

Plurilingual Scholarly Writing for Publication: Politics, Practices, and Pedagogies

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Agenda

- Researcher Intro
- Context
- Frame
- 2015 MM Case Study Findings
- 2019 Qualitative Case Study Initial Findings & Discussion
- Questions for Consideration
- Future Avenues
- Chat

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Publish **in English** or Perish



&

ERPP

The 'publish or perish' adage has been revised to '**publish in English or perish**' in many parts of the world. The importance of publishing in English even when that is not the researcher's native language is seen in Asia, Latin America and Europe (Englander & Uzuner, 2013; Flowerdew, 2013; Hyland, 2015).

The pressures to publish research in English have grown with changing economic ideologies that prize the globalization of knowledge and the so-called **knowledge economy**.

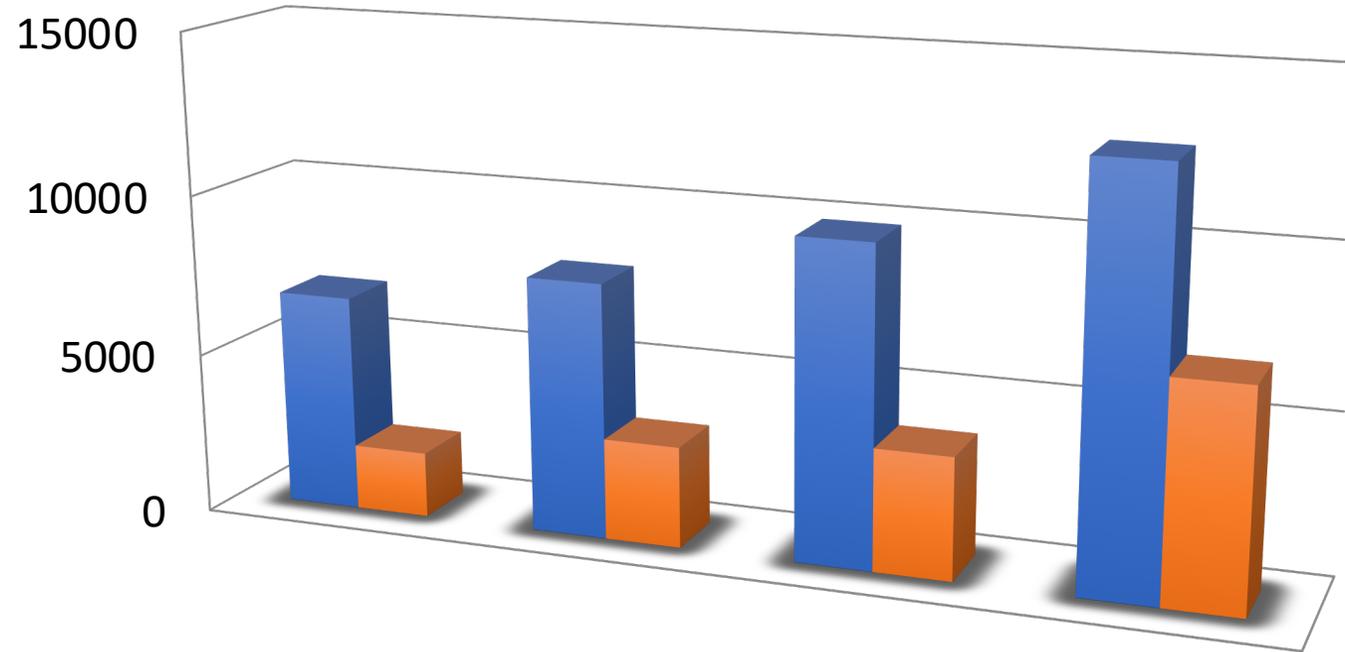
In this presentation, I discuss [how this] research publishing world...affects nations, universities and individual researchers...[and the impact of] growing efforts to mount pedagogical programs that support researchers who use English as an additional language (EAL) — whom we henceforth call **plurilingual users of EAL** — so that they can publish their research findings in international journals.

The multiplicity of such pedagogical efforts has created a burgeoning field called **English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP)**.

The Case: MEX U is classified as one of the best options for higher education in the Spanish-speaking world.



