Reflections and future directions in publishing research in English as an Additional Language:

An Afterword

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Academia has become a world in which scholars are being encouraged or pressured to publish more articles in higher-impact journals under increasingly stringent evaluation and review systems. In the UK, for example, the assessment of scholars' research outputs within the national Research Excellence Framework [REF] can affect individuals' promotions, departmental funding, and ultimately the ranking of the university within the country (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2009; Parker, 2008; Martin, 2011). In countries where English is seen as an additional language, the pressures on scholars can be even greater. Not only do they have to reach the high standards of international journals in terms of content, relevance and novelty, but they also have to meet the often opaque and varying language requirements of these journals, while navigating through the sometimes cryptic, indirect suggestions and comments of reviewers (Paltridge, 2015).

It is within this demanding and challenging environment that the PRISEAL [Publishing and Presenting Research Internationally: Issues for Speakers of English as an Additional Language] and MET [Mediterranean Editors and Translators] organisations decided to hold a joint conference in 2015. The conference was held in the beautiful city of Coimbra, Portugal, and provided a unique forum for researchers on academic writing and research publication to meet with in-house and freelance professional editors, who receive daily requests from clients to edit or translate their work for publication. In this volume that emerged from the joint conference, we can see a strong reiteration of the growing pressure on scholars to publish in English and recognition of the challenges they face. However, the strongest message we can receive from the authors of these chapters is that the challenges faced by scholars using English as an additional language can be overcome through a greater understanding of the problems they face, instruction

and supervision from academic faculty that is tailored to their particular needs and contexts, and discipline-specific, focused support from professional language editors and translation experts.

Clearly, the challenges faced by scholars who need to publish in English as an additional language are not just surface-level writing problems, such as verb tense and voice usage, modality, subject-verb agreement, article usage, hedging and punctuation, although without instruction, these may appear to many scholars as the aspects of their writing in most need of being 'fixed'. As we find in Cargill et al.'s study in Chapter 8, for example, the planning of writing is also a very important skill that scholars need to develop. Planning may include deciding on a suitable target journal, choosing which section of the research article to write up first, and understanding common conventions in the rhetorical structuring of research articles, such as the model presented by Martín and Pérez in Chapter 7 for the immunology and allergy sub-branch of medicine. Throughout the volume, we see the various methods employed by instructors, supervisors and professional editors to help scholars plan their work, including the use of the Research Writing Matrix presented by Cadman in Chapter 2, the CCC model presented by Linnegar in Chapter 5, the guiding comments of supervisors as discussed by DiGiacomo in Chapter 3 and Li in Chapter 9, and inline and margin comments of editors as discussed by Shaw and Voss in Chapter 4. It is also clear that support offered to scholars as they aim for publication needs to be tailored to the particular culture, context and language experience, a point emphasised by Burgess in Chapter 1 when describing how researchers are assessed in Spain, by Bennett in Chapter 10 when discussing how to understand and deal with academic plagiarism, and Cao and Cadman in Chapter 11 when explaining the challenges faced in developing an effective ELT training program in Vietnam.

One particularly difficult challenge faced not only by scholars hoping to publish internationally but also instructors and professional editors hoping to support them as they work towards this goal is that of language variation. A great body of work in the area of English for Specific Purposes [ESP] has shown that language varies considerably depending on the specific discipline (see for example Hyland, 2002, 2008). However, throughout the volume, we find other interesting examples of language variation. In Chapter 7, for example, Martín and Pérez show that the rhetorical structure of research articles can vary even with a narrow sub-discipline of medicine depending on the journal of publication. In Chapter 12, Swales shows that authors can sometimes be ingenious or playful in their writing, for example in their acknowledgments and footnotes, and that these divergences from journal conventions are made not just by senior academic scholars but also those beginning their careers. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that fledgling researchers should go out of their way to write in a divergent way from those around them. We should remember that Swales's work only reports on the examples of divergent language patterns that made it to publication, whereas there are likely to be many other cases where the divergent patterns were revised or 'corrected'

through the review editing process, or where the papers were rejected outright. The cases raised by Martín and Pérez and Swales do, however, emphasise the point that language variation is real and that scholars learning how to publish in English as an additional language need strategies to assess what types of variability exists and what language choices are available to them.

One way to approach the issue of language variation in the classroom is through a data-driven learning [DDL] approach, where learners are given software tools to explore a target language corpus with guidance from an instructor (Anthony, 2016). Results of these explorations can reveal the most frequent words and phrases in target journals, common rhetorical devices to open and close journal article sections, idiosyncratic uses of tense, voice and modality, and a host of other language features that are normally inaccessible to scholars using EAL. The approach also lends itself well to heterogeneous groups of learners from different areas of specialisation or aiming to publish in different target journals. In these settings, each learner can acquire or build their own unique language corpus and then use common search and analysis techniques to probe their data and extract meaningful information from it that can guide their own writing practices. Indeed, a large and growing body of empirical research has demonstrated the effectiveness of DDL in a variety of settings (Boulton, 2012). However, an instructor considering introducing DDL into the writing classroom must still be sensitive to the culture and context of the learners as well as consider the practical limitations of the institution's classroom facilities and technical support staff.

The discussions on how best to guide and support scholars on publishing research in English as an additional language are still ongoing. However, there is no doubt that the current volume provides many very important perspectives on how to take those discussions forward and help both scholars and instructors to arrive at real-world, practical solutions to the challenges that they face.

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