

Journal Pre-proof

Editorial

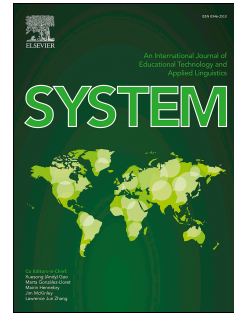
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Editorial

Giving voice to Applied Linguistics from the Global South

This Special Issue (SI) of *System: An International Journal of Educational Technology and Applied Linguistics* is dedicated to research from the Global South. This short introduction starts with some contextual explanation where we detail our idea of bringing together voices from the geographical areas that are under-represented in Applied Linguistics journals in general, and also – so far – in *System*. We discuss the social justice agenda so relevant to research in our days and highlight the research contribution made by researchers whose first language often is not English. We then describe the writing workshops, which were the starting point for this SI, highlighting the mentoring work that has taken place before the production of this SI. In ‘Overview of contributions’, we summarize the unique contributions included in this SI and indicate the impact that these contributions make to the way we understand global language issues. After framing the articles that form this unique collection and their individual merits, we acknowledge the professional development, craft and emotional labour that has fed into this SI, a step – as we hope – beyond the academic orthodoxy and hegemony of one language towards a truly global understanding of Applied Linguistics as multiple contesting voices. The introduction ends with our sincere thanks to all institutions and colleagues involved in the production of this SI.

Context

Firstly, we should detail our rationale for the choice of *System* as an outlet for this SI on Applied Linguistics in the Global South. *System* has always had a special consideration for novice and under-represented authors. As a novice reviewer, Ursula Stickler remembers the careful, gentle and immensely knowledgeable guidance and support given by the late and much missed Professor Norman Davies, the founding editor of *System*. His vision for the journal was not only to bring the then-innovative aspect of information technology (IT) into the area of Applied Linguistics. He also emphasised the support given to novice authors, and – speaking from Ursula’s own experience – reviewers. Through her four years as co-editor of the journal, she became aware that supporting novice authors takes time, a soft touch, delicate diplomacy, and a lot of work.

The other side of the coin, however, and this is coming from two non-native English speakers, is the acceptance – particularly from applied linguists – of cultural diversity and its value in academic publishing. We are not setting out in this SI to silence the diverse voices coming out from the Global South or making them sing Northern or Western hymns, we want to allow the specificity of the geographical context from which they originate to shine through. The rigour of the research presented has been thoroughly checked by peer reviewers to whom both the authors and we are indebted.

The Global South context is relevant for an international audience. Yet, many of those papers might have never made it into an international English-language journal without the plan of a special collection that invited, encouraged and mentored researchers from the Global South to publish internationally, and thus also go beyond their comfort zones. Make no mistake: it is a risk to non-native speakers, and we, the first two of the SI editors, explicitly count ourselves in that number, to present the work that we have done to an audience that first of all might just find fault in our language, flowery as it may be, our different way of presenting an argument, our dialectic reasoning. And yes, we have learned the vocabulary and the structure, we have bent our minds to the Procrustean rules of Anglo-American academia – but still we want to hear what others find in their own words, to learn about their beliefs, and to appreciate the relevance to their local practices to the international community of Applied Linguistics.

This SI will be one outlet for voices from the Global South, especially from Latin America in our case. Our hope is that this will encourage more novice authors to seek *System* as an outlet for their publications, or by proposing their own SI for their context (we are still missing voices from the African context!), or by systematically researching the bias of Applied Linguistics research against their voices. We certainly invite our colleagues to take all the opportunities given to support them, such as the writing workshops described in the next section of this editorial.

