

Thai University Academics' Challenges of Writing for Publication in English

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Abstract—This study examines challenges faced by Thai university lecturers with regards to publishing their academic works in English. 18 academics from two university settings in Thailand were involved in this investigation. The interviews were used to understand the lecturers' perceptions of the issues in writing for scholarly publication in the English language. Particularly, the aim of the research sought to discover what hindrances Thai university academics experienced and how they handled them. In addition, their needs for successful publishing were explored. The findings revealed three salient emerging themes, including (1) the need for publication in English; (2) difficulties in writing in English; and (3) the need for strenuous research support. The study suggests that university lecturers need more encouragement and support to publishing their academic works as a means of securing professional development, enhancing research culture and maintaining and increasing the national and international reputation of the university along with quality assurance.

Index Terms—Thai University Academics, challenges, writing for publication

I. INTRODUCTION

Academic publications are usually perceived as highly related to being 'scholastic' or 'expert' of the researcher or university lecturer in the field concerned. Currently, the concept of 'publish or perish', which denotes the value of writing for publication, has greatly influenced academia all over including Thailand (Belcher, 2007). As a consequence, Thai university lecturers and researchers are under enormous pressure to publish in standard national or international journals or proceedings. As one of the main requirements of quality assurance, lecturers' academic work publication or dissemination accounts for important assessment outcomes for the research component (OHEC, 2014). The outcomes as such would then be used to evaluate the quality of Thai universities with regard to research capabilities and potential and given this it seems that the more academic publication there is, the more social prestige universities obtain. Moreover, in some university settings, publications have been found to be one of the criteria used for university lecturers' or researchers' yearly performance appraisal and salary adjustments (Belcher, *ibid.*)

Having an academic or research paper published is an intricate process for educators in all disciplines in general including Thai teachers of English who are both experienced and inexperienced (Cheung, 2010). In fact, writing for publication requires some fundamentals of English writing skills to make the outcome academically sound enough for possible inclusion in well-established journals (Moldovan, 2011). Therefore, a number of university lecturers regardless of their areas of specialty would encounter difficulties when writing their articles in English. Coates et al. (2002) add that the researcher's insufficient linguistic skills normally result in paper denial. Instead, it is to be noted that the English language witnessed remarkable changes and spread outside its inner circle (Kachru, 2005) to have new varieties of importance.

In addition to lacking required academic writing proficiency together with the hegemony of English, other issues such as the problems of defining research performance outcomes and the dilemma of publishing in local versus international journals, particularly when the priority is on mainstream international journals, should be given consideration as well. As English has become the major language for academic publishing in international journals, university lecturers and researchers have no exception but to publish in English in order to have wide representation and recognition.

This research pursues to investigate a delicate and critically overlooked research area in the Thai university context and to answer issues pertinent to the way university lecturers view writing for publication in English, factors that make writing for publication in English arduous, their perceptions of the importance of writing for publication in English and their needs for successful publishing.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the academic world, adeptness in writing in English is increasingly regarded as an important component to prominence and more explicitly to getting research published in national and international journals and proceedings. The defiance faced by university researchers in writing for submission to English language journals is well documented and considered weighty. Not only is it just about writing academically acceptable, but it is also about keeping pace with the literature, conducting research in one language and writing up the results in another, choosing the right journal,