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## TOWARDS DECENTERING ENGLISH: PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF A MULTILINGUAL ACADEMIC JOURNAL

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### Abstract:

For a multilingual author, deciding in which language to publish an academic paper is a political choice. Not only is it linked to considerations such as career advancement and reaching the widest readership, it also touches on social and ideological questions, such as the preservation of languages, identities, cultures, and patterns of thinking and writing, in the face of English's dominance as the "default academic language" (Bocanegra-Valle 2014). This paper presents an analysis of the language practices of *E-JournALL*, *EuroAmerican Journal of Applied Linguistics and Languages*, a web-based, open access, and trilingual journal. Since the journal's founding in 2014, its editorial team has striven to ensure representation of English, Italian, and Spanish in each of its issues. In this article, we reflect on four years of multilingual publishing, asking: 1) What does it mean to ensure representation in *E-JournALL* of each of its three languages; 2) How do the languages of *E-JournALL*'s authors—and their decisions about publication language—relate to the role played by English in global academic publishing?; and finally, 3) Four years and eight issues in, where does *E-JournALL* stand as a multilingual journal in an English-dominated academic world? In addition to offering our own reflections as editors, we present the results of analyses of *E-JournALL*'s publication data about authors' native languages, the languages in which they published their papers, and the languages of the publications they cited, which show that despite our efforts, there remains a clear dominance of English. However, the data also suggest a changing, more diverse reality, and they form the basis for some suggestions for fostering multilingualism in academic journals.

**Keywords:** global academic publishing ♦ multilingual scholars ♦ language choice ♦ English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP) ♦ Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) ♦ linguistic diversity

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## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In global academic publishing, English holds a particular place. It has been called “a global language” (Canagarajah 1996: 443), “the Latin of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (Altbach 2004: 9); “the academic lingua franca” (Duszak & Lewkowicz 2008: 108; Lillis, Hewings, Vladimirov & Curry 2010: 111); “the language of international scholarship” (Li & Flowerdew 2009: 279); “the global medium of published academic writing” (Lillis 2012: 696); and the “default academic language” (Bocanegra-Valle 2014: 65). All of these refer to English as the monolith against which other academic languages must stand up. Indeed, publishing in English can allow for a wider and more international readership, publications in English can facilitate international cooperation, and most top-tier academic journals publish research articles only in English (Canagarajah 1996; Duszak & Lewkowicz 2008; Li & Flowerdew 2009). In his now-classic article on academic publishing, Canagarajah (1996) posed the dichotomy between *center* and *periphery*, where the center comprises Europe and North America and the periphery is the “Third World”<sup>2</sup> (see also Altbach 2004; Lillis 2012, and, with a specific focus on publications, Salager-Meyer 2014). While many of Canagarajah’s observations, such as comments on practices that relied upon physical mail and the absence of the internet, may now seem dated, the core of the questions he posed is still very current: he argued that academic publishing practices are inherently ideological and that due to many factors, including technological and economic ones, journals and publishing houses are concentrated in certain areas (the center), and that these areas tend to be English-speaking countries. As a result, the discourses, genres, and rhetorical conventions of these communities end up being perceived as paradigmatic for academic dissemination, and “center-based disciplinary communities may suppress the knowledge of periphery communities through the conventions and regulations of their publication practices” (Canagarajah 1996: 443). While the internet, exchanges via email, and online publishing opportunities have reduced the exclusion and isolation of peripheral communities, the hegemony of English-language publications over any other language remains a strong influence in scholars’ choice of publication venues, topics, and styles of scholarly debates.

Since Canagarajah’s work, many other researchers have written about the pressure to publish academic articles in English and have discussed what drives this push (Curry & Lillis 2004; Ferguson 2007; Ferguson, Pérez-Llantada & Plo 2011; Flowerdew 2008; 2013; López-Navarro, Moreno, Quintanilla & Rey-Rocha 2015; Mortensen & Haberland 2012). Across the literature, there is wide agreement that one of the most frequent motivations to publish in English is a desire

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<sup>1</sup> The three authors have discussed together the general structure and contents of the paper. Di Ferrante drafted all sections, which Bernstein and Gironzetti added to and revised.

