

Libyan Researchers' Perspectives on Language Choices in Published Medical Research Articles

Aiesha Ali E Emhammed

Department of English -Faculty of Arts
Sirte University- Libya

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to report the results of a small-scale survey study of Libyan medical scholars, set out to determine Libyan academics' experiences of publishing their research papers. In short, the current study is aimed to identify Libyan medical researchers' perspectives on using English and/or Arabic in writing medical research papers. It examines at the issue of language choice, the perceived advantages and difficulties being experienced as a result of selecting one or the other language. The findings of the study reveal that all the participants selected English language for writing their research papers. This helps in gaining international recognition for their works, and more readership. Moreover, their study background in English makes it easier for them to read in English than Arabic. The implications of the study are discussed and presented.

Keywords: Libyan bilingual writers, medical research paper, writing for publication, language choice.

1. Introduction

Over the last four decades, increasing attention has been given to understanding influences on academic writing, with research dedicating considerable attention to the research article as a principal genre of professional publication. The publication of research articles has been treated as one of the academic "rites of passage" in one's academic career (Swales, 1984, p. 79). Furthermore, publishing is recognized as a part of the contemporary "marketization of scientific

knowledge" (Pérez-Llantada, 2012, p. 110). Thus, Burgess (2002) states that "publication of research articles continues to be seen as a reliable measure of a scholar's academic productivity and plays a major part in determining academic status" (p. 198). Therefore, it is important to draw on the perspectives of those who write research articles by obtaining their insider view in relation to their academic practice. Thus, by employing an open-ended questionnaire in the present study, the issue of language choice and the perceived advantages and disadvantages experienced as a result of selecting English or Arabic for medical research writing is described from Libyan professional writers' perspectives. This, in turn, enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding of the authors' perspectives regarding their language choices for their academic publications.

2. Literature Review

The literature review provides a concise critical overview of recent research on Libyan Academic/Medical Writing. It then presents a detailed discussion of the importance of international publications and the challenges which multilingual writers might face and it will also provide some recommendations derived from previous empirical research about the academic writing of multilingual researchers.

2.1 Research on Libyan Academic/Medical Writing

Broadly speaking, a few studies have looked at Libyan students' writing. Nonetheless, none of these studies have explored Libyan scholars' perspectives regarding their academic writing. For example, El-Aswad (2002) examines the L1 (first language) and L2 (second language) writing processes and strategies of Arab Learners with special reference to third-year Libyan university students. The results of his study revealed that participants' writing process, in L1 and L2, significantly varied in planning, time and content; writing time was shorter in L1 than in L2; reviewing in L1 focused on organization

and content, but on the form, grammar and vocabulary in L2. Similarities were apparent in mental planning and reliance on internal resources as participants alternated between writing, repeating, and rehearsing. Another finding is that the L2 compositions gradually emerged with repetitions, pauses, and the use of L1. The study concluded that the L2 compositions seemed to be constrained by the participants' linguistic knowledge and imperfect mastery of L2.

Very few studies have been conducted to investigate Libyan medical writing. These studies have tended to focus on examining the contribution of Libya to medical research rather on the rhetorical or linguistic patterns of Libyan scholars' medical writing. For example, Bakoush et al. (2007), who evaluated the contribution of Libya to medical research by investigating its contribution to the PubMed database (PubMed is a service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine that comprises over 19 million quotations from MEDLINE and other life science periodicals for biomedical articles back to 1948), carried out a research. All publications allied to Libya in the PubMed database were counted over a five-year period ending December 2006. They also employed the same tool to attain data on the PubMed medical publications from Tunisia, Morocco, and Yemen. The findings of their research revealed the low production rate of scientific medical research articles from Libya in international peer-reviewed journals in comparison to countries such as Tunisia. Tunisia had the biggest number of PubMed publications among the studied countries: 20.4 publications per million population per year. Libya had much fewer publications: 2.4 publications per million population per year. They deduced that the biomedical research publications in Libya are insufficient and lessening. The absence of a research culture amongst native Libyan medical academics is one of the causes of the decline. Bakoush et al. (2007) mention that writing a medical research paper for publication is not emphasized and/or encouraged by the educational system in Libya in undergraduate and postgraduate studies. What is more, the majority of Libyan

universities do not accentuate the quality of research when deciding on academic promotion (ibid).

2.2 The Use of English as an International Language of Medical Science

The wider worlds in which academic discourses operate and interact are not limited to nation states and multinational corporations but comprise the global contexts of research and publishing (Curry & Lillis, 2010, Curry & Lillis, 2013, Ferguson, 2007, Hyland, 2019, Hyland, 2016, Hyland, 2015). The context of the recent explorations of academic discourse is an amplified focus on international publishing in nearly all disciplines. International publishing and study abroad have always required academics and researchers of most nationalities to write in a foreign language, (first Latin, then French, German, and English, alongside their own), but existing circumstances denote that only international publishing is esteemed in many disciplines and that only English is acceptable (Hyland, 2016, Hyland, 2019, Clavero, 2010, Ferguson et al, 2011). As this study deals with writers' perceptions regarding their experiences of publishing their research either for local or international publications. In what follows the researcher will provide an overview of the importance of English as a global language for international scientific publications, the problems which multilingual scholars face in publishing their research articles in international journals and concluding this section by pointing out the advice which was put forward by previous studies in multilingual scholars' experiences in publishing their work in international publication networks.

