Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education

An international journal's attempts to address inequalities in academic publishing: developing a writing for publication programme

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PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

An international journal's attempts to address inequalities in academic publishing: developing a writing for publication programme

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Scholars around the world are under increasing pressure to publish in English, in Anglophone centre journals. At the same time, research on professional academic writing indicates that scholars from outside Anglophone centre contexts face considerable obstacles in getting their academic work published in such journals, relating to material and linguistic resources. This paper draws on current research to offer a brief outline of inequalities arising from the privileged status of English and critically discusses the experiences of *Compare: a journal of comparative and international education*, in trying to tackle some of these inequalities in publishing through a mentoring programme. Recognising that many writers submitting to the journal have rich and original material, and that the established reviewing procedures do not readily accommodate the mentoring required to support submission (and eventual publication), the programme was designed to offer writers access to resources not easily (or necessarily readily) available: 'expert insider' knowledge from *Compare* editorial board members and reviewers and English textual commentary by 'academic literacy' facilitators. We outline key features of *Compare*'s 'writing for publication' programme and critically discuss both the success and difficulties encountered, drawing on reflections of participants, writer profiles and numbers of submissions from the three years in which the programme was run.

Keywords: academic publishing; writing for publication; academic writing programmes; non-centre scholars; English in academic publishing

Inequalities in writing for academic publication

The pressure to publish, particularly in academic journals, is something most scholars in the academic world experience and this looks likely to continue. Individual scholars' publishing practices vary, according not least to the disciplines in which they work, their geographical locations, and their personal interests, desires and aspirations. At the same time, individual practices and aspirations form part of a complex global enterprise, involving some 5.5 million scholars, writing for some 66,000 academic journals[1] and embedded in increasingly rigid systems of evaluation of academic work, or more precisely 'output'. Such systems of evaluating academic work, long since codified with regard to the natural sciences, are increasingly being codified across all disciplines. Whilst a range of such systems are in evidence at local-national levels (see, for example, discussion in Lillis and Curry 2010, chap. 2; Flowerdew and Yongyan 2009), there is also a growing use of globally applied notions such as 'impact factor' (see Rousseau

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2002) linked to differential statuses of journals, according to their inclusion in specific indexes, notably the high status indexes of Science Citation Index (SCI) and the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) at Thomson Reuters.[2]

The goal of these Anglophone-centre based systems of evaluation is, as stated by their developers, to assist in identifying the highest quality research and journals (see Garfield 1972) but there has been considerable criticism of their widespread use, on two counts of direct relevance to this paper; their privileging of *English* medium journals and their privileging of English medium journals published in the Anglophone centre.[3] Such critical claims are based on quantitative bibliometric methods and data (see, for example, Crespi and Geuna 2008; Katz 1999; Van Leeuwen 2001) as well as on the growing number of qualitative studies exploring the practices and experiences of multilingual and 'non-centre' scholars, which show that whilst many scholars seek to continue to publish in local national/transnational languages, they are under pressure to publish in English as well (see, for example, Canagarajah 2002; Curry and Lillis 2004; Lillis and Curry 2010; Flowerdew 2001, 1999a, 1999b). Evidence of the current status of English in academic publishing globally can also be found in the figures drawn from journal databases: 67% of the 66,166 academic periodicals included in the most comprehensive journal database, *Ulrich's Periodicals Directory*, are published using 'some or all English'; 95% of science journals indexed by the ISI (Institute for Scientific Information) and 90% of social science journals use 'some or all' English (ThomsonReuters.com 2008). The high percentage of journals using 'some or all' English in *Ulrich's* stands in sharp contrast to the figures given for the total percentage of refereed journals using one of the 10 most commonly used languages in the world (Mandarin/Chinese; Hindi/Urdu; Spanish; Arabic; Russian; Portuguese; Bengali, French; Japanese; German) which stands at 27% as compared with 88% in English.[4]

The position of English as the global medium of academic publishing may seem to be taken for granted and the positive dimension emphasised, for instance, that English can facilitate knowledge exchange through its status as a global lingua franca. That the latter point has some validity is indicated by the fact that scholars from around the world do publish in English language journals including high status centre journals and can indeed be individually successful. However, the growing research based on the practices and experiences of scholars writing from outside of the Anglophone centre, points towards the inequalities that the privileged position of English gives rise to. Such inequalities arise from a number of political, material and linguistic constraints, most obviously the following:

