



# National Journals and Centering Institutions: A historiography of an English language teaching journal in Taiwan



Cheryl L. Sheridan <sup>a,b,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> National Chengchi University, Taiwan

<sup>b</sup> Graduate Program in Composition & TESOL, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, United States

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Available online 8 January 2015

### Keywords:

Scholarly publishing  
Taiwan  
Globalization of higher education  
National journals  
Historiography  
Centering institutions

## ABSTRACT

This article presents a historiography of the longest-running English language studies journal in Taiwan within the socio-political environment of higher education since reforms beginning in 1994 led to the particular 'publish or perish' paradigm currently faced by Taiwan-based researchers. Utilizing textual analysis and in-depth interviews, the study traces the journal's development from 1995 to 2010. Data collected included: (a) journal front and back covers and tables of contents; (b) editorial and advisory board member lists and editorial communication; (c) first one to two pages of all articles; and (d) transcripts from in-depth interviews with five individuals who have been contributors, reviewers, and/or editors. Findings show ways the journal changed from a local Chinese magazine to a respected English-dominant national journal publishing original research articles and included in a national citation index. Its development coincided with policies established by the government and institutions under market pressures and globalization leading to competition for higher education funding, which have urged scholars to publish research in journals listed in international bibliometric indices. The concept of centering institutions informs the analysis of the multiple influences on the journal's development, and a critical-pragmatic perspective situates recommendations for national journals to succeed in non-center contexts.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

This article explores the development of an English language education journal in Taiwan over 15 years when national and institutional policies dramatically changed the scholarly playing field. Institutional pressure and personal challenge for academics from non-Anglophone countries to publish in English-medium journals produced in center contexts and included in prestigious international databases has been documented in many contexts (Canagarajah, 2003; Flowerdew, 2000; Flowerdew & Li, 2009; Hanauer & Englander, 2013; Lillis, 2012; Lillis & Curry, 2010; Swales, 2004). However, aside from Liu (2014), who interviewed five researchers from various disciplines about their challenges writing in English and publishing in internationally indexed journals, Taiwan-based scholars have received little attention. In evaluation situations, their publications receive points on a sliding scale from local non-indexed journals to SSCI journals, similar to the schemes Englander and Uzuner-Smith (2013) reported in Mexico and Turkey. These conditions, attributed to the rise of English as the

\* Foreign Language Center, College of Foreign Languages, National Chengchi University, 64 Zhinan Road Section 2, Wenshan District, Taipei 116, Taiwan.  
E-mail address: [sheridan@nccu.edu.tw](mailto:sheridan@nccu.edu.tw).

lingua franca of academic publishing (Delgado, 2011; Lawrick, 2011; Uzuner, 2008) and the influence of globalization on national higher education policies (Englander & Uzuner-Smith, 2013; Mok, 2003), have stoked the drive for 'World Class Universities' and affected scholars in non-center contexts, including Taiwan (Chang, Wu, Ching, & Tang, 2009; Mok & Wei, 2008). Taiwan-based scholars are under pressure because one of the criteria used to rank higher education institutes (HEIs) has been the number of articles faculty members publish in journals included in the citation indexes of Thompson Reuters Web of Science (A. H.-M. Huang, 2009; J. Huang, 2003b), which are overwhelmingly Anglophone center journals (Hanauer & Englander, 2013; Lillis & Curry, 2010). Therefore, as observed in other non-center contexts where scholars send cutting edge research papers to prestigious 'international' journals (Lillis, 2012; Liu, 2014), local journals are less likely to receive manuscripts from members of their own discourse communities (Salager-Meyer, 2008). In this climate, local journals around the world are generally relegated to a lower status than English-medium center journals due to their absence from international indices (Lillis & Curry, 2010) and lower institutional financial rewards for publishing in them (Flowerdew & Li, 2009).

