The Modern Language Journal

Perspectives

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THE ISSUE

The Changing Scene for Publishing in Applied Linguistics Journals: Views From Editors

THE TOPIC FOR THIS ISSUE OF *PERSPECTIVES* is the result of several happy confluences that took shape through generous professional collaboration.

Its overall theme, "The Changing Scene for Publishing in Applied Linguistics Journals: Views from Editors," is one with which everyone in our field is familiar. We experience changes in the publishing world in time-saving and liberating ways when we can access the journal holdings of our university libraries from the comforts of home, and we encounter them in convoluted and time-devouring ways when we must learn how to handle yet another manuscript submission or reviewing system. However, although our encounter with these overtly technology-driven changes, both as consumers of information and research knowledge and as contributors to its expansion, offers glimpses here and there of more fundamental dynamics taking place, it is the editors of journals in our field who must deal with the consequential nature of these changes with full force on a daily basis. As they juggle the rigorous demands and counterdemands in managing their own journals with admirable commitment and enthusiasm, they directly encounter and come to discern long-range dynamics in our field that most likely are not apparent to many readers.

The column's immediate occasion is one many readers know from attending professional conferences, namely a session dealing with various aspects of publishing in professional journals. Thus, this year's program of the annual conference of the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL), for which I was responsible, once more featured such an event, just as it has for a number of years. Following another tradition of some years, *The Modern Language Journal* (*MLJ*) editor organized and chaired the session at which numerous journal editors generously contributed their insights and words of advice regarding publication in their own journals and in the larger world of applied linguistics. It was from the journal editors' desire to dig a little deeper, as it were, that the topic for this column quite naturally arose for me.

Publishing sessions at conferences tend to be seen as "how to" events, as convenient opportunities for obtaining information about an array of journals and for finding the hidden secrets on getting one's research published, with senior graduate students and junior colleagues being among the most eager seekers. However, there is much more to the changing world of journal publishing than learning about the intellectual niche and research focus of a particular journal, its submission guidelines and procedures, and its acceptance rate and approximate time between manuscript submission and, hopefully, actual publication. To begin to capture that aspect, I asked 10 journal editors from among the increasingly expansive list of applied linguistics journals to consider issues such as the following:

- What major changes have you seen in your journal's work, from matters brought on by publishers, including the huge impact of the electronic environment and financial competitiveness and viability, to who submits what kind of scholarly work for publication consideration?
- How have these changes affected your work as an editor and the person supervising the entire process of publishing and how are they affecting your journal's presence as a major venue for knowledge construction and dissemination in your field?

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- What measures have you taken to address these dynamics and what consequences do you see for your journal and for the field of applied linguistics in general?
- What should potential authors be aware of—beyond the obvious—as they make decisions about what to publish where?
- Taking a global view of journal publishing, what insights have you gained about what is taking place, and what broad recommendations would you make to address these changes?

As expected, very similar dynamics confront the group. Even so, they chose a range of issues for the focus of their comments, treating them with critical thoughtfulness and suggesting diverse solutions or, at the very least, diverse long-range activities and measures. Oftentimes they have already instituted them; at other times, addressing a problem may need professionwide attention, including, quite importantly, the attention of publishers, to assure for the field of applied linguistics a forum that deftly deals with complex competing demands at the heart of our scholarly identity.

I present their observations without further comment, arranging them alphabetically by their journals' titles: *Applied Linguistics, The Canadian Modern Language Review/La revue canadienne des langues vivantes, Foreign Language Annals, Language Assessment Quarterly, Language Learning, Language Learning & Technology, Language Policy, Language Teaching Research, The Modern Language Journal,* and *TESOL Quarterly*. It was the editors' exemplary collaboration and adherence to tight deadlines in the brief time between the 2010 AAAL conference and manuscript submission that made the column a reality. If there is one characteristic that applies to them all, it is this: They are extraordinarily busy but also extraordinarily professional and deadline-conscious people. My special thanks go to them for this and so much more!

THE COMMENTARIES

Reflections on the Steady Increase in Submissions

Commentary from the co-editor and editor's assistant of *Applied Linguistics*

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Since we began using ScholarOne Manuscripts (formerly Manuscript Central) in 2009, the information we have available is more detailed than that kept previously by us and our predecessors. Consequently, some of what we discuss here is based on general impressions of our current experience with the journal, as well as others' earlier experience. With that disclaimer, we believe that one of the greatest developments over the last 10 years is the steady increase in the number of submissions to *Applied Linguistics*. Last year (2009), to be specific, we received twice the number of submissions received in 2000.

We have heard, through conversations with editors of other journals also witnessing a growth in submissions, that the increase may be due to "publish or perish" policies at universities in countries like Australia, the United Kingdom, and China. Although that development may have influenced more scholars to submit to our journal, it does not account for the fact that submissions from the United Kingdom and Australia have actually not increased. Consequently, we think that our shift to the automated ScholarOne system provides a better explanation for submission increases. Although the largest proportion of submissions (currently 40%) continues to come from predominantly native English-speaking countries (Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand, the United States), there has been a substantial increase of papers from nonnative English-speaking countries, particularly, and in order of increase, China, Taiwan, Korea, Iran, and Spain.

Whereas ScholarOne helps journals in cataloging and archiving submissions, it seems also to make submission more accessible to scholars in traditionally underrepresented countries. The records of my predecessor, Co-Editor Gabriele Kasper, show only a handful of submissions from China, Iran, and Spain, along with a few from Greece, Taiwan, and South Korea. The large majority was coming from the United States, closely followed by the United Kingdom. Since the introduction of ScholarOne, however, submissions from China alone stand at 22 (just 1 behind Canada); 18 have come from Iran, and 11 from Spain.

Unfortunately, that increase in submissions from underrepresented countries has not also led to an increase in their publication. Not only does a large majority of these submissions not make it through the peer review process, they do not even make it into that process, as many must be rejected in-house. Now, as in previous years, these submissions do not always meet the required linguistic, formatting, or substantive standards. For example, literature reviews often seem to reflect authors' difficulty accessing recent, international academic publications; the focus of studies is not always one that is current and/or represents a major contribution to the field at large, or papers lack a critical perspective. The result is a notable increase in our in-house rejection rate: from 9 in 2008 to 32 in 2009.

Perspective From *The Canadian Modern Language Review/La revue canadienne des langues vivantes*

Comments from the co-editors

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The Canadian Modern Language Review (*CMLR*)/*La revue canadienne des langues vivantes* (*RCLV*) is a bilingual French–English quarterly. It publishes empirically based, peer-reviewed articles on the teaching and learning of English and French as second languages (the two official languages of Canada) as well as other modern, indigenous, heritage, and community languages. Features of the journal include a regular "Focus on the Classroom" section devoted to articles highlighting research-based pedagogical approaches and materials for language learning, a yearly guest-edited Special Issue with a thematic focus, and an annual Best Graduate Student Paper competition. Each issue also offers reviews of recently published works on language teaching and learning. In recent years, the editorship has been shared by two Canadian scholars with complementary expertise and experience.

As background for some of the issues we raise in this article, it is important to understand the extent to which the *CMLR* is a bilingual publication: The editors, editorial board members, and the editorial assistant must be able to work in both French and English; the editorial team communicates with each potential author in either language according to the latter's preference; all submission guidelines, general information, and promotional material (including the Web site) are produced in both languages; and every published article is introduced by an abstract in English and in French. Although the examples we offer below concern French and English, we assume that the points we raise would be relevant to any applied linguistics journal that publishes articles in two or more languages and indeed any journal that publishes in a language other than English.

English is dominant in applied linguistics publications, as it is in other academic fields, with its increasing use as the lingua franca for international communication and dissemination of scholarly work. In this context, *CMLR*'s continued commitment to facilitating the exchange of scholarly information in another language appears to be more important than ever. The publisher of *CMLR*, the board, and the editorial team have been proactive over the years in developing multiple strategies to increase contributions in French. This issue has been discussed extensively and repeatedly among those who work for the journal and are concerned about respecting its mandate as a bilingual outlet. Publishing articles in French in the *CMLR* serves to facilitate the circulation of ideas between francophone and anglophone scholarly communities by enabling both groups to access theoretical advances and research developments published in the other language. It also responds to a critical need to provide students enrolled in French language teacher education and graduate programs in Canada and elsewhere with reading materials in French on research in language learning and teaching. It further encourages the development of appropriate terminology in French for novel concepts that are frequently coined in English (e.g., there is still no appropriate translation for "type/token" in French).

For a time, as an incentive to attract submissions in French from authors who might be concerned about reaching a broader English readership, articles published in French were translated into English and posted on the Web site. However, translation of these texts proved to be too costly for the journal, and this practice was regretfully discontinued. In an effort to expand the French readership of the journal and draw more submissions from *la francophonie internationale,* the *CMLR* has begun an article exchange with *Le français dans le monde–recherches et applications*. A further incentive is to make authors aware that high-quality submissions in French are regularly fast-tracked to ensure that each issue includes at least one French article.

The bilingual nature of the journal poses a number of challenges for the editorial team and for the publishers. As the publishing world has become more electronically based, most journals have moved to electronic manuscript submission. Our publisher, University of Toronto Press, has examined a number of commercially available systems used by other journals and found that they are unable to handle the bilingual requirements of the *CMLR*, which has resulted in the need to create an in-house electronic submission system. Unfortunately, it has not been as effective or easy to keep updated as we had hoped, so that the journal is once again in the process of migrating from one system to another and all involved have had to deal with the frustrating delays and difficulties that this type of change entails. The move to electronic access has also made the Web site a crucial component of scholarly publishing, and keeping the *CMLR* Web site current and updated in both languages has created additional expense for the publisher and extra work for the editorial team and production staff. The Canadian government provides funding to support the bilingual publication of scholarly journals, and the *CMLR* has been successful in obtaining these grants consistently over the years; however, participation in the annual grant-writing exercise represents an added demand on the editors' and the publisher's time.

Like other journals in the field, the *CMLR* has experienced a substantial increase in international submissions from English-as-an-additional-language writers, who appear to be new scholars. Often, their manuscripts are not appropriate for the journal because they focus on teaching/learning issues of a narrow local interest that are not necessarily relevant to readers in other contexts. For example, an author may focus on the performance of English-as-a-foreign-language learners on the different versions of state examinations in one particular country, without highlighting the larger teaching and testing issues expected of a research article destined for an international readership. Occasionally, we are able to identify a research focus that an author could bring to the fore in a manuscript, and this has resulted in a resubmission of the paper that we are then able to send out for review. For the most part, however, this is not the case. An additional reason for rejection of submissions without even seeking a peer review is the quality of the scholarship—outdated literature review, underdeveloped methodology, and/or inappropriate research design.

These are standard reasons for in-house rejections of manuscripts, but we are concerned that such a substantial number of these papers are coming from scholars who appear not to have sufficient understanding of the expectations for peer-reviewed papers in the journals they target. We wonder whether one solution to the problem beyond simply having editors invest extra time and energy in mentoring authors along as they prepare a manuscript for submission to their own journal would be for a number of editors of applied linguistics journals to collaborate on developing a video featuring an information session on how to publish, which would be posted online. This would allow potential authors to access such information easily if they do not have the resources to travel to conferences where these sessions are offered in a face-to-face format.

As noted at the annual applied linguistics editors' meetings held during the American Association for Applied Linguistics conference, all journals are experiencing an increase in submissions, which can result in longer lag times between acceptance and final publication of a manuscript. This is particularly difficult for new scholars who are trying to build their research portfolio. At the *CMLR* we have found that our annual Best Graduate Student Paper competition is one way to mentor new scholars and to showcase their work in a timely fashion. These submissions are blind reviewed and adjudicated by the editorial board, and the winning paper is published in the June issue of the journal (i.e., 8 months following initial submission). All authors receive written feedback, and runner-up authors whose papers show promise may be invited to submit revised versions of their papers to the journal for further blind review. This extra mentoring in the publication process has resulted in publication for a number of new scholars.