2.2. 1 the Dominance of English as a Lingua Franca in Scientific Communities

English has increasingly dominated international communication and information access. The use of English as an international language of science is by now well acknowledged; depending on

one's orientation, English may be seen as an impartial lingua franca or it may be seen more insidiously as an overpowering force (Curry & Lillis, 2013, Hyland, 2015, Olsson, & Sheridan, 2012). The use of English as a lingua franca means "any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice and often the only option" (Seidlhofer 2011, p. 7). Indeed, English has become a world language by virtue of political and economic advancement made by English speaking nations in the past 200 years (Crystal (1997). It is worth pointing out that the driving forces behind this universal expansion of English in academic life are complex and often tied to political and commercial interests, but one can see these developments in contradictory ways. On the one hand, it is possible to see the growth of English as establishing a neutral lingua franca, embracing speakers of all languages and efficiently facilitating the free exchange of knowledge across the world. In this view, English empowers its users as ever larger numbers of people can access the products of research and contribute to networks which go beyond the local (Pakir, 1999). Alternatively, English is considered as a tool of linguistic supremacy and cultural imperialism assisted by governments, foundations and private companies to promote markets for Western labour, products, and ideologies (Pennycook, 1994).

Incontestably, English is now the language of international scholarship and an important medium of research communication for non-native English speaking academics around the world. Indeed, one in five of the world's population now speaks English with reasonable competence (Crystal, 2003) and the language has come to dominate the distribution of knowledge. Universities in numerous nations currently necessitate staff should give presentations at international conferences and, more importantly, publish in major, high-impact, peer-reviewed Anglophone journals as a requirement for tenure, promotion and career advancement. Swales (2004) observed that large numbers of leading European and Japanese journals have switched to publishing in English and this Anglicization of published research can also be seen in the

remarkable rise in papers written by non-native English speakers appearing in leading English language journals.

2.2.2 The Challenges Facing Multilingual Scholars in the International Publication Network.

As English has become the language through which access to global academic communities is possible, publishing in English has become the only way a writer's work can be disseminated (Curry & Lillis, 2010, Curry & Lillis, 2013, Hyland, 2015, Olsson, & Sheridan, 2012). For example, as Medgyes and Kaplan (1992) pointed out, if multilingual scholars want their work to have any influence on the world of science, they need to publish in English otherwise, they "cannot reach the larger community if that community is unable (or unwilling) to read the literature in any language not accepted as the dominant language of disciplinary communication" (p. 67). Medgyes and Kaplan (1992) are not alone in arguing that publishing in English is the only way a multilingual scholar can be noticed. The studies of Duszak and Lewkowicz (2008), Englander (2009), and Giannoni (2008) also revealed findings supporting this contention. As illustrated in the studies of Gosden (1992) and Flowerdew (1999a), publishing in a language other than English and publishing in local contexts other than global ones limit scholars' chances of future academic success since international publications are the determining factors for decisions about hiring, promotion, and employment.

Previous research in applied linguistics has surveyed practicing multilingual writers about their uses of and attitudes toward English as a lingua franca and language of publication, providing useful insights into the experiences of those in the Outer and Expanding Circles Kachru's (1985) Inner Circle (e.g., Jemudd&Baldauf, 1987; Flowerdew, 1999a, 1999b, 2000; Medgyes& Kaplan, 1992; Phillipson&Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). The use of English as the international language of research and academic communication is now well documented. While some fields seem less vulnerable to the

dominance of English than others, there is no denying the influence of the language on international publishing.

The processes of multilingual scholars' participation in international publications have been much more widely investigated. It has been found that participating in a global publication naturally represents challenges for multilingual scholars (Flowerdew, 1999a, 1999b; Shaw, 1991, Duszak&Lewkowicz, 2008; Li, 2005; Man, Weinkauff, Tsang, & Sin, 2004, among others). Empirical evidence shows that failure to accomplish the language requirements of core academic communities diminishes multilingual scholars' academic productivity as it results in editorial rejections (Duszak&Lewkowicz, 2008; Li, 2006; Man, Weinkauff, Tsang, & Sin, 2004). Particular difficulties, that include the biggest obstacle to these multilingual scholars' successful academic writing, were found to be language-related problems with respect to having less facility of expression in English and a less rich vocabulary (Flowerdew, 1999a, 1999b; Shaw, 1991), convoluted syntax and unclear modality (Flowerdew, 2001), and inappropriate or incorrect use of idiomatic expressions (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005; Liu, 2004). As demonstrated in Flowerdew' (1999a), multilingual scholars themselves regard poor language skills as a major problem in drafting and revising academic papers with Flowerdew's (1999a) participants, for instance, reported that they felt hampered by limitations in vocabulary and expressions both in terms of accuracy and range. Nevertheless, while language problems are often of greatest concern to editors, reviewers and writers alike, the most serious obstacles might be less linguistic than financial and physical, with structural divisions between the advantaged Northern and disadvantaged Southern hemispheres creating the greatest inequalities (Wood, 2001). Canagarajah (1996), for example, discussed how 'non-discursive' financial and physical aspects of the research and publication process can create problems for multilingual scholars, with access to literature, print quality, postal costs, and editor-writer interactions posing serious problems. Other studies found the potential bias against multilingual scholars' submissions to be one of the critical reasons for these scholars' under-representation

in global scholarship (Aydinli & Mathews, 2000; Belcher, 2007; Cho, 2004; Gosden, 1992).