<sup>2</sup> We use Canagarajah’s term here. Canagarajah himself admits that the term Third World is “problematic” (1996: 442).

to disseminate research to as wide an audience as possible (Harbord 2018; Li & Flowerdew 2009; Uzuner 2008); an article in English can have international reach, as many scholars and students have a working knowledge of English (Mortensen & Haberland 2012). Yet, this does not entirely explain why, for instance, an Italian-speaking author who completed a PhD in Italy and is working in Italy would write an article in English about Italian L2 pedagogy, when any scholar who would use the research would speak Italian and not necessarily English. A second, prominent motivation for publishing in English, however, is that scholars, often university professors or those in pursuit of professorships, establish their careers on the basis of the quantity and impact of their publications (Jiménez-Contreras, Delgado López-Cózar, Ruiz-Pérez & Fernández 2002; Lillis, Hewings, Vladimirou & Curry 2010; López-Navarro et al. 2015; Uzuner 2008), and high-impact, international publications are the basis on which scholars can obtain a better salary, promotion, and financial support for their research, benefits that scholars tend to associate with publishing in English (Ferguson 2007). Additionally, by reaching larger audiences, English-language publications have more chances than non-English works to be cited by a higher number of scholars (Curry & Lillis 2004), increasing individual metrics, such as Google's h-index, which many universities consider in promotion. The effect might be captured in a post-globalization version of the old adage: Publish (internationally, that is, in English) or perish.

The prevalence of English can be observed throughout the globe in the many studies on academic publishing, from multiple perspectives. There are often two vantage points to publishing in English as an Additional Language (EAL): the editors' / reviewers' perspectives and those of the authors. Longitudinal studies on paper drafts (Flowerdew 2000; Lillis et al. 2010) undergoing multiple rounds of peer and editorial reviews have elucidated how "linguistic-stylistic and organizational-structural" (Flowerdew 2000: 142) aspects in EAL writers' papers are often identified as problematic. Moreover, reviewers often ask that the authors have their paper proofread by "native speakers" of English (Pérez-Llantada, Plo & Ferguson 2011). Authors report being as frustrated by these comments as by the constraint to write in a language in which they are not completely proficient (see for example Bardi 2015 for Romanian researchers; and Flowerdew 2000 who analyzed the publishing process of a Chinese junior researcher).

While nearly every study on international publishing confirms the increasing importance of English, some research also underlines how local languages are not completely discarded in academia, as in the case of Polish (Duszak & Lewkowicz 2008), Italian (Calaresu 2011), Spanish (Gea-Valor, Rey-Rocha & Moreno 2014), and German (Schluer 2014). The niche that local languages keep in academic publishing can be large or very tiny, on the basis of the discipline (in the humanities the ratio of English publications to local language is smaller), the research topic, the target audience, and authors' language competence. Yet, the idea of "holding a niche" for languages like Polish or German complicates Canagarajah's taxonomy of *center* and *periphery*.

The above-mentioned languages all belong to the Euro-American context, the so-called center, yet publishing in these languages has still been greatly eroded by English. In their longitudinal study, Lillis et al. (2010) observed how even citations constitute a powerful force toward “Englishization” (Schluer 2014). They examined drafts and reviews of articles by authors from Slovakia, Hungary, Spain, and Portugal submitted to an English-medium journal. They report that one of the anonymous reviewers of one of those articles commented:

As a general comment the style needs to be polished. In any instance sentences follow each other without logical connections and the authors *often refer to other publications that may not be available to the ordinary unilingual or even bilingual North American reader*. By themselves these two points make it difficult to evaluate the results or the comments passed. (Lillis et al. 2010: 119, emphasis in the original, i.e. Lillis et al.)

The “other publications” they referred to were a paper written in Hungarian, a language of Europe, or the “center”, and published in an international journal. Thinking about other European languages raises similar questions: Spanish is the dominant language of Spain, a country in the “center”, but what about the Spanish of Latin America? Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages and the language of instruction at hundreds of universities around the world, but is this reflected in global Spanish publications? And while Italy is a major European country, how centered is it? How many international scholars read works written in Italian? We believe that the map of center vs. periphery of academic publishing is characterized by an in-progress, changing geography, yet the push for English publications and the concentration of publishing into a few academic centers is not without consequences: “Without the publishing industry opening up to ‘off-networked’ scholars, the production of knowledge in the center will be narcissistic. It is ongoing dialogue and negotiation between conflicting intellectual paradigms and discourse communities that fosters scholarly development” (Canagarajah 1996: 463).

