Using Non-English Sources in Academic Research

Risa Hatanaka (risa.hatanaka@alumni.ubc.ca)[1], Josh Chan (Joshua.Chan@ubc.ca)[1], Heather O'Brien[1]

[1] The University of British Columbia, School of Information

BACKGROUND

AS OF 2019 IN CANADA AND US [1]

362 EAST ASIAN STUDIES PROGRAMS

700 EAST ASIAN STUDIES SCHOLARS

PROBLEM: Few studies show how East Asian Studies scholars locate non-English sources for their research

RESEARCH QUESTION

What information seeking strategies do East Asian Studies scholars use when searching for non-English sources?

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS:
- Two literature scholars from UBC Dept. of Asian Studies
- Two librarians (Chinese Studies and Japanese Studies)

DATA COLLECTION:
- Pre-interview questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, information world mapping

DATA ANALYSIS:
- Directed content analysis[2]
- Codes using the information triangle[3]

IMPLICATIONS

Greater understanding of the information seeking strategies/behaviours of East Asian studies scholars

LIMITATIONS

- Very small sample size affects generalizability
- Scholars from other subject areas were not included

SCHOLARS' INFORMATION STRATEGIES

INFORMATION STRATEGIES: "Activities undertaken by a researcher to advance an information-seeking task or meet an information-seeking need" (Sabbar, 2016, pp.53).[4]

FORMAL STRATEGIES Information retrieval systems

INFORMAL STRATEGIES Citation tracing and browsing

INTERACTIVE STRATEGIES Consultations with colleagues
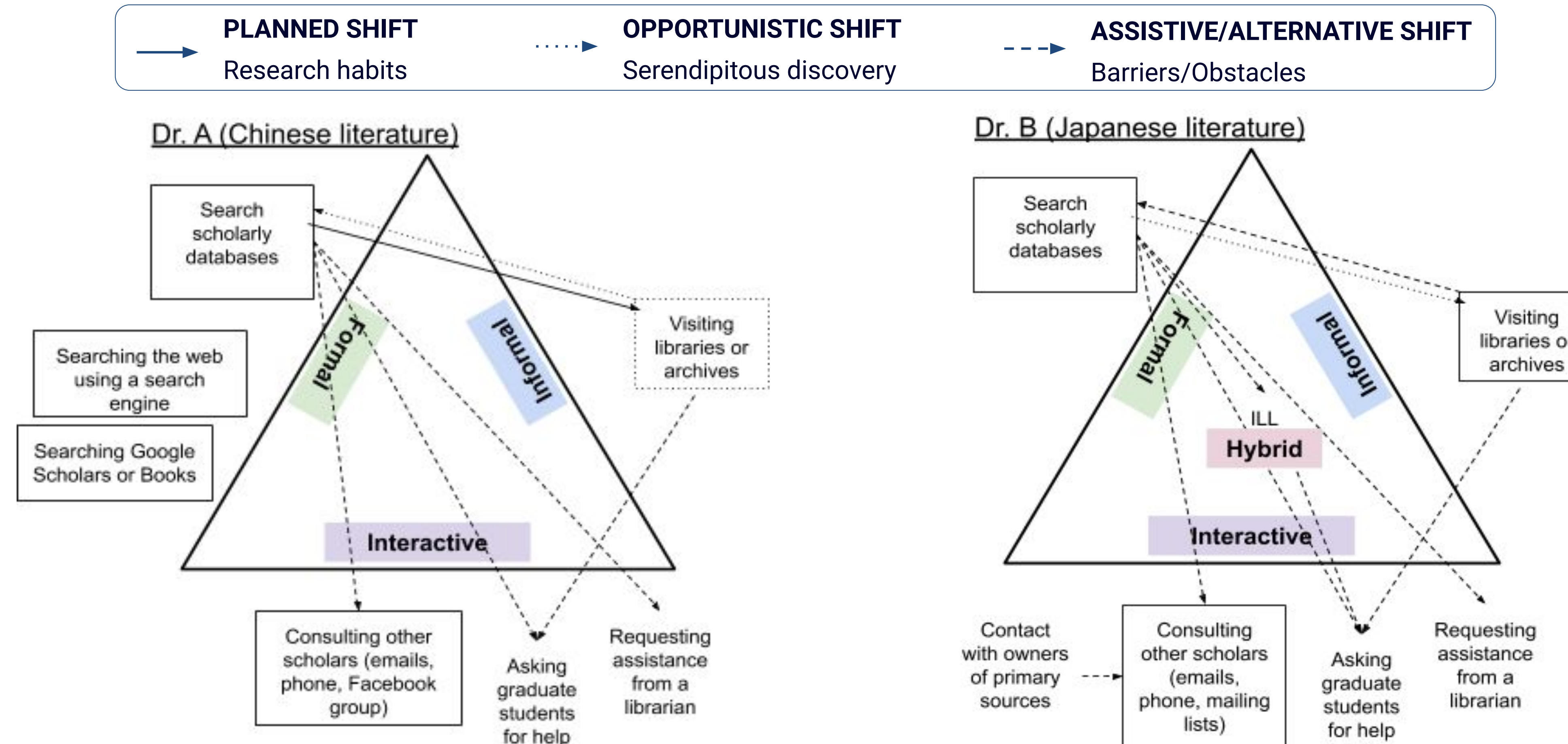
HYBRID STRATEGIES Interlibrary Loan

