paper. OK, I have this one, I will submit it. Just that. No choice, no, not, it's not my own decision

Some reasons for choosing venues for publication and research practices are shared across subjects. All of the subjects (with the exception of Subject B when submitting to conferences) complete their research before choosing the venue; all mention the match between research topic and the venue for at least one publication; and following colleagues' advice is reported by three subjects. Nevertheless, there are clear differences in the research publication styles of the subjects. In one case (Subject B for journals and conferences), these differences are intra-subject, but the major differences are between subjects with each subject's individual concerns and motivations leading to different reasons behind the choices of venue for publication and research publication styles.

5.2 Choices for type of venue for publication

Even though the subjects have clear individual research publication styles, they may share common reasons for a given type of publication venue. From Table 2, in total the four subjects had four publications in international journals, 13 publications in international conference proceedings, and nine publications in national journals (national conference proceedings and other publications - both teacher magazines - are restricted to a single subject meaning there can be no shared reasons). This section examines these three main types of venue to see if there are common reasons behind the subjects' choices.

5.2.1 International journals

Publishing in international journals is strongly encouraged by the university, but there is no evidence from the interviews that institutional pressure led the subjects to choose international journals as the venue for publishing their research. Institutional pressure has some effect on encouraging staff to conduct research, but seems to have little effect on their choices about where to publish. Indeed, most of the subjects, while showing awareness of the institutional pressure, seem to try to ignore it. Instead of publishing in international journals because of institutional pressure, this type of venue was more likely to be chosen as a measure of personal progress in research ability. Extract 3 above shows that Subject C viewed publishing in an international journal as evidence of her own development, and a similar reason is given by Subject B in extract 5.

Extract 5

B For this journal, my friends or my colleagues are saying I shouldn't have sent, I should not submit my research to this journal because the acceptance rate is very low, but I think it's, I will be, I will feel very good and proud of myself if I can get publication here, and it was successful

While there is some evidence that international journals are chosen as a type of venue to show personal development, there are no common reasons across subjects for choosing what international journal to publish in. Indeed, the reasons often appear to be serendipitous. In extract 6, subject A chose a journal because she happened to meet the editor.

Extract 6

A She visit here, we had lunch together, and I told her that I have a kind of article like this, and she said, ah!, we are preparing a new special issue about that, so she asked me to send and lots and lots of revisions after that. So happy she accepted.

5.2.2 International conference proceedings

International conference proceedings are the most common type of venue for publishing, but the only reason given in the interviews for choosing this type of venue is Subject B's preference for international conferences with proceedings (over national conferences and conferences without proceedings) since these are counted in university evaluations of staff (see extract 2). The main reason for choosing a specific conference is the match between the conference theme and the topic of completed research (see extract 1). One further issue for conferences outside Thailand is that the location of the conference is a place which subjects want to visit (see extracts 4 and 7).

Extract 7

C If I went to Dubai, Laos and last year I went to Australia, I try to change the place, I mean the country, of the conference that I will attend. First of all, I think about the theme first, and then I will try to, well, let's say, tourist purposes, but actually I want to explore life, to see way of life, something like that, because I have not much chance to go abroad, right?, so this is a good opportunity for me to get around, to learn more

5.2.3 National journals

Publishing in national journals, while apparently quite common, is not rated very highly by the university. Given that there is little institutional pressure to publish in this type of venue, why is it such a frequent venue for SoLA staff? Two reasons are mentioned by at least two subjects. First, national journals may provide a secure place for a first research publication (supporting Gong's (2009) progression of publication) as mentioned by Subject C. For two other subjects, their first publication was derived from a thesis and their supervisor recommended a national journal as a suitable venue. Second, two subjects mention that there are practical benefits to publishing in national journals. One reports that national journals have quick turnaround times, and another states that national journals allow lengthy periods for revising articles following reviewer feedback. Generally, though, there are no clear shared reasons for publishing in national journals.

Examining the three most common types of venue for publication, with the exception of the match between conference theme and research topic for international conferences, there are no reasons for choosing venues, either for type of venue or for specific venue within a type, that are shared by the majority of subjects. This suggests that the individual research publication styles are a greater influence on decisions about venue for publication than the venues themselves.

5.3 Language choice in publication

The Department of Language academics are all English teachers or applied linguists working on English, so it is perhaps not surprising that their research publications are all in English, and identity as an English teacher is a factor influencing the decision to publish in English for Subject C (see extract 8).

Extract 8

- R Why have you never tried to write an article in Thai?
C Why? Because I think I'm an English teacher and my specialty is to use English, and one way I think writing research in Thai is more difficult than writing research in English because of the terms, something like that, writing style as well. I think, well, another thing is because we are an English teacher, we should do research in English

There are, in addition, other reasons for publishing in English given by Subject D in extract 9 which were less expected, especially the increased likelihood of being accepted for publication in Thailand-based journals if the article is in English.

