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Engaging the Global Community

Christopher V. Hollister, University at Buffalo

The inaugural meeting of IFLA's Special Interest Group on Library Publishing was held in Dublin, Ireland earlier this year. This special interest group was formed around the expanding notion that scholarly publishing is to some extent a critical function for libraries of the future. The theme of its inaugural meeting—international knowledge exchange—is of particular interest to the editors of CIL, and accordingly, it was a privilege for me to address those assembled and to share a case study on the journal's relative philosophy, successes, and challenges.

In their recently published paper, Hoops and Hare (2019) asserted the importance of values-driven practices in the library publishing environment. *Amen to that!* To this point, international knowledge exchange has been among CIL's core values from the outset, and given the wealth of information literacy research and scholarship produced across the globe, one might assume that finding relative works to publish would be an easy task. To be sure, CIL has been actively searching for and soliciting international contributions from its early days by engaging the global community through a variety of professional channels and venues. On the surface, the journal has succeeded in its goal of attracting international contributions; to date, authors from 40 different countries have submitted manuscripts to CIL. However, those submissions have resulted in published papers from authors operating in just 10 countries. Furthermore, those publications are North Americentric and, apropos of this editorial, they are heavily skewed toward native English-writing countries.

I should emphasize here that CIL's non-native English writing and publishing successes are genuinely noteworthy. As just a few examples, CIL articles written by Skagen et al. (2009), Singh (2010), and Mahmood (2016) are well cited and they receive extraordinary download traffic from all corners of the known information literacy universe. Alas, here is the great challenge: As a non-commercial, unsubsidized, library-published journal, CIL does not have the capacity needed to support authors whose manuscripts have significant English language writing issues.

There is a robust and well-established body of published research and theory to guide the discussion concerning non-native English scholarly writing. From the applied side, Kaplan and Baldauf (2005) identified and collated the most common writing flaws that journal editors characteristically encounter in manuscript submissions from non-native English authors; their findings align well with our experience at CIL. Mišak, Marušić, and Marušić (2005) proposed the deployment of “specialized translators” as a solution. On the surface, this notion may seem hollow because it was advanced by way of a well-resourced, commercial publishing venue: Elsevier’s *Journal of Second Language Writing*. However, these authors are proposing a solution based on their experience editing the open access *Croatian Medical Journal*, which is supported by the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports.

I find particular resonance in Flowerdew’s (2008) approach to the issue at hand. He asserted that a fundamental disadvantage exists for non-native English writers in international publishing, and he suggested a better course of action might be to view the problem as one for all writers and for all academic communities in general. Flowerdew proposed a place for scholarly contributions in each field that is based on a scale of merit that places less importance on English language skills. In the present context of scholarly communication, this vision for global knowledge exchange is likely manifested in something like a specialized disciplinary repository. I am unopposed to such a proposition, but it fails to recognize the emergent role of library publishers if such a model were to be implemented.

The editors of CIL would prefer to see the creation of a new, non-native English manuscript processing service, developed by leading professional organizations for the purpose of facilitating global knowledge exchange through library publishing. Logic holds that organizations advancing such an undertaking might include the Library Publishing Coalition, IFLA’s Special Interest Group on Library Publishing, and perhaps others if carefully vetted. We believe it would make sense to convene an associated steering group or perhaps an advisory board comprised of members from the aforementioned associations, library publishers, and invested journal editors. Notwithstanding the strong feelings of many of our friends and colleagues in the library field may have about library vendors and commercial journal publishers, we also believe it is important to consider these groups as potential partners in such an enterprise. Of course, this is all an open proposition, but we hope it is one the library publishing community will consider moving forward; I can assure this readership that the editors of CIL will be interested, supportive, and engaged.

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