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Editorial

Writing for publication in multilingual contexts: An introduction to the special issue

This special issue is dedicated to writing for publication in multilingual contexts; it focuses on the use of English and other languages in the research and publishing practices of scholars working outside the English-speaking world. Researchers all over the globe are being urged to disseminate their findings to wider and more diverse audiences. "Knowledge transfer", "knowledge dissemination", "impact", and similar concepts now make an essential part of research assessment. As Gentil and Séror put it in their contribution to this special issue, "the quasi-hegemony of English in scientific publications is now a fait accompli". At the same time, outside the English-speaking world, the need to disseminate research findings to the general public and local practitioners implies increased uses of national language(s). To date, most of the research has focused on the "centre" versus "periphery" dichotomy (Canagarajah, 2002) and the challenges that non-anglophone researchers face when they try to publish their research in English-medium journals (e.g. Flowerdew, 2008; Lillis & Curry, 2010). The question of how multilingual scholars use English in relation to other languages has received considerably less attention.

Although English for Research Publication Purposes (ERRP) has become a recognized branch of EAP, it remains a surprisingly under-explored topic. The critical discussion concerning the status of English in academic communication was fuelled by the publication of Phillipson's *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992) and Pennycook's *Cultural Politics of English* (1994). In 1997, John Swales responded to concerns about the "triumphalism" of English in his article "English as *Tyrannosaurus rex*" which described English as "a powerful carnivore gobbling up the other denizens of the academic linguistic grazing grounds" (Swales, 1997, p. 374) and called for critical awareness in the teaching of English in academic settings. Tardy (2004) followed up this theme in an article published in *JEAP*. Her survey of graduate students in a US university, of whom 73% were from South Korea and China, attempted to determine whether the respondents viewed English more as a lingua franca or as the Swalesian tyrannosaurus rex. The answer to this dilemma was not clear-cut: the majority of Tardy's informants saw value in the use of English as a lingua franca in science, but at the same time, some did not view it as a neutral communication tool and expressed concerns about eventual disadvantages for non-native English speaking scholars. Tardy's study suggested that, after return to their home countries, the informants would be likely to face similar difficulties experienced by those of "off-networked scholars" (Canagarajah, 2002).

Research on the use of English in academic publishing has been carried out in different geopolitical contexts. The increasing dominance of English has raised concerns about any eventual disadvantages for non-native speakers who publish their research in English in international peer-reviewed journals (e.g. Ammon, 2007; Belcher, 2007; Canagarajah, 2002; Ferguson, 2007; Flowerdew, 2008, 2013; Lillis & Curry, 2010; Uzuner, 2008). Some of these studies focused on specific countries such as China (e.g. Li & Flowerdew, 2009), Denmark (Petersen & Shaw, 2002), Portugal (Bennett, 2010), Spain (e.g. Ferguson, Pérez-Llantada, & Plo, 2011; Pérez-Llantada, Plo, & Ferguson, 2011), and Sweden (Bolton & Kuteeva, 2012; Olsson & Sheridan, 2012). The 2008 special issue of *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* was dedicated to English for research publication purposes. A strong undercurrent in this special issue was a concern that researchers who have English as an additional language are often disadvantaged compared to native speakers, particularly if they are placed in the "periphery" and do not have the same access to information and resources as those working in the Anglophone world.

A decade after the publication of Canagarajah's *Geopolitics of academic writing* (2002), many changes have taken place both in international publishing and associated linguistic practices. The issues related to using English in academic publication surpass the native versus non-native dichotomy, and there are other factors that impact the language choices of multilingual scholars. The research output of non-Anglophone countries such as China and South Korea has grown dramatically (e.g. Royal Society, 2011; Shukman, 2011), and they can no longer be considered "peripheral" (cf. Flowerdew, 2007). English undoubtedly remains the language of international publication, particularly in the scientific domain (e.g. Ferguson, 2007), and this trend has been spreading to disciplines in social sciences, arts and humanities. However, the tolerance towards non-native usages of English has also increased, as evidenced by the growing body of research on English as lingua franca in academic settings (e.g. Mauranen, 2012). In a recent state-of-the art article, Flowerdew (2013) suggests that the native versus non-native distinction

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is being blurred, and it is rather the level of professional expertise and academic seniority that is more important when it comes to successful academic publishing.

While the international publication scene is dominated by English, the local landscapes in non-anglophone countries look different. The need to disseminate research findings to the general public has led to increased uses of national language(s). The Nordic countries provide an illustrative example of how language policies promote the use of national language(s) in high-stakes domains. In order to counter-balance the dominance of English in research and education, *The Declaration on a Nordic Language Policy* (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2007) promotes the parallel language use of English and one or several Nordic languages. It also states that both Nordic languages and English should be used as languages of science; that knowledge dissemination in local languages is to be rewarded; that higher education institutions need to develop long-term strategies for language choice, parallel language use, and language instruction; and that competent bodies continue to coordinate translation and terminology in scientific domains. It is certainly a laudable aim to promote the use of languages other than English and to reward knowledge dissemination to local audiences. At the same time, there is often a discrepancy between policy and practice. A broad analysis of language uses among academic staff across the four faculties of a major Swedish university (Bolton & Kuteeva, 2012) demonstrates that English as an additional language is used in different ways and for different purposes. Although language use depends on the nature and knowledge-making practices of the academic discipline, language policies do not always allow space for disciplinary adjustments (Kuteeva and Airey, in press). Likewise, when it comes to using English in research and academic publications, language policies do not necessarily reflect day-to-day practices (see e.g. McGrath, this issue).