(1) As already discussed above, the privileged position of Anglophone centre based journals within current systems of evaluation. Publishing in 'high status journals', often means securing publication in English in Anglophone centre-based journals (see also, Flowerdew 2000; Lillis and Curry 2010);

(2) Differential access to the necessary material resources for securing such publication (see Canagarajah 1996), such as limited access to current journals and therefore the current 'conversations of the disciplines' (Bazerman 1988); and

(3) Diversity of linguistic-rhetorical practices. Managing linguistic and rhetorical resources not only at the level of a specific language, in this case English, but using the conventions recognised and valued by Anglophone centre journals can present significant obstacles (for examples, see Canagarajah

2002; Casanave 1998; Duszak 1997; Lorés, Mur, and Lafuente 2010; Mauranen 1993).

That there are inequalities in accessing the resources necessary for securing publication does not mean of course that publication is not possible for scholars outside of the Anglophone centre. But of further interest in this respect is research which explores the conditions under which publication is secured, in particular the ideological dimension to reviewing practices surrounding what counts as 'relevant', depending on the geo-cultural/linguistic location of the scholars involved. This last issue has been raised by a number of researchers (Belcher 2007; Canagarajah 2005; Duszak 2006; Flowerdew 2001; Salager-Meyer 2008). For example, and perhaps surprisingly in journals whose paradigms embrace qualitative socially situated research, Lillis and Curry (2010) draw on their detailed tracking of texts towards publication to argue that whilst Anglophone centre contexts of research are treated as self-evidently of (universal) interest, that is 'unmarked', research emanating from non-Anglophone sites is 'marked' (either positively or negatively) by readers (editors and reviewers) in their reviews. For example, a study reported in a submitted article which is marked as 'Hungary/arian' in some way (through for example reference to the site of research, the context of research, the affiliation of authors) may be either negatively or positively evaluated by reviewers on the grounds of its locality (in this case Hungary/arian): negatively as too 'parochial' or positively as 'different' and 'exotic' in some way (Lillis and Curry 2006a). The point is that whilst the nature of the evaluation may vary, locality outside of Anglophone centre contexts tends to be marked, in contrast to Anglophone centre contexts where locality is 'unmarked'. Furthermore, it seems that some of the more implicit and ideologically loaded evaluations of non-centre contributions may be masked under statements about 'language' and 'style' (Lillis and Curry 2010). Any attempts to challenge inequalities around academic publishing globally are therefore necessarily complex and will involve a range of initiatives over a period of time.[5]

The focus of this article is on one attempt at providing scholars with access to the resources necessary for securing publication in one Anglophone centre journal, *Compare,* whilst at the same time opening up a space for critically reflecting on the journal's practices. The programme described and the critical reflections on its importance, both for writers and the journal itself, can be located within a small but growing number of initiatives by Anglophone centre journals to reconfigure editorial practices.[6] The paper is written by two 'outsiders' to the journal – researchers and teachers in the area of academic literacy – and one 'insider', one of the journal's three editors. Working and writing from this combined insider-outsider positioning has been useful with regard to our dual goal of enabling writers' access to the journal whilst at the same time maintaining a critical perspective on the journal's practices.[7] The article looks in detail at the implementation and outcomes of a mentoring programme set up by the journal. As well as analysing the impact of the specific programme, we also reflect on the extent to which this kind of development intervention can challenge institutional and cultural barriers constructed by international journals and their publishers. As researchers, we share what has been termed a 'situated' (Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanič, 2000) or social practice approach to literacy (introduced in more detail below), which informed the design of the mentoring programme and our analysis in this article.