The increase in the number of applied linguistics journals and the overall increase in submissions to applied linguistics journals in general have had an impact on our ability to secure the services of the reviewers we need. Journals are in greater competition for reviewers who are, in turn, receiving far more requests than they can manage. One of our solutions has been to conduct a more rigorous in-house review, regularly involving our associate editors, so that the papers that are sent out for review are those that we think meet the basic standards expected of publishable empirical research. We are also observing that a growing number of reviewers are submitting shorter reviews and making their more detailed comments directly on the manuscript (using features such as "Comment" and "Track Changes"), despite the explicit request not to do so in our guidelines for reviewers. Although we can appreciate the time that interline comments save for assessors, it is a problematic practice because computer programs make it difficult to mask the identity of those who write comments on a document in this way, thereby compromising the blinding process when reviews are shared. Not having the comments together in a single document also makes it difficult for editors, authors, and reviewers to compare assessments properly.

Finally, with increased pressure on authors in Canada and elsewhere to publish frequently, we are finding that more submissions seem to be based on a carving up of results from one main study into smaller, less coherent wholes. This can make it difficult for reviewers to judge the merit of the analysis presented in a manuscript, especially when the reader is referred to other blinded papers for important details on the methodology of a study.

A related and much more serious issue is the increase in incidences of self-plagiarism, where authors do not adequately reference their other publications on the same study and/or reproduce verbatim parts of their prior work. There is a pressing need not only to educate authors on the APA guidelines about self-plagiarism and the sanctions that journals impose on authors in such cases, but also for editors to continue to share information with each other about manuscripts that they suspect contain information published elsewhere. The new journal editors' forum initiated by Graeme Porte, editor of *Language Teaching: Surveys and Studies*, is a constructive response to this situation because it provides a venue for subscribed members to let each other know what they are doing when these problems arise.

Given the mandate of *The Modern Language Journal* (*MLJ*) to highlight research and discussion in the teaching and learning of a variety of foreign and second languages, it seems appropriate to conclude with some encouraging remarks for researchers who choose to broaden the reach of their work by disseminating their findings in more than one language (i.e., in a language other than English). Scholars who do so should highlight the bilingual or multilingual nature of their research publications in their curriculum vitae when preparing their dossiers for performance evaluation, identifying the contributions of this practice for the teaching and research communities. We would further encourage colleagues who are called upon to evaluate these dossiers to explicitly value this aspect of a researcher's profile.

We thank the *MLJ* for inviting us to participate in this forum; it has been a useful exercise for us to reflect on different aspects of the *CMLR*, and we hope that this special feature of the journal has provided current and future authors with a heightened awareness of the ins and outs of publishing in the field of applied linguistics.

Should There Be an App for Us?: Observations From an Editor's First Year

Commentary from the editor of *Foreign Language Annals*
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In 1967 the newly created American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages launched *Foreign Language Annals* (*FLA*) as its official journal to reflect the interests of professionals involved with the teaching and learning of foreign languages (www.actfl.org). In 43 years the journal has gone from using happy faces (☺) on its cover to developing an application for digital media. It is possible that no other journal represents the changes in its organizational culture and audience as overtly as does *FLA*. Comparing a sample of the research represented in the articles from the first issue (e.g., "Evaluation of Foreign Language Teaching" by Hayes, Lambert, & Tucker, 1967) with an article from the latest issue (e.g., "Beyond the Classroom: Maintaining and Improving Teachers' Language Proficiency" by Fraga-Cañadas, in press), common themes and interests are easily traced. However, the articles' style, audience, and research methods are vastly different.

WHAT IS THE JOURNAL'S PLACE IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE FIELD OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING?

In a 1994 article, Brecht and Walton used the term *field architecture* (p. 194) to present instructional goals, research needs, and successes in the less commonly taught languages to the general public and foreign language community. In a similar way and reflecting on my first year as editor of *FLA*, I will explore from three perspectives how the journal is placed in the field architecture of applied linguistics: in terms of the questions being asked by practitioners, by researchers, and with regard to the technological means the journal uses to communicate the results of that research to the general public.

Beginning first with technology, there is broad consensus among educators, communication scholars, sociologists, and economists that the development and diffusion of information and communication technologies are having a profound effect on modern life. This strong influence is due to the affordances of new digital media, which bridge the interactive features of speech and the archival characteristics of writing. These features allow many-to-many communication among people without regard to time and space, including mass collaborative editing of texts; in turn, these facilitate the creation of a global hyper-indexed multimodal information structure and then enable content production and distribution in both writing and multimedia on a scale previously unimaginable (Jewitt, 2008; Warschauer, 1999). For all of these reasons, computer-mediated communication can be considered a new mode of information (Poster, 1990), or a "fourth revolution in the means of production of knowledge" (Harnad, 1991, p. 39), following the three prior revolutions of language, writing, and print. For example, Google Scholar and other search engines provide gateways to information for the majority of language teaching professionals, researchers, and the public who seek to inform themselves on current issues and questions about language learning and teaching. Further, libraries provide access to online archives of journals, and print journal publishers usually support these online archives, as do universities and consortia.

As a result of this new mode of information, the field of language learning and teaching is generally well represented on the Internet. At the same time, the proliferation of these Web sites begs the question and raises a concern that is being discussed in various academic venues since the economic crisis of the last decade has hit: Do journals not provide a more appropriate environment for archiving research literatures, given that university Web sites are no longer stable? For example, attempting to retrieve an article published in an online journal, I discovered recently that the entire site had disappeared with a statement to the effect that "the XXX site will return when University X extends funding to continue supporting this important service . . . ." Poof! A valuable data set disappeared.

Beyond their gateway function, journals also have acquired a gatekeeper function in the profession. Promotion and tenure committees judge professors' worth by how much and where they publish. Postsecondary institutions must show that their staff can produce a sizable volume of good quality research, where quality is initially ascertained through the reputation of a journal. Here I note an important change: Not only do university administrators expect scholarly publications, but also faculty peers are exerting additional pressure. Colleagues demand that everyone contribute to the overall reputation and standing of a department, as the university's financial position and their own are connected to how much important research is being done and how the department is ranked nationally (e.g., http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools).

In both functions—as gateway and as gatekeeper—journals face considerable hazards. The enormous growth in recent years in the number of articles submitted to journals can lead to cursory refereeing, which, in turn, could jeopardize the peer-review system and discredit its value. One way to address this dilemma is to persuade referees to be more rigorous in their judgments. At the same time, editors are held to the publisher's page budget guidelines, which means holding down or even reducing the number of articles published. As a consequence, work that is sound but does not report advances in knowledge must be excluded.

SHOULD WE MAKE A PARADIGMATIC GLOBAL SHIFT?

Researchers in language teaching and learning are changing, even as the primary audience for the journal remains stable. Thus, of submissions received by *FLA* over the last 6 months, an overwhelming 70% were from non-U.S.-based academics, whereas the international organizational membership stands at only 6%. Although this statistic may be peculiar to *FLA* because of its close ties to a U.S.-based professional organization, ACTFL, the numbers also reflect changes in academia in the United States and the global education landscape.

The majority of our graduate students in language, linguistics, and education programs are international students (see http://www.cgsnet.org/portals/0/pdf/R_IntlApps10_I.pdf for current enrollment data). When these international graduates return to their home countries, they are anxious to publish their dissertation research. Adding further pressures is the increase in higher education institutions in Asia granting doctoral degrees and the requirement for a doctoral degree in some countries (e.g., universities in Taiwan and Korea) that candidates have published research in an America-based journal. This increase in international manuscripts has necessitated the creation of explicit guidelines for manuscript submission for this new group of scholars, including statements pertaining to the ethics of manuscript submission. For example, *FLA* has had to plainly state that only one manuscript may be submitted from one author at a time and has included information on English language polishing so as to reduce heavy copyediting and other burdens on the journal's office and editors (see www.editorialmanager.com/fla/). Such explicit information speaks more to the manuscript submission process of international scholars than to the publication interests and focus of the journal, issues that would be in focus with domestic authors.

In the end, the editor must decide whose voices the readership should hear. Do the investigations of international researchers about language learning in their specific context resonate as deeply as do those of domestic scholars? How do editors determine whether the quantity and quality of work of international scholars are to be valued higher than those of domestic researchers, even when readers may be indifferent at best to international contexts and their concerns? How are publication decisions best made to meet the needs of the marketplace that supports the journal; indeed, should that be a central concern? It seems that a blend of judgments by an editorial board, expert referees, and the editor enters into the final decision: not necessarily an easy or straightforward matter.

HOW CAN WE PREDICT THE FUTURE RATHER THAN MERELY WISH FOR IT?

In 1986 Larry Cuban reminded us that the world took Thomas Edison's 1922 prediction to heart when he said, "I believe that the motion picture is destined to revolutionize our educational system and that in a few years it will supplant largely, if not entirely, the use of textbooks" (Cuban, 1986, p. 9). In popular reading, the digerati tell us that the Internet has changed everything, that technology will revolutionize the way we do business, conduct research, and disseminate our findings, and that nothing will be the same. Maybe. However, the experts provide us with few facts to back up their prediction, and they preach a digital future as certainty rather than as reasoned conclusion.

Editors, however, do have their publishers' annual reports to provide them with facts on the digital usage of their journals. Within these reports, there are statistics on who is using the journal online and what articles are most frequently downloaded, for example. In this year's report for *FLA*, a picture of the diverse interests in its readership is confirmed. Two of the most frequently downloaded articles in 2009 were written respectively by a scholar from a Korean university who addressed a universal topic in SLA, and the other, authored by a scholar from an American university, focused on students' voices in language instruction in a suburban school system. However, what does the editor do with that information? One option is to respond in terms of access and make that criterion paramount for the journal. Taking that route, *FLA* is developing an app for digital devices, thereby making the journal digitally more accessible for all of its readers.

To enhance knowledge of the influence of a journal on the profession, a series of questions should be asked. These begin with questions of use based on an analysis of the ways in which diverse readers deploy new media for gaining access to information. We then move to outcomes, a consideration of the gains achieved by a diverse audience through use of new media as measured by the creation of new knowledge—for example, by measuring curricular and assessment changes for both teachers and learners. Finally, we could ask questions about the disparities involved in accessing this new mode of information to illustrate how issues of access, use, and outcomes are intertwined. As gateways and gatekeepers of knowledge, journals are challenged to find answers to such questions to assure a more robust future for themselves.

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Publishing in the Era of Online Technologies

Comments from the editor of *Language Assessment Quarterly*
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For almost 350 years, bound serial publications (popularly known as journals) of scholarly work, along with books, served the public good by bringing knowledge from university laboratories and libraries to the literate person. The bridge that made this possible included faculty members and researchers at university departments, learned societies, and university presses (joined later by commercial publishers), working with voluntary peer reviewers and mostly voluntary editors to produce low-cost journals. This model of scholarly communication worked for more than three centuries, and the classics of yesteryears made their appearance in libraries and homes through library subscriptions and interlibrary loans (at least in the affluent parts of the Western world). Libraries in the developing world, though, had much difficulty with this model and depended very much on assistance from European and North American embassies and universities to access journals. Nevertheless, the model certainly helped with building a collective knowledge base and creating a community of researchers and consumers of research from around the world. The arrangement, of course, was aided by the need to publish: Faculty members and researchers at universities in Europe and North America were forced to publish in scholarly journals in order to be promoted, gain tenure, receive grants, and secure academic recognition. This established a perfect scenario for presses and publishers to create scholarly journals and for authors to submit their recent works for editorial and peer review and possible publication without any payment. In universities in which publishing in scholarly journals was not required, faculty members wrote textbooks or took up tutoring or teaching in coaching schools for additional remuneration.