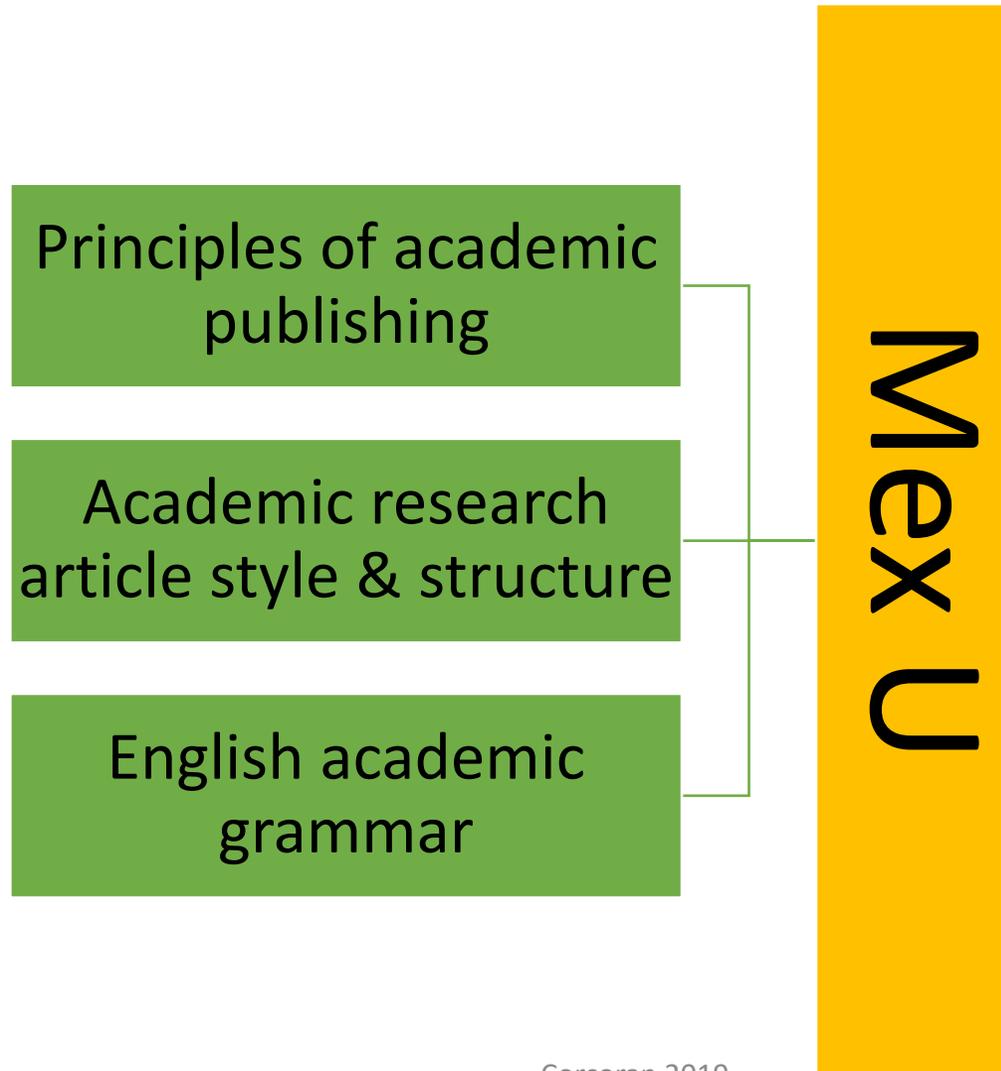
Comparison between total and “visible” scientific products at MEX U



	1995-1999	2000-2005	2006-2011	2012-2015
■ Total Scientific Productivity	6741	7926	9856	12,752
■ Articles published in indexed journals	2027	3136	3779	6755

