Shiraz University

Faculty of Literature and Humanities

Ph.D. Dissertation In TEFL

IRANIAN SCHOLARS AND SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION IN ENGLISH: ATTITUDES, PROBLEMS, AND STRATEGIES

By

AKRAM BAHRAMI

Supervised by

ABDOLMEHDI RIAZI, Ph.D.

February 2009

۱۱۲۵۵۸

دانشکده ادبیات و علوم انسانی

پایان نامه دکتری در رشته آموزش زبان انگلیسی

اساتید ایرانی و چاپ مقالات علمی به زبان انگلیسی : نگرشها، مشکلات، و راهبردها

توسط

اکرم بهرامی

استاد راهنما

دکتر عبدالمهدی ریاضی

بهمن ماه ۱۳۸۷

۱۱۳۵۵۸

In the Name of Allah
The Most Compassionate,
The Merciful

Praise belongs to Allah, the lord of all beings;
The Most Compassionate, the Merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
who are immune from Thy wrath
and have never gone astray.

O Allah! Send your blessings to the head of
your messengers and the last of
your prophets Muhammad,
and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also, send your blessings to all your
prophets and envoys.

IN THE NAME OF GOD

IRANIAN SCHOLARS AND SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION IN ENGLISH: ATTITUDES, PROBLEMS, AND STRATEGIES

BY

AKRAM BAHRAMI

THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Ph.D.

IN

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TEFL)
SHIRAZ UNIVERSITY

SHIRAZ

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

EVALUATED AND APPROVED BY THE THESIS COMMITTEE AS: EXCELLENT

A. M. Riazi ..... A. M. RIAZI, Ph.D., ASSOCIATE PROF. Of SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION (SUPERVISOR)

M. Yamini ..... M. YAMINI, Ph.D., ASSISTANT PROF. Of TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (1st READER)

Parhizgar ..... M. R. PARHIZGAR, Ph.D., ASSISTANT PROF. Of TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (2nd READER)

FEBRUARY 2009

Dedicated to:

My Father

My Mother

My Husband, Dr. Esmaeili

My Son, Mohammad Javad

For their Patience, Understanding, Support, and Love

Acknowledgements

Thanks to God and may His peace and blessings be upon all his prophets for granting me the chance and the ability to successfully complete this study. It is my pleasure to have this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to those who have contributed to this work in one way or another.

First of all, I would like to deeply thank my dear supervisor, Dr. Riazi, without his encouragement, advice, mentoring, and research support, this thesis would not have been materialized. I also truly appreciate his patience and tolerance. It has been a unique opportunity and honor for me to work with him.

I am also extremely grateful to Dr. Yamini and Dr. Parhizgar for their careful reading of the manuscript.

I wish to express my warmest gratitude to Dr. Shokrpour, the educational deputy of the school of allied medical sciences, as the external examiner of the dissertation.

I should also like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Saadat, the internal examiner of the dissertation for her meticulous reading of the manuscript.

I would like to thank Dr. Pourgive, the representative of the graduate school in the defense session.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Yarmohammadi, Dr. Sadighi, and Dr. Jafarpur for their instruction during doctoral courses.

I am also thankful to Shiraz University's professors from different disciplines who kindly gave me their precious time, took part in this study, and generously shared their thoughts and experiences with me.

Last, but not least, it was impossible to continue my education at Ph.D. level without my lovely family's help and support. My sincere appreciation and thanks are wholeheartedly dedicated to my parents for their invaluable sensitivity, affectionate support, and continued encouragement all the way through my life. Their understanding and love inspired and encouraged me to work hard and to continue pursuing a Ph.D. Also, I'd like to give my sincere thanks to my brothers and sister for their unfailing encouragement and love. And finally, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my devoted husband, Dr. Esmaeili and my sweet son, Mohammad Javad for their outstanding and highly appreciated patience day and night throughout the time of my study, warm companionship, sense of responsibility, and for putting up with my absence. They form the backbone and the origin of my happiness. Their love and support without any complaint or regret enabled me to complete this Ph.D. dissertation particularly in those many days in which I spent more time with my computer than with them. They never lost their belief in my ability to accomplish this work. I owe every achievement to both of them. And, I promise to try and make up some of their sacrifices during these years.