Enter the late 20th century with the age of information and online publishing technologies. The print model is immediately threatened by the digital and print hybrid model (in which subscribers can receive their journals in print or electronically) and the all-digital virtual model (in which subscribers receive their journals only electronically). In addition, we have the world of electronic monitoring and ranking of journals through citation indices (e.g., the impact factor based on the Social Science Citation Index) and a host of other methods (e.g., the *h*-Index, PageRank, Eigenfactor, and the SCImago Journal Rank; the median impact factor, aggregate impact factor, aggregate immediacy index, aggregated cited half-life, and the number of downloads/hits). Matters became yet more complex because of the mergers and acquisitions of commercial publishers that left Elsevier, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Sage, and Wiley-Blackwell in control of major journals in most fields. These mergers did not result in a decrease of per-page costs of publishing a journal; rather, researchers assert that journal pricing subsequently went up dramatically. As a result, even the most well-heeled private university libraries in the Western world are cutting journal subscriptions (mainly based on journal rankings and costs). At the same time, libraries in the developing world have very limited resources to subscribe to even a fraction of the journals in most fields. For them, knowledge dissemination has to wait until such knowledge gets into textbooks or news aggregators.

A quick review, for example, of six journals in the field of applied linguistics (*Applied Linguistics, Language Learning, Language Testing, The Modern Language Journal, Studies in Second Language Acquisition, TESOL Quarterly*) revealed the high costs of print and electronic versions: Institutional subscription rates range from $173 to $719 for the online versions, about five times the personal or individual rates. When lower institutional rates are available for the Americas, the rates for the rest of the world are about 50% higher. Incidentally, these rates are much higher for journals in psychology, sciences, mathematics, and engineering. With these subscription rates for individuals and institutions (along with "pay-per-article" prices), particularly in the developing world, coupled with the newly available technologies, the key question posed by Solomon (1999) in the title of his article is relevant to this argument: "Is It Time to Take the Paper out of Serial Publication?" Is it also time then to have more open-access policies to resolve a number of problems regarding costs, access, and inclusiveness?

How do we in applied linguistics view this situation? In the field of language assessment, *Language Assessment Quarterly* (*LAQ*) is a relatively new journal (first issue published in March 2004), joining long-standing journals in applied linguistics (such as *The Modern Language Journal,* which is approaching the century mark, and *Language Learning*, which has gone past its 60th year). The editorial team decided to do a few things differently. It premised its decisions on the idea that academic and professional knowledge dissemination needs to be done through many journal features (i.e., through commentaries, discussions, and interviews) in addition to regular features such as articles and reviews. We also started with a large and diverse editorial advisory board to include researchers from beyond the English language assessment world and geographically from beyond Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Western Europe. Further, as universities and research centers are not now the only locations for knowledge production but comprise, among others, government, military, nonprofit, and commercial organizations and small business groups of individual researchers, we included researchers from these sectors in our review and editorial processes.

These decisions were made primarily to open up the dissemination of existing research studies from and to areas of the world that were not previously able to access such knowledge and to encourage and embrace academic and professional discourse from languages other than those most widely discussed (such as English, German, and Japanese). Because our goal at *LAQ* is to be as inclusive as possible in terms of the language of publication (which is now only English), we want to present abstracts and key articles in other languages. This would enable authors who cannot write in English to disseminate their research. For example, we would like test evaluations of tests in Spanish, Mandarin, or Hindi to appear in these languages as well as English (through translation) so that a wider group of developers, test-takers, and users of the test can read the test evaluations in these languages rather than having to depend on the English version. In addition, we had hoped this inclusive approach would open doors to regions of the world that we do not generally hear from because, as a profession, we have much to learn from academics and professionals in Africa, Asia, South America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and South and East Asia.

Much to my disappointment, this kind of scholarly communication has not happened in a visible way in the journal, although it has been successful according to the traditional criteria of readership, subscriptions, submissions, and quality of published articles. Perhaps it is too early to tell, but I fear that our goals and interests in widening our reach are not yet resonating in the profession.

To find a solution to this problem, I have been personally engaged in encouraging participation of academics and professionals from other regions to disseminate their research. At the same time, I have also been wondering whether we need to consider why scholarly communications from other regions are not represented in the journal. There are two possible reasons: the price and the electronic environment. Regarding the price, based on my correspondence with professionals from different parts of the world, this is the main reason that researchers from around the world are not considering publishing in *LAQ* (even when they have research findings to share), as most university and commercial libraries cannot afford a new journal and individual subscriptions are prohibitively expensive—thus excluding access to the journal's current and back issues. Regarding the electronic environment of the journal—namely, article submissions through the ScholarOne Manuscripts system (formerly Manuscript Central), review, revision, preproduction, page proofs, and correspondence—that medium itself leads to disparate submission levels as access to and use of electronic submissions and page proof reviews cost money in Internet rooms. Thus, although the electronic medium is expected to provide more access, in terms of scholarly communication, access has been less than satisfactory. As Willinsky (2006) pointed out, today more and more information is becoming less and less available freely. This is an important point, as readers of a journal often become its authors and promoters. Therefore, all three—wider readership, authorship, and interest in scholarly communication—have suffered.

What, then, are the possible solutions in the modern world of online publishing technologies? Kling and McKim (1999) argued that articles published within a scholarly community should satisfy three criteria: publicity, trustworthiness, and access. *Publicity* announces the existence of articles through subscription, abstracts, advertising, and citations; *trustworthiness* is established by peer review, a quality editorial advisory board, and overall journal quality; and *access* is made possible through individual and institutional subscriptions, libraries and interlibrary loans, search engines, and commercial aggregators (such as indexing, abstracting, and archiving like the National Institutes of Health's PubMed Central, the free digital archive of biomedical and life sciences journal literature). If these three criteria can be met, then scholarly communication can be accomplished through e-journals (as in the case of *Language Learning & Technology*) and open-access journals, thus largely removing the cost factor.

E-journals are already known to the field, but the concept of open access may be new. So, what does "open access" mean? The Budapest (2001), Bethesda (2003), and Berlin (2005) declarations of the Open Society Institute defined *open access* as "removing price and permission barriers." More specifically, they identified the following characteristics for open-access journals: They are scholarly, digital, and refereed, but readers can access them free of charge and authors retain copyright. These last two characteristics are important, as they dispense with readers or their institutions having to pay for articles or for journal subscriptions that have been written for no compensation (unlike book authors who are compensated with a fee and/or royalties).

The open-access movement has been active for the last decade (cf., Buckholtz, 2001). As of May 2010, the Directory of Open Access Journals (from Lund University libraries) lists 5,022 journals, of which 182 are in the languages and literatures subject area. In the field of applied linguistics, disappointingly, I noticed only two others beyond the previously cited *LLT*: *Heritage Language Journal* and *Reading in a Foreign Language*.

How can *we* bring about change to this situation? Here are a few suggestions to authors, administrators, publishers, learned societies, foundations, and governments, based on Suber's (2005) recommendations:

- *For authors (faculty and researchers):* to deposit their preprints of accepted articles and postprints of published articles in an open-access, OPI (Open-Access Initiative)-compliant Web site (either with permission from the publisher or by retaining copyright) or to deposit these article versions on the author's personal, institutional, or sponsor's Web site
- *For university librarians and administrators:* to launch an OPI-compliant archive, to encourage and help faculty and researchers to deposit their articles in the university archive, to encourage theses and dissertations to be archived in the institutional archive, and to publish institutional open-access journals
- *For publishers:* to allow authors to retain copyright and to archive both preprints and postprints on their own Web sites; if this is not immediately feasible, to allow open access after some delay or embargo period (say, 3–6 months)
- *For learned societies:* to consider making their journals open access, allowing authors to retain copyright, and encouraging members to endorse and use open-access journals
- *For foundations and governments:* to require research grant seekers to use open-access journals for their sponsored research publications and to provide funds to create open access

In summary, open access to journals means online access without charge to readers or libraries. This means that publishers have to dispense with the financial and legal barriers that are now limiting dissemination of knowledge to paying subscribers and must find other ways of making the business model work. It also means, in the words of Buckholtz (2001), a return of "scientific publishing to scientists." This I believe to be the solution for accelerating research, sharing knowledge, and including readers (and potential authors) worldwide who do not otherwise have access or cannot pay or subscribe.

NOTE

The views expressed here are solely the author's and not of the associate editors of *LAQ* or of its publisher.

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Where Is Our Field Going?

Comments from the outgoing editor of *Language Learning*
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Language Learning was founded in 1948 and is thus the oldest applied linguistics journal after *The Modern Language Journal*. Many changes have taken place in its 60+ years of existence, of course; but reflecting back on the past 5 years, 2005–2010, the years I was editor, I have noticed particularly rapid changes while other things have remained remarkably unchanged. Although the number of manuscripts has almost tripled in these 5 years (a tendency apparently also experienced by other journal editors), the quality has not suffered and probably has increased somewhat. This has led to a larger number of articles being accepted per year, something we are trying to accommodate with a larger number of pages and a smaller font; together that would allow for an almost 50% increase in the number of articles published per year. At the same time, articles have gradually tended to get longer over the decades, in part because more literature has accumulated and needs to be cited and in part because of increasingly complex methodology and increasingly stringent rules for reporting, which often not only lead to a longer main text but also require a number of appendices with stimuli, background statistics, detailed results, and a variety of other forms of information. As there is an economic limit to how much more space publishers and subscribers can afford, these additional materials will increasingly need to be made available on linked Web sites, whether these belong to the publisher, the author(s), or a third party.

Other changes are more qualitative in nature but of no less importance. More and more articles are co-authored; many have three authors and more and some recent issues of *Language Learning* have had no articles with fewer than three authors. Such multiple authorship has been the norm in the natural sciences and psychology for many years and may be a sign that our discipline is coming of age. It is all the more surprising, therefore, that applied linguists in some humanities departments still have trouble getting tenure committees to understand that multiple-authored publications are valuable and in some cases, apparently, even to acknowledge that a series of articles in the major journals is as valuable as a book.

In one sense, however, there may be a tendency that makes applied linguistics seem out of step with other social sciences. Although it is customary to see articles in the areas of cognitive, developmental, or experimental psychology that report on multiple related experiments and although these articles would often be hard to interpret without this juxtaposition, we often see the opposite in our field: Closely related aspects of the same data set from the same study are reported in separate articles in different journals, thus taking more space while providing less insight. There is only one possible explanation for this phenomenon, of course, and that is another ugly aspect of the tenure process: When articles do count, the operative dictum would seem to be "the more the better." Washback is clearly not limited to the field of language testing.

In spite of the many rapid changes just mentioned, other characteristics of the manuscripts submitted and accepted by *Language Learning* have remained remarkably stable over the last 5 years. The percentage of submissions from North America, for instance, continues to hover around 40%, most others being from Western Europe or East Asia. The percentage of articles published is more heavily weighted toward North America. Some will take this as evidence of a certain degree of ethnocentrism in our field; others will simply assume that social science outside of North America (and perhaps Western Europe) continues to lag behind. The truth is probably somewhere in the middle, in the sense that many manuscripts from outside "the Western world" are rejected because they are poorly conceived and others are rejected not because they are inherently weak but because they fail to meet certain conventions that are taken for granted by Western journals. People who have not been educated at top-notch institutions of higher learning in the West (and even some who have!) seem to find it very hard to realize that failure to systematically follow a number of organizational, stylistic, and formatting conventions automatically gives an amateurish impression. Editors face a dilemma when they receive such manuscripts: Rejecting them because of these stylistic shortcomings—or even asking the authors for a rewrite before the manuscript is sent out for review—angers authors who are not aware of (the importance of) these conventions; sending them out as they are angers reviewers who feel that their time is being wasted. On a personal note, my motivation to help authors on this point gradually diminished when I came to realize the strong correlation between stylistic inadequacies and more fundamental methodological and conceptual ones and when I saw that authors would often rush through revisions and send in a version that still had many of the previously identified stylistic problems. Authors (wherever they may be from) can be forgiven for having missed a style sheet requirement here and there; they may even be right that the number of rules in the most frequently used style sheets is excessive. Not bothering to even try to observe any of their requirements, however, shows either serious ignorance of professional standards or total disregard for the time of editors and reviewers, who are almost invariably overworked and unremunerated.