Scholarly writing for publication course at MEX U

Three pillars of the MEX U ERPP Course



MEX U Course Content

Week 1: Principles of Academic Publishing	Week 2: Structure and Style of a Research Article	Week 3: Academic Grammar
Abstracts	Overview of structure	Parts of Speech
Ethical issues	Introduction	Word Order
Readership and Audience	Literature Review	Verb tenses and aspect
Citation and influence	Methods	Sentence structures
Citations	Results/Discussion Conclusion	S-V agreement
References and bibliographies	Concision and coherence	Active versus Passive Voice
Submission cover letter	Figures and Tables	Punctuation
	Summarizing, paraphrasing, synthesizing	Common sentence errors

Course Implementation

- Instructors are science editors, applied linguists, EAP teachers
- 3-week & 2-week intensive (40 hours per week)
- Completed manuscript PRIOR to beginning course
- Individual feedback on manuscript PRIOR to course
- During-course activities include: lecture, workshop, individual analysis of manuscript, individual consultation with instructors on manuscript
- Visit by Editor of a major journal in the discipline

2015 Case Study Research Questions

- What are Latin American scientists' experiences with scholarly writing for publication?
- What are these scientists' **attitudes** towards English?
- What are these scientists' **challenges** with achieving publication in English?
- What is the **impact** of an intensive ERPP course in addressing their scholarly writing challenges?

Overview of Participants

	Post-course Survey	Semi-structured Interviews	Average # of Publications in English
Faculty Supervisors (Biological Sciences)	17	9	11
Graduate Students (Biological Sciences)	38	20	1
Scientific Journal Editors		7	N/A
Total participants for each phase of data collection	55	47	

Findings from 2015 Case Study: Attitudes towards English

Language use in knowledge production

Spanish

English

National grant applications

Conversation re: data and analysis

Ease, accuracy, and/or complexity of expression

Disseminate research to national or regional audience

Future remuneration from merit-pay bodies

Academic advancement: graduation; hiring

Recognition and status leading to potential professional fulfillment

Connection to international audience

Attitudes towards English

Functional-Rational-Natural

"English is used for writing science. We must learn how to write in English in order to be understood by other scientists and be a good scientist. It's like learning a type of computer software. We have to learn to write in English as part of the job."

Resistance

"It's the language of our imperial neighbours. I use it but I don't like it. We should be able to use our own language to talk about our issues."

Bias

"They send back a message saying check your English and re-submit...when we submit the same article with an English co-author they accept with no question..."

