Editorial

Belonging to a Community of Research Practice

Belonging to a community of research practice as applied linguists or as academics in any field is part of our professional life. Being an academic implies, inter alia, creativity in advancing knowledge in the disciplines, which reflects in writing journal articles, presenting papers in conferences, doing research, teaching, tutoring students and publishing. Globally, every higher education institution requires that academics publish in prominent journals to make their work and their institution visible and influence their professional field. However, the questions that arise concerning academic production are how do communities of research support academic production?, How do higher education institutions help novice researchers develop academic writing competences?, What is the place of writing within research? How do institutions foster quality publication?

Rowena Murray (2012) shared similar concerns about the writing and publishing dimensions of research productivity and how writers´ understanding of the nature of journal article writing can be developed. She believes that although the imperative to publish is widely accepted, we need to know more about the process by which it is achieved. She claims that higher education institutions assume that novice researchers produce fewer publications than experienced researchers do, but there has been no exploration of how their writing practices develop. Finally, she proposes that in order to learn about academic writing, we can listen to academics´ accounts of how they work to meet research assessment targets.

Being a journal editor myself, my experience includes mentoring authors who struggle to have the manuscript submitted for publication approved. It also has to do with explaining novice and experienced researchers the subtleties of submitting the article. In my dual role as editor and academic writing instructor, aware of the challenges of writing to publish, I decided to offer an 11-session writing for publication course every two years from 2009-2013 in order to establish an academic community that supported the writing process of many researchers interested in publishing. The outcomes of the courses report thirteen articles published, 10 in national and 3 in international journals and the valuable writing experience for the participants and for me as instructor. Some of the reflections from the participants are having to think about their audience, getting to know the structure of the article for the journal selected, and carefully selecting the academic language required (Clavijo, 2014).

In addition to the above aspects, writing journal articles implies knowing and following the code of ethics for research and for publications. Novice researchers might not be aware of the ethical regulations in academic journals. The *Colombian Applied Linguistics journal* is inviting researchers and authors to know its code of ethics for best publication practices (*Declaración de buenas prácticas editoriales y*

normas éticas) that is included in this issue for the first time (p. 325-326). Our institution as a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) gives emphasis to ethical practices.

I propose to develop communities of writing practice by means of communities of research practice at our higher education institutions. Communities of practice, as Wenger (1998) puts it, are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Thus, if we work on creating healthy productive environments within our communities of research in higher education institutions we should possibly facilitate and successfully develop our research and publication agendas.

References

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