ADAPTING PROCESSES TO THE ENGLISH PUBLISHING VENUE

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Abstract:

1   Introduction

The study of the influence of English in the production of scientific knowledge has become a trend in recent years. Some authors have examined such influence from the perspective of the pressure researchers have to disseminate knowledge exclusively in English (Curry and Lillis, 2004; Lillis and Curry, 2010).Other studies have mainly focused on those scholars who have actually overcome the challenge of disseminating their work in English (López-Navarro, Moreno, Burgess, Sachdev & Rey-Rocha, 2015).

The present study addresses a different perspective. This research concentrates on discovering the situation non-native speakers (NNS) of English go through at the moment of sharing their work with their respective academic communities in their native language. The perspective of researchers who continue to publish their work in their native languages deserves to be revealed. Thus, the aims of this study consist on, first, determining the options researchers have to publish their work in their native language and the relevance such mediums of publication have; and second, discovering how this group of scholars are modifying or adapting their work and their reading and writing patterns when dealing with the English language. Examining these three aspects may allow us to have a clearer perspective about the options and challenges scholars have to share their work in academic venues.

Curry and Lillis (2018) warned about the dangers of the exclusive use of English as lingua franca of scientific publications. One of the consequences pointed out by these authors is the burdens added to the work of scholars. According to them, although many authors are publishing in English, and contrary to what may be assumed initially, this does not necessarily mean that they are multilingual as they frequently draw on translating services which besides being expensive are not likely to have the level of disciplinary knowledge and the quality of rhetorical conventions required by academic journals. In addition, as English is getting essential to share scientific knowledge, researchers face the challenge to obtain support from administrators to perform scientific work in the Anglophone context which implies not only publishing but also investing a significant amount of time and resources to do research, attend conferences, and get support for writing in English.

Regarding the options to publish in other than English language, González-Videgaray and Zamora (2014) examined the requirements to publish of the top five Mexican journals of education indexed in JCR in 2011. From these five, three journals required English as the language of publication. In contrast, the top five of the same kind of journals indexed in the Consejo Nacional de

Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT) do not require publications to be written in English. These results illustrate the options scholars have to publish their work in journals listed in recognized international indexes such as JCR. In a different perspective, Pho and Tran (2016) investigated Vietnamese scholars' attitudes towards research and publication and their obstacles to both local and international publication. Their study focused on the field of Social Sciences and Humanities and established a correlation among the degree of difficulty and other factors such as age, discipline, and scholars' education and research experience. Their conclusions indicated that although lectures are aware of the importance of research and publishing, their institutions emphasize more teaching rather than researching. In addition, to this group of scholars the greatest barriers were funding, having the necessary time for research and writing, and finding appropriate journals for publication.

Beyond the options to disseminate their work, a deeper examination of the challenges scholars go through needs to consider the changes they are making in order to adapt themselves to continue to do their labor in a language that is not their mother tongue. Actually, the changes of academic populations over time require from disciplinary communities' frequent assessment of the needed requirements to fulfill the current academic needs despite the language of publication. Scholars need to have skills not only to write research papers but also to read and understand the rhetoric of various types of writing and the meaning of technical discourse in English. In a survey administered by Ostler (1980) undergraduate and graduate students in the 'soft sciences' perceived reading and writing academic discourse as equally important to be able to succeed in their majors. More recently, Mokhari and Reichard (2004) examined the application of skilled reading strategies in first and second language. They indicated that a crucial factor to become an expert reader in a second language lies on the level of awareness the reader has to apply intentionally reading strategies such as think about the subject matter, analyze the text, and revise their understanding while reading, among others. In the same path, Horowitz (1986) argued that writing tasks are regulated by both the genre and writer's mental process and that academic writing deals with finding, reorganizing, and presenting data. Such claims have been supported by recent studies such as the one by López Navarro, Moreno Fernández, y Rey Rocha (2017) who discovered that the difficulty levels experienced by scholars in the social sciences were especially significant in relation to the learning and application of the rhetorical conventions particular to this scientific area.

2   Methodology

As a preliminary notation to the methodology, it is necessary to indicate that what is presented in this work is an initial approach with a reduced sample both in the number of subjects and in the geographical and categorical scope. Such analysis, in addition to the data it provides, also served as a pretest of the methodology designed. The situation is analyzed from two different perspectives, with different methods for each one of them and a range of international geographic application consisting of 4 countries - chosen according to a series of desired characteristics based on the literature review namely, non-English speaking countries, and with a long career in Social Sciences and Humanities: Spain, El Salvador, Portugal and Italy. First, a bibliometric analysis was used to get a clearer insight regarding the editorial reality faced by NNS researchers willing to publish their work; and second, we propose to analyze the perception and method of NNS researchers regarding publication of their work in English.