Perceptions of bias against plurilingual scientists at international journals

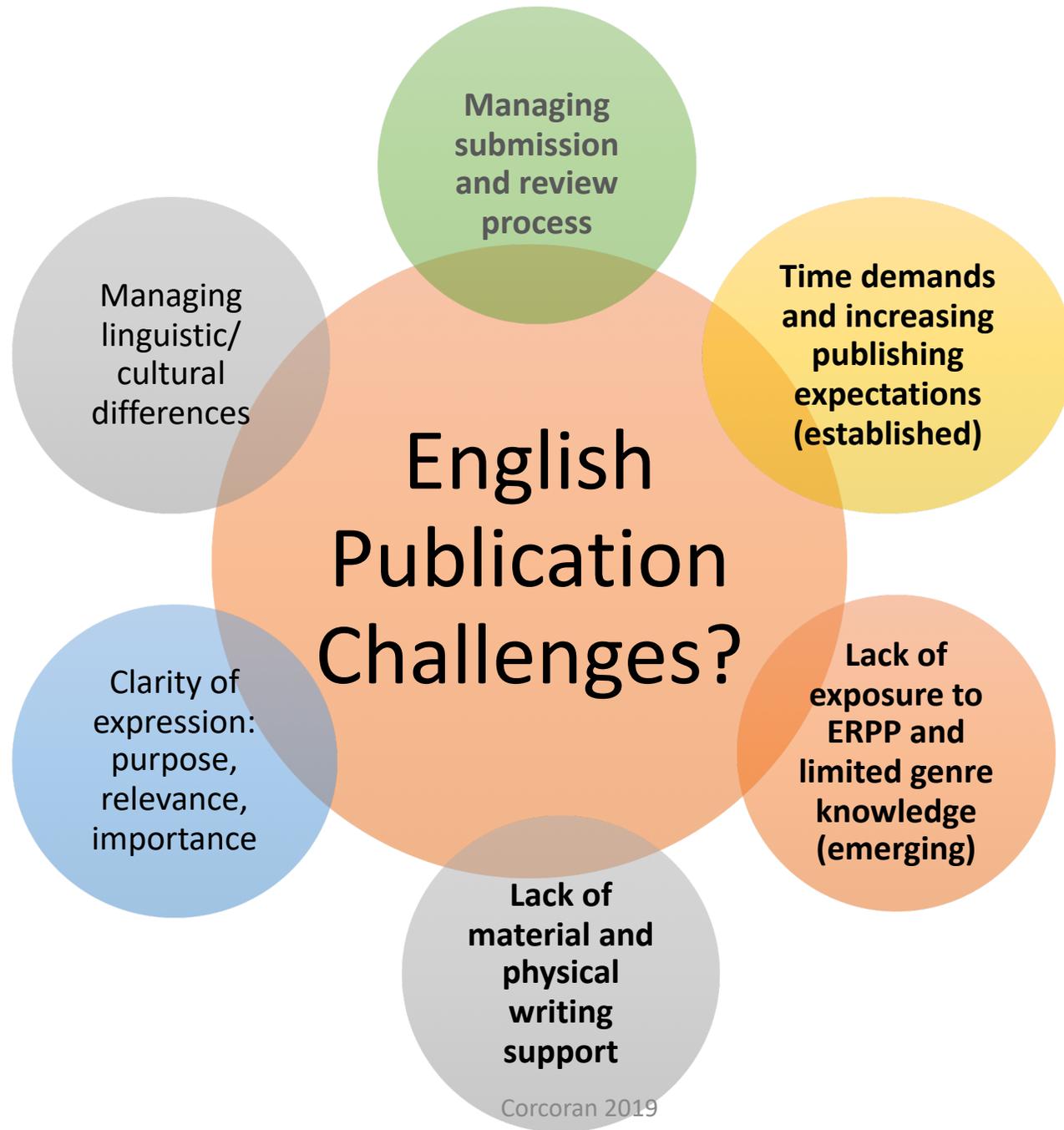
“I am not imagining this. I have seen [reviewer comments like] ‘This is very badly written. If they cannot properly write in English how can they do an experiment?’ Who the hell do they [reviewers] think they are? Awful. I would add it's not only the language, I think there is also prejudice concerning your affiliation (institutional)...so if you are from let's say Mexican institution you are subject to doubts but if you are affiliated with UC London then it's ok.”

-José, Senior Health Scientist

Competing perceptions of fairness in global scientific knowledge production

Plurilingual EAL Authors	Anglophone L1 Editors
Prejudicial adjudication is limiting potential advancement / dissemination of scientific knowledge	Plurilingual scientists' English is prejudicing their publication success
Bias of Anglophone editors creates inequality	Systemic lack of resources creates occasional inequality
Efforts are not being made to change an unequal, inequitable situation	Individual and group efforts are being made to change an occasionally unequal, inequitable situation

Findings from 2015 Case Study: Challenges & Impact



Evaluation



Five years later...Going long: Charting the progression of L2 writing support, beliefs and practices

“Lifespan Writing Research examines acts of inscribed meaning-making, the products of it, and the multiple dimensions of human activity that relate to it in order to build accounts of whether and how writers and writing may change throughout the duration and breadth of the lifespan.”

(Writing through the Lifespan Collaboration, 2019)