In recent years, research on journals published in non-Anglophone contexts has grown. Several studies are relevant to the current one. In China, Shi, Wang, and Xu (2005) interviewed editors of foreign language education journals to understand the local publication culture there. In particular, they found editors trying to balance practices common in North America with their local culture, such as the review process, expression of academic ethics and freedom, formatting standards, and language of publication. Wang (2006, 2008) and F. Zhang and Li (2003) discussed similar issues from their own experience as editors. Also in China, Feng, Beckett, and Huang (2013) interviewed administrators, national journal editors, and authors to investigate their perceptions of the government's change in emphasis in 2011 regarding research production policy. They explained that, beginning in 1978, the Chinese government encouraged bringing advanced research from beyond China into the country for national development. However, in 2011 the policy changed from this 'import' orientation to a 'going-out' orientation to encourage knowledge from China to be exported to the West (Feng, et al., 2013, p. 253). They found that, despite the quantity of publishing activity in China, impact of this work beyond China was still limited due to language and quality issues. Also related to national and institutional policies, Lillis (2012) studied English-medium national (EMN) journals in Europe, where Anglophone U.S. and UK influences dominate. She interviewed editors and analyzed four EMN journals in four European countries. Corroborating the research in Mexico, Turkey, and Taiwan, she claimed that scholarly work published in English-medium journals connotes prestige and 'international' academic activity. This prestige, embodied in English as a sign, is enabled by commercial interests such as Thomson Reuters through its citation indexes because institutions subscribe to the view that participation in the 'international' knowledge market is crucial. These institutions function as 'centering institutions' (Blommaert, 2005; Silverstein, 1998) by establishing policies that support this Anglophone value system. These studies, which mostly collected interview data from editors, considered the effects of policies on scholars and journals in a globalized academic world on the margins, beyond the so-called 'center' of academic production.

Another type of research on scholarly journal development documents publications as single case studies. Through "textual and linguistic analysis," Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995, p. 81) reported three stages in the development of the journal *Reader*, which began as an informal forum for scholars experimenting with a new approach in the field of literary criticism. They divided the first 12 years of publication into three sections based on editors' tenures and documented shifts in content and purpose as it grew from an informal newsletter to a journal listed in major citation indexes. They explored texts and 'external features' such as the cover, other design elements, and evidence of professionalization, which they defined as "a period during which the routines of academic production that constitute normal science of scholarship become stabilized" (p. 83). They concluded that without adopting standard practices of citation and reference formatting establishing the "production of formal academic discourse, it is unlikely that *Reader* would have had any lasting influence in the profession of English studies" (p. 95).

Lundin, Jönsson, Kreiner, and Tienari (2010) told the story of *The Scandinavian Journal of Management* (*SJM*). In three consecutive autobiographical narratives, they described their experiences as editors from a context on "the margins; from outside the core of a field that is dominated by Anglo-American actors, outlets and traditions" (p. 309). *SJM* started with a local publisher, eventually joined an international publishing house, and ultimately was admitted to the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI). They did not describe article content in detail, but considered aspects of professionalization in the journal's development similar to those in *Reader*. Depending on which phase of *SJM*'s development they were part of, each editor had their own perspective on the struggle to maintain a "Scandinavian" profile" (p. 311) while first resisting, then conceding to, and finally embracing the inevitable internationalization by satisfying Anglo-American standards of academic production.

In the third phases of both of these journals' narratives, a controversial choice was made by the editor or editors to transform them from relatively low-status publications by adopting external standards to join a larger community. The third editor of both *Reader* and *SJM* decided that, despite what might be lost, the way forward to ensure survival in the long run was to adapt and join the mainstream.

Inspired by these two studies and motivated by the limited research from the Taiwan context, this article presents a historically situated analysis via a case study of the oldest Chinese–English bilingual English education publication in Taiwan, *English Teaching and Learning* (*ETL*),<sup>1</sup> established in 1976 by National Taiwan Normal University, the island's premier education

<sup>1</sup> Originally titled *English Teaching and Learning* (Magazine) or 英語教學雜誌 [Yingyu Jiaoxue Zazhi], it became *English Teaching and Learning* (Journal) 英語教學期刊 [Yingyu Jiaoxue Qikan] in 2007, although neither 'Magazine' nor 'Journal' were in the English titles.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/355382>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/355382>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)