To know the editorial reality, a bibliometric type analysis is proposed to be used. Five of the most prestigious and/or quality journals of the aforementioned countries, of various disciplines of the areas of Social Sciences and Humanities (Library and Information Science, History, Education and Law) will be studied to determine the languages in which they accept manuscripts to be published. These areas have been chosen because their disciplines tend to be more related to the local or regional

environment, to the culture, and to the singularities of the territory in a more direct way than other areas. Thus, the language in which science is disseminated may be more relevant than in other cases.

Regarding the criteria to define a ranking of journals to work, the rankings JCR (Clarivate Analytics) and SCIMAGO Journal and Country Rank (Scimago Lab) are assumed as sources of information. Both are globally recognized and frequently used in the evaluation of research work. To the purposes of the proposed study, both will be taken as equals, equating the quartiles of one and the other.

From each of the selected journals, the following information will be compiled - through the information on the journal's website and the authors' guidelines:
- Name of the journal and country of publication
- In which languages does the journal accept (and publish) the texts
- If they accept a language other than English, is it required to present a summary and keywords in English?

For practical purposes, a series of considerations are taken into account:
- the conference proceedings (2 of 85) - which also lack ISSN- are not taken into account.
- In addition, the journals that appear in both rankings will be considered only once, and other journals of the same ranking will be included until the number of 5 journals is completed (in case there are more).
- Platforms and resources such as Dialnet, SCOPUS or DOAJ are used in cases where it has not been possible to access information through the website of the journal or its authors' guidelines.
- Finally, in the statistical analysis we have only been able to use the data from those journals that have specified the languages in which they accept and / or publish articles.

The second part of the proposed methodology used in this research will analyze the perception and method of the NNS researchers regarding the publication of their work in English. For this, the data will be collected through an ad hoc survey designed for this purpose. The survey will be directed to researchers from the areas studied in the previously defined countries (Spain, El Salvador, Italy and Portugal). The questions will address the following dimensions: sociodemographic data, academic data, behavior when reading, behavior when writing, behavior when publishing.

2.1 Up-to-date results

One of the first data that we wanted to work with was the number of localized languages. In this regard, we can confirm, without a doubt, that there is a clear predominance of English, in some cases, as a unique language over the native language of the country.

The countries of the analyzed journals official languages are Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. In the case of Spain, there is also the addition of Catalan, Galician and Basque. None of them has English as its official language and, yet it is the one that is most frequently repeated in the analysis of the data. Something similar happens with French which, without being the official language of any of the countries or having the academic-scientific hegemony that English traditionally has, is placed ahead of other official languages in the countries analyzed (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Languages in which the analyzed journals publish and percentage of appearance
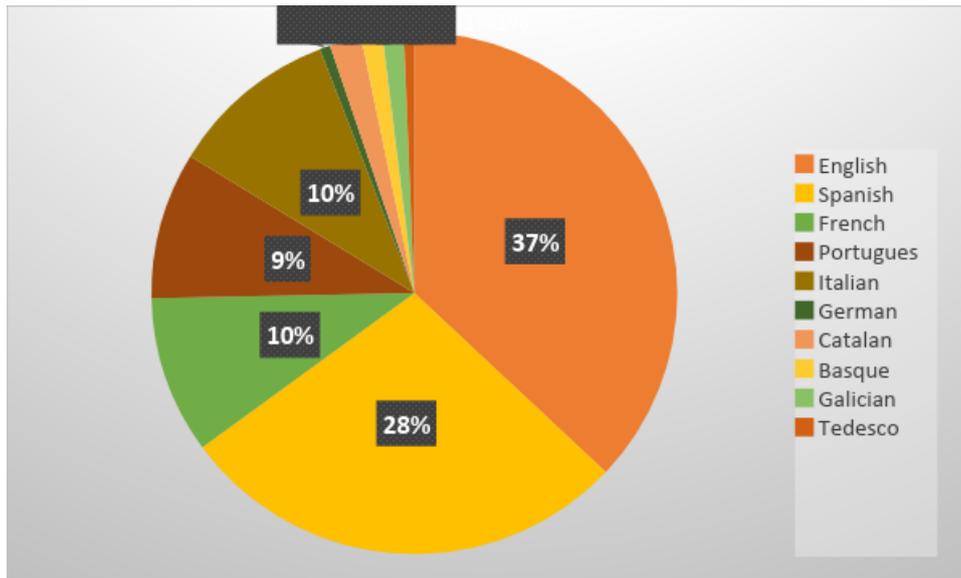

Consequently, the number of journals located in the consulted sources was analyzed because the requirements of the databases affect the language policies of the journals. These percentages are presented in the Figure 2.