While one solution could be for publishers and authors to take a stand by simply publishing in languages-other-than-English, the material costs in terms of readership, impact factors, and promotion loom large. As editors, however, we see a third way. More than five years ago, we envisioned an intentionally international and trilingual journal, in which translations and multilingual communication are implemented to foster multilingualism while still carving a space as an international publication targeted at an international readership. We wanted to allow any scholar who is able to write in Italian, Spanish, or English to publish their research in one of the three languages while at the same time allowing readers to access their keywords, abstracts, and biographical information in any of these languages. We also wanted for *E-JournALL*’s articles to reach an international readership, beyond the readers whom they normally would have reached, and thus envisioned an open-access journal in which each issue would include content in all three languages. With these goals in mind, in 2014, we founded *E-JournALL*, *EuroAmerican Journal of*

*Applied Linguistics and Languages*, a web-based, open-access, trilingual applied linguistics journal.

Four years and eight published issues later, we examine here the founding of the journal, the language practices of the editorial team, and the language practices of the authors who have published with us. Using publication data, citation counts, and data from a survey distributed to the authors who published in *E-JournALL*, we analyze and discuss the challenges of guaranteeing trilingual representation—in (almost) each issue as well as in our internal and external communications—at a time when the push to publish in English is so great. We reflect on what this push means for our authors, both those who choose to publish in English, the majority of whom identify as speakers of English as an Additional Language (EAL), as well as those who publish in Italian and Spanish, the majority of whom identify as first-language (L1) speakers of those languages. We also reflect on what the drive to publish in English means for the editorial team, looking at our decisions in terms of whose language standards, formatting, and generic conventions we adhere to and how heavily we copy-edit the authors' work. We end with thoughts about the challenges of multilingual scholarly publishing and some aims for the future. In addition to reflecting upon the operations and outcomes of our own journal, our intent is to provide details of our experience that may serve others interested in launching a similar journal or in understanding how a multilingual journal in an open-access system works. Finally, we hope to contribute, with this reflection on our practices and the challenges we face, to the ongoing debate on how to foster multilingualism in global academic publishing.

## **2. Academic publishing and English-centric practices**

Publishing is an essential component of academics' work and careers, and the idea of English as the international academic language must be understood in relation to multilingual scholars, their geographies, the variety of languages they speak, the cultures they are immersed in, their own historical and social backgrounds, academic and rhetorical traditions, etc. All these elements inform the way people think, speak, and write, in addition to the books and articles they read and those that they cite. The push to funnel this diversity into one academic language, along with standardized organization of the texts (and therefore of the thoughts and ideas) has two major consequences: On the one hand, it enriches enormously global research and knowledge and allows local research to enter the broader international scholarship (see Flowerdew 2001; Hyland 2016; Liu 2004). On the other hand, it raises questions of “linguistic injustice” (Van Parijs 2002; see also Clavero 2010), where there exists an asymmetry between first-language and additional-language speakers of the academic language, namely English. This opposition complexifies the center vs. periphery dichotomy and therefore adds fuel to the flames of the availability (or lack thereof) and accessibility of resources.

Within this global(ized) context, two primary factors seem to play a role in guiding authors' academic publishing decisions, particularly in the case of multilingual scholars and scholars from non-*inner circle* countries (in Kachru's terms, 1985): academic career requirements and "linguistic medium and related (or implied) geographical location" (Lillis et al. 2010: 112). These two factors are strongly interconnected as different institutions and countries have different sets of rules that link publications to career advancement and, depending on the country, scholars negotiate between the push to internationalization (i.e., to publish in English) and the "responsibility to disseminate research and analysis in local languages" (Altbach 2009: 25).<sup>3</sup> Decisions regarding how and even what to write about are imposed upon academics by "policies on what is or is not an acceptable publication to keep one's job or make career progress" (Harbord 2018: 89). Academic institutions, and sometimes even countries, act as what Lillis (2012) called *centering institutions*, which

tend to be highly centripetal in nature [...] [and] include immediate centres, such as departments, faculties or universities which regulate (more weakly or more strongly) what counts as scholarly work and, in particular, the *value* of different kinds of scholarly publishing (text type, specific category of journal, etc.) (Lillis 2012: 102, our emphasis)

Importantly, that value often determines scholars' possibilities of career advancement. In this sense, all scholars, regardless of field or country, adhere to policies about publishing, some implicit, some explicit. The publication requirements in Italy, for instance, are established by the ANVUR, the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of University and Research, and represent a good example of explicit policy and the extent to which centering institutions inform scholars' publication choices.