Another reason that a disproportionately high number of non-Western manuscripts are rejected by the major journals is that although their authors may use the theories, concepts, and methodologies they learned in graduate school (perhaps even at some of the very best institutions of higher education worldwide), they often apply these concepts to their local situation without attempting to contribute to a worldwide conversation; that is, they do not attempt to form or test theories but carry out studies that are largely descriptive of a local situation and therefore not of interest to the majority of the readers of international journals.

Yet, it is not the case that authors from countries that have so far produced little internationally known social science have less to contribute; on the contrary, precisely because their languages and societies, and their cultural institutions, educational philosophies, and teaching traditions are so underrepresented in prevailing theory, they should have the most to contribute to a more generalizable theory. On this point, then, perhaps authors should be more ambitious and try to challenge prevailing theory using accepted norms rather than try to fit the established mold by producing regional clones.

Turning now to the studies that do make it into print, it seems to me that a bifurcation is taking place in the field between, on the one hand, ever more tightly controlled psycholinguistic experiments and ever more sophisticated statistical analyses and, on the other hand, qualitative research that uses neither experimental treatments nor inferential statistics. Regardless of one's individual preferences for one or the other, one cannot fail to observe that if this trend continues, second language acquisition (SLA) research will be absorbed completely into psycholinguistics or cognitive psychology, on the one hand, and anthropology or sociology, on the other hand. Not only would this be worrisome from the point of view of those who have a vested interest in the field of SLA, it would also be regrettable for those who take the term "applied linguistics" seriously, as neither the extreme laboratory nor the extreme qualitative approaches have much to say that is both generalizable and of direct interest to language teachers and learners.

Another consequence of this development is that more and more specialized journals have developed over the years. As the field has grown so much in size and sophistication, it is perhaps better that more specialized journals with more specialized reviewers and editors cater to more specialized authors and readers. However, as all researchers and readers only have time for an ever-shrinking fraction of the published literature, this development also contributes to a narrowing of our field of vision, rather paradoxical in these times of much-vaunted interdisciplinarity. To anybody outside our field, even to fellow academics, SLA research appears as a very narrow specialization. Do we really want to split it up into even smaller fiefdoms? Such a narrow focus furthermore entails the danger of what Thomas Kuhn (1996) called "normal science," for which individual researchers embroider on given themes in ever more sophisticated ways but do not really produce new thinking.

All in all, however, we should embrace the growing size and sophistication of our field. One outsider (to the area of language learning) observed to me a few years ago that our field had made tremendous progress and was "now as sophisticated as any other area of linguistics." Let us hope he was right, and if he was not, let us all try to make sure he is right next time he says it.

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Issues in Publishing an Online, Open-Access CALL Journal

Comments by the editors-in-chief of *Language Learning & Technology*
DOROTHY M. CHUN, *University of California, Santa Barbara*
IRENE THOMPSON, *George Washington University (Emerita)*

Language Learning & Technology (*LLT*, http://llt.msu.edu) stands alone among established language/linguistics journals in being an entirely online, open-access (OA) publication. However, it shares with the other journals the problem of an increasing percentage of unpublishable manuscripts and simultaneously the need to increase the number of quality submissions. The brief discussion below will concern itself with (a) the advantages and disadvantages of being an online and OA journal and (b) reasons for the large number of rejections and possible ways to increase the number of quality manuscripts.

ONLINE FORMAT

From its inception in 1997, *LLT* has availed itself fully of the capabilities of the Internet by being published exclusively on the Web. Today, more than a decade later, even older established linguistics/second language acquisition (SLA) journals are introducing electronic versions along with the traditional printed ones. However, these electronic versions are PDF versions of print articles, lacking the features that distinguish hypermedia texts from print documents. *LLT* pages, on the other hand, are designed for the Web, allowing the journal to take full advantage of its multimedia capabilities.

Among the advantages of an online format, we find the following to be the most important:

- *Dissemination and access.* In 2009, *LLT* received 5,435,355 hits, with an average of 15,014 hits per day, and 578,570 visitors, with an average of 1,598 visitors a day from some 130 countries/territories located on all continents of the world. One of the reasons for such high usage is undoubtedly the result of *LLT*'s online format. It is worth noting that this was achieved without any promotion or advertising.
- *Easy tracking of readership.* Web tracking programs allow *LLT* to monitor Web site traffic, such as the number of daily hits/visits, where visitors come from, and daily fluctuations. By tracking the number of hits/visitors for each article/column/review/commentary over time, the editors can see which ones have been viewed the most and which have remained popular.
- *Impact.* It is easy for authors to be cited and for readers to access Web-based publications. Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) researchers in the survey study by Smith and Lafford (2009) felt that the online medium allowed greater access to CALL publications, resulting in a greater number of citations in online journals. In a 2009 Thomson Reuters report in ScienceWatch (http://www.sciencewatch.com/dr/sci/09/mar15-09_1D/), *LLT* was ranked 14th among the top 20 Education Journals, with an impact factor of 1.77 (5-year impact factor of 2.067). Interestingly, however, Smith and Lafford found that among the 19 criteria for evaluating the quality of CALL journals, databases in which a journal is indexed were ranked 15th, citation data was ranked 16th, whereas circulation/readership was ranked 18th in order of importance (p. 875).
- *Virtually unlimited space through hypermedia.* The electronic format offers *LLT* authors virtually unlimited space through seamless linking to externally stored data; tools/instruments; and electronic media (sound files, images, videos, and Web-based software programs), which illustrate and amplify content at no extra cost—something that is not possible in print format. We strongly encourage authors who are used to print publications to make use of the electronic format of the journal.
- *Quicker turnaround of manuscripts.* Online publication can speed up certain components of the submission-to-publication cycle—in particular, the uploading and publication of articles. However, there may not be much difference between electronic and print journals in terms of the length of time it takes to find reviewers and go through the review-to-publication process.
- *Lower cost of production.* Being entirely online saves *LLT* costs associated with printing,

warehousing, and mailing, making production of the journal an extremely cost-efficient operation.

- *Flexibility regarding residence of editors and editorial staff.* From the beginning, the editors and editorial staff of *LLT* have resided in all parts of the country, from Hawai'i to Virginia (and even abroad, in Egypt and Israel). All of *LLT*'s business, from submission to publication, is conducted online, and even the editorial assistant or managing editor and Web production manager do not need to reside in the same location as the editor(s).

Disadvantages include the following:

- *Perception in the profession regarding quality.* One of the main disadvantages of an online format is the continued reluctance on the part of some departments to give equal weight to electronic publications, which they view as being less rigorous than print media (Magnan, 2007; Smith & Lafford, 2009). However, in the latter study, CALL researchers expressed very positive views of online journals, indicating that they prefer to have their own research published in *LLT*, an online journal, rather than in any other journal that publishes CALL research, all of which are print publications. When asked which criteria they considered to be most important when evaluating a journal, Smith and Lafford's survey respondents identified quality of articles and significance of contribution to the field as the two main criteria. Thus, as far as CALL researchers are concerned, a rigorous peer-review process resulting in quality content is the main criterion, not the medium of publication. Based on these criteria, *LLT* received the top ranking among CALL-specific and education-technology-related journals (Smith & Lafford, 2009).
- *Opinions about online publication for tenure and promotion.* Despite the fact that CALL researchers believe that peer-reviewed online publications can attain the same quality standards as print journals, when considering tenure and promotion many departments may continue to give more weight to publication in journals with high impact factors. For the most part, these are older established print journals founded before electronic publication became feasible. The situation is aggravated by the filtering of journals by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) Web of Knowledge, which usually indexes approximately 10% of candidate journals. Because the vast majority are print publications, it is difficult for an electronic journal to get its foot in the door. However, the situation is gradually changing. Since 2003, *LLT* has been indexed in the exclusive ISI Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), ISI Alerting Services, Social Scisearch, and Current Contents/Social and Behavioral Sciences.

In addition, the Web site of the Modern Language Association contains a "Statement on Publication in Electronic Journals":

> The electronic journal is a viable and credible mode of scholarly publication. When departments evaluate scholarly publications for the purposes of hiring, reappointment, tenure, and promotion, the standing of an electronic journal should be judged according to the same criteria used for a print journal. These criteria include the journal's peer review policy, its rate of acceptance, the nature of its editorial board and publisher, and its general profile in the field it covers. (http://www.mla.org/resources/documents/rep_it/statement_on_publica)

OPEN ACCESS

Since its establishment in 1997, *LLT* has owed its existence to continual support by Title VI grants to the National Foreign Language Research Center at the University of Hawai'i and to the Center for Learning Education and Research at Michigan State University. This support allows LLT to continue to offer its readers free access to all its content, as opposed to journals that offer hybrid and/or delayed open access. In this respect, LLT stands alone among the 19 language learning journals surveyed by Smith and Lafford (2009).

The primary advantage of OA is that journal content is available to readers everywhere in the world. As a result:

- Articles in OA journals may be read and cited more often. According to ScienceWatch (http://www.sciencewatch.com/dr/sci/09/mar15-09_1D/), *LLT* was ranked 14th among the Top 20 Journals in Education as ranked by its 2007 Impact Factor.
- Readers do not need to be affiliated with academic libraries. This is particularly critical for readers in developing countries in which academic libraries are scarce or nonexistent. Even if such libraries did exist, it is highly unlikely that they would be able to

afford the hefty subscription fees charged by commercial publishers that offer reduced subscription rates to libraries in developing countries in only a few disciplines, such as agriculture and certain branches of medicine. It is unlikely, for instance, that our current readers in Croatia, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Lithuania, Romania, or Sudan (to name just a few developing countries) would have been able to access *LLT* had there been a subscription fee. It is worth noting that to continue performing the vital function of promoting SLA/CALL research around the world, *LLT* has declined invitations by major publishers to convert to a subscription-based model.
- Open-access levels the playing field for readers in developed countries at institutions whose libraries cannot afford high journal subscription fees, making it possible for them to enjoy the same access as those at more affluent institutions.

There are two primary disadvantages of OA:

- *Perception of OA journals as being of lower quality than subscription journals.* The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) lists 300 OA language/linguistics journals (http://www.doaj.org/doaj?func=subject&cpid=8). Only about 10–15% of OA journals are peer-reviewed, which may help explain the perception of OA journals as being overall of lower quality than subscription-based journals.
- *Financial uncertainty.* The key disadvantage of OA is lack of income from subscriptions to support the journal. Appeals to readers for financial contributions generally tend to fall on deaf ears. Dependence on cyclical grants puts a journal in a precarious financial position, and raising money through advertising and other means creates a great deal of additional work for already overworked and underpaid editors and staff.

ATTRACTING QUALITY SUBMISSIONS

Language Learning & Technology's focus is fairly narrow, restricted generally to reports of empirical studies that are theoretically grounded, investigate focused research questions, are methodologically sound, and use appropriate qualitative or quantitative treatment of the data collected. Like other journals, for the last several years *LLT* has received a relatively low percentage of quality articles among a growing number of submissions. Since 2007, *LLT* has received approximately 150 submissions per year, but the great majority (approximately 90%) are rejected based on internal review, taking a toll on the editors' time.