Lack of connections with members of the core academic communities has been viewed as one of the reasons which restrict multilingual school participants in the global research network. Casanave (1998) and Belcher (2007) found that maintaining a network of connections from core disciplinary communities is a powerful means that enables novice and emergent multilingual scholars to enter into the publication world. Similarly, Curry & Lillis (2004) and Flowerdew (2000) found being distant from core academic communities is a limiting factor that decreases multilingual scholars' chances of fully participating in the global research network. These studies have definitely inspired the researcher to explore similar issues which are the challenges that Arabic authors face when they publish their work. I will go further to extend the discussion by highlighting academics' attitudes towards publishing their work in Arabic and/or English. I will also look at the issue of language choice and the perceived advantages and difficulties experienced by Arabic academics as a result of selecting one or the other language.

2.2.3 Tips for Overcoming the Challenges

Despite the challenges of the process of manuscript submission for publication, multilingual scholars have frequently been advised to be patient, persistent, and never give up when faced with rejection. Instead, they are encouraged to "consider the editor's and reviewers' negative comments and decisions positively as constructive criticism, and always keep trying and revising" (Liu, 2004, p. 14). According to the publication experiences of different multilingual scholars which have been reported in the studies of Belcher (2007), Cho (2004), Curry and Lillis (2004), Flowerdew (2000), Li (2005), and Liu (2004), dauntlessness, courage, imperturbability, patience, and

persistence are indispensable elements enabling multilingual scholars' active participation and contribution in their relevant research fields. Casanave (1998) and Li and Flowerdew, (2007) go further to suggest that collaboration and co-authorship with experienced researchers are also highly recommended strategies for facilitating multilingual scholars' international publication success. Another study was carried out by Liu (2004), who investigated multilingual scholars' publishing experiences, in particular, Chinese tenure-track assistant professors in applied linguistics at various American universities. She has found that the reason behind the rejection of most manuscripts submitted by multilingual scholars in her study is that the papers were slightly different from the canonical structure. Liu (2004, p. 14) suggested that multilingual scholars should keep abreast of the present and related literature and pay close attention to both the content, style and the rhetoric of the published journal articles in their areas of interest and they need to acquaint themselves with the journal's instructions and conventions (e.g., issues such as novelty, originality, discourse structure, rhetorical styles, plagiarism, and illustration) before they submit a manuscript. It is noteworthy that all these strategies have been seen as valuable tools for multilingual scholars' eventual success in the world of scholarly publication.

Despite having to overcome the language barrier and other challenges mentioned above, there is an evidence that the contribution of multilingual academics to prestigious English language journals is, in fact, rising (e.g. Tomkins et al., 2001 & Wood, 2001), and they make unique contributions that "help reform, expand, and enrich the knowledge base of core disciplinary communities" (Liu, 2004, p. 2). This is definitely a commonly acknowledged idea. For example, Canagarajah (1996) noted, "if all knowledge is situated and personal, then periphery perspectives on different disciplines may provide unique insights" (p. 463). The major rationalization for this is that publication in international journals is no longer optional for many multilingual scholars. Not

only are they motivated to contribute to this international web of scholarship and have their work broadly read, but publication in English is now inseparable from the process by which prestige and credibility are assessed. It is of interest to see the Libyan medical scholars' views with regard to the above issue and their attitudes towards publishing their research in English and/or Arabic for local and international journals.

3. Methodology

The current study has adopted a mixed design methodology comprising both quantitative and qualitative aspects. As for the qualitative element, an open-ended questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was designed to find out what language participants prefer to publish their medical paper in and what advantages, disadvantages, and difficulties associated with their language choice. Questionnaires are relatively popular and attractive means of collecting data. However, it is important to note that the use of open questions in the questionnaire as a means of data collection has its own limitations such as the lack of opportunity for the researcher to probe, if the respondent's meaning is unclear, unlike in an interview (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, "...they may require much more time from the respondent to enter a response thereby leading to a refusal to complete the item" (Cohen et al 2007, p. 322). However, while the researcher is aware of these limitations which were avoided in the present study by omitting any unclear phraseologies and misleading questions. One of the pros of the open-ended questions is that they "enable respondents to answer as much as they wish, and are particularly suitable for investigating complex issues, to which simple answers cannot be provided" (Cohen et al 2007: 321). Undoubtedly, open questions enable respondents to provide more in-depth and more personal response, in particular when a study aims to explore writers' perspectives regarding their writing (Fowler, 2009 &

Fink, 2017). Hence, in this study, many open questions were included through which respondents were requested to write their opinions.