In Italy, ANVUR acts as a centering institution by several means, including by publishing two lists: one comprising all scientific journals (local and international), and a second, shorter list, of academic journals considered high-profile scientific publications and given the *Classe A* ranking. *Classe A* journals are those that meet a set of requirements including publishing full-length research articles, only publishing articles that have been peer reviewed, having an international editorial board, a code of ethics, etc. Moreover, the Italian agency for the National Scientific Habilitation (ASN) sets a series of requirements for academics to get the *abilitazione* (habilitation or qualification) needed to access higher-rank university positions (Associate and Full Professors). These requirements, called *mediane*, establish, for each disciplinary area, a minimum number of published articles and books, as well as a minimum number of articles published in *Classe A* journals. In this context, scholars who want to proceed in their academic careers can only do that

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<sup>3</sup> Research on international and local publishing in Italy has shown two opposite tendencies: on the one hand, the shift to English, even by many Italian international journals and, on the other hand, the use of Italian for research targeted to local scholars and professionals (Bondi 2009; Calaresu 2011; Giannoni 2008).

by also publishing in *Classe A* journals. Incidentally, many *Classe A* journals publish in English, and in some disciplines (e.g., the economic sciences), *Classe A* journals publishing in Italian are now virtually non-existent, underscoring the pull of English, even in centering institutions in Italy. A study by van Weijen (2012) found that between 1996 and 2011, the ratio of journal articles published by Italian researchers in English to those published in Italian tripled, and this tendency has been confirmed by studies based on questionnaires to Italian academics (Guardiano, Favilla & Calaresu 2007).

The Italian model is similar to those currently used in other European countries including ANECA in Spain ([www.aneca.es](http://www.aneca.es)); HCÉRES in France ([www.hceres.fr](http://www.hceres.fr)); NVAO in The Netherlands ([www.nvao.net](http://www.nvao.net)); or HSV in Sweden ([www.hsv.se](http://www.hsv.se)). While each of these institutions regulate scholars' academic practices differently from one another, they all do it by exerting pressures towards the center of the academic publishing map. Yet, the effects of these centripetal forces are also observable in English-speaking countries. In the United States, for example, scholars have access to a wide variety of resources, including scholarly publications in languages other-than-English, but at the same time are required, more or less explicitly depending on their institution and discipline standards, to publish in journals with the highest impact factor, which frequently only publish articles in English. It was in the face of these pressures that *E-JournALL* was born.

### 3. The birth of a journal

In 2013, we (Di Ferrante and Gironzetti) were pursuing an American PhD in applied linguistics at Texas A&M University-Commerce after having earned doctorates in Italy and in Spain, respectively. We bonded over a few common concerns: First, that in applied linguistics in general, and language teaching and learning in particular, there was not enough communication between scholars working in different languages, nor between researchers and language educators. We were also concerned with the ease of access to scholarly publications for language teachers who, without university affiliations, may only have access to a limited, language- and context-specific set of publications and resources to inform their teaching practices. We were concerned, too, with access to scholarly publications for scholars located in peripheral areas (Canagarajah 1996). Even with broadband internet to bring journals to anyone's doorstep, many elite journals are locked behind expensive paywalls. Without a university library subscription, these publications are prohibitively expensive to access, and many universities outside of inner circle countries do not subscribe to a wide range of journals from other countries. (While writing this article, Di Ferrante, who is affiliated with two different Italian universities, had to ask Bernstein and Gironzetti, in the United States, to retrieve articles that were not available through either of the two Italian university library systems.) Finally, we saw scholars in the United States reading only in English, and scholars in

Italy navigating the tension between publishing for a local audience in Italian, and an international one in English.<sup>4</sup>

In order to contribute to solving these issues, we (Di Ferrante and Gironzetti) decided to found a journal that could bring researchers and language educators from different countries and traditions together. We identified internationalization, open accessibility, and multilingualism as the pillars of the journal. The journal would work as a virtual bridge between Europe and the Americas, among European countries themselves, and among research written in English, Italian, and Spanish, the three languages in which we work. We knew that English would be one of the preferred working languages, because of its privileged position in academia (Ammon 2001; Belcher 2007; Curry & Lillis 2004; Ferguson 2007), but we also wanted to support the dissemination of scholarly content by Italian and Spanish speakers and to counter the hegemony of English, contributing to the preservation of languages other than English as languages of knowledge and research. Finally, we wanted to ensure that everyone—even those unaffiliated with universities or at universities without access to specific databases or journals—could access the articles, and thus decided on an online-only, independent, open-access publication model.