The articles published in this special issue report on studies conducted in various geopolitical contexts, including European countries such as Germany, Romania, and Sweden, as well as officially multilingual countries such as Canada and China. They depict different realities and challenges faced by multilingual scholars, which are related to institutional policies, academic reward systems, and disciplinary practices. The studies reported here use primarily qualitative methods. Lisa McGrath (Stockholm University), Claus Gnutzmann and Frank Rabe (Technical University of Braunschweig), and Yongyan Li (Hong Kong University) draw on interview data collected from informants based at universities in Sweden, Germany, and mainland China. Guillaume Gentil (Carlton University) and Jérémie Séror (University of Ottawa) present dialogical self-case studies comparing their own use of academic English versus academic French in two Canadian universities. Two other articles, one by Ana Bocanegra-Valle (University of Cádiz) and the other by Laura Muresan (Bucharest University of Economic Studies) and Carmen Pérez-Llantada (University of Zaragoza), make use of the survey instruments to reach out to the study participants and supplement their statistical analysis by qualitative data collected by email. The article by Muresan and Pérez-Llantada reports on a pilot study which forms part of a larger research project exploring publication practices at a Romanian university. Bocanegra-Valle's study is situated in a European context and draws on the analysis of a survey involving 161 contributors to *Ibérica*, a multilingual journal published by the European Association of Languages for Specific Purposes, which encourages submissions in five languages. Finally, in her forum contribution, Salager-Meyer discusses the problems faced by non-English-medium journals and offers suggestions on how to increase the global influence of multilingual scholars.

One of the major themes emerging in the six articles published here concerns the importance of disciplinary practices and their impact on language use, regardless of the geopolitical context in which the research was conducted. Thus, McGrath's study of 15 humanities scholars at a Swedish university shows how language uses vary across three disciplines: anthropology, history, and general linguistics. She shows that English, Swedish, and other languages are used for both academic and outreach publication, but Swedish is certainly dominant in outreach. McGrath also points out a discrepancy between official language policies –by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Swedish government, and the university in which her study was carried out– and the actual publication practices of her informants. These tend to vary across the three disciplines and are largely determined by factors such as intended audience, research topic, and genre. Gnutzmann and Rabe's study of 24 German researchers from four disciplines – biology, mechanical engineering, German linguistics, and history – analyses different language demands that these researchers face when they write for publication in English. The authors apply the concept of disciplinary culture to determine how research paradigms, writing conventions, and value systems impact language uses and writing in English. They show that perceptions of language competence for research publication vary across the four disciplines, and identify major factors in the language demands made on the scholars, including the degree of rigidity of genre and language, the distribution of writing tasks, and the ratio of native-speakers of English to non-native speakers in a given discipline. Thus, we can see how disciplinary knowledge-making practices, including international and local orientation, impact language uses of the informants.

Another two studies – by Gentil and Séror and by Bocanegra-Valle – focus on the multilingual publication practices of applied linguists. Gentil and Séror are both francophone applied linguists based in Ontario, Canada, and working in two different institutions: a monolingual university and a bilingual university. The authors reflect on their own biliteracy development and bilingual publication practices in an attempt to reveal the social conditions that influence their language choices in disseminating knowledge in both English and French. Bocanegra-Valle's study offers an insider perspective of an LSP journal editor working with a predominantly multilingual community of practice who nevertheless choose to publish their research predominantly in English. Her analysis of questionnaire responses offers a valuable insight into language uses of LSP professionals and the role of English in LSP research. These two studies underscore that, due to its close connection with English language teaching, applied linguistics is one of the disciplines in which issues surrounding the language of publication have been particularly controversial.

Finally, the articles by Muresan and Pérez-Llantada and by Li both focus on the publication practices of social science researchers. In her article, Li shows that despite the fact that China's scientific output ranks second after the US (Royal Society,

2011), the situation in social sciences such as management research is different. As business schools in mainland China subscribe to international journal ranking systems, the 14 management researchers in Li's study find themselves under performative pressure exerted by journal ranking lists on the one hand and the need to balance the demands for English-medium publication with societal commitments in local language(s) on the other. Muresan and Pérez-Llantada's study was conducted among a multilingual population of social scientists at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. Similarly to McGrath, the authors show that language choices are determined by factors such as audience and research topic. While English dominates in research publication, Romanian is used as the language for research dissemination in both the local and national context, whenever the focus is on issues of local/national relevance. Other European languages such as French, German, Italian, and Spanish are used in spoken academic communication, particularly with EU partners, which is possible due to the informants' proficiency in modern languages other than English.

