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Letramento acadêmico: práticas pedagógicas em tempos de internacionalização

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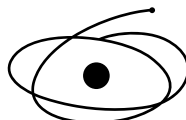
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Introduction to the Special Issue

This special issue of *Letras* about “Academic Literacy: pedagogical practices in times of internationalization” originates from a thematic session held at the *X International Symposium on Genre Studies* (X SIGET), in 2019, at the National University of Córdoba, in Argentina. It was the first edition of SIGET outside Brazil and, therefore, one of the motivations for the present special issue is to celebrate the occasion as a benchmark of the international scope and collaborative network the conference has achieved.

The main motivation for this thematic issue, however, is the paramount role of academic literacy in additional languages within the policies of internationalization of higher education, and this demand has pressured the field of Applied Linguistics to debate concepts, principles and pedagogies of academic literacy development. We aimed at studies that were interested in discussing the theme in association with the concepts of genre (Swales, 2004) and of social practices (Lillis; Curry, 2010), with the autonomous and the ideological models (Street, 1984), or with the generalist (Spack, 1988) or the specific (Hyland, 2002) perspectives.

Following the goal of the SIGET thematic session, this issue aims at bringing together research on academic literacy (mainly) in English, featuring papers presented at SIGET, including two international studies carried out in Argentina, but also other papers about the theme.

The sixteen papers published in the issue are organized based on a flow that seems to reflect processes in language education: from planning that is based on contextual analysis (including needs analysis), to pedagogical action and reflection about teaching and learning processes and outcomes, and then to the institutionalization of these experiences in the form of language laboratories and programs that subsidize teacher education, literacies development and, hopefully, have an impact on the implementation of language policies.

The four initial articles address academic literacy needs from the perspective of the actors involved in the process – university teachers and students, using questionnaires and interviews. **Macedo, Venancio and Gomides** analyze the trajectory of a professor in the field of hard

sciences, based on the perspective of Academic Literacies and the work of Bordieu. The study reveals the institutional pressure on the professor's work and the need for proficiency in English. **Laranjeira** and **Paris** investigate the publication strategies of two PhD students. The interviews show adequacy to the Anglophone rhetoric as the participants' main strategy as well as proficiency in English as the language of scientific communication. Scientific publication is also discussed by **Leal**, through a survey with senior Brazilian researchers about their experiences and needs in publishing internationally. The answers to the questionnaire reveal a need for an integration of actions that foster advanced English proficiency and academic English, and that support the researcher to help his/her advisees in the challenge of publishing in English. **Hendges, Rodrigues** and **Pretto** rely on the questionnaire survey as well, to identify interests and academic literacy needs of university teachers and students in relation to English Medium Instruction at the Federal University of Santa Maria. Their findings suggest the literacy needs, as expressed by both groups, are mostly related to oral classroom practices. The institutionalization of EMI is a desire expressed mostly by the teachers, while both groups see the role of the English language department as essential in offering linguistic support if EMI is institutionalized at the university.

The next group of four papers debates pedagogical approaches and technologies for academic literacy development. **Vieira** discusses critical-complex pedagogy as an effective approach for academic literacy teachers and students, because it combines different data collecting means (self-assessment questionnaire, reading and writing activities) to address the complexity of factors affecting academic literacy development, particularly contextual factors. The application of the critical-complex pedagogy with a group of Computer Science graduate students showed a need for intensifying context-related knowledge for the development of academic literacy. The second pedagogical tool is discussed by **Corbett**, who used Blended learning to teach about conference presentations in English to graduate medical students. The author supports blended learning as a potential means to simultaneously address academic literacy needs and time and geographical constraints of EAP teachers and students. The article by **Cad** and **Carrera** discusses the self-assessment sheet (SAS) as a pedagogical tool in the teaching and learning of academic writing. An

SAS was used and evaluated by students and tutors in an experiment conducted at a Writing Feedback Center (WFC). The questionnaires show that the kind of SAS used in the study was effective in raising students' awareness about aspects like generic structure and paragraph structure, and also developed reflective strategies about their writing. However, it was less effective in improving sentence level knowledge about grammar and vocabulary, because the SAS lacked a grammar and vocabulary section. The last pedagogical approach, in this group of papers, is reported by **Fonseca, Corbett** and **Costa** about the adaptation of a Cambridge Certificate blended learning pilot course in English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) to the context of the University of São Paulo. The article presents the views of three agents involved in this process: a representative of Cambridge Assessment English, a teacher of USP, and the students in the course, with the views of the students collected through a survey. The work raises issues about tensions involved in this partnership and presents several recommendations about course delivery, course content and language policy should this kind of standardized international courses and certificates be considered in a specific institution.