Background and the goals of the programme

The *Compare* editorial board and BAICE executive (*Compare* is the membership journal of the British Association for International and Comparative Education) had for some time been exploring ways of encouraging and supporting writers who have previously not published in *Compare* – particularly those writers based in the South (see Table 2). As a journal positioning itself at the intersection of comparative education and international development, *Compare* is particularly concerned to facilitate exchange across the North/South and is committed to publishing articles on societies that are 'under-researched and relatively unrepresented in the literature' (see *Compare*'s scope and aims). Such writers are usually not 'novices' but are often experienced academics who have previously published in English and a number of languages in national and transnational contexts. It was recognised that whilst the *Compare* editorial team could readily tackle some of the practical constraints faced by such writers (such as the expense of photocopying and sending hard copies by post), the more difficult dilemma was how or whether to help writers with shaping the form and content of their articles to help align them with the practices and goals of the journal. *Compare* reviewers' views varied greatly on this – some wished to engage in extended interaction with writers about the contribution, offering detailed criticism. Others felt that (as a reviewer previously pointed out) they needed to be wary about crossing the line between being a reviewer and being a 'tutor'. Recognising that many writers have unusually rich and original material which could potentially constitute a publishable paper, *Compare* decided to pilot a programme designed specifically to support writers submitting articles to the journal. The pilot programme took place in 2007 and 2008 and following its success was repeated during 2008–2009 and again during 2009–2010. The programme has been funded by BAICE, using income from *Compare*'s royalties.

The design of the programme

The overarching design of the programme is informed by an 'academic literacies' approach to language and literacy (for overview, see *Lillis and Scott 2007). In broad terms, 'academic literacies' refers to an approach which challenges the common assumption of language as a neutral and 'transparent' medium (Turner 2003) and the dominant discourse around academic literacy (reading and writing) as 'skills' acquisition. Building on Street's (1984) 'ideological' model of literacy which views literacy as a social practice, shaped by political, cultural and economic hierarchies, academic literacy researchers have explored the institutional practices which shape academic writing, raising questions about identity, power, the nature of dominant conventions, and what may be at stake and for whom (Ivanič 1998; Lea & Stierer 2000; Jones, Turner, and Street 1999; Lea and Street 1998; Lillis 2008; Robinson-Pant 2009; Carter, Lillis, and Parker 2009). The design of the programme draws on these concepts as a way into analysing the complexity of hierarchical relationships (between writers, reviewers, editors, publishers). Engaging with the transformative goal of academic literacies (Lillis and Scott 2007), the programme seeks to find ways of not only providing access to dominant practices and conventions (writing in ways which secure publication in Anglophone centre journals) but also raising awareness amongst all involved about the highly situated and contested nature of the practices and conventions in which academic knowledge production is embedded.

With specific reference to writing for publication, the programme draws on current research into the issues faced by scholars working outside of Anglophone dominant

contexts and the South and who are seeking to publish in Anglophone centre academic journals, including the issues raised above – such as the specific rhetorical practices valued in Anglophone centre journals as compared with practices in other national and linguistic contexts. In addition, the following aspects were considered important: 1) Reviewers' reactions to texts – even in so-called 'anonymous' reviewing – are powerfully shaped by what they 'read off' the texts in relation to knowledge, experience and identity (see Tardy and Matsuda 2009) and are often marked by strong negative reactions to English usage they view as 'non-native' (Lillis and Curry 2010); and 2) Working in networks and with mediators or *brokers* (Belcher 2007; Lillis and Curry 2006a) – particularly academics familiar with journals' 'conversations' – is as significant/more important to successful English medium (international) publications than individual linguistic/rhetorical 'competence' in English (Lillis and Curry 2006b). The latter foregrounds the importance of building a meaningful network as part of a programme seeking to facilitate publication; the former foregrounds the need to build dialogic exchanges between writers and mentors to challenge any straightforward or categorical evaluations about writers, their linguistic resources and their scholarly goals.

An emphasis on networks as a resource for academic publishing signals the importance of involving 'expert insiders' – academic mentors – who offer invaluable commentary aimed at making visible to writers the requirements of *Compare*. Given the implicit (as well as explicit) knowledge that 'expert insiders' have (Wenger 1998), their involvement was considered crucial to facilitating writers' access to a wide range of often unstated knowledge, most obviously: the specific disciplinary conversations that the journal wants to encourage; the implicit ideology of the journal in relation to what counts as a 'relevant' contribution to knowledge; what counts as 'new' within this particular journal, given the value attached to novelty in journals and therefore necessary for securing publication (see Kaufer and Geisler 1989 on the importance of 'novelty'); and the difficulties of claiming novelty, particularly for scholars writing outside the non-Anglophone centre or South (see Canagarajah 2002, Lillis and Curry 2010).