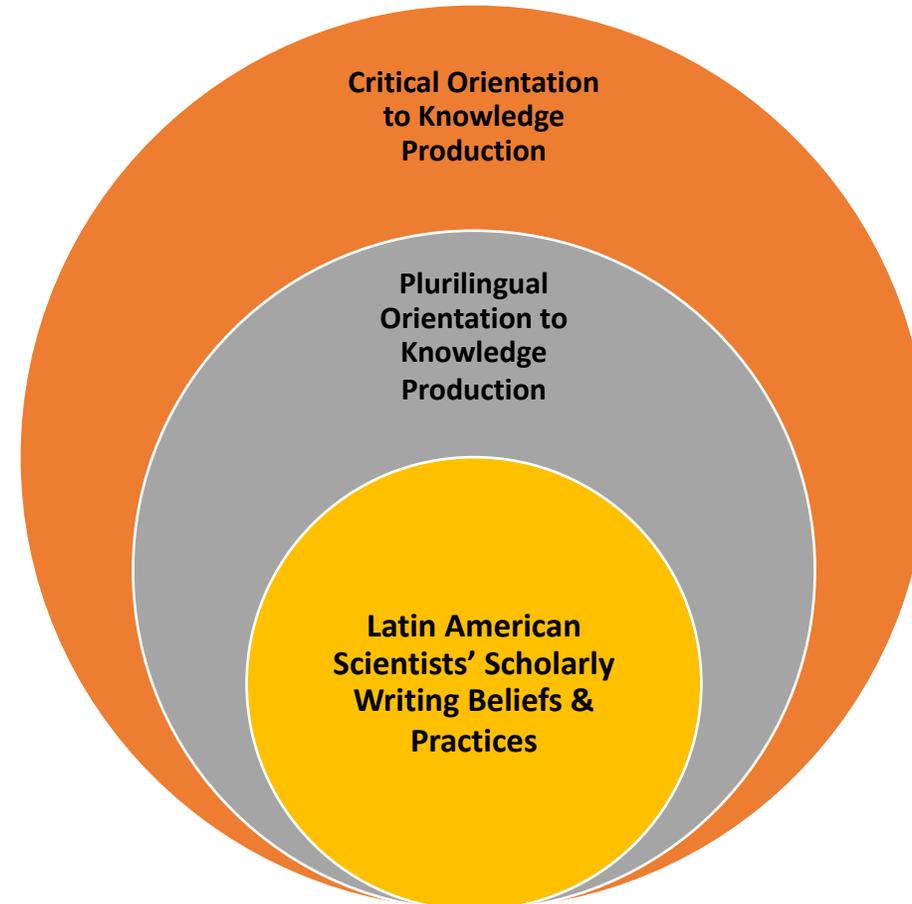
Research Questions

What is the **longer-term impact of the ERPP course** on these scientists' research writing **outcomes, practices, and beliefs**?

How has the MU ERPP course changed over time?

How have scientists' writing practices changed over time?

Critical Plurilingual Lens



Framework: Critical plurilingualism

A CP orientation welcomes linguistic and discursive variation and critiques normative (monolingual) epistemologies, ontologies, and ideologies that may reify particular relations of power (Atkinson, Crusan, Matsuda et al., 2015; Bennett, 2014; Canagarajah, 2016; Cummins, 2009; Curry & Lillis, 2019; Hamel, 2013; Jenkins, 2014; Lillis & Curry, 2015; Lin, 2016; Marshall & Moore, 2018; Piccardo, 2013). **Such a plurilingual orientation necessarily attends to issues of (evolving, hybrid) scholarly identities among those writing research in an additional language, positioning these actors not as deficient but rather as pluri-competent users of English as a language of scholarly communication.** Importantly, the notion of pluri-competence can be extended to all facets of plurilingual EAL scholars' knowledge production, with languages seen as part of plurilingual scholars' dynamic repertoire of communicative resources (Englander & Corcoran, 2019), thus challenging "...discourses of deficit, (in)competence, and open[ing] spaces for a plurality of languages..." (Marshall & Moore, 2018, p. 21) in scientific knowledge production.

Design, Participants, Methods, and Analysis

- Qualitative case study, biographical (narrative), responsive
- Document analysis – MU Policy & Curriculum docs.; Participant CVs
- Two 90-minute, semi-structured interviews with **2 former curriculum designer/instructor/editors, two emerging scientists and two established scientists**
- “Grounded” (constructivist) coding and analysis of initial interviews (2015) and follow-up ones (2019) with Nvivo 12

Findings & Discussion

- Pedagogical support still relatively scant across MU and need for continued offering of workshops and courses for scholars across disciplines appears as great as ever
- Greatest long-term impact of course appears to vary across cases: increased genre awareness and writing processes (emerging); ability to navigate submission & review and support graduate students (established)
- Evidence of dynamic, plurilingual practices abounds even for those involved in a (sub) discipline with high expectations for publishing in English and these continue to shift / evolve over the trajectory of scientists' careers
- Some anecdotal but little “solid” evidence of long-term impact of course on scholarly writing for publication outcomes
- Some softening of initial beliefs regarding equitable relations of power; however, suggestions of inequality and inequity endure
- Even within a discipline, particularly one known for its interdisciplinary orientation, writing practices and expectations differ between individuals and shift over time and space
- There is a greater need among stakeholders to pluri-conceptualize global scholarly writing – even when the final product is in English – in an era of monolingual (English language) hegemony.