Figure 2. Percentage of journals located in the consulted sources
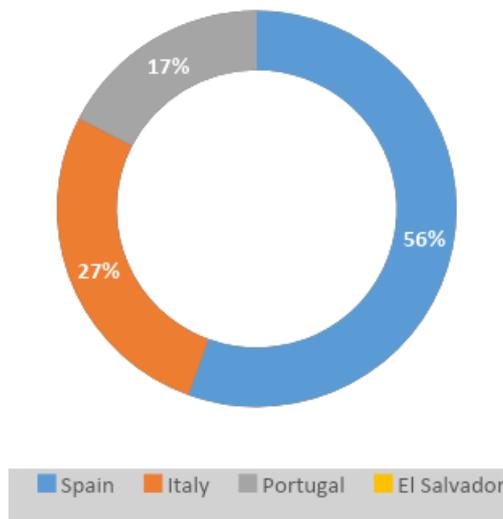
It is worth noting that El Salvador does not appear in any of the consulted sources.
Also with regard to the inclusion of journals in the revised databases, it should be noted that not all the analyzed disciplines have the same number of journals, as shown in Figure 3. Although the methodology proposed to review only the five best positioned journals by discipline and country, in many cases the number of journals included is fewer than 5.
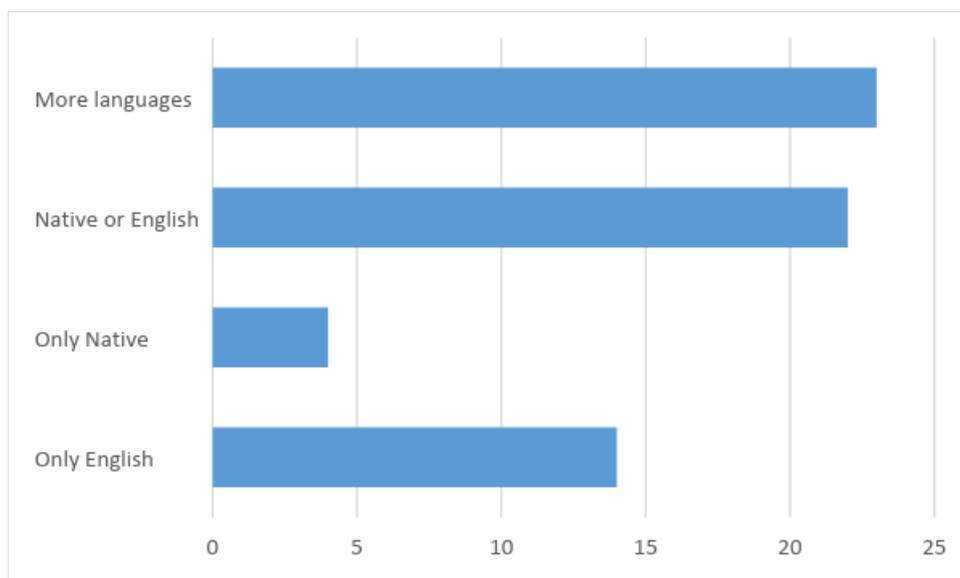
Figure 3. Number of journals per discipline located in the databases
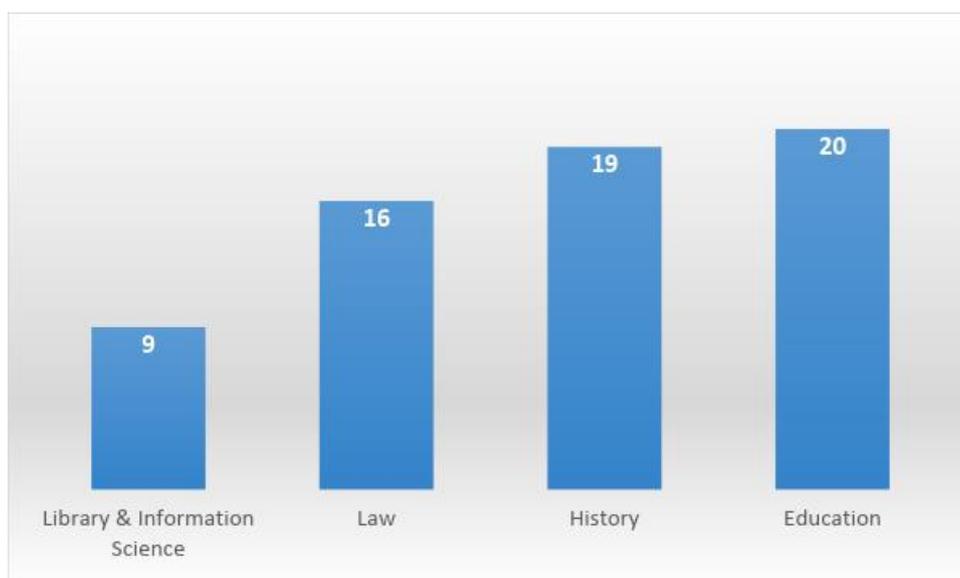
Regarding the language for publication accepted by the journals, the data has been analyzed from three different points of view:
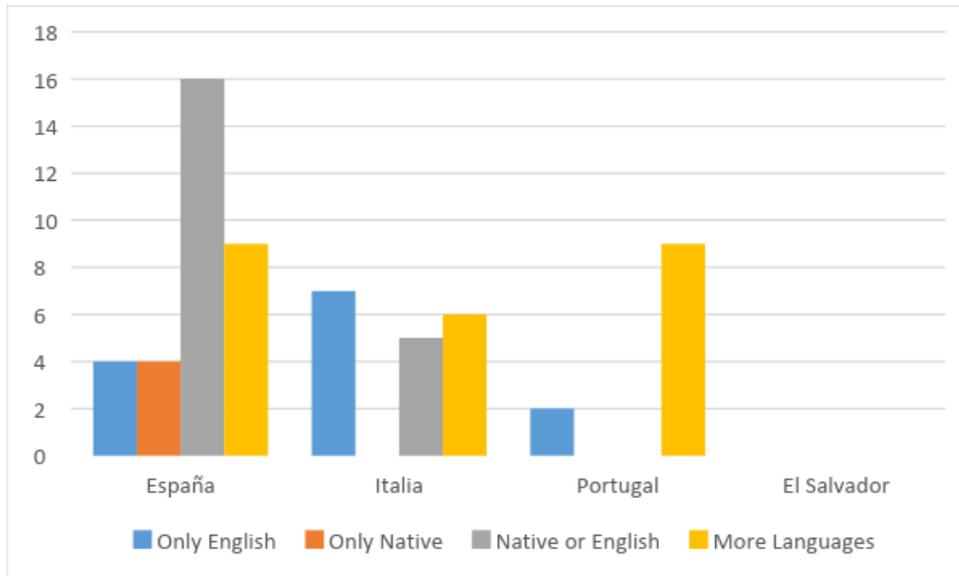
- Total language reception:

Figure 4. Number of journals in relation to the quantity of accepted languages.
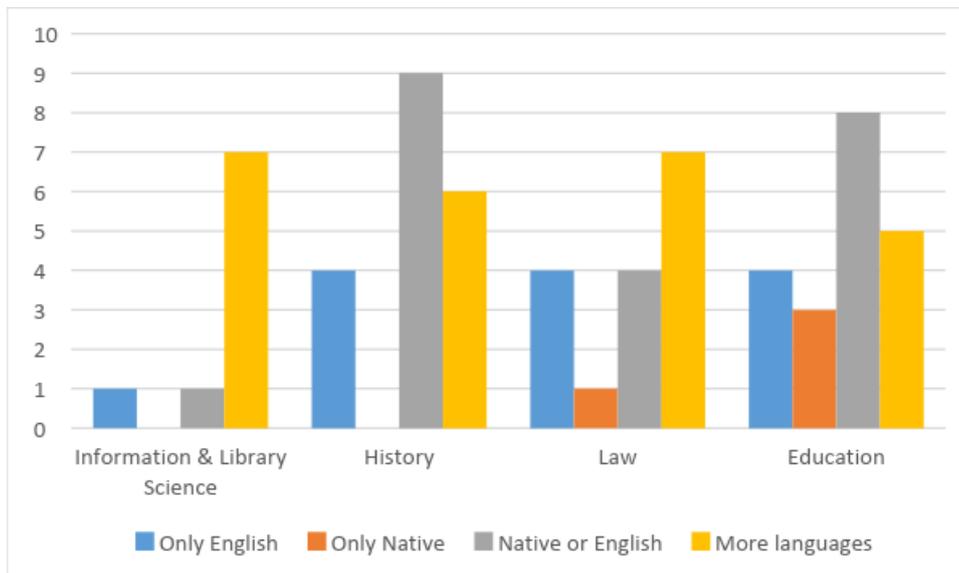

- Language reception by country:

Figure 5. Number of journals with diverse accepted languages per country.