We read books and blogs, watched tutorials, and asked for help from friends, mentors, and colleagues. We realized right away that in order to accomplish all these goals, we needed more people: translators, proofreaders, and an editorial board of established scholars. We also invited an associate editor (Bernstein), an L1 speaker of English with working knowledge of Italian and Spanish, to join us. Our trilingual journal would thus have three editors who could work in three languages, but who could each specialize in one. We built a website, designed a logo, established a submission and peer-review workflow, and, in September 2013, sent emails in three languages to 41 senior scholars in the field of applied linguistics from North America, Spain, Latin America, and Italy. We introduced ourselves and explained our project, a “free access, web-based, multilingual journal that is meant to be a scholarly agora for researchers and practitioners from Europe, United States, and Central and Southern America.” We hoped for an editorial board of ten. To our surprise, we received 40 positive replies. We took this as a sign that we were on the right path.

Fourteen months and countless hours of work later, in November 2014, the first issue of *E-JournALL* was published. It contained nine papers (one editorial, seven articles, and one review): three in Italian, four in English, and two in Spanish, written by scholars from Europe and the United States. Four years and eight issues later, *E-JournALL* continues to publish peer-reviewed research and teaching articles from different countries, in any of our three languages. Additionally,

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<sup>4</sup> In Spanish-speaking countries, the question of whether to publish in Spanish or English is a bit more complex, as both are international languages, yet they do not have the same status in academic publishing.



all abstracts, keywords, and author biographies are translated and published in all three languages. This way, we guarantee, on the one hand, that a large audience can access the content of the articles and, on the other hand, that authors gain visibility in a variety of contexts. For example, a monolingual English-speaking scholar may discover, through the abstract, that other scholars in Italy, Spain, or elsewhere are working on their same topic and, through the short biographical note, could gather information and contact the authors to explore international collaboration.

We have learned that having the three languages represented does not mean reaching a balance among, for example, the number of publications in the three languages. In the following sections we reflect on what representation has meant for the journal. We examine the languages of our practices, both in terms of how the three languages are represented in the articles we publish and in terms of how we as editors handle communication among us, with our teams, and on the website.

#### **4. A critical look at our internal language practices**

From the beginning, we have worked to maintain representation of *E-JournALL*'s working languages on three levels: the public level, the internal level, and the private level. In the public level, the level visible on the website and *E-JournALL* social media, we have achieved the most success in balancing languages. On our website, the three languages are equally represented: visitors can access any content about the journal in their language of choice and authors can submit their manuscripts in any of the three languages. We also guarantee that emails, peer reviews, and editorial letters will be sent to them in their language of choice. The same levels of language representation are maintained in all social media posts, which combine the three languages whenever the post is related to *E-JournALL* articles, initiatives, or call for papers, and we alternate the order of the languages based on the target audience or topic at hand.

On the level of internal communication—communication among editors, translation and proofreading teams, editorial board, and guest editors—the language distribution varies. In formal announcements via mass emails, we send each message in all three languages. In emails to a specific team—Spanish proofreaders, say—and in one-on-one communication, we use targeted communication in the language of the interlocutor. However, in many cases, particularly when we are constrained by time, a group email is sent to multiple teams or to the editorial board in just English; in looking back over our communication history, we have not done the same in Italian or Spanish, despite the fact that the English editorial team does not outnumber any of the other teams.

The third level, the level of private communication among the editors, is by far the least balanced, leaning most heavily toward English. Yet, it is also by far the most translingual. A review of emails between the three editors shows that while greetings, small talk, and leave-takings are usually in Spanish and Italian, most business happens in English. Even during initial planning, when both

editors were Italian speakers, we used English-heavy translanguaging. For instance, going back to our notes from planning the website (Figure 1), the editors took notes in English with Italian code-mixing: “foto con bio” (picture with bio sketch) on the top left, “siti amici” (suggested links), “trad. titolo” (title translation) on the bottom right, and the translingual “stabile always” (always fixed) or “First Nome/Last Nome” (first name / last name).