3.1 Presentation and Objectives of Authors' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was piloted and some modifications and changes were made. The piloting was in fact very useful because it helped eradicate leading questions and any questions which might lead to a lack of clarity or were liable to misinterpretation. Once final changes were made, the questionnaires were sent out to the participants via email correspondence. Most of the questions in the questionnaire were open-ended and a few closed ones as well, where the choice of answers is closed, as in yes/no questions. Some authors were asked more questions than others. This depends on their language of publication. Libyan writers who publish their work in Arabic were asked more questions in order to find out their reasons for choosing Arabic for their publications and the advantages and drawbacks of using Arabic compared with publishing their papers in English.

The questions were grouped into two categories. The first group of questions was created to gather general background information (general demographic information) about the participants, such as their first language, the language of instruction at the university, and the number of medical scientific papers they published. The second group of questions was designed to identify their attitudes towards the language of their publications and what are the reasons behind their language preferences. The authors who published their papers in Arabic had the choice to respond either in Arabic or English. Twenty medical researchers were randomly selected who were willing to participate in the current study and fill out the questionnaire. Those researchers who published their medical research paper either in Libyan Journal of Medicine (LJM), Eastern Mediterranean Health or/and British Medical Journal (BMJ). The final versions of the questionnaire are shown in Appendix A and Appendix B respectively. On the whole, the questionnaire sought to obtain the following information:

- Background information about the participants
- Language choice
- Libyan scholars and English-medium publications
- Reasons, benefits and drawbacks correlating with publishing in English
- Reasons, benefits and drawbacks associating with publishing in Arabic
- Libyan authors' perspectives on using Arabic in medical scientific writing in the future
- Language preferences of publications

As mentioned earlier, the present study was conducted to identify the attitudes of Libyan medical writers regarding language choice. Additionally, it also identified Libyan medical researchers' perspectives on using English/Arabic in writing medical research papers. The question that the researcher would seek to find an answer to is:

Q1. What are the Libyan researchers' attitudes/perspectives toward using English and/or Arabic in writing medical research papers?

4. Results and Discussion

As mentioned above, the study probes Libyan researchers' perspective regarding publishing their medical papers in English and /or Arabic and the situation of Arabic language in medical science publications. When the researcher collected the data for one of her previous research (Emhammed, 2018) entitled " Medical rhetoric: A contrastive study of English research article abstracts written by native speakers of English in an internal journal and by Libyan academics in a Libyan national journal", it was really difficult to find journals that published their medical research articles in Arabic. This inspired the researcher to find out what the reasons could be for the

shortage of medical research papers published in Arabic by Libyan academics. Based on the analysis of questionnaire data, the following topics emerged which are related to the research question of the study. Those emerged themes are discussed and illustrated with evidence from the data.

4.1 Libyan Researchers and English-medium Publications

All the respondents had published their work in English. Only 6 out of 20 Libyan medical researchers had published a few of their medical publications in Arabic. Table 4.1 below shows the number of medical research articles of Arabic and Libyan scholars per language. It is evident from the table below that the majority of those scholars' research articles have been published in English. Roughly 96.4 % of their medical research papers were published in English compared to 3.6 % in Arabic. This is in accord with Duszak and Lewkowicz' s (2008) findings. They found that 87 % of Polish scholars in medicine who publish do so in English. They maintain that what seems to prompt those researchers to publish in English rather than their mother tongue is the perceived demand to have their work more widely recognized by a global readership. Most Libyan respondents have only published in English about 75 % (15 out of 20). This is in line with Butler (2000), Egger et al. (1997), García-Guinea and Ruísb (1998) and van Leeuwen et al.'s (2001) findings. They found that non-Inner Circle scientists are increasingly less likely to publish in their mother tongue, and their English-language publications are cited more often.

Table 4.1 The number of medical research articles of Arabic and Libyan scholars per language

Writers	Language of Publication	
	Arabic	English
1	3	8
2	4	45
3	—	8
4	—	31
5	—	35
6	2	45
7	—	9
8	—	25
9	—	12
10	—	8
11	—	7
12	—	13
13	2	9
14	—	11
15	—	6
16	—	14
17	—	9
18	—	11
19	1	13
20	—	7
Total	12	326
Percentage	3.6%	96.4%

4. 2 Reasons, Benefits and Drawbacks Associated with Publishing in English.