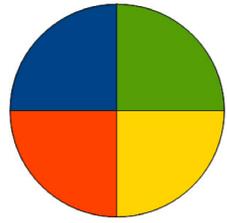
Questions and Future Avenues

- How can (should?) institutions in peripheral locales (e.g. Mexico) support individual scholars' plurilingual scholarly writing practices? What could / should this look like, particularly in light of these findings?
- Further (ethnographic?) L2 writing research needed to understand not only language choice of plurilingual scholars but also practices that accompany such choices and how these shift over time and space
- What are the implications of this work for scholars working from "centre" locations such as at North American universities?
- I am looking to shift my investigation on this front to plurilingual scholars writing for publication in Canada.

Recommendations for addressing inequitable relations of power in scientific knowledge production

- Increase pedagogical SWP offerings across disciplines (in Spanish and English)
- Take a more critical, plurilingual approach to pedagogy that views language as resource rather than “problem”
- Make vetted translation and editing services readily available to scholars
- Increase number of bilingual scholarly journals
- Modify institutional policies so that they explicitly value (to a greater extent) Spanish language publications

Curricular Tier	Pragmatic Pedagogies: “Identify and Replicate”	Critical Plurilingual Pedagogies: “Identify and Situate”
GENRE AWARENESS	Identify discourse community norms	Historically situate norms and suggest alternatives
	Identify structural components of a research article	Compare and contrast standard vs. non-standard article construction
CRITICAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS	Identify rhetorical / stylistic norms	Analyze and promote diversity of expression
	Identify lexicogrammatical elements of scientific writing	Recognize (and thus validate) intelligibility over “accuracy”
SUSTAINABLE WRITING PRACTICES	Navigate submission process	Examine and reflect on impact of publishing choices
	Navigate review / revision process	Examine and critically reflect upon agency and relations of power between authors, language brokers and gatekeepers
	Focus on discursive or text-based features of scholarly writing for publication	Focus on discursive <i>and</i> non-discursive features of scholarly writing for publication



4 Key Assumptions Examined

1. English is the natural language of science, or, if not “natural,” at least the logical/only/best language of science.
2. To get published in English, the language of a manuscript must be perfect.
3. Publish or perish is the only way, or the best way, to evaluate good scholarship.
4. Reviewers and editors are never biased or discriminatory, and scientific rigour is the only criteria for acceptance.

Challenging Decisions and Questions

- How much **genre-focus** should be “sacrificed” in the name of attention to **CRITICAL instruction**?
- How can instructors **balance** the need for **immediate** assistance in lieu of **sustained** writing practices and processes?
- How can we get **funding** for such interventions **without short-term evidence** of improved English publication metrics?
- How “critical” and “plurilingual” an approach is this, really (**neoliberal multiculturalism!**)?