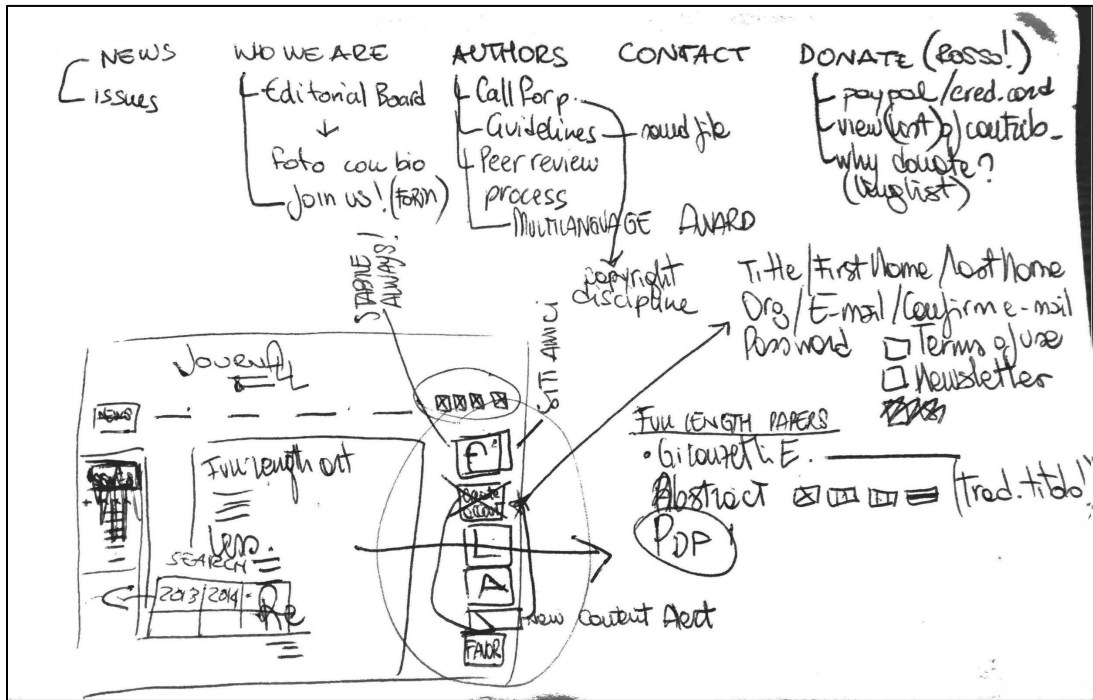


Figure 1. Planning *E-JournALL*'s website. Early 2013.

The notes in Figure 1 are written by two different hands, and they both code mix. The same is true for our oral communication. In a Skype call about preparing this piece of writing, Di Ferrante and Bernstein began by chatting about summer plans in Italian with some English mixed in, but switched to English for the business of the article, because, as Di Ferrante put it, “I think about linguistics in English.”

Even in our internal communication, we feel the pull of what Bakhtin (1981) called “centripetal forces” or the pull toward unification and centralization of language, in this case toward English. In our external communication, with the public and with our authors, it is only through explicit counter-forces on our part, such as translating all abstracts and releasing calls for papers in English, Italian, and Spanish, that we maintain representation of the three languages.

Finally, it does not elude us that the writing of this very article happened in English. Part of the reason for this is simply that English is our best collective academic language: it is the language that three of our five PhDs were completed in, it is by far the predominant language in content-

related exchanges among the three of us, and it is the prevalent language of our past individual publications. However, another reason may be that although the call for papers for this special issue welcomed articles in any language, the call was in English. English is also the only language used on the journal's page and in its author submission information, and English is the language of most of the articles published in the journal. Thus, both in the broader context in which this article was conceived and written and in the very local context of this call and our own linguistic habits, the pull toward English was strong enough that we did not even consider writing this in another language.

### 5. A critical look at the languages of our published articles and our authors

This pull is also clearly present for authors who publish in our journal. As of November 2018, of our published articles, the number of English articles is equal to the number of Spanish and Italian articles put together. Table 1 summarizes the number of papers (including articles and reviews) per language that were published in the eight issues of *E-JournALL*.

**Table 1.**  
Languages of *E-JournALL*'s published papers

Language	Number of papers
English	31
Italian	17
Spanish	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>

The linguistic distribution of our published articles reflects, first and foremost, the linguistic distribution of the submissions we receive. Of the 157 articles and reviews that have been submitted to our journal, English-language submissions are almost three times more numerous than those written in Spanish or Italian. And because the decision whether to accept an article for publication is only based on its quality, supported by the editors' assessment and the peer reviewers' evaluations, we cannot control the distribution by language of accepted articles. In addition to the dominance of English, publications in Italian are more numerous than those in Spanish. Along with the pull of English discussed above, these proportions might also be explained in part by the publication of a special issue on the *Pragmatics of Italian as L2/LS*, where more Italian articles were published than Spanish ones in the special issue on *Spanish as a Heritage Language*, which, despite being about Spanish, is a field dominated by English publications. Yet, we can and do actively work to influence the language of submissions. The data in Table 1 reflect the outcomes of explicit multilingual policy decisions: trilingual calls for papers, selection of

topics for special issues with rotating relevance in each language, and solicitation of language-specific book reviews.