From the analyzed countries, only Spain has journals in which only manuscripts written in Spanish are accepted.
  - Language reception by discipline:

Figure 6. Distribution of language reception by discipline

It is interesting to point out that in the field of History, which is traditionally considered as one of the areas where studies of local and small nature have more weight and where greater scientific production could be expected in the local language, no journals have been found that only accept texts in such local language.

Regarding the statistical analysis performed with the data collected to date with the software SPSS, the possible correlations between the variables under study are examined by analyzing the distribution observed in qualitative variables, through the Chi-square test. Based on the null hypothesis that states that the variables analyzed are not related to each other, the following correlations are studied:

Relationship between papers published in English or Spanish and their indexing in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) or in Scimago Journal Reports (SJR). The null hypothesis is discarded and the variables are declared related (asymptotic significance .004 and contingency coefficient .355) The results allow us to conclude that the SJR database indexes journals which publish in an almost indistinct way the accepted manuscripts both in the original language of the publication and in different languages (translations). For its part, the JCR database indexes journals that tend to favor the local language of the publication, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Relationship between the language of publication and its inclusion in JCR and SJR

		Language1		Total
		inglés	español	
Source	JCR (SSCI / SCIE)	2	13	15
	SJR	27	22	49
Total		29	35	64

Pruebas de chi-cuadrado

	Valor	df	Significación asintótica (bilateral)	Significación exacta (bilateral)	Significación exacta (unilateral)
Chi-cuadrado de Pearson	8,085[a]	1	,004		
Corrección de continuidad[b]	6,488	1	,011		
Razón de verosimilitud	8,962	1	,003		
Prueba exacta de Fisher				,007	,004
N de casos válidos	64				

a. 0 casillas (0,0%) han esperado un recuento menor que 5. El recuento mínimo esperado es 6,80.

b. Sólo se ha calculado para una tabla 2x2

Medidas simétricas[c]

		Valor	Significación aproximada
Nominal por Nominal	Phi	-,355	,004
	V de Cramer	,355	,004
	Coeficiente de contingencia	,335	,004
N de casos válidos		64	

c. Los estadísticos de correlación están disponibles sólo para datos numéricos.

On the other hand, this study analyzed the possible relationship between the publication options related to the language (English and Spanish) and the different areas of knowledge examined (Education, Law, Library and Information Science, and History). The null hypothesis (asymptotic significance .433) is maintained, and the variables are declared as independent. There is no relationship between the patterns of publication in the different areas analyzed in correspondence to the language in which they are published.

Similarly, this study analyzed the possible relationship between the publication options related to the language (English and Spanish) and the assignment to a certain quartile (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 in both JCR and SJR). The null hypothesis (asymptotic significance .547) is maintained and the variables are declared as independent. There is no relationship between the different linguistic options accepted by the journals and the assignment to a certain quartile.

Finally, we analyze the possible correlation between the indexing of the elements Title, Keywords, and Abstract in a different language (English) to the body of the article in the publications of each area of knowledge examined (Education, Law, Library Science and Documentation, and History). The null hypothesis (asymptotic significance .807) is maintained and the variables are declared as

independent. There is no relationship between the publications according to the area of knowledge and the presentation of these elements in a second language. In this case, the number of publications that include these elements is the majority, regardless of the area or field of knowledge.

3   Future lines of research

Based on the results found to date, three possible lines of future research are suggested. First, as El Salvador neither has any journal in these databases nor in the disciplines studied in this work, a parallel line of investigation may be considered. For example, it would be interesting to discover the behavior of researchers when there is no Salvadoran journals in the databases that are used in the traditional metrics of research evaluation.

Second, another possible line of future research may include the analysis of the relative impact on articles published concurrently in different languages. This would be possible as the large databases of scientific literature allow to monitor the evolution of the citation level and impact of these works, in a differentiated way in relation to the language of publication. The analysis of the differences in the levels of citations, in this sense, would shed light on the role played by the language factor in the field of the visibility of scientific production. Such consideration would allow, for example, to compare the power of dissemination and scope of universal languages such as English versus more local languages and scopes. While, in the first case, the article is located in a much more competitive and diverse ecosystem, in the second, the dissemination power seems to be lowered despite having a more visible position in a smaller scientific field.

Finally, it would be feasible and desirable to test how each researcher's own language, or the one associated to the object of study, acts as a determining element for the publication in that single language in contrast to works that are published in several languages. This juncture is especially relevant in the field of Social and Human Sciences where language is an essential element inherent to the research itself, unlike hard sciences where language is a more aseptic and standardized element with less power to determine the final product.

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