Writing workshops

Learning multiple, complex writing practices is a central aspect of academic work, irrespective of discipline and career stage. Also, as academic writing practices are shaped by changing technologies and shifting accountability discourses, then this ongoing learning needs to be situated throughout one's career. Further, when set against the competing demands of teaching, research, administration, and service roles, protecting time for writing is notoriously difficult. Writing workshops have long since been an effective means of developing positive academic writing practices and protecting writing time. With the challenges of complexity, change and time in mind, we responded to the British Academy's inaugural call for Writing Workshops and designed a week-long writing workshop that combined functional content (e.g. genres, English for academic purposes and self-/peer-editing strategies), experiential insights (e.g. as authors, reviewers and editors); and dedicated time for writing (e.g. fixed time slots with specified writing goals). Hosted in Brazil with the warmth and generosity of colleagues at the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte and the Federal University of Ceará in Fortaleza, these convivial workshops mentored early-career researchers in writing for publication, creating spaces to share experiences and strategies for navigating contemporary academic life. In other words, the workshops facilitated professional learning across a range of topics and emotional contexts, the latter so often silenced in prevailing accountability discourses in higher education. We will return to the emotional literacies of writing in the conclusion of this editorial, but first we signpost each of the 12 papers, highlighting their contexts and findings. Some but not all of the papers in this SI have originated in our writing workshops. Based on our insights from working with colleagues in Brazil, we decided on opening the call for papers for this special issue to all academics working in or writing about Applied Linguistics in the Global South.

Overview of contributions

Part I of this SI brings together five papers on foreign language learning in three different countries – Brazil, Chile and Colombia. Ronaldo Corrêa Gomes Junior's contribution focuses on the foreign language learners' histories made available in an Instagram community named *instanarratives*. This community had (until June 2019) 89 contributions – either as instant stories or video messages. Drawing on Connectivism and Learning Ecology, the researcher examines whether this Instagram community may be characterized as a learning network and what the advantages of foreign language learning histories are. His qualitative analysis of 48 Instagram stories indicates how this community abides by the principles of autonomy, diversity, interactivity and openness. It also reveals the perceived affordances of learning histories from the perspective of foreign language learners. It is argued that encouraging learners to engage in similar online communities is likely to generate advantages to them, including their inclusion in a connected society.

Online language learning is also the focus of Mónica Stella Cárdenas-Claros' paper; however, this is approached from a diverse angle. Her study deals with the use of technology for listening in English as a foreign language (EFL). The researcher investigates the use of help options (e.g. glossaries, keywords, listening tips, transcripts) as a proxy for the identification of potentially difficult listening

comprehension input. The results of this empirical case study reveal that the participants – 13 Chilean EFL learners in an initial teacher education program – identified vocabulary (both general and technical), rate of speech and the absence of linking words as features that cause difficulty in listening comprehension. It is suggested that future help options (e.g. hyperlinks to definitions of some words) should be developed in order to assist Chilean EFL learners' listening skills development.

Similar to Mónica Stella Cárdenas-Claros's contribution, Rafael Zaccaron and Donesca Cristina Puntel Xhafaj's paper also deals with learners' skill improvement in English. This paper, however, focuses on writing skills, and the geographical context is changed to Brazil. The researchers investigate the role that peer (rather than teacher) feedback may play in supporting the writing skills development of 24 Brazilian English-as-an-additional-language (EAL) learners. The research compared two groups: one which completed anonymous peer feedback, and the other which undertook conference peer feedback. The data sets included the texts produced by the participants as well as their responses to a questionnaire. Among the main results, the researchers indicate the lack of a statistical difference on feedback uptake between the two groups and the potential challenge to interpersonal relationships in conference peer feedback (i.e. some students' feedback provision was perceived as rude). The researchers also highlight the potential of peer feedback in supporting EAL learning in Brazil.

With "Identity projection in the oral presentations of Colombian PhD students: Disciplinary differences", our attention turns to the skill of speaking in English for academic purposes (EAP), and we are introduced to a different national context in the Global South – the Colombian one. Ricardo Nausa's detailed analysis of pronoun use in oral presentations made by 58 PhD students in different disciplines is used as an indicator of disciplinary differences in these students' identity construction and projection in the so-called hard vs. soft disciplines. The results highlight the role that both tenor and field play in the choice and use of personal pronouns in oral presentations and add empirical evidence to disciplinary differences. The contribution ends with pedagogical suggestions for EAP practitioners, which include the use of online corpora to raise EAP students' awareness to the role of self-mentions in oral presentations.