ABSTRACT

IRANIAN SCHOLARS AND SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION IN ENGLISH: ATTITUDES, PROBLEMS, AND STRATEGIES

BY

AKRAM BAHRAMI

This study reports the results of an investigation which sought Iranian scholars' attitudes, problems, and strategies publishing research articles in English. To this end, interviews were conducted with 72 academics across different disciplines (Sciences, Social Sciences, and Art and Humanities); then, a coding scheme was developed based on the relevant literature and the information provided by the interviewees to codify the interviews. Findings revealed a detailed categorization of the participants' attitudes, problems, and strategies. It was found that Iranian scholars had a positive attitude towards publishing papers in English as a means of knowledge production. The results also supported the findings of previous research that the most important problems during writing research articles for non-native scholars and scientists were the introduction and discussion sections. Also, the major strategies reported were revising and editing, discipline-specific reading, and practicing writing. Implications are discussed for EAP courses, university authorities, and the editorial boards and reviewers of the journals.

Table of Contents

Title	Page
Chapter One: Introduction to the Study	1
1.0. Introduction	1
1.1. Preliminaries	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem	3
1.3. Theoretical Background and Conceptual Framework	4
1.4. Purpose and Significance of the Study	6
Chapter Two: Review of the Related Literature	8
2.0. Introduction	8
2.1. Scientific Publication	8
2.1.1. Science (Centre-Periphery)	8
2.1.2. Peripheral Publishing	9
2.1.3. The Role of Nation States	10
2.1.4. World Power Structures	11
2.1.5. NNES Scholars and the World of Scholarship	12
2.2. English as the International Language of Scientific Publication	13
2.2.1. Negative Consequences of EILSP	14
2.2.2. Considerations to Minimize the Consequences of EILSP	15
2.3. The Role of Literacy Brokers in Scientific Publication	16
2.3.1. Different Types of Literacy Brokers and their Orientations	18
2.4. A Review of the Previous Studies	19
2.4.1. Studies of NNES Scholars' Publication Practices	19
2.4.2. Studies of Novice NNES Scholars' Publication Practices	25
2.4.3. Studies based on Textual Analysis	30

2.5. Key Themes in the Studies 35
2.6. Future Challenges 36
Chapter Three: Method 38
3.0. Introduction 38
3.1. Participants 38
3.2. Instrument 41
3.3. Data Collection 41
3.4. Data Analysis Procedures 43
Chapter Four: Results and Discussion 45
4.0. Introduction 45
4.1. Overall Findings 45
4.1.1. Attitudes 47
4.1.2. Problems 50
4.1.3. Strategies 53
4.2. A Comparison of Different Categories across Different Disciplines 56
4.2.1. Attitudes 56
4.2.2. Problems 57
4.2.3. Strategies 58
4.3. Discussion of the Results 60
Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusions, and Implications 64
5.0. Introduction 64
5.1. Summary of the Study 64
5.2. Conclusions 65
5.3. Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications 67
5.3.1. Implications for NNES Scholars 67
5.3.2. Implications for Novice NNES Scholars (Graduate Students) 68
5.3.3. Implications for Journal Editors and Reviewers 69
5.3.4. Implications for Curriculum and Pedagogy 70
5.4.5. Implications for MSRT 70
Suggestions for Further Studies 72
References 74
Appendix A 81

