

## REFLECTION ON MY STORY WITH CRIL

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During a graduate student conference in the early aughts I was privileged to join a mentoring session with sociolinguist Penelope Eckert. After describing her shifts from studying older speakers in France (e.g. Eckert 1980), to teens in Michigan (Eckert 1989), to children in California (Eckert 1998), Eckert mused that it is only in retrospect that we impose a coherent narrative on careers in research. Thinking about my own career in this way, I see that CRIL has played an important part.

My contributions to *Colorado Research in Linguistics* during my graduate education have proved to be fundamental in my career in at least two ways. First, a paper published in CRIL – and not one that I expected to be influential at the time I wrote it – is the most cited paper on my CV. Second, working as a member of the review board and later as journal editor was invaluable preparation for work that makes up a large share of my professional responsibilities today.

As a graduate student, I was required to complete a “synthesis paper”, an overview and synthesis of some portion of the scholarly literature, before advancing to candidacy. I was advised to engage with theory, but not to use linguistic data in the paper. Since I had never seen such a paper, I was at quite a loss regarding how to create one. I didn’t understand what it should contain, how it should look, or what sort of analysis I should undertake. The question, “What should I do?” from a student is at once rather too vague and potentially too weighty to allow faculty to provide specific advice and guidance. Yet my own ignorance was too vast to allow me to construct more useful questions.

To remedy my ignorance, I began asking slightly more senior students, those who had recently completed the requirement, to allow me to read their papers. This proved to be invaluable, as several people offered advice – or at a minimum, condolences – regarding the requirement. I found Kristine Stenzel’s work<sup>1</sup> particularly helpful for, although her goals and her geographical concentration were quite different from mine (compare Stenzel 2005), we did share several areas of interest. Moreover, seeing a concrete example of the type allowed me to begin imagining how I could approach the task myself, both in terms of content and style. With this example in mind, I was able to write my own synthesis, a review of some of the literature on code switching.

Having benefited from the work of students ahead of me, I thought it only fair to share my own work with those coming after. I let colleagues know that I would be happy to share my own synthesis paper to any student who wanted it, and sent several people copies.

Around this same time, *Colorado Research in Linguistics* was having a resurgence thanks to the work of Alan Boydell and Adam Hodges with David Rood (CRIL 2004). Following a six year hiatus, CRIL was being revitalized as an open access online journal, with a focus on working papers by graduate students, reviewed and edited by graduate students. I therefore submitted a revised version of my synthesis paper to the journal, and in 2006 it was published.

That paper published in CRIL is my most successful work to date in terms of influence on other published work. According to Google Scholar, the paper has been cited more than 400 times, with many of the citing papers in turn cited dozens of times. It has also led to opportunities to contribute additional work on code switching (Hall and Nilep 2015; Nilep 2020), to say nothing of the many requests to review other work on code switching and related topics.

I am convinced that, whatever the merits of the subject matter and content of the paper, a contributing factor to the success of that publication is the fact that it was freely available as an online, open-access publication. Although there is some controversy around the effect of open access on publication impact, some work suggests that open-access publications are at least similar to commercially published subscription journals in terms of “impact” as defined by those journals (Björk & Solomon 2012). Other scholars argue that total citations are a better measure of actual contributions to scholarship, and that publications that are free to access tend to be cited more often than comparable pay-walled articles in the same field (Harnad & Brody 2004; Piowar et al. 2018). In any case, I conclude based on anecdote that my work published in CRIL has had nothing but positive effect on my own career.

My experiences with CRIL provided valuable experience not only as an author but also from the editorial side. In 2004 and 2005 as a member of CRIL’s editorial board I had my first experiences peer reviewing scholarly work, and discussing publication decisions with the editors and other board members. From 2006 to 2008 I served as the editor of *Colorado Research in Linguistics*. These experiences provided valuable training for my current role in academic research and publishing.

Reviewing the work of other researchers is a major part of my work today. Since 2010 I have worked with the Nagoya University Writing Center, where I am currently Designated Associate

Professor in the Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences. One of my key responsibilities as a member of the Writing Center faculty is to work with scholars across the university in order to help them publish their work in international journals. This involves consulting with scholars about both the logical and empirical content of their research, and the rhetorical and linguistic elements of their presentation of that research. As such, I regularly consult not only with scholars whose research interests are similar to mine, but also with those in very different fields from my own.

Again I find that my experiences with CRIL have prepared me well. The journal has published both work in linguistics as such, and interdisciplinary work related to fields across cognitive sciences, social sciences, anthropology, and letters. Working with the journal and with departments across the University of Colorado provided me a broad familiarity with various approaches to scholarship and scholarly writing and publishing. In my current position a broad (if sometimes shallow) understanding of diverse fields, as well as interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary experience is a boon.

In 2011 my Nagoya University colleagues and I started a journal partially modeled on *Colorado Research in Linguistics*, called *NU Ideas*. *NU Ideas* was edited by graduate students, as CRIL was during the time I was a member of its editorial board. Also like CRIL, it published work from graduate students, as well as post-doctoral researchers, faculty, and other scholars affiliated with Nagoya University. As a publication of the Writing Center, the journal accepted work in a broad range of disciplines, written in any of five languages (see e.g. *NU Ideas* 2012). Whereas CRIL is primarily a working papers journal, *NU Ideas* published full working papers as well as shorter summaries, and fully vetted research papers in their final version. This required assistance from a broad range of (anonymous) reviewers, and yeoman effort from a hardy cohort of graduate student editors. Between 2012 and 2018, *NU Ideas* published nine issues including nearly 50 papers, thanks to the efforts of thirteen editors<sup>2</sup> sharing various duties at different times.

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Colorado Research in Linguistics* provides an opportunity to reflect on the past. When imposing a narrative on my own career to date, I have to give the journal, and its editors and contributors, a major role in that story. I hope that the future of my career in academic writing and publishing will continue to be as rewarding as my past with the University of Colorado and with CRIL has been.

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ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Stenzel's paper was a critical review of the literature on community multilingualism in the Vaupés region of Amazonia. My own major interest at the time was related to the language behavior of sojourners from Japan in the United States. Both projects involved language contact phenomena.

<sup>2</sup> They are, in alphabetical order: Isabelle Bilodeau, Jasmina Damjanovic, Hsu Peihsin, Thomas Kabara, Sa Kou, Shylaja D. Molli, Kanako Morita, Chad Musick, Isabelle Veà, Wang Qian Ran, Yabushita Momoko, Taeko Yamada, and Zhang Lin. Simon Potter and I also served as guest editors for one issue in 2013.