Extract 9

- R All your publications here are all written up in English. Why do you never try to write up research in Thai?
D I myself believe that, if I write it in Thai, it will not convey a clear concept or the clear framework I really use because all the frameworks belong to the foreign ones, the post-modern theories, the thinking theories. Even our own data is English, it is impossible to write it in Thai, for me it is impossible and, if I write it in Thai, I think it's not going to be published because it's not interesting
R So you think that even for a journal like a national journal which accepts papers in

both Thai and English, you think that if you write in English, it has a higher chance of being accepted?

- D For sure. Someone from X University told me that we desperately need the English paper, the paper in English to be published. I believe that maybe people who write it in Thai may have the equal, the same quality as my paper, but they will choose me because of English

The questions for the English language academics concerning language choice were framed to elicit reasons for not publishing in Thai, and it is interesting that none of the subjects considered the need to publish their research in ways accessible to the general public. This may be because academic publications are not aimed at the general public, or because the faculty provides help in disseminating research to the general public through community radio, a booth at the National Research Exhibition, and various informal publications. Subject B is involved in this dissemination to the public and, as can be seen in extract 10, finds the use of Thai problematic.

Extract 10

- R Do you find it difficult to do these things in Thai?
B Yes (laughs) I didn't learn how to write academic language in Thai, Thai academic language I didn't learn to do that ... For the general public, OK, for radio I don't use academic language, but in the poster [at the exhibition] or in something, the newspaper for example, we still have to use academic language but it can be simplified

6. Discussion

The current study differs from previous research into venues for publishing research in three main ways. First, as an interview-based study using in-depth questions about reasons for publishing particular research articles, the methodology contrasts with previous studies which are mostly either bibliometric or survey studies. Second, this study places a greater emphasis on reasons behind choices of venue for publication than most previous research. Third, the study focuses on a periphery country with little history of previous research, whereas most other studies have been conducted in either core countries or in non-core but developed countries with a history of research publication, such as those in Europe or Hong Kong.

The previous research into reasons for choosing venues or language of publication has mostly used surveys (e.g. Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). Although the use of questionnaires allows general patterns to be identified for a large number of respondents, questionnaire surveys often result in superficial data (Dörnyei, 2003) which may hide specific issues of interest. In this study, Subject B for conferences and journals had two different approaches to publication which questions seeking to identify general patterns may fail to uncover. A further issue with questionnaires is that they are constrained by their use of predetermined questions, meaning that issues which are not expected, such as the greater perceived chance of articles written in English being published in local journals, may not be elicited. The current study suggests that choosing a venue for publishing is a complex, individual issue for which questionnaire surveys with their restricted data may not be appropriate.

The reasons for choosing venues for publication given in this study suggest that individual differences in research publication style are more important than both differences

between venue types and institutional pressure. While aware of institutional requirements for publication, even when publishing in the institutionally preferred international journals, the subjects report personal reasons related to challenge and personal development rather than responding to institutional pressure. Even though outweighed by individual differences, the main differences between venue types are between journals and conferences (for example, several choices of journal appear to be serendipitous whereas conference choices are more rational) rather than between local and international publications. For language choices, the Department of Language academics only publish in English and appear to believe that they have no real choice concerning language of publication. Individual beliefs, priorities and styles therefore appear to underpin most of the decisions regarding venues for publication.

In a periphery country like Thailand with little history of research, some of the proposed reasons for publishing locally are less likely to have an impact. For instance, publishing to raise the author's profile in the local research network is unlikely to be a reason for publishing locally if the local network is fragmented and weak as is the case in several academic disciplines in Thailand. This issue is compounded by the fact that many articles are hidden in that they appear in no databases and are difficult to access. We should, therefore, not be surprised that so many articles are dry holes (Laband & Tollison, 2003) which are never cited. Indeed, it is unclear how many people may have even read the articles. If this is the case at the highest-ranked and perhaps most research-conscious Thai university, the proportion of hidden, uncited and perhaps unread research at other Thai universities may be even higher. This situation presents a challenge for bibliometric research focusing on publication and raises questions about what the academics hope to achieve in their research.

7. Conclusion

This study suggests that individual differences in research publication style are the biggest influence on decisions about choosing venues for publishing research. Although the case-by-case methodology used in the study may have emphasized the importance of this finding, the fact that many of the reasons behind the choices are more serendipitous than rational suggests that broad surveys into choices concerning research publication may overlook much of the complexity behind the decision making. That much of the research output is hidden by not being included in databases and never being cited also casts doubt on bibliometric analyses of research. Given the specific context in which the study was conducted, it is unclear whether the findings apply to other contexts, but it seems likely that similar patterns of complex, individual decision making and large proportions of hidden research output may be found in other periphery countries that have recently started promoting research publications.

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