The third set of papers also reports on pedagogical experiences, but with a focus on the learners and their trajectories and outcomes related to academic literacy. **Orfanò, Mattos** and **Terra** examine how students self-evaluate their oral academic literacy after participating in an online video pitch task about applying for academic mobility. The evaluations were made through written comments in an online forum and reflective reports about the task. The authors conclude that learning resulted mainly from the nature of the task, because it fostered autonomy and collaboration, which are advised as important factors in the teaching and learning of English for Academic Purposes. **Mazzei, Pfister** and **Zorz** also focus on English for Academic Purposes, with an emphasis on the learning gains resulting from incorporating the academic literacies approach to the genre-based approach in a course for the Psychology College of the University of Buenos Aires. Back to the Brazilian context, **Bailer, Debortoli, Matos** and **Berri** investigate how students in the Languages without Borders program develop their understanding of the concept of English as a *lingua franca* after a short course related to the topic. After comparing the students' answers to two quizzes, one used at the beginning of the course and the other one

at the end, the authors found that on average the classes helped to raise awareness about issues such as linguistic imperialism and prejudice and the myth of the native speaker. **Fernandes** also examines learners' discourse, but his paper shifts the lenses to international students in a Portuguese as an Additional Language class. The initial focus of the study is his students' representations about the academic genre 'abstract', after they attended two classes on the subject. The conclusions, however, direct the focus to a reflection about his teaching practice, which led the students' to see only the textual structure rather than the social function of abstracts. The fifth paper in this group, by **Arruda** and **Murphy**, reports on the integration of speaking and writing in an English for Academic Purposes course for undergraduate and graduate students of different disciplinary areas. The students participated in an online survey at the end of the course and their answers indicate that academic speaking exercises significantly helped them in their written assignments.

The last group of articles in this special issue explores the role of institutional language laboratories and language programs in the context of internationalization and academic literacies development. Two articles approach the context of *Languages Without Borders* (LwB), an unprecedented (but discontinued in 2019) nationwide language program created in 2012 by the Brazilian Ministry of Education to support academic mobility programs, mainly *Science without Borders*, but more generally to develop academic literacy in additional languages in public higher education. In the first part of their article, **Silva** and **Santos** show that LwB evolved from a focus on international mobility to a focus on positive impacts on society and on the quality of education through the institutionalization of language policies. The paper then discusses how this latter perspective was recontextualized in the planning of an English course within LwB at the Federal University of Sergipe. **Sarmiento** and **Vial** also addresses LwB with a focus on student teachers and their challenge of teaching about English for Academic Purposes while being inexperienced at it. Based on ethnographically generated data (using, for example, participant observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis), the authors observed the key role of an academic writing course aimed at the student teachers as part of weekly pedagogical meetings. It fostered the student teachers' academic literacy while also developing their teaching literacy, highlighting the

importance of the integration of theory and practice in pre-service teacher education. The closing paper, by **Cristovão, Vignoli, Ferrarini-Bigareli** and **Retorta**, presents the foundation of a new collaborative Laboratory, the Integrated Laboratory of Scientific-Academic Literacies (LILA), in response to the increasingly recognized importance of academic literacies for the international visibility of Brazilian science. The article departs from a study about existing academic writing laboratories in Brazilian public universities, the range of activities they offer and the influence of the Academic Literacies model in these actions. This model is indicated as the theoretical basis of LILA, which is characterized mainly by its inter-institutional cooperation effort that joins three higher education institutions in Paraná in research and in pedagogical actions about academic literacies.

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What do we learn from these studies? It is clear that English proficiency is in demand by the academic community. This leads us to think about

the attention *Letras* major is devoting to the field of Academic Literacy in English/additional languages and its role in educating future English/additional language teachers for this social need and

the private language schools' neglect of writing skills and their role in making language users proficient and in educating future English teachers for this social need.

Integration of theories, pedagogies, technologies, skills seems to be the path to follow. The articles also reinforce the perspective that a context focus is necessary in addition to the textual one. It is not possible to investigate the teaching-learning of academic literacy (in any language) without a comprehensive understanding of how the activities/practices involved with it – knowledge production and publication – happen. The last one in particular is quite obscure but directly related to the former and to our work as EAP instructors, researchers, educators. Part of a critical work is to investigate these practices and be aware of the limits of individual agency towards conventions, “rules of the game”, not only about rhetorical consciousness raising but also about activity consciousness based on lived experience.

Internationalization has been a recent phenomenon that brought pedagogical and linguistic related consequences for the academic community that could not be foreseen 20 years ago. Thus, this special issue opens with an essay by **Ferreira** in which she discusses the

internationalization of Brazilian higher education and the additional language demands imposed by it upon the academic community. Also, she advocates for the institutionalization of English/additional language proficiency by higher education for more inclusive and solidary internationalization.

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