Respondents were asked about the reasons behind publishing their papers in English. The most common reason for choosing to publish their papers in English is related to the language of instruction at the medicine faculties where the respondents had done their degrees. They (20 respondents) were taught medicine in English, thus their preference for writing their papers was in English. All the respondents found it easier to write and read medical research papers written in English than the ones which were in Arabic. For all of them, this meant that much of their previous professional experience had been conducted in English. In fact, 15 out of 20 who had their higher degree from English speaking countries, the other 5 had done their degree in English but in their home country Libya. This may indicate that the respondents have relatively high professional experience in English. The significance of publishing in English as the language of science is another vital reason which leads Libyan researchers to publish their work in English. Their responses suggest perceived higher importance of English in the field of medicine. In line with Egger, et al.'s (1997) findings, English dominates publications in medical science. All the respondents believe great advantages linked with publishing their work in English, for example gaining international recognition for their work, the widest possible readership, getting a chance to publish in well-known international medical journals, facilitating international cooperation. These also were the most frequent reasons for the respondents' selecting English for their publication as shown in the table below. Some other, less frequent, reasons for selecting English as the language of publication is getting a higher chance of citation of their work and gaining promotion. The reasons mentioned above by the respondents are the same as those identified earlier in the literature (Curry & Lillis, 2010, Curry & Lillis, 2013, Ferguson, 2007, Hanauer, & Englander, 2011, Hyland, 2015, Hyland, 2019, Olsson, & Sheridan, 2012). Here is one of the respondents' answers:

I prefer to publish in English, to gain international recognition for my work. It's better to let your voice be heard by others in their language. Publishing your paper in English will reach a huge number of researchers who can benefit from its results.

Table 4.2 Reasons for publishing in English

Reason	Frequency of response
English is the language of instructions of the faculties of medicine in the respondents' country	20
Widest possible readership/ Internationally recognition	20
Importance of English as the language of science and specifically medicine.	20
Ease to write in English and express results and ideas when writing in English	20
Enables international cooperation	20
Getting a chance to publish in well-known international medical journals	20
Giving a higher chance of citation	17
Gaining promotion	15

What appears to motivate the respondents to publish in English is the perceived need to have their work more widely known by an international readership, which many respondents feel can only be achieved by publishing in English. There is evidence to support the idea that publishing in English is growing in importance. However, there is one disadvantage linked to using English as the main language of Arabic scholars' medical publications which has been mentioned by one of the respondents. He pointed out that there is one drawback of Arabic scholars publishing their medical papers in English, which is that not all Arabic academics could understand scientific English. Hence, professionals who do not develop good academic writing skills are at a great disadvantage. He also mentioned that linguistic problems and lack of research skills are barriers to publishing in English.

4.3 Reasons, Benefits and Drawbacks Associated with Publishing in Arabic

Some questions in the questionnaire addressed the attitudes of Libyan writers who published in Arabic. Five respondents who published a few of their medical research in Arabic filled the questionnaire in and sent it back. They were asked to indicate the reason for choosing to publish their papers in Arabic, and what advantages, drawbacks, and difficulties of publishing their medical papers in Arabic. The main reason reported by these participants was the lack of medical research papers published in Arabic. Therefore, they felt they should publish their paper in Arabic in order to fill this gap in Arabic medical literature. Here is one of the respondents' answers: We opted to publish the paper in Arabic because we noticed that there is a lack of published Arabic literature in this field.

Another reason mentioned by three respondents is that Arabic scholars should publish in Arabic if the topic is targeting Arabic speaking populations.

They believed that publishing in Arabic is useful for those writers with undeveloped English writing skills. Nevertheless, these writers were aware that writing in Arabic could limit their papers readership. Certainly, choosing to publish in Arabic, limits the accessibility of the research to a much more confined readership. As illustrated in the studies of Gosden (1992) and Flowerdew (1999a), publishing in a language rather than English and publishing in national contexts rather than international ones limit academics' chances of future academic success. The five respondents indicated that the major difficulties which Arabic researchers face when they publish their papers in Arabic are the lack of medical journals published in the Arabic language, the poor quality, and non-peer review of most of the available local journals of the Arabic scientific societies. Clearly, the five respondents questioned the quality of research in Arabic in the field of medicine.

4.4 Libyan Authors' Perspectives of Using Arabic in Medical Scientific Writing in the Future

In response to the question "Do you think Arabic will be replaced by English in medical scientific writing in the future?" all respondents stated that Arabic will be replaced by English especially in writing medical research articles. However, they reported that Arabic may continue to be used in review articles. Five of the Arabic respondents suggest that the Arabization of medical education must be taken more seriously. One of the respondents' commented: in order to publish more medical research articles in Arabic, we need first to change the medium of medical education from English to Arabic, and parallel to this, we should provide circulars in Arabic. This is a duty to be carried out by Arabic governments and educational organizations.

4.5 Language preference for publication

Finally, the respondents were asked what language they would prefer for their publications. Respondents were consistent in selecting English for their publication. An interesting finding is that a considerable preference for English as the main language of publication. 90 % (i.e., nineteen out of 20 respondents) chose English as their sole preferred language of publication, even though 5 of them have published few medical research papers in Arabic as shown in table (4.1). Only one respondent favored both Arabic and English for his medical research papers publications; even though he had published only 4 medical papers in Arabic compared to 45 in English, explaining that he felt equally comfortable publishing in both languages. Publishing in English seems to be increasingly important in order to enter the supranational community of the academic world. English is thus seen as the key to success, to becoming recognized as an academic of worth.

