

BOOK REVIEW



A USEFUL GUIDE TO GLOBAL PUBLISHING

Mary Jane Curry and Theresa Lillis. A SCHOLAR'S GUIDE TO GETTING PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH. CRITICAL CHOICES AND PRACTICAL STRATEGIES (2013), Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. 192 pp., ISBN 9781783090594.

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In today's world of the academia the overquoted 'publish or perish' has come to mean 'publish in English or perish' due to the elevated international status of the English language so it is no surprise that most of the authors coming from the academic margin, i.e. non-English speaking countries, struggle to achieve international scholastic recognition in a variety of ways. Without going into the reasons why English has become the leading language of various sciences and without discussing the repercussions of the dominance of English in the academia in terms of linguistic and cultural accommodation, the book *A Scholar's Guide to Getting Published in English* by Mary Jane Curry and Theresa Lillis was written to offer "guidance, information and practical suggestions to anyone seeking to publish or to support others to publish" (p. 2).

In its gradual and highly illustrative approach the book leads the reader through a myriad of topics related to all important aspect of the process of getting one's work published. Although it might seem superfluous to some, this book is a much needed guide to many authors on the academic margin, i.e. beyond the academic centre, especially having in mind the low acceptance rate of non-English authors' papers in English-medium journals. Hence, it can be concluded that the book is aimed at authors, who may be teachers, supervisors or scholars, seeking to

get their work published, as well as at manuscript reviewers or journal editors, who are the inevitable other side of the publishing coin.

The authors have chosen to focus primarily on academic journal articles, but parts of the text discuss chapters in edited books as well, which means that the postulates, principles and illustrations offered in the book mainly deal with shorter academic forms of writing. As for academic disciplines, the book relies mostly on the fields of education and psychology, but all examples covered can be easily mapped onto other scientific areas. As for the macro structure of the book, it has 17 chapters which move along a logical path of a piece of writing, from the moment it is designed and researched for to the moment of publication.

All of the chapters cover essential segments of the publication process and address all the relevant stakeholders, both the ones in the foreground (authors and journal editors) and the ones in the background (educational institutions, publishing houses, sources of finance, etc). Each chapter follows the same order of elements: (1) *Chapter focus*, which raises important questions that are further elaborated; (2) *Data*, questions and comments, which relies on an ethnographic approach and draws on a large bank of examples (from interviews or testimonies of scientists directly involved in the field who have conveyed their experiences, feelings and thoughts in the most direct manner); (3) *Thinking about your practice*, which invites the readers to reflect on their own decisions and next steps; (4) *Suggestions for future action*, which offers sound advice on how to tackle certain problems in the publication process; (5) *Useful resources*, which refers the reader to books, articles and websites relevant for the topic; (6) *Related research*, which points to other scholarship in the field that may not necessarily agree with the viewpoint of the authors; and (7) *Information box*, which succinctly describes a topic important for the chapter in question.

The first chapter addresses a variety of reasons why scholars decide to publish their work and what the possible places of publication are. Furthermore, this chapter invites authors to consider what is involved in this decision-making process, i.e. whether the research is aimed at the local or the global context, what language should the text be written in, which types of journals it should be submitted to, etc. Finally, the authors reflect on different criteria upon which the international status of a journal is determined.

The second chapter offers a follow-up of the first by describing diverse criteria employed by institutions when evaluating the results of scholars. As can be seen from examples from many European countries, experiences are similar and results are most often judged via a point system which awards the largest number of points to international journals, which are in most cases published in English. In other words, English thus receives the status of a preferred language despite these institutions being positioned in various non-English speaking countries. Far-reaching entailments of such criteria range from scholars being promoted and getting tenure to becoming members of projects and getting paid more for better results.

In the third chapter the authors look back on the 'publish or perish' rule in the academia, which implicitly means 'publish in English', but they also pay due attention to reasons for publishing papers in national journals. Following the narrative of one scholar, the authors rightly conclude that "the publishing activity of scholars living in a complex academic world can shift according to changing personal priorities and commitments in interaction with institutional requirements and criteria" (p. 38).