In designing materials used for the one-day workshop at the outset of the four-month programme, particular importance was attached to the notion of 'Text Histories', that is, the detailed tracking of texts from drafts through to submission and eventual publication or rejection. Used as a research tool, the goal is to build a rich picture of text trajectories – how texts (or parts of these) change, who is involved, and what are the consequences. Attention to such detail helps to firmly situate text production and avoid any idealisations or reifications of the 'academic journal article' or the practices surrounding its production and evaluation (see Lillis and Curry 2010, 4–5). Used as a 'design tool', as in this programme, introducing authentic text histories from the specific journal where they are attempting to publish, encourages writers to identify the kind of content and rhetorical changes that take place in the trajectories of texts towards publication, including some of the more nuanced, complex and contested (for example where reviewers disagree) changes in texts as they move towards publication.

Structure of the programme

The programme was set up and designed by two consultants (who also acted as 'academic literacy facilitators' within the programme) in liaison with one of the journal editors, who oversaw the progress of the programme. The academic literacy facilitators had overall responsibility for the design and preparation of the workshop

and follow-up mentoring programme, maintaining contact with academic mentors and offering e-support on academic writing to the writers. In the setting up of the programme, the editor's role was fundamental, providing access to people and materials not normally available to those outside of the journal. For example, the editor identified a range of Text History material from the database of published articles and, after considered discussion, four text histories were selected and permission sought from authors and reviewers to use extracts from their articles, reports and responses in the workshop. The four text histories were selected on the following grounds: (1) Their contrasting academic content; (2) The different geographical and linguistic backgrounds of the authors; (3) Their eventual publication after extensive reviewing and revision processes, thus illustrating the considerable work involved in preparing an article for publication and the complexities of engaging with what can at times be conflicting reviews; and (4) The comments made by reviewers as being illustrative of issues commonly raised and which were foregrounded in the workshop day activities (as outlined below). The editor also approached members of the editorial board and regular reviewers who had offered constructive and supportive feedback in the past to see if they would be willing to act as 'academic mentors'. Alongside the academic facilitators, the academic mentors were to give individual support by email to a participant in their specialist area (according to either their geographical or subject expertise), from initial draft of their academic article through to submission to the journal's peer review process. The programme was designed around a one-day workshop followed by a four-month period of writing supported via email by academic mentors and academic literacy facilitators (see the Appendix for an overview; see http://www.baice.ac.uk for further details).

The one-day workshop involves academic literacy facilitators working with writers on key features of academic journal articles including: *rhetorical moves in abstracts*; *locating the study/paper in an appropriate literature/sub-field/journal conversation; writing a convincing argument based on robust interpretation of data; constructing a clear and sharp focus.* During the workshop, in addition to drawing on and introducing writers to published materials (for example, Swales and Feak 2000), the writers are involved in Text History based tasks, using authentic materials from *Compare* (including submitted and revised papers, reviewers' comments, cover letters) as well as drafting their own texts. The editor leads a session on clarifying the expectations and interests of *Compare*, including focusing on an issue which each year has generated complex but important discussions with writers about *What is meant by 'comparative'?*

The follow-up support involves each writer being allocated an academic literacy facilitator and an academic mentor. Support is organised on a one-to-one basis via email (predominantly) focusing on a specific article that the writer drafts over four months with a view to submitting to *Compare* at the end of that period to undergo normal peer reviewing procedures.

Progress of the programme to date

To date, 55 writers have been involved in the programme from a range of linguistic backgrounds including: Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Dagbani, English, Ewe, French, Greek, Hindi, Japanese Kikuyu, Kiswahili, Lulagooli, Malay, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Thai and Ukranian. Of the 32 UK based participating scholars, 16 were scholars from a range of 'non-Anglophone' and Southern contexts currently studying

Table 1.   The outcomes: participation, submission and publication.