Beyond the language of writing, we were also curious as to the languages of articles that our authors were *citing*, what Lillis et al. (2010) referred to as the “*geolinguistics* of citation” (113). This was not data that we had collected as we published, so in order to quantify the publication language of cited works, we recorded the language of each bibliographical reference in all the articles and reviews published so far, based on the language of the reference’s title, and in a few ambiguous cases, by locating the text itself.<sup>5</sup> In the eight issues of the journal published to date, 2256 works were cited. As shown in Table 2, citations were made to publications in nine languages, with the three languages of the Journal being the most frequent, as might be expected. However, almost three quarters of the cited works are in English, another indication of its centripetal pull in academic publishing.

**Table 2.**  
Languages of the publications cited in *E-JournALL*

<b>Language</b>	<b>Number of cited publications</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
English	1680	74.47%
Italian	331	14.67%
Spanish	203	9%
German	18	0.85%
French	17	0.8%
Portuguese	3	0.13%
Latin	2	0.09%
Norwegian	1	0.04%
Russian	1	0.04%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2256</b>	<b>100%</b>

Yet, when taken together with the data about the language of *E-JournALL*’s publications, we see a glimmer of hope. While the ratio of English to Italian or Spanish citations is 3:1 (for each three cited works in English, there is one cited work in Italian or Spanish), the ratio of English to Italian

<sup>5</sup> As we counted all the entries, there might be duplicates, as two or more different authors might have cited the same paper, but we were interested in the total number of citations.

or Spanish papers published is smaller—just 2:1 (for each two published papers written in English, one paper is written in Italian or Spanish). While this difference in ratio is slight, it might be seen as an indication that we have moved the needle toward greater representation of non-English languages: while our authors are citing in English, they are writing in Spanish and Italian as well.

**6. A critical look at the languages of our authors**

The languages in which authors submit their work is a strong predictor of the languages of the articles that we eventually publish. For this reason, we were also curious about our authors’ working languages. We wondered, for instance, whether our Spanish- or Italian-speaking authors were actually submitting in Spanish or Italian. Because these were also not data we had been collecting, we sent a survey to each author who had published a paper in *E-JournALL*, with the goal of obtaining information that would allow us to see the distribution of L1 and L2 speakers in relation to the language of their publications. Of 76 authors, 58 completed the survey; the data are summarized in Table 3 and Table 4.

**Table 3.**  
Language of published papers as authors’ L1 or L2

		Language of the published paper					
		English		Italian		Spanish	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Authors publishing in L1	N = 35	13	39.4%	14	100%	8	72.7%
Authors publishing in L2	N = 23	20	60.6%	-	-	3	27.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>N = 58</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4.**  
Authors’ self-reported L1 by language of their published paper

Author’s self-reported L1	Language of the paper		
	English	Italian	Spanish
English	11*	-	1
English, Spanish	2*	-	-
Spanish	8	-	8*
Italian	7	13*	2
Italian, Spanish	1	-	-
Italian, Hungarian	-	1*	-
German	1	-	-
Latvian	1	-	-
Portuguese	1	-	-
Tagalog	1	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>

\*Denotes papers published in author’s first language

As shown in Table 3, based on the 58 responses that we obtained, just 13 out of 33 (39.4%) authors who published in English self-reported as speakers of English as a first language, while 60.6% reported speaking English as an Additional Language (EAL). In contrast, 100% (14 out of 14) of authors who published in Italian and 72.7% (8 out of 11) of those who published in Spanish reported being first-language speakers of those languages.

Table 4 outlines the relation between the language of the published papers with the detail of the authors' self-reported first language(s). It is worth noting that 16 (grey-highlighted numbers) of the 20 authors with EAL who chose to write in English report being first-language speakers of Italian or Spanish. Despite having chosen a multilingual journal to disseminate their research and having been given the possibility to publish in their native language, these authors chose to publish in English.