REASONS FOR LARGE NUMBER OF UNPUBLISHABLE SUBMISSIONS

- To conduct quality research, authors need a solid background in SLA, social science research methodology, and knowledge of educational technology. Although all three play an important role, *LLT*'s experience shows that many rejections are due to lack of familiarity with social science research methodology. Lack of familiarity with this type of research is especially true of submissions from developing countries, but it also applies to those from the developed world.
- In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of submissions from developing countries in Asia and the Middle East, where educational systems are undergoing reform with the promotion/tenure process becoming increasingly tied to publication in ISI journals. This type of pressure results in submissions that do not meet the quality requirements of refereed international journals, as SLA research in these countries is still in its infancy. Additionally, developing countries often lack local publishing venues that would have been more appropriate for locally focused research unsuitable for an international readership.
- Journals compete for quality contributions. *LLT* competes with 18 other journals that publish CALL research (see list of journals in Smith & Lafford, 2009, p. 877).

POSSIBLE STEPS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION

The long-term solution lies in the training of future SLA scholars in the use of quantitative and qualitative research methodology. Some current Ph.D. programs in SLA offer courses in research design and methodology (e.g., University of Wisconsin–Madison's Program in SLA, University of Hawai'i at Manoa's Program in Second Language Studies, Carnegie Mellon University's Modern Languages Program), but it is unclear if this is true of all SLA programs. Many authors who come to SLA research from other disciplines need additional training and mentoring in research design, methodology, and statistics. Journal editors can only offer limited help to the latter contingent of authors, but the following are a few examples of this type of mentoring:

- Providing authors of rejected submissions with guidance on how they could improve their research design. This is extremely time-consuming for busy editors and not always feasible, although every attempt is made to provide helpful feedback.
- Providing detailed author guidelines for conducting quantitative and qualitative research. *LLT* offers a link to such guidelines on its Web site (http://llt.msu.edu/resguide.html). Letters of rejection automatically include the following paragraph:

> Should you consider future submissions to *LLT*, please consult our submission guidelines (http://llt.msu.edu/contrib.html) and also review the type of articles that are published in our journal. We recommend that you consult our APA-based guidelines for reporting on qualitative/quantitative research (http://llt.msu.edu/resguide.html). We urge all authors to have their manuscripts proofread by an editor familiar with English academic prose and APA guidelines.

- Offering workshops at professional meetings. *LLT* editors offered 1-day preconference workshops at CALICO 2009 and 2010 entitled "Conducting and Reporting on CALL Research." We are planning to make some of the content of these workshops available on the *LLT* Web site.
- Advising authors with limited or no background in research methodology to pair up with or, at the very least, seek advice from a colleague with a background in research design and statistics *before* they undertake the actual study.

FUTURE TRENDS

Like many other journals, *LLT* has recently adopted ScholarOne Manuscripts (formerly Manuscript Central) to standardize, streamline, and expedite its administrative, editing, and reviewing processes. Our experience with the system shows that it has both advantages and disadvantages. These are, no doubt, shared by editors of other journals.

ScholarOne makes the job of editors and editorial staff easier by providing them with the following: automated processing of a large number of submissions; prescreening of submissions for conformity to the journal's submission requirements; easy-to-access information about each manuscript stored in one place; a manuscript audit trail that allows editors to monitor the progress of each manuscript; automated emailing of all communications with authors and reviewers; an easy means for in-house communication among editors regarding each manuscript.

At the same time, ScholarOne has a number of significant disadvantages. Chief among them are the following: a very steep learning curve for the editorial staff; a time-consuming setup for all email templates; the impersonal character of emails, despite editors' attempts to personalize communications with authors and reviewers; a high annual subscription cost.

SUMMARY

In summary, there is a definite trend for print journals to provide digital versions of their content, usually in PDF form and through paid subscriptions. There is also a developing trend of peer-reviewed, online, OA journals becoming established as rigorous, quality journals. Advantages of such journals are the wide dissemination and access leading to greater impact, the ability to include multimedia content, quick turnaround of processing and publishing manuscripts, ease of tracking readership, lower production costs, and worldwide availability, particularly in developing countries. The profession is beginning to recognize that a rigorous peer-review process, which results in quality content, is the main criterion for a journal's stature, not the medium of publication. However, parallel to ease of access is ease of submission, and although articles can be submitted from anywhere in the world, the quality of these submissions can be problematic. Suggestions have been offered to improve the situation—namely, providing detailed author guidelines online for conducting quantitative and qualitative research and training and mentoring prospective scholars, for example, in Ph.D. programs in SLA and at annual conferences in the field.

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Academic Publishing, Globalization, and (In)equality

Comments from the editors of *Language Policy*
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ELANA SHOHAMY, *Tel Aviv University*

Language Policy is a relatively new, yet rapidly expanding journal that reflects a growing interest in theory, research, and applications of language policy as an evolving discipline. Although it is fewer than 10 years old, the journal is listed on the Thomson/ISI Social Sciences Citation Index and has recently witnessed a sharp uptick in both the number of articles submitted and the number of Internet downloads each year. The field of language policy has traditionally focused on the language planning efforts of individual nation-states, with more recent work emphasizing how language policies are developed, implemented, negotiated, and contested in a range of settings. Thus, the field's scope is international by nature, as it describes and analyzes language policy developments around the world. Whereas the journal aims to be "international" in its content coverage, readership, authorship, and editorial membership, it is also a "global" journal that is profoundly impacted by globalization processes. Indeed, the publishing of an international academic journal presents fertile ground for examining challenges associated with globalization and, more specifically, with inequalities in representation, access, and labor.

Most definitions of *globalization* evoke not only technology and rapid communication but also the shifting position and power of nation-state boundaries toward transnationalism and increased economic and social inequalities. As editors of *Language Policy* for the last 3 years, we have often noted aspects of such globalization processes in the international submissions and the production process of the journal, along with the challenges and ethical questions that these raise. This short essay provides us with an opportunity to reflect on some of the tensions, contradictions, and dilemmas inherent in working with a journal that strives to be international in content coverage, authorship, and editorial leadership but that potentially also plays a role in promoting or furthering inequalities across numerous domains.

For *Language Policy*, as is increasingly the case for all journals, download statistics are the main currency and criterion for success from the perspective of its publishers. These data reflect and often even drive the journal's rankings and ultimately generate economic earnings for the publishing company (through resultant increased subscriptions). For us, these numbers also provide insights into our global readership, given that the statistics include the geographic location of our readers. For example, between January and September 2009, there were 18,217 download requests for full texts of articles from the journal. Of these, the greatest number (37%) originated in the Asia-Pacific area, with China being the largest requester by far. Thirty-one percent of the download requests came from Europe (led by the United Kingdom) and 25% came from North America (led by the United States). Only 2% of the total number of requests originated in Africa; this low figure most likely reflects the small number of universities in Africa that subscribed to the Springer "bundle" of journals, of which *Language Policy* is a part. Not surprisingly, similar trends are evident in the submission of articles for review and publication, with a huge growth in Asia in recent years. In terms of areas of expansion, the greatest area of growth for the journal, in both downloads and submission of manuscripts, has been in China. These trends reflect the growth of China as an economic power and probably the increasing demands of Chinese academia to publish in recognized (i.e., indexed) international journals.

At the same time, the makeup of our editorial board, although international in the sense of representing a large number of countries worldwide, does not reflect this major shift in downloads and submissions. For instance, relatively few members of our editorial board are based in Asia or are familiar with linguistic, educational, or historical aspects of, for example, Chinese language policies. The great majority of editorial board members work and live in the United States or in Europe, are associated with institutions in those contexts, and have earned their credentials, if not their reputations, by publishing in English-language journals that focus on research, policies, and practices in other Western countries.

As editors, we regularly worry about the extent to which our journal reflects these shifts and our own role in perpetuating the "power of the West." We often ask, for instance: How "international" is the journal if general European criteria for sound research methods, argumentation, and presentation are used to judge the quality of manuscripts? How can we be sure that international standards are applied and reflected in our review process? These inequalities in representation are even more salient with respect to Africa, a continent inhabited by 15% of the world's population and which is currently home to a large range of controversial language policy issues, both in society and in education. Yet, our journal has published *very few* articles documenting and investigating these issues in Africa. Although we, as well as other journals, have initiated recruitment and mentoring efforts to attempt to rectify this imbalance, thus far these efforts have reaped only limited success. One potential reason for this inequality in authorship and representation can be traced to the mandates of our own "language policy" to publish uniquely in English (see Lillis & Curry, 2010, for an overview). We also lack contacts with reviewers and potential editorial board members who can provide us with locally informed critiques and suggestions for cultivating authors and papers. In addition to these concerns and probably more important still, there are massive imbalances in economic and educational infrastructures across nations.

We are very aware that as editors we might have unwittingly contributed to this problem in (under)representation as we have pushed to make the journal more theoretical, empirical, and more integrated with other disciplines. We have also encouraged or required authors to connect their language policy reports with previously published academic work. Given that language policy is a relatively new field and that theory-building is therefore an important aim of our journal, we tend to assess the suitability of submitted manuscripts, at least in part, by the degree to which they connect with and build upon past research that has been published in other "international" journals. Of course, making these connections requires technology and/or library access to online publications, which are, as mentioned earlier, not equally available.

Another dimension that calls into question various aspects of "globality" of the journal is its production process. *Language Policy* is published by Springer Publishing Company, which is based in the Netherlands. Although Springer is owned by Mannheim Holdings LLC, a subsidiary of the Mannheim Trust (based in New York), Springer continues to operate as an independent entity. Whereas all administrative and financial decisions are made in the Netherlands, the great bulk of the journal work happens elsewhere, primarily in Asia, with editors and associate editors spread across multiple continents. Springer, like so many academic publishers, has outsourced much of the work of journal production overseas. The technical support for the submission and external review of the journal is handled by colleagues in the Philippines, and proofreading and typesetting is conducted by collaborators in India. As we often work under deadlines and in frequent (at times hourly) communication by email, we cannot help but notice inequalities across this production process, as well. For instance, whereas our colleagues in the Netherlands enjoy strong labor laws and benefits (e.g., 5-day work weeks averaging 37.5 hours, sick pay, payment for numerous legal holidays, and paid vacations), we wonder about the extent to which our colleagues in the Philippines and India work under similar conditions. We are informed that for them it is standard to work 6 days a week. Not only are these colleagues' responses almost always instantaneous, they also strike us as exceedingly compliant and polite. This is partly a function of formal, standardized, global/postcolonial English and history. However, we cannot help but wonder whether it also reflects power differentials and an eagerness to hold onto positions, all the more so as in our short time with the journal, we have seen a rapid turnover of individuals, positions, and even country locations. Together, this anonymizes and depersonalizes communication. Although we are often in daily contact, we are unaware of basic facts about their lives, their identities, and even their age or gender. This arrangement contrasts with the stable, personally known workforce in the Netherlands, whom we regularly meet at conferences. We feel hypocritical at times, as we support workers' rights but also know that we, servicing the journal, benefit greatly from collaborating with our colleagues in India and the Philippines, who we know will be quick, efficient, and compliant.

In thinking about solutions or strategies to address these inequalities in representation and authorship, a few specific and obvious steps come to mind. One includes taking more aggressive steps in recruiting reviewers and editorial board members from underrepresented areas and regions and working to establish more formal mentorship programs for potential authors. Yet, although Springer is willing to fund limited "proofreading" of nonnative English, this differs substantially from meaningful mentorship. Cultivating a pool of academics who can serve as authors, reviewers, and editorial board members requires deeper, more institutionalized, and costlier engagements.