	Year 1 2007–2008	Year 2 2008–2009	Year 3 2009–2010
Number of writers	17	16	22
Profile of writers	9 based in UK institutions; 2 in South Africa; 1 in Uganda; 1 in Nigeria; 1 in US; 1 in Switzerland; 1 in India; 1 in Canada.	11 based in UK institutions; 2 in Russia; 1 in Ireland; 1 in Spain; 1 from Canada.	12 based in UK institutions; 1 in New Zealand; 1 in Australia; 1 in Japan; 1 in Egypt; 1 in Kenya; 1 in Nigeria; 1 in Rwanda; 1 in Ghana; 1 in Tanzania; 1 in India
Number of mentors	10	10	8
Number of Ac Lit facilitators	2	2	2
Papers submitted for review	13	8	8 (at time of writing)
Papers rejected	2	1	1
Papers accepted for publication	6	3	1 approved for publication (subject to minor revision) and others being revised following 'major' revisions or still under review (at time of writing)
Additional comments	Of the 5 writers who did not continue to the final stage, 1 writer decided against submitting the paper to *Compare* because he or she was not convinced that *Compare* was the appropriate audience. Other participants withdrew due to personal reasons, including pressure of work	1 paper accepted for publication in another journal. 3 papers are still ongoing and being rewritten or reviewed following 'major/revision' recommendations in the first round of peer review. Four writers working on their PhD theses did not continue to the final stage of submitting the paper to *Compare* for peer review, needing to complete their thesis and had underestimated the time required for working on the article.	An interesting aspect of this year's programme was a 'group booking' by a university research centre for 4 researchers on their projects who were based in African countries.

for Doctors of Philosophy (PhDs) in the UK. A summary of the outcomes of their involvement in the programme is provided in Tables 1 and 2.

Evaluation of the programme

The running of the programme

Overall organisationally the programme has worked well. The three core members of the programme team (the academic literacy facilitators and the journal editor) worked together to resolve any specific issues and queries as they arose, for example practical issues such as when a writer did not submit a paper by the deadline or if a mentor did not reply within the timescale.

The mentors' perspectives

Towards the end of the programme, feedback on the programme was sought from the academic mentors. Responses were received from 8 of the 10 mentors during 2007–2008 and 6 out of 10 in 2008–2009. Overall, the mentors have been enthusiastic about the programme, as reflected by a mentor based outside the UK:

> My only regret is that I did not suggest it first! I have met so many able academics and colleagues who border [*sic*] resentment because they have had papers turned down in journals with the standing of 'Compare'. In many cases what was needed was assistance to put together structured papers that were written in acceptable English.[8]

Another mentor commented that the ongoing individualized support with actual drafts was essential:

> Mentoring of this sort is really the only way in which their writing can be supported for real improvement. I mean, you could organise a seminar or something in which they could present a draft of their ideas and receive oral feedback, but the bottom line is wrestling with the writing.

The different kind of relationship established through the mentoring process between the 'expert' academic and the writer (as compared to the peer review process) was sometimes more fulfilling for the mentor as well as mentee, as a regular reviewer for the journal commented: 'I have been delighted with the responses of mentees to what I have had to offer …'. And this same mentor also noted that to some extent they as mentors – like the writers they mentored – were being 'judged' when the article was later peer reviewed, commenting: 'I have been humbled, nay chastened, by the critiques written by the reviewers of the papers my mentees have submitted'. Mentors seemed in general to concur that it was 'an excellent way to support new writers' and were all keen to hear whether their support had led to positive outcomes, raising questions about what constituted 'success' in this programme – beyond the obvious indicator of securing publication.

The specific aspects that mentors reported focusing on in their comments related to both content and form: structure, appropriate academic style, overall 'fit' across the paper, clarifying what was (ir)relevant, clarity, research methodology, moving it from a thesis to an article, relevance to *Compare*, methodology, argument, drawing sufficiently on data, making text more persuasive, need to contextualise study, developing a succinct review of relevant literature, adopting a more critical stance, creating coherence, making a comparative dimension, focusing on national particularities,

concept explanation and theoretical framing, how study was nested in the wider literature, clarification about nature of results, aligning title and focus, balance between theory and empirical study, and knowledge content.