Appendix B 82
Appendix C 83

List of Tables

Table	Page
Table 2.1. Studies of NNES scholars' publication practices	21
Table 2.2. Studies of novice NNES scholars' publication practices	27
Table 2.3. Studies based on textual analysis	32
Table 3.1. Demographic information of the participants	39
Table 3.2. Three major disciplines and their related fields based on ISI categorization	40
Table 3.3. The number of English articles in different disciplines 2004-1995	40
Table 4.1. Results of data codification	46
Table 4.2. A comparison of attitudes across different disciplines	57
Table 4.3. A comparison of problems across different disciplines	58
Table 4.4. A comparison of strategies across different disciplines	59

List of Figures

Figure **Page**

Figure 1.2. A schematic representation of the path taken by an NNS research article 17

List of Appendices

Appendix	Page
Appendix A: Interview Questions	81
Appendix B: Coding Scheme	82
Appendix C: Coded Data	83

Chapter One
Introduction to the Study

1.0. Introduction

This chapter is an introduction to the study. There are four sections in this chapter. The first and second sections present the preliminaries of the study and the statement of the problem, respectively. The third section introduces the theoretical background and the conceptual framework. The fourth section describes the purpose and the significance of the study.

1.1. Preliminaries

In recent years the number of published research articles and journals as a means of disseminating scientific knowledge has increased worldwide. English as the International Language of Scientific Publication (EILSP) (Bidlake, 2008) has assumed a vital role in knowledge dissemination in the academic world. Though the advantages of EILSP are considerable, Bidlake (2008) discusses the main negative consequences of EILSP for non-native-English-speaker (NNES)[1] researchers at linguistic and geopolitical levels and for the international scientific community at local and global levels.

The dominance of English as the language of scientific production (the lingua franca of the science) or as a "dominating and overpowering

[1]For the purposes of this study, the term NNES refers to an English user who speaks English as a foreign language. Other terms are used today instead of NNES such as English as an Additional Language (EAL) writer, multilingual scholar, etc.

force" (Tardy 2004, p. 247) has positive and negative aspects (Flowerdew, 1999a,b). On the one hand, it facilitates international understanding, global economic integration and growth, and the modernization of developing countries and on the other hand, some believe, it brings with it cultural imperialism and linguistic hegemony (Phillipson, 1992, 1998).

Hence, with "globalization and marketization of the academy" (Flowerdew, 2008, p.77), scholars all around the world are under increasing pressure to publish in English. English is considered as the key to success in an English-only research world (Belcher, 2007) and is being recognized as an academic worth (Dusazk & Lewkowicz, 2008). Today the "publish or perish" law (Garfield, 2000 cited in Mišak, Marušić, & Marušić, 2005) of academic environments makes researchers show their worth in terms of their research output which is evaluated by the number and quality of their publications indexed in the major citation indices (Flowerdew, 1999a,b; Curry & Lillis, 2004). Moreover, the researcher's output is usually considered as the criterion for promotions and research grants.

The issue of NNESs publishing in the international journals through English for Research Publication Purposes (ERRP, Cargill and Burgess, 2008) can address the concerns of professional researchers and post-graduate students who need to publish. Previous studies that explored writing for scholarly publication have included NNES novice researchers, doctoral students, junior scholars, and experienced or senior researchers (Swales, 2004) (see, for example, Swales, 1990; Gosden,

1995, 1996; Riazi, 1997; Hasrati, 2005; Cho, 2004; Li, 2006a,b; Flowerdew & Li, 2007; Li & Flowerdew, 2007).

These studies have provided useful insights about NNES publishing experiences including different L1 languages, e.g., Spanish (St. John, 1987), Scandinavian (Jernudd & Baldauf, 1987 cited in Swales 1990), Hungarian (Medgyes & Kaplan, 1992), Hong Kong (Flowerdew, 1999a,b, 2000), Danish (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), Hungarian, Slovakian, Spanish, Portuguese (Curry & Lillis, 2004; Lillis & Curry, 2006), Chinese (Liu, 2004), Japanese (Casanave, 1998; Okamura, 2006), Armenian (Sahakyan, 2006), Polish (Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008), Turkish (Buckingham, 2008), and Persian (Riazi, 1997; Hasrati, 2005).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Iran is regarded as a newly industrialized country (NIC) within the developing world (Salager-Meyer, 2008) which is nevertheless periphery in terms of international science publishing. This is while in different universities of Iran (almost 100 state universities and 290 Islamic Azad and non-for-profit universities in 30 different provinces), the major promotion criterion for different disciplines is the number of publication in international refereed journals. Considering the conflicts between Iran and the Western (English-speaking) world due to political issues and scientific sanctions against Iranians, it seems necessary to illuminate Iranian academics' status in attempting to make their intellectual voice get heard. Therefore, in an attempt to investigate the situation of NNES scholars researching in different fields, this study intended to investigate