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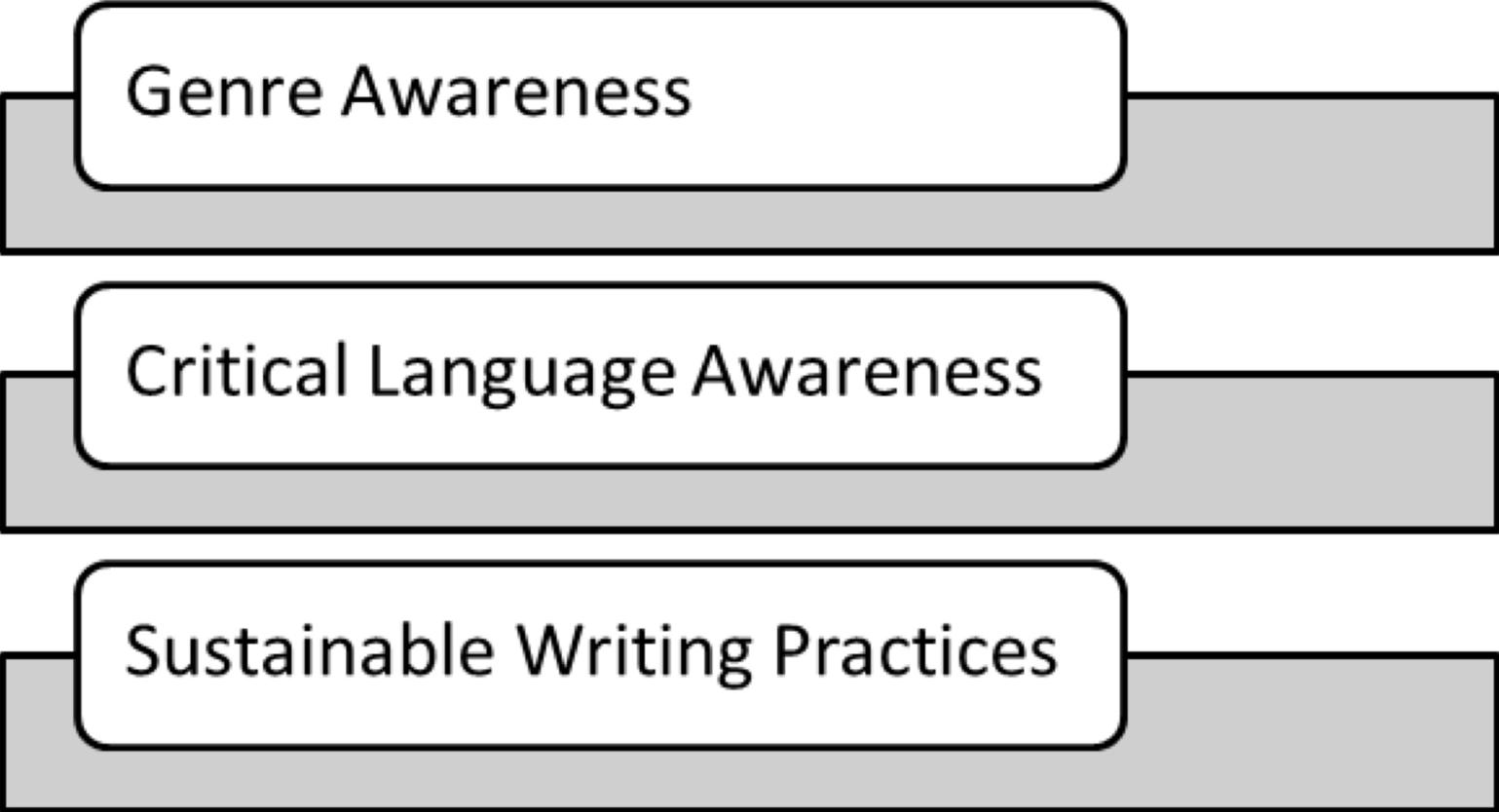
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Re-conceptualizing critical pragmatism: Enacting critical plurilingual approaches