On a practical level, although several mentors said that they were surprised at how manageable their task was, others found that it proved quite time-consuming, with one mentor reporting spending up to 20 hours (the programme had offered payment only for 4 hours' support to each writer). However, a majority said they would be happy to act as mentors again. Some mentors were concerned that some writers (particularly those who were also working on their doctorates) were not at an appropriate stage to write for publication. There was also in one case a sense of awkwardness surrounding what was referred to as the 'silent participation' of a doctoral supervisor with whom a writer was co-authoring their paper, a case to which we return below.

The writers' perspectives

Participants' perspectives on the one-day workshop were formally solicited after each workshop via email, with 35 responses received overall. In addition, some participants volunteered comments on their experiences in email during the mentoring process. Many of the participants drew attention to the 'unique' educational opportunity the workshop had offered: 'Recognising the need for those who have a lot to say from their work but saying it in another language and in another forum (for publication)'. The workshop's combined coverage of the rhetorical aspects of a research paper using authentic texts and an overview of the entire process of writing for publication appeared to work well, as a writer commented:

> I really appreciated the real examples of abstract revisions, reviewer comments, and the original and final versions of documents that we were asked to analyse. It gives a real sense of the kinds of issues to keep in mind when going through our own editing process.

Participants particularly valued the 'hands on' approach in the workshop which involved writing an abstract and redrafting following feedback: 'There was no theory rather practices, e.g. analysing abstract and working on our own' and 'I found especially useful the way you explained how to elaborate an abstract (make and occupy your own niche, etc.)'. The abstract writing activity was also noted as a way into understanding how to construct the whole paper: 'To me it was really an intensive learning exercise. I was very much impressed with the exercise which was done for developing the abstract. It provided us insight how the whole paper need to be knitted'.

Feedback from writers was also sought via email after the deadline for submitting papers and 25 participants responded to this. On the programme overall, many participants observed that they had not realised beforehand how much work was involved in developing an article. One participant commented that they learned most from: 'The idea that it is possible to publish but it comes with great commitment and focus'. Although drafting and redrafting their article in response to the mentors' feedback was a struggle for many, there was also a sense of achievement and confidence in undertaking this process, as a writer suggested: 'Very exhaustive every time when I got suggestions and comments but I can feel proud that yes I could do it. Really this was a path finding experience to me to prepare a paper like this'. Like the mentors, some writers acknowledged that though their paper might not be published, this was not necessarily the only measure of success: 'even if it does not result in *Compare* publication [it is] useful for other current and future writing'.

The participants also noted the importance of the involvement of the *Compare* editor in the workshop and the reviewers through the mentoring process which enabled them to gain an understanding of the requirements of this journal: 'The programme provided the opportunity to write for a particular journal and for experts involved with the journal to assess one's writing. It also helped to grasp the fundamental requirements of this specific journal'; and 'Comments were very useful and gave me understanding of what your journal seeks. It's valuable for me as we have different rules for the publication in journals and it was quite interesting to compare'.

The academic literacies facilitators' perspectives

In practical terms, the design and running of the programme has been quite smooth in part because the facilitators had previously worked together in research and teaching (on academic writing for publication). The facilitators noted the following as key strengths of this particular mentoring towards publication programme:

(1) The programme's grounding in an academic literacies approach and current research on writing for publication (discussed above) and in which the facilitators play an active research role and/or have a strong interest. The academic literacy facilitators therefore hold common understandings about what is involved and at stake for scholars and journals in seeking publication/ gatekeeping practices;

(2) The active involvement of the journal editor. The highly visible role of the journal editor ensured that the programme was not presented or viewed in deficit terms (that is, as a programme for people who 'can't write') but as a high status activity with complex and often hard to articulate assumptions and conventions. The face-to-face workshop, involving not only academic literacy facilitators but also the editor of *Compare* and the chair of BAICE, is a way of establishing that the programme involves serious commitment from all involved and its professional (rather than 'remedial') status. This approach to academic writing for publication as part of professional development helps writers to see themselves as writers with the potential to succeed and at the same time offers a space for experts to share their insider knowledge, which is not available to them in their more institutional role as 'reviewers'; and