The importance of academic conferences is elaborated and illustrated in the fourth chapter, which illustrates the academic conversation tied to conference participation: from a call for papers, through a choice of topic and a proposal submission, to conference attendance. The authors strongly emphasize the importance of conferences in terms of becoming acquainted with innovations in one's field and in terms of receiving feedback for one's work.

Similarly, chapter five offers a view on conversations in academic journals explaining and illustrating how authors should approach the selection of an appropriate journal for the submission of their work. This is further elaborated in the sixth chapter, which presents a variety of challenges that scholars encounter when trying to get their work published in a high profile international journal. The information box at the end of the chapter clearly lists a series of steps that an article goes through in order to be published.

"Acknowledging the work of other scholars is central to knowledge production and an important aspect of writing for publication" (p. 70) and hence chapter seven elaborates on reasons to cite other people's work and what is entailed in the process. Various examples from the practice of different scholars indicate that this process can be highly biased and that the decision on which sources to cite are shaped by many factors (the language in which the text is available, the contexts in which journals are published and scholars' individual perspective on citation practices, p. 73).

Crucial differences between articles in journals and chapters in books are discussed in chapter eight, where the authors use a number of scholars' testimonies to illustrate both benefits of book chapters (higher likelihood of being accepted, greater support in terms of text development, etc.) and their drawbacks (unpredictable timelines and possible delays in the publication of the entire book). Timelines are further elaborated in the following chapter, which shows how long each stage in the process of writing and publishing might take and why. It is clear from the many examples that writing in most cases is a lengthy and painstaking process interlaced with many other duties such as teaching, supervising, attending conferences, participating in projects, etc.

Further problems surrounding the writing process are presented in chapter ten, where the authors discuss different strategies for accessing resources such as books, articles, data bases, etc. as well as different strategies for funding accompanying activities such as research and travel, all of which are of utmost

importance for beginners in the academia as they will shed light on various hazy and obscure topics related to funding.

Chapter eleven discusses the pros and cons of publishing in English and in the author's native language. This inevitably brings up the topics of translators and language advisors and their competence in the field, as well as the cooperation between the authors and language specialists in charge of bringing the text closer to the academic and linguistic standards of English language writing. The next two chapters deal with the topic of academic collaboration through a variety of networks, both local and international.

Chapter twelve illustrates how networks are created and what factors are crucial in this process and it also portrays different roles assumed by different agents over time. The following chapter develops this topic further and takes a look at different types of collaboration including collaboration between colleagues and collaboration between supervisors and students. The ethnographic data offers invaluable views on the good and bad sides of collaboration and it stresses the necessity for the investment of a lot of time, effort, patience and knowledge in order to achieve success in the end.

Chapters 14 and 15 relate to the final stages of writing a paper, before it is submitted for consideration in a journal and during the stage of editing and revising following the reviewers' comments. The authors identify two types of literacy brokers, namely academic brokers ("colleagues in a scholar's discipline, who tend to orient their feedback to research content", p. 129) and language brokers ("translators, authors, editors and [...] other people with knowledge of English [...] who tend to orient their feedback to the structure, format and language of texts", p. 129). The authors of the book further identify gatekeepers, i.e. journal editors, and describe how the conversation with them should proceed both in terms of understanding the basic requirements of particular journals and in terms of communicating about the revisions of the submitted paper.

The pre-final chapter considers the other side of the publication process and describes what is involved in the process of editing a journal and reviewing a paper. The authors provide ample examples to illustrate the benefits of becoming a reviewer such as gaining experience, learning something, participating in the process of the creation of excellence, but they also list many concerns connected with anonymous reviewing. The final chapter discusses critical choices in terms of publishing in English or not and problematizes the international (and essentially colonial) role of the English language in the academia.

All in all, a fairly loose structure of the book allows the readers to take a non-linear stance when reading it, which means that one can pick and choose a chapter as the need arises. One additional strength of this book lies in the fact that its multifacetedness will accommodate the needs of both beginners in the publishing world and experienced writers who might gain a fresh perspective by relating their own experiences to those conveyed in the book.

For all the reasons mentioned this book is highly recommended to all non-native English speakers seeking help, advice and guidelines in the process of becoming successful authors whose work will eventually gain international recognition.

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