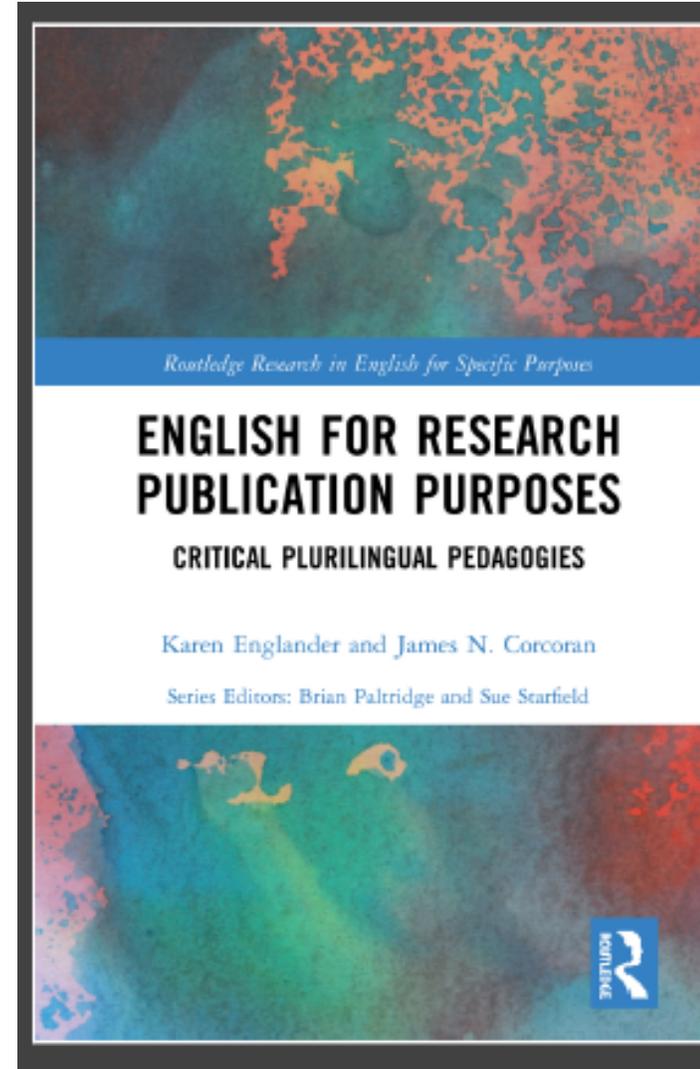
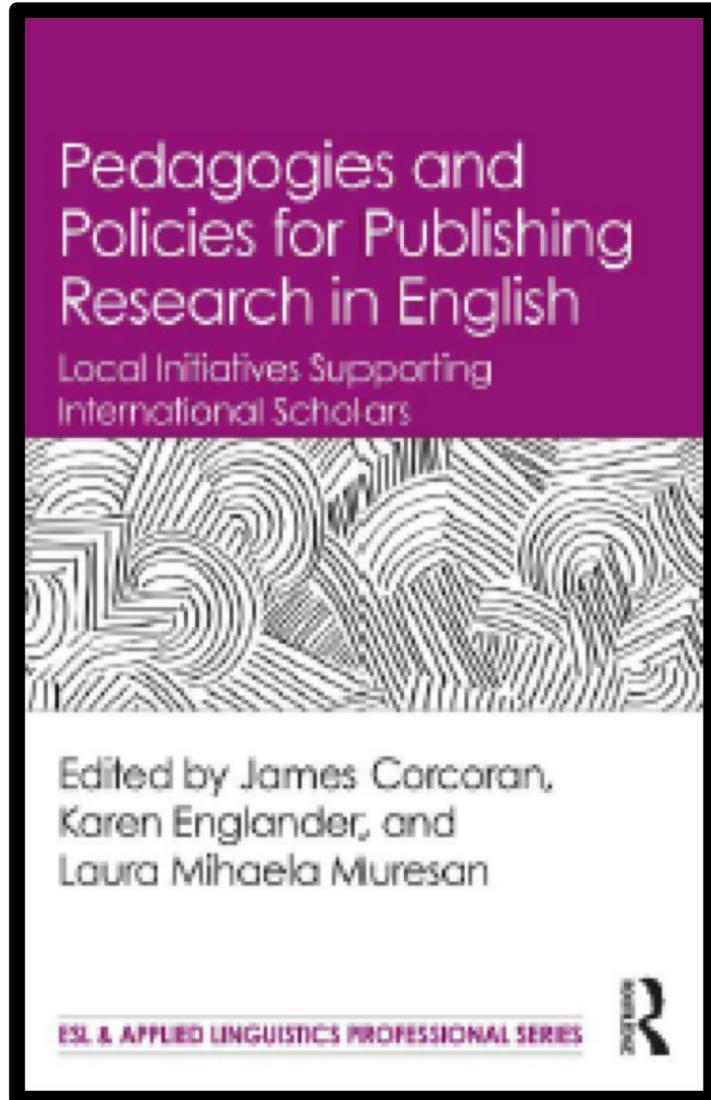
Genre Awareness

Critical Language Awareness

Sustainable Writing Practices

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Two books now available



Englander & Corcoran, 2019