5. Conclusions

As mention earlier, the study sets out to investigate Libyan bilingual writers' perspectives regarding publishing their medical research papers in English and /or Arabic. To fill full this aim, an open-ended questionnaire was employed. Twenty medical researchers took part in the present study and filled out the questionnaire. It was found that those researchers showed interest in choosing English for their publication. An interesting finding was the considerable preference for English as the main language of publication. The results revealed that Arabic did not seem to be an important channel for publishing in Libya in the field of medicine. Authors published in English for various reasons with the majority doing so to gain international recognition for their work and the widest possible readership. One of the most important factors which influenced those authors' decisions regarding their choice of language for their academic publications was that much of their previous professional experience had been conducted in English. Consequently, all the respondents found it easier for them to write and read medical research papers written in English than ones written in Arabic. It is likely that English is seen as the key to success, becoming recognized as an academic of worth which that happens at the expense of the respondents' native language (Arabic). As the respondents reported the shortage of medical research articles published in Arabic. Nevertheless, in the other fields, such as psychology, history, or language studies this may not necessarily be the case: issues being researched might be of a much more local concern.

5.1 Implications of the Study

As mentioned above, those scholars predominantly publish in English and it seems clear that the future trend will be a complete shift to publishing in English ONLY, and publishing in Arabic will be a thing of the past for those scholars in the field of medicine. Indeed, there is a growing pressure on academic staff to publish and

increase their publication output in English (Hughes, 2005). Moreover, scholars increasingly pressured to publish in international English publications. These researchers need to contextualize their studies to a wider audience within the cultural context that reflects the values, beliefs, and knowledge of the international discourse community in the field of medicine (Cargill et al., 2012). Arguably, novice writers and research students need to learn both general academic conventions as well as disciplinary writing requirements that are shaped by their discipline's paradigms and conventions (Canagarajah, 2002). It is important to mention that the participants in the current study have a various challenges in getting published in English. Hence, it is recommended to run workshops and academic publishing courses for early-career researchers and novice researchers on how to write and publish research papers in English and how to increase their chances of publication success. Those courses could assist and guide junior researchers and research students in writing English research papers that are acceptable and comprehensible to international audiences.

5.2 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research

Despite the interesting findings of this study, it was limited due to the following contextual restrictions. Unfortunately, the questionnaire sample was low only 20 authors filled out the questionnaires. If the sample had been larger, this would have contributed to more validity and reliability of responses. So, caution should be taken when the findings of this study are interpreted as it might be misleading to generalize the findings obtained from such a small-scale study.

This study, due to space constraints, was confined to only one discipline. Finally, the most significant aspect that the researcher could not do in this study, though the researcher was initially

planning to do so, was an email interview with authors. She was planning to send the questions one at a time and wait for the authors' responses before sending the next one. Hence, She would be able to react at once to what an interviewee says and may add questions and even change later questions in the light of what they had said earlier. However, the informants preferred to be sent all the questions together. So, a questionnaire was created instead. If follow up interviews were conducted, some more insights could have been gained.

This study could be extended so that more authors to be involved either by answering a questionnaire or interviewing them in order to achieve more generalized findings.

This study could be extended so that more authors to be involved either by answering a questionnaire or interviewing them in order to achieve more generalized findings. Something else that can be done is to study other disciplines to identify whether there are differences among authors from various disciplines with regard to attitudes and language choices and preferences for publication.

References

- Aydinli, E., and Mathews, J. (2000). Are the core and periphery irreconcilable? The curious world of publishing in contemporary international relations. *International Studies Perspectives*, 1: 289-303.
- Bakoush, O., Al-Tubuly, A. A., Ashammakhi, N., and Elkhammas E.A. (2007). PubMed medical publications from Libya. *Libyan Journal of Medicine*, AOP: 070625: 125-128.
- Belcher, D. (2007). Seeking acceptance in an English-only research world. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16: 1-22.
- Butler, D. (2000). French scientists turn to journals in English. *Nature* 405 June, p. 500.

- Burgess, S. G. (2002). Packed houses and intimate gatherings: Audience and rhetorical structure. In J. Flowerdew (Ed.), *Academic Discourse* (pp.196–215). Harlow, England: Longman.
- Cargill, M., O'Connor, P., & Li, Y. (2012). Educating Chinese scientists to write for international journals: Addressing the divide between science and technology education and English language teaching. *English for Specific Purposes*, 31, 60–69.
- Canagarajah, S. (1996). Nondiscursive requirements in academic publishing, material resources of periphery scholars, and the politics of knowledge production. *Written Communication*, 13/4: 435-472.
- Canagarajah, S. (2002). *Critical academic writing and multilingual students*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Casanave, C. P. (1998). Transitions: the balancing act of bilingual academics. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12: 175-203.
- Cho, S. (2004). Challenges of entering discourse communities through publishing in English. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 3: 47-72.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L, and Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