"When I used to go yeah, up into the stacks — I mean there will still be books in the stacks, but you know fewer of them — and I could just...just browse." (Dr. A)

Strategy	Dr. A (Chinese Literature)	Dr. B (Japanese Literature)
Formal	Google UBC Library catalogue Non-UBC Library catalogues/databases	NIJL catalogue CiNii/CiNii Books WorldCat
Informal	UBC Asian Library Princeton University Library Berkeley Library The British Library	UBC Asian Library Universities and research institutes in Japan Institutional proceedings
Interactive	Scholars Graduate students Librarians	Scholars (In-person, Mailing lists) Graduate students Librarians Owners of primary sources
Hybrid	N/A	Interlibrary loan

"[I]t's often better just speak to people and they will do some adding for you." (Dr. B)

SCHOLARS' INFORMATION SHIFTS

INFORMATION SHIFTS: "Changes made by users from one information-seeking strategy to another in order to advance the information-seeking process" (Sabbar, 2016, pp.56).[4]

PLANNED SHIFT Research habits

OPPORTUNISTIC SHIFT Serendipitous discovery

ASSISTIVE/ALTERNATIVE SHIFT Barriers/Obstacles

Dr. A (Chinese literature)

Dr. B (Japanese literature)

"Our library does have some pretty nice and rare books, but not all of them. So yeah, you have to travel." (Dr. A)

" [A]s I became a more senior scholar, [...], there is no time to [find what I need]. I need to be more creative about how I get those resources." (Dr. B)

LIBRARIANS' PERSPECTIVES

BOTH CHINESE AND JAPANESE LANGUAGE LIBRARIANS:
- Language fluency is not an issue for patrons
- Graduate students/faculty need print materials

CHINESE LANGUAGE LIBRARIAN:
- Barriers for patrons: Metadata, geography and copyright
- Technological advancements make keyword searches in traditional/simplified Chinese relatively easy for patrons

JAPANESE LANGUAGE LIBRARIAN:
- Barriers for patrons: Constructing Japanese language queries
- Role of the librarian: Intermediary with libraries in Japan
- Few e-book resources available due to print book culture

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Recruit graduate students, early-career faculty members, and East Asian scholars from other subject areas

CONCLUSION

- Study participants used **formal**, **informal**, **interactive**, and **hybrid** strategies.
- Participants shifted strategies both positively (planned and opportunistic) and negatively (assisted/alternative).
- **Geography** and **culture** were significant barriers for both participants. However, **language** was not an issue for either participant.
- **Time constraints** due to teaching portfolios was another barrier. Participants leveraged their **personal networks** to overcome this barrier.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

iSchool@UBC
SCHOOL OF LIBRARY, ARCHIVAL & INFORMATION STUDIES