While also exploring foreign language learning, Rogéria Costa Pereira's paper differs from most of the ones included in this special edition given its focus on German as a foreign language (GFL). Her research analyzes complex syllabic constituents in the interlanguage of Brazilian GFL learners. The empirical data comes from three experiments with 18 learners who lived in Germany and for whom Brazilian Portuguese was the first language. Among the results of this contrastive analysis, the researcher indicates that learners' proficiency and the task proposed are two of the key factors that correlate with these learners' choices.

Part II of this SI shares the same focus on foreign languages; however, contributors' attention is geared towards teaching-related matters. Kelley Crites and Emma Rye's paper is dedicated to the macro topic of curriculum design in English language teaching (ELT). The researchers report on an exploratory case study on the use of design thinking in a top-down program reform at a Colombian university, where the local practitioners only had approximately two months to undertake all the changes (i.e. from the design to the implementation of the new program). The findings point out the feasibility of integrating design thinking and curriculum design, and suggestions are made to the use of design thinking more extensively in Latin America as a way of fostering collaboration among the key stakeholders involved in curricular reforms.

The ELT context also takes centre stage in Flor Toledo-Sandoval's paper, dedicated to a diachronic analysis of textbooks produced for the 5th and 6th grades in the Chilean educational system (i.e. the

first two years of compulsory English language education in that country). Drawing on key concepts such as localization and representation, the study examines the incorporation (or the lack of incorporation) of elements of the local culture in the textbooks provided by Chile's Ministry of Education. The study draws on a content analysis of four focal textbooks and a quantitative analysis of the questionnaire responses provided by 63 local teachers. The content analysis highlighted a disparity in how the local culture was portrayed in the books. The quantitative analysis indicated teacher participants' attempts in adapting these textbooks to cater for the needs and wants of their specific groups of students. Based on the results, the author argues that the process of producing textbooks in Chile requires an urgent reappraisal.

Similarly based on the Chilean context, Karen Contreras, Claudia Arredondo, Claudio Díaz, María Jesús Inostroza and Brandee Strickland explore a different pedagogical matter of relevance to practitioners – lesson planning. More specifically, this paper investigates the potential differences in pre-service vs. in-service teachers' cognition in the planning of lessons. To this end, the researchers conducted think-aloud protocols with 86 pre-service EFL teachers and 28 in-service EFL teachers. The identification and subsequent quantification of cognitive processes in the think-aloud protocols indicate that pre-service teachers engage in more frequent and more diverse cognitive processes when compared to in-service teachers, a difference which is possibly linked to the practical teaching experience of the latter group.

Edgar Emmanuell Garcia-Ponce and Caroline Tagg's paper slightly shifts the focus from teachers' cognition to teachers' beliefs. These two researchers examine the role that Mexican in-service EFL teachers' beliefs play in their teaching of speaking skills. The researchers' choice of focus on speaking stems from the importance assigned to communication (especially spoken communication) in this specific EFL context. Their case study compares the practice of three Mexican EFL university teachers with their beliefs. The results indicate that, while these teachers attempted at encouraging their students' spoken communication in their classes, the proposed pedagogical activities did not always provide students with meaningful opportunities for speaking practice. Garcia-Ponce and Tagg propose that EFL teacher education programs in Mexico should support in-service teachers in balancing their beliefs, the principles of communicative language teaching, and potentially pedagogical constraints.

The English language context is also the focus of Malba Barahona's paper, but this is framed from a Chilean perspective. Her study is aimed at identifying the pedagogical practices which 46 EFL teacher educators and 21 school EFL teachers consider to be key in the EFL field. To this end, Barahona collected data through two questionnaires and one focus group, and she employed a Delphi-type analysis. The paper reveals practices considered relevant by the participants, and special consideration is given to the role that translanguaging may play in the EFL setting in Chile.