the attitudes, problems, and strategies of Iranian scholars publishing in English.

1.3. Theoretical Background and Conceptual Framework

Previous research has identified a number of key areas where NNES writers experience difficulty in writing for publication (see, e.g., Adams-Smith, 1984; Bazerman, 1988; Dudley-Evans, 1994; Johns, 1993; Mauranen, 1993 all cited in Flowerdew 1999a; St. John, 1987; Swales, 1990). Some of the problems identified in these studies are as the following:

1. grammar
2. use of citations
3. making reference to the published literature
4. structuring of argument
5. textual organization
6. relating text to audience
7. ways in which to make knowledge claims
8. ways in which to reveal or conceal the point of view of the author
9. use of "hedges" to indicate caution expected by the academic community
10. "interference" of different cultural views regarding the nature of academic processes.

In addition to these specific problems with academic writing, other factors may inhibit NNES publication in international refereed journals. Just as a majority of articles in international refereed journals are written by NSs (Native Speakers), so are the editorial boards dominated by these

people. And, according to Gibbs (1995a), Scientific American's interviews with more than 40 scientists in 18 countries reveal that many believe poverty, cultural differences and a subtle prejudice against so-called Third World researchers combine to largely shut them out of major journals, important international conferences and critical databases.

As well as identifying problems and areas of difficulty, the literature presents key strategies used by successful native- and nonnative-speaking writers of scholarly articles. The following is a list of these strategies (summarized from Bazerman, 1988; Berkenkotter et al., 1991; Dudley-Evans, 1994; Johns, 1993; Myers, 1989, 1990; Samraj, 1994 all cited in Flowerdew 1999a; St. John, 1987; Swales, 1990):

1. measuring proposed research against the current conversations in the discipline by interacting with scholars who make up the discourse community of the discipline
2. deciding what is appropriate for publication in an internationally refereed English language journal and what is more appropriate for a local or regional English language journal or indigenous language journal
3. using a native-speaking mentor or colleague as co-author
4. using a NS at various stages of drafting
5. making use of peer help in reviewing writing
6. relating to the anticipated audience, i.e., predicting the knowledge and attitudes the text can assume that readers will have
7. using implicit knowledge of the "move" structure (discourse organization) of the key parts of the academic article
8. structuring the argument appropriately

9. judging the appropriate charge to put upon the reader, i.e., what the author would like the reader to do after being convinced by the article
10. expressing appropriately the author's self, i.e., making the reader aware of the author as an individual statement-maker coming to terms with a distinctive perspective
11. presenting knowledge claims with the caution expected by the academic community
12. using appropriate degrees of persuasive language.

While these strategies are successfully used by both native- and nonnative-speaking writers, it is likely that the mastering of such strategies is more problematic for NNESs.

1.4. Purpose and Significance of the Study

The main purpose of the present study is to determine the role of English language in Iranian scholars' writing research articles in English for publication in international refereed journals[2] and to illuminate their attitudes, problems and difficulties, and strategies as nonnative-speaking scholars who have Persian as their native language.

Hence, this study attempts to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the Iranian scholars' attitudes towards their situation as NNESs publishing articles in English?
2. What are the main problems and difficulties facing Iranian scholars

[2] Those journals available in the ISI (Institute of Scientific Information) list of journals will be included in this study.