We suggest that Springer, together with other major publishers, invest more heavily in this possibility. It will not only benefit the journal by cultivating readers and enriching content but also promote broader equality. One simple way to start would be to provide more deeply discounted access to the Springer bundle of journals to universities in economically poorer countries. Springer, along with many other publishers, participates in several broad initiatives to promote exchange of information and increased access to academic journals; these include the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications and the Association of Commonwealth Universities Low Cost Journals Scheme; however, more, better, and alternative mechanisms are needed. An additional option is to rethink and perhaps revise the journal's "English only" policy so that a wider range of languages (or varieties of English) are represented, rendering the journal accessible to a broader readership.

None of the varied tensions described here is unique to our journal. We appreciate, however, that they challenge us to consider appropriate and responsible roles for us as editors. Specifically, these issues force us to reflect on what power (if any) we as editors have in reforming the journal's publication system, both in terms of its readership, authorship, and editorial membership as well as in its material production. We have come to recognize that although we are the "figureheads" of the journal, in fact we have little control over the broader financial, administrative, and personnel decisions of its operation. As editors of an international journal, we seek to challenge the long-standing global hierarchies that tend to benefit those from countries where English is the language of academia and those in economically privileged places. At the same time, we seek to promote academic excellence and substantial research that contributes to the field of language policy in significant ways. Although these goals might be viewed as oppositional, we see them as complementary. They cannot be achieved, however, without publishers' support and without broad recognition across the field of applied linguistics of the inequalities built into the current status quo. To that end, we appreciate the efforts of *The Modern Language Journal*, and of Heidi Byrnes in particular, and are grateful for the invitation to reflect upon these issues and to voice these concerns.

REFERENCE

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Policy and Procedure in Journal Editing

Comments from the editor of *Language Teaching Research*

ROD ELLIS, *University of Auckland, New Zealand*

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE JOURNAL

I will begin with a brief history of *Language Teaching Research* (*LTR*). This is necessarily brief given that, unlike the majority of the other journals examined in this *Perspectives* column, *LTR* is a very young journal. The first issue was published in January 1997 under the editorship of Keith Johnson. Keith continued as editor up to 2003 (Volume 7, Number 1), after which I took over. In its 14-year history, then, the journal has seen just two editors. The early volumes were published by Edward Arnold. In 2006 the journal was taken over by Sage, which continues as the publisher today. With my encouragement, Arnold applied for the journal to be included in the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) database in 2006. *LTR* received its first Impact Factor in 2008. Given that this was its first entry in the ISI, the journal achieved a very respectable 0.711. In that year, it was ranked 57th out of 113 journals on the Education and Educational Research list and 37th out of 68 journals on the Linguistics list.

The journal's development over its short history is evident in the increasing number of subscriptions. There has been little change in the number of subscriptions over the last 4 years but a very substantial increase in the number of library consortia taking the journal. There are currently over 2,000 institutions with access to *LTR*. A further measure of *LTR*'s development is the number of full-text online downloads. Since 2006 there has been a 58% increase in full-text downloads. In short, in a period of 14 years, *LTR* has established itself as a major journal in the applied linguistics field.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The editorial policy of *LTR* has undergone a number of small changes since its inception. These changes are reflected in the following statements of policy that appeared on the back inside page of the first and latest issues of the journal:

> *LTR* will publish articles related to research in the fields of second and foreign language teaching. The research may be of qualitative or quantitative orientation. Articles dealing with the teaching of languages other than English will be welcome, as will those displaying an interdisciplinary perspective. All articles submitted for publication will be reviewed by members of the Editorial Board or other referees. Brief accounts of research may be accepted for publication as Research Notes. (Volume 1, Number 1)

> *Language Teaching Research* will publish articles related to qualitative or quantitative research in the fields of second and foreign language teaching. Articles dealing with the teaching of languages other than English will be welcome. Articles reporting studies of language learning without a clear reference to the role of teaching will not be considered. The journal incorporates two specialist sections. Articles reporting a teacher's own exploratory research will be considered for publication in a section entitled "Practitioner Research." Articles reporting research in a specific national or local teaching context will be considered for publication in a section entitled "Regional Studies." All relevant articles submitted for publication will first be reviewed in-house by the editor and assistant editor and, if deemed publishable, will then be sent to two or more external reviewers. (Volume 14, Number 2)

These statements demonstrate that the policy of the main section of the journal has remained essentially unchanged—to publish qualitative and quantitative studies of second/foreign language teaching. However, given that a substantial number of articles submitted to the journal addressed language learning rather than language teaching, it became necessary to draw authors' attention to the fact that *LTR* will not consider articles unless there is a "clear reference to the role of teaching." Unfortunately, this has had little impact, as we continue to receive articles focused solely on language learning, reflecting what I suspect is a common problem—many would-be authors do not read the "Notes to Contributors" in the journal or consult the journal's Web page!

Two other changes in editorial policy have occurred. The first concerns the subsections of the journal. The early volumes included a section called "Research in Progress," but this was discontinued when I took over as editor, as I felt that the journal should devote itself to publishing accounts of completed research. Instead, I instituted two new sections. Dick Allwright was invited to solicit articles for a section called "Practitioner Research." The inclusion of this section reflected the growing importance attached to teachers' accounts of their own exploratory practice in the field of language teacher education. A little later, responding to the fact that we were receiving a number of well-written articles with a very regional content that did not fit easily into the main section of the journal, I instituted a section called "Regional Studies." However, not every issue of the journal includes these subsections, as suitable articles are not always available.

The second change concerns how articles are reviewed. The original policy was to submit all articles for review to members of the editorial board or external referees. The later policy was for articles to be first screened by the editor and assistant editor (Gary Barkhuizen) before sending them out for external review. This change became necessary because of the huge increase in the number of articles submitted to the journal and the difficulty of obtaining reviewers for all of them. Additionally, it was clear that many of the articles submitted had no real chance of being published in the journal. We are only able to publish approximately 10% of the total articles submitted to the journal. Currently, we send out for external review less than 50% of the articles we receive. In some respects, this change is regrettable, as one of the purposes of a journal like *LTR* is to help authors develop the skills they need to achieve publication, and reviews can play an important role in this respect. To compensate for the lack of reviews, the editors endeavor to provide a brief explanation for why articles not sent out for review have been rejected. This constitutes one of the most time-consuming of my editorial jobs!

Not mentioned in the editorial policy statements is the right of the editor to publish special issues devoted to articles addressing specific areas of language teaching research and also to solicit state-of-the art articles by established researchers in the field. The publisher encourages both on the grounds that such articles attract citations and therefore enhance the journal's Impact Factor and because they deal with topics of great interest to the field. *LTR* has published a special issue on exploratory practice (edited by Dick Allwright) and on computer-mediated language teaching (edited by Cynthia White). A further special issue on language teacher education (edited by Gary Barkhuizen and Simon Borg) will appear in Volume 14, Number 3. Currently, the only state-of-the-art article we have published is Norbert Schmitt's review of instructed vocabulary research—the most downloaded article in 2008 and 2009. We have been wary of overdoing both special issues and state-of-the-art articles on the grounds that they deprive individual authors of space in the journal. There is a need for balance between promoting the journal by publishing citable articles and providing space for individual authors to publish their research. One possible solution might be to follow the practice of *Language Learning*, which reserves four issues for individual articles and, in addition, publishes one special issue annually. This is a possibility that we intend to pursue with Sage in the future.

PROCESSING ARTICLES

Many journals have elected to process the submission and reviewing of articles entirely electronically using a platform such as ScholarOne Manuscripts. There are obvious advantages in using such a system, the most obvious being the reduction in the workload of the editors. Sage has proposed that *LTR* switch to such a system. However, for the time being we continue to receive articles by email and enter them into our own online system. We acknowledge receipt of the articles through a personal email to the author and we then contact potential reviewers, drawing on both members of the editorial board and other referees. When reviews are received by email, they are acknowledged personally and entered into the system. A decision is then made as to whether to accept the article, request revisions, or reject. A personal email is then sent to the author with the publishing decision, together with copies of the reviews. This is a laborious and time-consuming process. However, it avoids the need for authors and reviewers to struggle with managing an electronic submission and reviewing system—tasks that I have found personally very frustrating! Additionally, it allows for direct contact between authors/reviewers and the editor, which, according to the feedback we have received, is greatly appreciated. We acknowledge that there are advantages in using an electronic system. Authors can track the progress of their papers and it ensures that delays in collecting reviews are automatically drawn to the attention of both the editors and the reviewers. However, we still feel that the choice lies between a system that is of primary benefit to the editor and one that is more author- and reviewer-friendly. For the time being we have opted for the latter, but I suspect that in the long run, as the number of articles we receive continues to grow, we will switch to a fully electronic system.

Language Teaching Research, like other journals, is concerned to ensure that any article received has not been submitted concurrently to another journal. Unfortunately, we have come across a number of cases in which authors have submitted their articles to other journals. We are also concerned that some authors submit articles that draw extensively on data they have used in a previously published article. Graeme Porte led a recent email exchange among journal editors that engendered a discussion of these problems. Accordingly, *LTR* now requests all authors to confirm that they have submitted only to *LTR* and to specify in what ways the article represents a substantially new piece of work if the data have been used in a previously published article. Only when a written confirmation and statement is received is an article entered into our system. Interestingly, this has led to some authors withdrawing their articles and, on occasions, to us declining to accept an article if we felt that it replicated previously published material too closely.

Peer-reviewing of articles is an essential feature of any academic journal. It necessitates identifying appropriate reviewers, requesting a review, and, quite often, sending reminders to reviewers who have missed their deadlines. In many respects the most challenging task of an editor is finding reviewers and collecting reviews. The problem has escalated over the last few years due to both the substantial increase in the number of articles submitted to *LTR* and to the emergence of new journals (many electronic) seeking reviewers. The problem is also exacerbated by the increasing need to send out articles that have been revised and resubmitted for further review. We increasingly find reviewers declining an invitation to review. We are also concerned that our regular, reliable reviewers are becoming overburdened. To address these problems, which are probably common to all the journals contributing to this column, we have resorted to an increasingly rigorous screening of articles. As a result, we send out a much smaller proportion of articles for review than we did previously. We have also tried to ease the burden on reviewers by asking them to only write detailed reviews for articles that they determine are "publishable with revisions." If an article is deemed "not publishable in *LTR*," only a brief review detailing the main reasons is required.

Many of the authors submitting articles to *LTR* are nonnative speakers of English. In many cases, their articles are written in excellent English. In a number of cases, however, problems with English expression arise, including in articles that are very competent in content and methodology. The task of editing such articles places an additional burden on editors. To help address this issue, Sage has identified a company, SPi, which offers professional language editing services, details of which are available in the submission guidelines on the journal's homepage. I have no knowledge, however, of whether authors are making use of these services.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The demands placed on academics to publish in ISI-listed journals are increasing. Many countries now carry out nationwide evaluations of university faculty's research outputs. These evaluations can determine tenure, promotion, and salary increases. This is the context in which journals like *LTR* now operate. It has led to a huge increase in the number of articles received and consequent pressure on journals to process them. As a result, the workload of editors has become extremely arduous. Ideally, publishers need to acknowledge this and make additional funds available to enable editors to employ appropriate assistants. However, publishers themselves are under pressure, as journals attract fewer individual subscriptions, institutional subscriptions are also under threat, and there is competition from open-access journals. It is unlikely that additional funds will become available for editing *LTR*. It is also difficult to see how the dynamics of this situation can be addressed, although the increased communication among editors through annual meetings at the American Association of Applied Linguistics conference and the kind of email correspondence instituted by Graeme Porte have helped to identify and ameliorate some of the common problems. By and large, however, the future of journals like *LTR* ultimately rests on the hard work of their editors and reviewers. For the time being, the satisfaction I have gained from seeing *LTR* develop into a major journal in the applied linguistics field will suffice.