### **7. A critical look at our handling of EAL authors' work**

While we want to give authors the opportunity to publish in any of our working languages and their varieties (we allow for spelling conventions from multiple Englishes, as well as Spain's and Latin America's varieties of Spanish) regardless of their first language, when EAL authors choose to submit an article to *E-JournALL* written in English, there can be challenges. The most persistent of these is the question of how much to intervene in the rhetorical structure, word choice, and narration sequence of our authors' writing as we prepare their accepted articles for publication and for our international readership. Having a multilingual and international team of proofreaders becomes important here, as an English proofreader who has working knowledge of an author's primary language can better assist in editing their work and making their ideas clear for a broad public. As editors, we make a conscious effort to invest our time in working with authors on a paper that has potential but which, due to issues of language, structure, or rhetoric, for example, may not convey concepts as clearly as it could. Since we are aware of the disadvantages and frustration that many EAL speakers experience when publishing in English (Ferguson et al. 2011), we begin working with authors even before sending the papers out for review, in order to mitigate negative comments about EAL use.

Yet, it is not always clear how much we should intervene. On one hand, "L2 mistakes do have the potential to interfere with clarity and obscure meaning" (Flowerdew 2000: 145) and the same is true for cultural connotations and pragmatics: we are concerned primarily with publishing high-quality research that can be disseminated as much as possible, in a clear, polished, and unambiguous manner. On the other hand, we wonder whether, in Swales's words, "there is anything we can do to modify, where necessary, the attitudes of NS [i.e., native speaker] scholars, researchers, and students so that they are more tolerant of non-native speakers, more willing to accept them into their discourse communities and more aware of the extra burdens which they

carry” (Swales 1990: 107). In most cases in which we *have* decided to edit an author’s prose, we often receive emails from authors expressing their gratitude, saying that we have succeeded in making their intentions and ideas clearer than they themselves could have done. However, we have also received pushback from authors who felt that we were delegitimizing and undermining their variety of English, in which their paper was originally written.

Thus, there is an unanswered question about the balance between honoring the identity of the authors and meeting the expectations, in terms of language, style, and structure, of English-as-a-first (and perhaps, -only) -language readers. Should the language of these papers be a lingua franca, perhaps distant from a native variety yet intelligible (Jenkins 2000; 2006; Smith 1992), or should it be closer to a native variety, which may be perceived as more prestigious and may also be less work for English-speaking readers to understand (and cite)? So far, and not without hesitation, we opted for the latter, but we are still striving to find a better approach to ensure that our authors’ writerly identities and rhetorical styles do not get lost in translation or proofreading.

## 7. Conclusions

The making of a journal, and particularly a multilingual journal, is inherently a political process. While the prefix *multi-* expresses the togetherness and diversity of three languages contributing to knowledge production and dissemination in an international arena, the same prefix also hides the identities that do not find their space there. This is most evident in the gap between the languages that our authors report having published in (English, Italian, Spanish, and a few in Portuguese, German, and French) and the many languages that our authors consider their first languages (English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and French, but also Latvian, Hungarian, and Tagalog). This gap reveals a universe of languages and cultures far larger than the ones we offer with our journal. Those languages and their speakers’ identity get lost in part when we constrain publication to even our three languages, and when the reviewers, and then the proofreaders make suggestions for additions, changes, cuts, and rephrasing.

In short, making a multilingual journal is not easy. We collaborate with about 40 hard-working people who work between and across languages—on a voluntary basis, as a labor of love—and there is still always so much more we could do. We have played with the idea of translating whole articles, but that challenge seems insurmountable. The farthest we have pushed the boundaries has been with our last special issue (December 2018), for which we invited articles that translanguaged within themselves, in any languages the authors speak, and have managed to find reviewers who could evaluate these submissions based on their quality and impact, rather than by the “nativeness” of their authors.

The reflection we have carried out for this paper, based on an examination of our practices, our publication data, and surveys of our authors, has spurred debates among us and forced us to call into question our own assumptions on the work we have been doing. Prior to this work, we always talked about achieving “near-equality” or “balance” among *E-JournALL* languages. We have since realized that “representation” is instead what we were aiming for and what we have achieved.

At first, realizing the extent to which English prevailed in comparison with Italian and Spanish, we wondered if we had given the appropriate consideration and support to all three languages. We believe that we can do better, that sometimes English represents a short-cut, an easy way to save time, but that by saving time we lose richness and shades that only diversity can really offer. Yet, as an independent journal, not attached to any university or publisher, which does not take money from any institution, which operates internationally, with three different languages and authors from all over the world, we are certainly contributing to a multilingual academic community and to disseminating knowledge from different perspectives. As we continue our work, we see it as our continued responsibility to engage in scholarly debates about global publishing and knowledge dissemination, to create opportunities to reason and discuss, and to find ways to give a voice to authors from different languages and cultures rather than simply following the current toward standardization.

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