-
- Curry, J. M., and Lillis, T. (2004). Multilingual scholars and the imperative to publish in English: Negotiating interests, demands, and rewards. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38/3: 663-688.
 - Curry, M. J., & Lillis, T. M. (2010). Academic research networks: Accessing resources for English-medium publishing. *English for Specific Purposes*, 29(4), 281–295.
 - Clavero, M. (2010). Awkward wording. Rephrase linguistic injustice in ecological journals. *Trends Ecology Evolution*, 25, 552–553.
 - Duszak, A., and Lewkowicz, J. (2008). Publishing academic texts in English: a Polish perspective. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 7: 108-120.
 - Egger, M., Zellweger-Zähner, T., Schneider, M., Junker, C., Lengeler, C. and Antes, G. (1997). Language bias in randomized controlled trials published in English and German. *The Lancet*, 350: 326–329.
 - El-Aswad, A. (2002). A study of the L1 and L2 writing process and strategies of Arab learners with special reference to third-year Libyan university students. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Newcastle: University of Newcastle.
 - Emhammed, A. (2018). Medical rhetoric: A contrastive study of English research article abstracts written by native speakers of English in an internal journal and by Libyan academics in a Libyan national journal. *Alcala*, 10: 60-80
 - Englander, K. (2009). Transformation of the identities of non-native English speaking scientists as a consequence of the social construction of revision. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 8 /1: 35-53.
 - Ferguson, G., Pérez-Llantada, C., Plo, R. (2011). English as an international language of scientific publication: a study of attitudes. *World Englishes*, 30/1, 41-59

- Fink, A. (2017). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Flowerdew, J. (1999a). Problems in writing for scholarly publication in English: The case of Hong Kong. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8/3: 243-264.
- Flowerdew, J. (1999b). Writing for scholarly publication in English: The case of Hong Kong. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8/2: 123-145.
- Flowerdew, J. (2000). Discourse community, legitimate peripheral participation, and the non-native English speaking scholar. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34/1: 127-150.
- Fowler, F. J. (2009). *Survey research methods (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication
- García-Guinea, J. and Ruísb, J.D. (1998). Las consecuencias de publicar en revistas científicas escritas en Español en España [The consequences of publishing in journals written in Spanish in Spain]. *Interciencia*, 23: 185–187.
- Giannoni, D. S. (2008). Medical writing at the periphery: the case of Italian journal editorials. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 7: 97-107.
- Gosden, H. (1992). Research writing and NNSs: from the editors'. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 1: 123-140.
- Hanauer, D., & Englander, K. (2011). Quantifying the burden of writing research articles in a second language: Data from Mexican scientists. *Written Communication*, 28, 403–416.
- Hughes, M. (2005). The mythology of research and teaching relationships in universities. In R. Barnett (Ed.), *Reshaping the university: New relationships between research, scholarship, and teaching*

- (pp. 14–26). Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education/Open University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2015). *Academic publishing: Issues and challenges in the construction of knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 - Hyland, K. (2016). *Academic publishing and the myth of linguistic injustice*. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 31(1), 58-69.
 - Hyland, K. (2019). *Participation in publishing: The demoralizing discourse of disadvantage*. In P. Habibe & K. Hyland (Eds.), *Novice writers writing for publication* (pp 13-24). London, Palgrave.
 - Jemudd, B. H., & Baldauf, R. B. (1987). *Planning science communication for human resource development*. In B. K. Das (ed.), *Communicative language teaching* (pp. 144-189). Singapore: RELC.
 - Kachru, B. (1985). *Standards, codification, and sociolinguistic realism: the English language in the outer circle*. In R. Quirk and H. Widdowson (eds.), *English in the world* (pp. 11–34). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 - Kaplan, R., & Baldauf, R. B., Jr. (2005). *Editing contributed scholarly articles from a language management perspective*. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14: 47-62.
 - Li, Y. (2005). *Multidimensional enculturation: the case of an EFL Chinese doctoral student*. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 15/1: 153-170.
 - Li, Y. (2006). *Writing for international publication: the case of Chinese doctoral science students*. Unpublished dissertation. Retrieved June 5, 2009, from <http://dspace.cityu.edu.hk/handle/2031/4550>
 - Lillis, T. M., & Curry, M. J. (2013). *English, scientific publishing, and participation in the global knowledge economy*. In E. Erling & P.

Sargeant (Eds.), *English and international development* (pp. 220–242). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

- Liu, J. (2004). Co-constructing academic discourse from the periphery: Chinese applied linguists' centripetal participation in scholarly publication. *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching*, 14: 1-22.
- Man, J. P., Weinkaif, J. G., Tsang, M., & Sin, D. D. (2004). Why do some countries publish more than others? An international comparison of research funding, English proficiency, and publication output in highly ranked general medical journals. *European Journal of Epidemiology*, 19: 811-817.
- Medgyes, P., and Kaplan, R. B. (1992). Discourse in a foreign language: the example of Hungarian scholars. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 98: 67-100.
- Olsson, A., & Sheridan, V. (2012). A case study of Swedish scholars' experiences with and perceptions of the use of English in academic publishing. *Written Communication*, 29, 33–54.
- Pakir, A. (1999). Connecting with English in the context of internationalization. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33: 103-14.
- Pérez-Llantada, C (2012). *Scientific discourse and the rhetoric of globalization: The impact of culture and language*. London: Continuum
- Phillipson, R., & Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2000). Englishisation: One dimension of globalization. *AILA Review*, 13, 19–36.
- Pennycook, A. (1994). *The Cultural Politics of English as an international language*. London: Longman.
- Shaw, P. (1991). Science research students' composing processes. *English for Specific Purposes*, 10: 189-206.