Merits and Metrics in Journal Publishing

Comments from the editor of *The Modern Language Journal*
LEO VAN LIER, *Monterey Institute of International Studies*

In this brief essay I will try to do three things. First, I will give a brief overview of *The Modern Language Journal* (*MLJ*) in its almost 100-year history; then I will sketch the writing, reviewing, and editing process; I will conclude with problems and possibilities that I think about as editor of the *MLJ*.

OVERVIEW

In another 6 years, the *MLJ* will celebrate its centenary as the longest running applied linguistics and language learning journal in the field. As editor, I inherited the archive of all the bound volumes, which I carefully put on a set of shelves in my office. From time to time I like to look at one of the early volumes, just to see how the field has changed and how it has stayed the same. Several things are quite obvious to the casual eye, for example, that the size of the volumes has steadily increased over the years. I like to think that this reflects the natural growth and increasing maturity of the field, not merely inflation. One obvious reason for this increase is that individual papers are longer and that is undoubtedly due to the need for thorough literature reviews as well as carefully documented research designs, data analyses, and discussion and implications sections.

The Modern Language Journal started in 1916. Some of the topics during that year were reading lessons in French, a survey of opinions about the Direct Method, a defense of the use of translation, and successful work at the blackboard. All of the contributions were directly related to teaching, and although most articles were in English, there were also several in French and German. There were no articles on English as a second or foreign language (ESL or EFL). Articles tended to be quite short, sometimes no longer than two or three pages. ESL/EFL-oriented studies did not make a significant appearance in the *MLJ* until the early 1970s. However, since then, submissions in ESL/EFL-related areas have steadily increased; they now form around 80% of total submissions. The NFMLTA (National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations), which owns the *MLJ*, has instituted a ground rule of no more than 50% of any one issue to be on ESL/EFL. This, of course, means that increasing numbers of potentially publishable papers in these areas must be rejected, thus contributing to the difficulties faced by academics around the world, many of whom do research on ESL/EFL.

WRITING, REVIEWING, EDITING

I remember starting out as a junior academic in the early 1980s trying to publish my exciting new ideas (or so I thought) and receiving rejection notices or what seemed to be insurmountable demands for revision of papers that I thought were (obviously, or at least nearly) perfect. Now, 20-odd years later, I find that things have not changed that much, after all. To be honest, I have had several rejections and demands for fundamental revisions just this last year, so it seems that I still need peers to give me guidance. I am glad that I can still accept their guidance and that, at the same time, I can give guidance to others. In that sense, the process of peer-reviewing has not changed. In my past 3 years as editor, I have been continually amazed and awed by the commitment, professionalism, and insight that our reviewers display in their comments and advice. This is truly a selfless and pro bono task, one that carries no benefits in terms of remuneration, prestige, or tenure but provides crucial assistance to authors. How long this system can last in this rapidly changing world is a question the field as a whole must worry about.

As editor, I have become increasingly aware that the backbone of journal publishing is the reviewer base, in conjunction with the editorial board. The editors' decisions are anchored in the cumulative advice from reviewers and board members, even in the (increasingly frequent) cases that a submission is rejected in-house without going out for full review.

In addition, there are the crucial roles of general, managing, and associate editors, editorial assistants, steering committees, and publishers (and their editorial staffs, marketers, and promoters). The publication of an academic journal is the result of the collaboration of all of these entities.

RECENT CHANGES

Since I started as editor of the *MLJ*, we have seen (as other journals have) submissions increase exponentially. From a little over 200 in 2007, we now receive around 350, equivalent to almost one for every day of the year. Even if all things were equal, the increase means that an ever-smaller percentage of papers can actually be accepted. However, as things are not really equal, a number of new pressure points have emerged. First, the reviewer pool cannot be expanded sufficiently to keep up with the increase in submissions, so that there is a real danger of reviewers being overburdened with requests for reviews (especially because all other journals also report similar increases, and new journals continually spring up that draw on basically the same reviewer pool). Second, there are a number of countries in which academics are required by their institutions or governmental authorities to publish in top-tier journals (however defined, see below) to secure tenure or advancement. Indeed, it is increasingly the case that doctoral students are expected to publish several papers even before they can be granted their degree. Third, and I will elaborate on this below, a number of new indicators, rankings, listings, and citation instruments have emerged in recent years that have resulted in a pecking order of points and ranks that puts ever-steeper hurdles before the would-be academic author. Fourth, many authors in emerging academic contexts find it difficult to adhere to the stringent stylistic, grammatical, and rhetorical requirements of academic publishing in the English-medium world, for which their training may not have prepared them.

I argue that these are problems not just for the authors but also for the reviewers and the editors and, ultimately, for the readers, as well. We cannot just send a paper back saying that there are too many stylistic and grammatical errors in it. However, as some of my colleagues have noted in this *Perspectives* issue, frequent writing problems tend to correlate with organizational problems, weak literature reviews, and even unsound research designs. The issue of acceptable yet flexible standards is of paramount importance. Editors or reviewers do not have the time or expertise to solve all of these problems (indeed, similar to most other journals, we increasingly have to reject submissions without sending them out for review, which makes it even more difficult for authors to receive the feedback they need and deserve); therefore, a more systematic approach is needed to try and put the international research-sharing community on a new and more equitable global track.

DOING THE NUMBERS

> [Researchers] worry that hiring, promotion and tenure committees that control their fate will ignore

> crucial but hard-to-quantify aspects of scientific performance such as mentorship and collaboration building, and instead focus exclusively on a handful of easy-to-measure numbers related mostly to their publication and citation rates.
>
> (Editorial, *Nature*, 2010, p. 845)

In recent years, a variety of citation metrics and journal rankings have been developed by different organizations and corporate interests, the most well-known among them being Thomson Reuters's ISI (Institute for Scientific Information) and its SSCI (Social Sciences Citation Index), which determines the Impact Factor (IF) of listed journals, among other metrics. The most common questions I am asked these days are: Is your journal listed by SSCI? What is the IF of your journal? What is your annual acceptance rate? (This last question is not—not yet, at least—measured by SSCI.) Other metrics that do not have major currency outside the upper strata of journal publishing include the Eigen Factor, Elsevier's Scopus, the *g*-index, the *h*-index, and others, all of them rather complex and sometimes quite inscrutable. A recent set of articles in the journal *Nature* (2010) discusses the metrics issue in some detail, and it includes also the opinions of scientists, administrators, and other leaders in science (van Noorden, 2010; www.nature.com/metrics).

As an editor, I see some of these metrics (particularly the IF) appear in the annual reports, alerting me to whether the journal's IF has gone up or down, including a 5-year trend. Specifically, the IF for 2009 counts the number of times articles published in the *MLJ* during the previous 2 years (i.e., 2007 and 2008) have been cited in all SSCI-listed journals.

There have been many criticisms of the IF and other metrics (see the insightful discussion in *Nature*, 2010). Metrics primarily apply to academic journals and are based on citation frequencies and rankings derived from them. The IF, for example, is derived only from citations in SSCI-listed journals over a 2-year period (the *h*-factor, however, does not have a time limit). These metrics are primarily of interest to publishers and journals and were not designed to assess the quality of work by individual authors or of specific publications. Even so, they are often used in evaluation and appraisal exercises of departments and individual academics—a highly debatable practice.

In actual academic fields and university departments worldwide, other factors can influence quality judgments, as well: the number of downloads of a particular article; the publication of books, chapters in books, and conference proceedings; and such figures as the acceptance rates of particular journals, their global or regional audience, and so on. In addition, an evaluation ranking may give more points to the first author of a jointly written study or may divide the number of points for an article among the collaborating authors. These latter practices are particularly worrisome, as they have the effect of discouraging and devaluing collaborative scientific activity.

As a journal editor, I find the journal metrics interesting but not directly useful, nor fully reflective of the quality of the journal, let alone any particular article of an author, or indeed a coauthor. We need to look at a far wider and more nuanced array of factors that are not quantifiable. The news I received this week that the *MLJ* IF jumped by 83% in 2009 is wonderful, but I am not sure what we (collectively, as the *MLJ* community) did, if anything, to achieve this impressive feat. By the same token, we have to worry if perhaps the IF might drop precipitously the next year, again for reasons not fully understood by the community.

Be that as it may, our main preoccupation must be to advocate for the authors and readers of our journal. In the final part of this contribution I would like to look at the issue of publication, as it relates to the career and perceived professional stature of an author. This issue can be divided into two factors: (a) the actual *value* of a particular publication for the profession and (b) the *credit* the author (and to a lesser extent the journal) receives for its publication. Let us tackle *value* first:

- Published papers may be referred to and used in numerous courses, workshops, and presentations, without being ranked or cited in metrics.
- Published papers may be cited in books, reprinted in course readers, and discussed extensively on blogs, without being ranked or cited in metrics.
- Published papers may influence teaching and learning over a long period of time, without being ranked or cited in metrics.
- Papers may be cited heavily in SSCI journals without having any impact on practice, research, or theory at all. For example, I could write and/or publish a paper making such outlandish claims that hundreds of people cite it (in order to dismiss it), which might make the IF skyrocket.

Next, to *credit*. Academics and graduate students are increasingly required to publish in top journals to achieve tenure, promotion, or degrees. The deciding committees generally apply a rank order and award points accordingly. On what are the rank orders based? Some decisions are based on the questions already mentioned: If the journal is SSCI-listed, you get certain points. If the impact factor is above Y, you get extra points. A journal is ranked higher when its acceptance rate is lower. There may also be other factors such as those mentioned earlier.

Given the developments in the publishing field that I have sketched above, it is clear that the hurdles faced by would-be journal authors are huge, and getting higher all the time. Numerous researchers, academics, and graduate students alike despair of getting their—often quite valuable—work published in one of the "top-tier" journals and thus see the number of points they need to gather as quite unattainable. At the same time, the journals, with the best will of the world, cannot give these scholars the detailed and constructive peer guidance they would like to provide because of the sheer volume of submissions. The end result appears to be a no-win situation for worldwide scholarship.

THE WAY AHEAD

> Most institutions seem to take a gratifyingly nuanced approach to hiring and tenure decisions, relying less on numbers and more on wide-ranging, qualitative assessments of a candidate's performance made by experts in the relevant field.
> (Editorial, *Nature*, 2010, p. 845)

In this final section I would like to point to some possible ways to improve the service that our journals can provide to worldwide readerships and authors. First, it is a welcome development that Thomson Reuters (ISI and SSCI) have added a special listing of regional journals:

> For more than two years, Thomson Reuters has reviewed thousands of regional journals in all areas of science, social science and arts and humanities. Although selection criteria for a regional journal are fundamentally the same as for an international journal, the importance of the regional journal is measured in terms of the specificity of its content rather than in its citation impact.
> (Retrieved June 11, 2010, from http://science.thomsonreuters.com/press/2008/8455931/)

The next step should be to make sure that evaluators in different countries acknowledge the value of regional journals and award equal points to them. Unfortunately, I could not find any applied linguistics and language teaching journals on the list so far. I would suggest that the many regional journals in our field investigate how to get listed. It is beyond doubt that regional journals are the most important way for many countries to move the profession ahead in locally determined and contextually effective ways.

A second way for evaluation committees to move the field forward is to promote collaborative writing. In some cases, as I mentioned earlier, if a paper is written by more than one author, points are divided among them, with more points being allocated to the first author. This is clearly an unacceptable policy: The way to promote quality in research is to *reward* collaboration, not to *punish* it.

A third suggestion is to encourage local grassroots collaborative sharing venues, partly online and partly through workshops and symposia. Such venues can establish the most effective support structures for copyediting, research design, literature reviewing, and other aspects that novice authors often find most daunting. On occasion, it has been suggested to me that authors are sometimes hesitant to share their draft work, fearing that their ideas might be highjacked or stolen, given the highly competitive atmosphere in their environment. A simple response is that if materials are shared publicly on an open collaborative platform, plagiarism, copying, and stealing are far less likely, as the materials are out in the open, dated, documented, and attributed.