In her Forum contribution, Salager-Meyer discusses the problems faced by periphery journals published in languages other than English and offers suggestions on how to increase their global visibility. Among other measures, she proposes multilingual publication practices, in which English is used alongside other languages (echoing the policy adopted by *Ibérica*, as discussed by Bocanegra-Valle). Salager-Meyer claims that non-native speakers of English face numerous difficulties when they write for publication in mainstream English-medium journals. However, the findings reported in several articles in this special issue give us reason to question this claim (e.g. McGrath, Gnutzmann and Rabe, Muresan and Pérez-Llantada). The non-native speaking informants of the studies reported here do not necessarily feel disadvantaged or "stigmatized" (Flowerdew, 2008) by default. In Muresan and Pérez-Llantada's study, for instance, the participants found it useful to receive reviewers' feedback and appreciated their comments related to language issues. Moreover, 63% of their informants considered themselves to be more advantaged than disadvantaged by the use of English in academic communication. While the pressure to publish in high-impact English-medium journals is certainly limiting language choice, the informants in Li's study, for example, did not report language-related issues to be of primary importance: they received sufficient support from language editors and co-authors. Overall, the articles published in this special issue describe somewhat ambivalent attitudes towards the use of English in research and academic publishing. The use of concepts such as "threat" (e.g. Bocanegra-Valle) or "unfair advantage" (e.g. Muresan and Llantada) in questionnaire items (cf. Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996) tends to provoke stronger reactions against English than open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews (e.g. McGrath). Thus, the formulation of interview or survey questions seems to have an impact on the attitudes expressed by the informants and ultimately influences the study results. Therefore, methodological issues need to be carefully attended to in further research: an ideologically sensitive issue like language choice will not benefit from research-based solutions if our methods stack the cards in favour of our chosen views. In addition, we need to understand the issues in a more fine-tuned way. For instance, situations in different parts of the world may vary along dimensions that have not been explored sufficiently yet; affordances provided by national wealth, the general level of education, and the number of speakers languages have or can be comprehended by can all lay out highly different fields for players.

Two repeated concerns emerge from the articles published here. One is related to the institutional pressures resulting from bibliometric systems, funding agencies, and journal ranking lists which value English-medium publications above others, and the other concerns the teaching of English for research publication purposes (ERPP) which ultimately sustains the "self-perpetuating cycle of English as the language of science" (Bocanegra-Valle, this issue). In order to break this cycle, the authors of the articles in this special issue propose adjustments in institutional policies and academic reward systems, as well as a stronger focus on the development of academic writing skills in different languages, including English. Gentil and Séror, for example, mention the importance of translingual work and the challenges faced by scholars who compose from sources in languages other than the language of publication (e.g. historians in McGrath's and Gnutzmann and Rabe's studies). Although English is widely used as an academic lingua franca and the tolerance towards non-standard language uses has increased (e.g. Mauranen, 2012), it cannot be taken for granted in all disciplinary contexts. An interesting concern was raised by the informants of Bocanegra-Valle's survey with regard to a threat to English as a language, posed by non-standard "misuses". Multilingual publishing is thus seen as a way to protect both national languages and English and to sustain the diversity of academic rhetorical traditions. It is interesting that prevalent publication ranking systems have recently come under criticism from other perspectives than language (e.g. Altmetrics Manifesto, 2010; San Fransisco Declaration on Research Assessment, 2012). The field of assessment and ranking has rapidly found itself amidst heavy turbulence, which may give the linguistic issues a good shake-up along the way: if for instance knowledge dissemination to the public becomes a prime factor in securing funding, writing for the international community of scholars may have to take the back seat.

There are several implications for EAP research and practice in this special issue. First, as shown for example by Gentil and Séror, there is a need for a more holistic pedagogical intervention, including collaboration between LSP professionals specializing in English and other languages, which would enable the development of academic writing skills in more than one language. One step towards this goal would be the creation of multilingual or parallel corpora focussing on academic language use. Raising language awareness among students and academics may eventually influence language choices and reinforce the use of languages other than English. Beyond the scope of EAP intervention, more work needs to be done to inform policy makers of the benefits of multilingualism in academic publishing. According to language policies such as the above-mentioned Nordic declaration, in order to ensure the continuation of local academic rhetorical traditions, universities should consider rewarding publication in local languages, both for outreach and academic purposes. At the same time, the research assessment mechanisms are being questioned and any transformations in that camp will ultimately impact languages uses.

While there are clear benefits in having a common language in research and academic publishing, taking practical steps to foster linguistic diversity and avoid academic monolingualism can be beneficial for all, as demonstrated by Bocanegra-Valle.

Overall, the articles in this special issue show that academic language uses are motivated primarily by professional needs and disciplinary practices. In order to have an impact on institutional policies, language awareness needs to start at the bottom level, among graduate students and academics. As Swales (1997, p. 381) put it: "If there is rhetorical consciousness-raising about the academic language issues, such as the contemporary power imbalance of an instrumental carnivore amok on a plain of sentimental herbivores, then precisely what would they, not me, want to do about it?"

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