-
- Seidlhofer, B. (2011). *Understanding English as a lingua franca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 - Swales, J. M. (1984). Research into the structure of introductions to journal articles and its application to the teaching of academic writing. In R. Williams, J. Swales & J. Kirkman (Eds.), *Common ground: Shared interests in ESP and communication studies* (pp.77-86). London: Pergamon Press.
 - Swales J.M. (2004) *Research genres: Explorations and applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 - Tomkins, R., Ko, C-Y., and Donovan, A. (2001). Internationalization of general surgical journals. *Archives of Surgery*, 136: 1345-52.
 - van Leeuwen, T.N., Moed, H.F., Tussen, R.J.W., Visser, M.S. & van Raan, A.F.J. (2001). Language biases in the coverage of the Science Citation Index and its consequences for international comparisons of national research performance. *Scientometrics*,51: 335–346.
 - Wood, A. (2001). International scientific English: the language of research scientists around the world. In J. Flowerdew and M. Peacock (eds.), *Research perspectives on English for academic purposes* (pp. 71–83). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Libyan Writers Who Wrote their Research Articles in English

Writers' Perspectives Regarding the Language of their Publications

This project is about the language choice of medical publications. More specifically, the study is designed to identify Libyan medical researchers' attitude

toward the language of their publications and what the reasons might be behind their language preferences.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather your perspectives regarding your language choice for your academic production. Participation in the project is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. Data will be anonymous and your identity will not be revealed when I publish the findings of my research.

Thanks in advance for your help and co-operation

Instructions: Please write your answers to the following questions in the space given.

1. Background information:

1.1 First language:

1.2 Language of instruction at the University/College you attended:

1.3 Country or countries where you obtained your higher degree:

1.4 Length of time spent studying at English speaking university:

1.5 Length of time working in English speaking country:

1.6 Approximately how many medical scientific papers you have written in English or in Arabic:

2. Language Choice

2.1 I have noticed that the EMHJ is Trilingual. Why have you chosen to publish your paper in English?

2.2 Some Arabic Scholars in the field of medicine believe Arabic scientists and medical researchers should publish their papers in Arabic; what do you think of this view?

2.3 Some authors I have interviewed said they preferred to publish in English, to gain international recognition for their work; what do you think of this view?

2.4 Do you see any difficulties for Arabic researchers using English for local and regional publications?

2.5 What do you think are the main difficulties faced by Arabic researchers using English for local and regional publications? If there is any?

2.6 Do you see any advantages of publishing your medical research papers in English for local and regional publications? If yes what are they?

2.7 In your opinion what are the disadvantages of publishing your medical research papers in English for local and regional publications?

2.8 In what language would you prefer to write research papers and why?

2.9 Do you think English will replace Arabic in medical scientific writing in the future?

2.10 Is there anything you would like to add to this topic?

Thank you very much for your co-operation

Appendix B: Questionnaire for Libyan Writers Who Wrote their Research Articles in Arabic

Writers' Perspectives Regarding the Language of their Publications

This project is about the language choice of medical publications. More specifically, the study is designed to identify Libyan medical researchers' attitude toward the language of their publications and what the reasons might be behind their language preferences.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather your perspectives regarding your language choice for your academic production. Participation in the project is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. Data will be anonymous and your identity will not be revealed when I publish the findings of my research.

Thanks in advance for your help and co-operation

Instructions: Please write your answers to the following questions in the space given.

1. Background information:

- 1.1 First language:
- 1.2 Language of instruction at the University/College you attended:
- 1.3 Country or countries where you obtained your higher degree:
- 1.4 Length of time spent studying at an English speaking university:
- 1.5 Length of time working in an English speaking country:
- 1.6 Approximately how many medical scientific papers you have written in English or in Arabic:

2. Language Choice:

- 2.1 I have noticed that the EMHJ is Trilingual. Why have you chosen to publish your paper in Arabic?
- 2.2 Some Arabic Scholars in the field of medicine believe Arabic scientists and medical researchers should publish their papers in Arabic; what do you think of this view?
- 2.3 Some authors I have interviewed said they preferred to publish in English, to gain international recognition for their work; what do you think of this view?
- 2.4 What do you think are the main difficulties faced by Arabic researchers using Arabic for local and regional publications? If there is any?
- 2.5 Do you see any advantages of publishing your medical research papers in Arabic for local and regional publications? If yes what are they?
- 2.6 In your opinion what are the disadvantages of publishing your medical research papers in Arabic for local and regional publications?
- 2.7 In what language would you prefer to write research papers and why?
- 2.8 Do you think Arabic will be replaced by English in medical scientific writing in the future?
- 2.9 Is there anything you would like to add to this topic?

Thank you very much for your co-operation