CONCLUSION

I hope that the discussion by journal editors in this *MLJ* issue provides readers with insights and ideas about how to improve the ways in which our journals (*all* of them, not just the ones listed or ranked in the major indexes) can help in providing the service to the profession for which they were established. Although I am only one of the contributors in this *Perspectives* collection, as editor of the host journal I want to welcome responses from publishers, authors, graduate students, and whoever reads these pages. I feel that this issue merits and indeed requires a long and multifaceted debate.

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Internationalizing Knowledge Construction and Dissemination

Comments from the previous editor of *TESOL Quarterly*
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In recent years, scholars have become critical of the role that academic journals play in defining disciplinary knowledge. They have pointed out that the research published is biased toward privileged communities. This sensitivity to the politics of knowledge production is inspired by recent epistemological and social changes. Epistemologically, the critique of the enlightenment tradition of inquiry has made scholars suspect claims of objectivity, neutrality, and universal validity for academic knowledge. We are now open to the notion that all research is situated, local, and even personal. Because studies are shaped by the researchers' contexts, values, and interests, their claims may not relate to all communities everywhere. These realizations have serious implications when we find that those who publish in mainstream journals (i.e., publications based in the West and considered prestigious in the field) come from a narrow geographical group. As Salager-Meyer (2008) observed: "90% of important scientific research is published in 10% of journals, and while developing countries comprise 80% of the world's population, only 2% of indexed scientific publications come from these parts of the world" (p. 122). She found a "strong association between scientific research output and national wealth distribution across the world" (p. 122). For economic and historical reasons, the major journals in our field are located in the West and published in the English language, with editorial board members from local institutions.

Socially, the conditions of globalization have generated much traffic between different communities, making us aware of different social conditions and knowledge traditions in other parts of the world. In our field of applied linguistics, we are now aware of diverse styles of language teaching and learning in different communities. As a consequence, the methods and approaches discussed in mainstream journals may not reflect or represent the needs and interests of many communities. At the same time, the teaching approaches and language acquisition strategies discussed in these journals come with the implicit claim of being the most effective and efficient, so much so that they might get imposed on other communities with detrimental cultural and educational consequences.

It is not that these differences are not appreciated in this age of multiculturalism and diversity. However, certain practices of academic publishing work against diversity in knowledge construction. For example, there is a pressure toward centralization in knowledge construction. Researchers relate their findings to certain common paradigms and conduct a unified conversation. Although paradigms can change, as Thomas Kuhn has theorized, current paradigms can have a conservative effect in excluding atypical forms of knowledge. Not only the content of the conversation but also the conventions of the conversation share some level of uniformity. As the work of John Swales and genre analysts shows, the IMRD (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion) structure and the CARS (Create a Research Space) framing of openings are fairly stable in research articles in many fields. The detached, data-driven style is still the preferred genre in mainstream academic journals.

It is also not the case that we do not get submissions from other parts of the world. Scholars from Nigeria and China are currently able to send articles with a click of a button from their home computers. In fact, editors in the West have seen a proliferation of submissions from East Asia in recent years. The "publish or perish" culture is spreading to more academic communities. In countries like China, it is said that Ph.D. candidates are expected to publish about three articles before they can obtain their degree. Local universities also rank the journals in which their scholars are supposed to publish, and they base their ranking on impact factor. Understandably, regional journals in English or local languages do not appear in these lists. Such trends help explain why I once received three separate articles submitted in a single submission by a Chinese scholar for publication in *TESOL Quarterly* (*TQ*) (see my blog for this and other stories on publishing inequalities at http://www.personal.psu.edu/asc16/blogs/TQeditor/2008/01/). However, several factors limit the ability of peripheral authors to get published in mainstream journals. They range from discoursal to material:

1. The styles of writing of periphery authors are not appreciated in mainstream journals. When I was editor of *TQ*, I saw that even British submissions could face discrimination from American reviewers. The conversational style and essayistic flow of British authors was misunderstood by American reviewers, who felt that these were conference presentations rather than journal articles. Their style gave the impression that these articles were not informed by rigorous research. The preference of the American reviewers was for relatively more detached, data-driven articles. If scholars from the "native English"-speaking community experience such discrimination, we can imagine how much more those from other language groups will be misunderstood.

2. The literature review of periphery authors may be dated. As a result, the authors are not always able to frame their studies in relation to current conversations in the discipline. Journals and books are expensive when you consider the unfair exchange rate and academic salaries in some countries. Libraries are often poorly stocked. Lack of access to the latest publications hinders local scholars from relating their studies effectively to the conversations in mainstream journals.

3. Even if the latest research literature is provided, some studies cannot be framed in relevance to the mainstream conversation because the concerns of the local professional community are sometimes different from those of the center. Relating local studies to the publications in the center may actually result in distorting their unique contexts and findings. For example, the plurilingual practices in the periphery cannot be framed in terms of dichotomous constructs such as first/second language or the nativeness-based paradigms of SLA.

4. The articles of periphery authors are not always shaped according to the guidelines and objectives of mainstream journals. In many cases, authors are unable to identify the journal that best suits their research. This is partly because they do not have access to the full range of journals in the field. In some cases, periphery authors send articles to journals they have not read or even seen in their countries. I once received three articles in quick succession from a bright and motivated scholar from Nigeria. I could not send them out for a review, as they did not relate to *TQ*'s objectives or guidelines. When I happened to meet the author at the 2005 International Association of Applied Linguistics convention in Madison, I found out that the author had never seen or read *TQ*. He had mailed the articles after obtaining *TQ*'s mailing address from a Web site (read the story in http://www.personal.psu.edu/asc16/blogs/TQeditor/2007/12/).

Giving more visibility to the research of periphery scholars will require different forms of intervention, not all of them within the control of a single journal. During my tenure as editor of *TQ*, the editorial board and I adopted some strategies to redress the inequalities in academic publishing. The following are some of the more important:

1. To increase access to the journal, I persuaded TESOL to make *TQ* available on JSTOR. TESOL has opted for a 5-year moving wall, which means that the issues will be posted at the end of the fifth year of publication. Although open access (i.e., unrestricted) is the ideal, TESOL (like many other publishers) is concerned about losing subscriptions. There is anecdotal evidence from other editors that giving open access to their journals increased subscriptions, not to mention submissions. However, this argument sounds counterintuitive to many publishers. Although the moving wall prevents periphery scholars from reading the most recent issues, the online access helps them familiarize themselves with our conversations and conventions without having to obtain paper copies of the journal.

2. We have expanded the editorial board to include more international scholars. The ratio of 9 to 1 between North American and international scholars has been gradually reduced to 6 to 4. Scholars from countries like Argentina, China, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, and Venezuela have served on the editorial board. The diversified composition helps in many ways. Our international members are able to persuade us on the significance of a study for the local community; lobby for policy changes toward featuring more local research; advise us on problematic issues in a submission (i.e., stylistic differences, perception of plagiarism, or possible duplication of articles from local languages or journals); and serve as our ambassadors in local communities, acquainting scholars with our publishing practices and mentoring some informally before submission.

3. We have set up a mentoring system whereby promising submissions from nontraditional settings (which include institutions that may lack access to resources or mentors in the West) are

given additional opportunities for revision in consultation with editorial board members. Typically, the editor identifies articles that will benefit from such mentoring, based on the comments of the reviewers on the initial submission. In the rejection letter, the author is given the option of corresponding with a member of the editorial board for consultation and revision. The mentors come from a committee set up within the editorial board, with fewer reviewing demands so that they can devote their time to mentoring. After several rounds of revision, the article is sent for an anonymous review before a decision is made for publishing. A couple of persistent foreign authors have succeeded in publishing this way. However, a majority do not take up the opportunity. Flowerdew (2008) pointed out that non-Western scholars are ambivalent about getting help, as they perceive this practice as unethical or degrading. We have to cultivate a culture of collaborative writing among scholars both in the center and the periphery. Gao and Wen (2009) have recently argued that such collaborative shaping of the article is an effective way of helping periphery scholars negotiate mainstream publishing conventions. Not surprisingly, sometimes collaboration may include sending articles and citations periphery scholars find difficult to obtain in their countries.

4. We have identified ways of using our own pages to disseminate information on new research and scholarship to our international readers. Additionally, as a practitioner-based journal, we are aware that teachers do not get time to read all of the research journals that are published in increasing numbers these days. We have therefore introduced two new sections, "Research Digest" and "Symposium," to address this concern. In Research Digest, we annotate relevant articles in multidisciplinary journals. In Symposium, we invite leading scholars in the field to debate emergent themes in the discipline, such as the connection between empirical research in second language acquisition and language teaching practices. Invited scholars share their perspectives in a conversational tone and without heavy scholarly apparatus. Through these sections, periphery scholars are able to gain insights into the ongoing conversations in the field as they frame their own work with greater relevance.

5. We have also identified some space outside the coveted main section for representing local knowledge. As can be expected, the 5% acceptance rate of *TQ* sometimes limits the plurality of conversations represented in the main section. Additionally, we cannot solicit articles on topics important for local communities in a refereed section. Therefore, we use the sections "Teaching Issues" and "Research Issues" to solicit brief reports from periphery scholars on emergent topics and trends in their communities. Through these sections, our readers are able to acquaint themselves with the pedagogical and scholarly concerns in different parts of the world.

There are sacrifices to be made in undertaking such initiatives. A concern regarding the last two initiatives is that they take up valuable space that could be devoted to research articles. Informal knowledge-disseminating genres, such as Research Digest and Teaching Issues, do not get cited or boost our impact factor. Furthermore, at a time when many publishers are forced to cut pages to save money, these new sections reduce the number of research articles that we can publish. However, if we truly want to pluralize knowledge, we may have to deviate from some dominant practices in academic publishing. For example, citation rates and impact factor may pressure journals and authors to publish on trendy themes and research methods and ignore other socially relevant subjects.

Although we have made some headway in diversifying the conversation without affecting the quality of the research published in *TQ*, we have to realize that these efforts relate to publishing in English. What about the knowledge constructed in other languages? Such studies are published in regional journals, a majority of which are not indexed in Journal Citation Reports or other major databases. As such, the research and scholarship in other languages do not inform disciplinary knowledge. A topic that dominates conversation currently is how to disseminate the research work in other languages. Wen and Gao (2007) have proposed that a study published in a local language in a regional journal should be published in translation in mainstream English journals. However, others have pointed out that the articles have to be rewritten to be framed appropriately for an international readership that does not share the assumptions and interests of the local audience, even if we ignore charges of double dipping and self-plagiarism (Hamp-Lyons, 2009). Some editors are open to publishing appropriately rewritten and freshly refereed articles in their journals, even if they have been published in another language earlier (Nunn, 2009). There are other possible strategies. Some journals (such as the *British Medical Journal*) do publish articles in simultaneous multiple translation. There are also a handful of bilingual journals, such as *Ars Pharmaceutica*, which publishes the same article in Spanish and English. Others have started publishing the abstract in a range of languages even though the article itself is published in English (see *Emerging Themes in Epidemiology*). A more helpful variation of this practice is to publish lengthy paraphrases of the article in diverse languages. However, as these practices take up space, not many publishers are inclined toward adopting them in their printed versions. The Internet may provide more avenues for publishing articles in translation. While the English version of an article can be published in the paper version, translations or originals in other languages can be published on the Web site of the journal. Many scholars consider multilingual publishing as the only way in which academic conversation can be truly internationalized (Salager-Meyer, 2009). Developments in technology may very well open up new avenues for realizing this dream.

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