Part III in this SI focuses on internationalization, which is exactly what motivated us to propose this issue in the first place. Acknowledging that the main study-abroad destinations are countries located in the North and/or more economically affluent, Gabriela Loires Diniz and Kimberly Noels examine the reasons for students to undertake a period of study in Brazil. Altogether 98 university students were surveyed via two questionnaires. The data indicate the heterogeneity of study-abroad students, who are divided into three categories – actors, observers and riders – in this study. Based on their findings, the researchers question the assumption that interculturality and language learning are necessary by-products of a study-abroad experience.

The present SI ends with a paper by Felipe Furtado Guimarães, Kyria Finardi, Michele Salles El Kadri and Reninni Taquini. This study investigates whether and how internationalization is embedded in the mission statements of 62 Brazilian universities through an analysis of their websites. The

quantitative analysis reveals that few mission statements use the word 'international', and a subsequent qualitative analysis of these few specific mission statements uncover the institutional aims of internationalization in the Brazilian higher education context.

Professional development

In the crafting of their contributions, the authors whose voices are included in this SI make their arguments on matters of practice, theory and policy in Applied Linguistics research. These arguments, made from perspectives of the Global South, provoke a critical re-evaluation of northern-biased language discourses and a re-evaluation of what counts as professional development in academic work. A central focus of many of the papers is the learning of others (e.g. students, teachers, administrators), but this learning extends beyond the beneficiaries of the research and includes the authors and us, their readers.

We draw attention to the multiple writing practices embedded in the underpinning research including (but not limited to) the writing of funding proposals and ethics applications; the writing of analysis, interpretation and synthesis; and the actual writing of the papers included in this SI. Importantly, but often overlooked, these same practices involve intense emotional work. The capacity to respond constructively to reviewers; to revise and resubmit; to move forward from rejections – this is an essential emotional capacity too often ignored in the professional development of academics as writers. What we have learned, as workshop facilitators, mentors and co-editors is that this emotional work needs places and spaces through which it can be learned and shared. We consider the writing workshops and this SI to constitute such places and spaces – a means for professional development of benefit to each of us but achieved through collective endeavour.

Acknowledgements

This SI brings to an end a cycle that started back in 2018 when the British Academy launched its call for Writing Workshops. In these past years, a number of institutions and colleagues have been instrumental – directly or indirectly – in allowing this SI to come to fruition, and we are sincerely grateful to all of them. We would like to thank the British Academy for the generous support offered for the two writing workshops that were held in Brazil in August 2018 as well as our respective universities for the institutional support that allowed us to engage in this worthwhile initiative.

The workshops would not have taken place without the hard work of Brazilian colleagues who agreed to co-host these events – Dr Vera Lúcia Menezes de Oliveira e Paiva (Federal University of Minas Gerais) and Dr Vladia Maria Cabral Borges (Federal University of Ceará) – and of those who contributed to the workshop sessions – Dr Antonia Dilamar Araújo (State University of Ceará) and Dr Bárbara Malveira Orfanó (Federal University of Minas Gerais). We are also indebted to all the workshop participants in both Belo Horizonte and Ceará, who shared their enthusiasm with us and made us become even more aware of the positive impact that these workshops can have in colleagues' careers.

This SI would not have existed if it were not for the openness of *System's* co-editors. They fully supported us from the very first moment that we approached them with our idea, and this support never failed in the process of editing the present SI. Their democratic approach to opening space for research in/from the Global South must be acknowledged.

Numerous colleagues in different parts of the world have been extremely generous with their time and have agreed to review papers for this SI. Peer reviewing is a task that generally goes unnoticed

in the academic system: reviewers are not named given the double-blind reviewing process, they are not paid for their work, and they are not given time by their institutions to undertake this task either. Thanking our peer reviewers for their detailed, constructive feedback is the bare minimum that we can do in return for their commitment to this project.

We also want to thank all authors – those represented in our SI and those who contributed in other ways – for sharing their work. The academic publishing journey is not an easy or a fast one, and this SI has had to face the challenges of a worldwide pandemic. We appreciate the authors' engagement and patience with the editing process under unusual and challenging life circumstances. We hope that you will be proud of seeing the concrete, tangible outcome of your efforts.

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