(3) The use of authentic materials drawn from articles submitted to *Compare* as discussed above, analysed by the facilitators and extracts of which are used as text histories in the workshop with writers. The particular value of using text histories from the specific journal to which writers are submitting papers is not to be underestimated. Most 'writing for publication' texts and programmes tend to focus on generic advice and guidance which is valuable as a way of making visible certain key (western/Anglophone centre) conventions but cannot offer the more nuanced details and understandings about a journal's practices which may prove to be crucial. Discussions around specific text histories help to illuminate not only dominant conventions, but also the contested nature of some of these. Examples of debate around the text histories in the workshops centred on the following questions: What exactly is viewed as 'comparative' about this paper (given that the need to be 'comparative' is clearly stated in the journal's mission statement)? The reviewers of this paper seem to have very different views – how is this possible and how is this

resolved? What makes this 'new' or newsworthy to this particular journal? This article opens more like a polemical debate than an academic paper – what kinds of styles are acceptable to this journal? How important is it to write in standard (UK or US) English? Such questions – and specific examples of how these are engaged with in the course of specific text trajectories (by writers, reviewers, editors) – help take writers inside this specific journal's values and practices in ways which would not be possible without opportunities for such close engagement with authentic material and practices.

In the role of academic literacy facilitator, engaging in dialogue with writers around their drafts directed attention to the contextual factors which contribute to knowledge production rather than simply the linguistic and rhetorical dimensions of the text. One example is given here. The main issue identified by the writer when sending her draft to the facilitator was that it was twice as long as the stipulated word count. The feedback from the academic literacy facilitator was at first at a linguistic level: the overuse of 'we'; the tentative language and convoluted sentences; too much methodological detail; lack of 'topic sentences'; too many points being made within single sentences. In broad terms the structuring of the argument did not meet expectations of an 'English' reader.

Before any conversation with the writer, the facilitator had entertained the possibility that this was a case of 'apprentice' writing – or even 'bad' writing. The research article was being co-authored[9] but the facilitator considered that the more experienced scholar may not have been involved in the writing. At another level, the text's failure to meet the expectations of an 'English' reader could be accounted for by the notion of linguistic 'interference', in that it reflected stylistic and rhetorical differences between Spanish and English academic writing. Alternatively of course, the English used could be construed as a particular English variety, as equally acceptable as 'standard' English varieties.[10] Further reflection led to the thought that the writer might be writing with a particular discourse community in mind, itself shaped by particular disciplinary, rhetorical or philosophical traditions in sociology.

The writer's response to the changes suggested by the academic literacy facilitator pointed to the role of process and context in shaping specific texts, rather than simply a concern with language differences. The writer explained that repetition of key words (a common practice in Anglophone centre articles) is viewed as 'wrong' in Spanish and that using longer sentences and a number of subordinate sentences constitutes 'good' academic writing. In contrast to English in which you use shorter and more direct sentences and every word have [*sic*] a different shade of meaning [so] it doesn't matter if you repeat a word in several places in the text (extract from email correspondence between the writer and academic literacy facilitator). At the level of meaning, the writer was aware of writing for an English speaking audience and therefore not knowing what shared knowledge and perspectives she could assume.

In terms of the writing process, it transpired that the article was based on a thesis. Furthermore, it was shaped by a research tradition in which the empirical research article as a genre was a relatively unfamiliar way of constructing and communicating knowledge. Signalling the differences in the way social science papers were structured in English language journals in contrast to Spanish journals, the writer did not see this as necessarily a difference in rhetorical traditions. Rather, she saw this as 'social science research being less developed in the Spanish context ...' – although she qualified this by saying that it was the research paper as a genre [which] was not as

widespread: 'in the Spanish academic context we are traditionally more focused on writing books and chapter books and not papers'. She also reflected that papers 'demand more synthesis effort and we aren't used to this', suggesting that this was because they had 'developed a mainly theoretical work more than empirical work'. At the same time she noted that currently research articles were being 'given more importance in our appraisal in order to pursue academic careers'.

As an academic literacy facilitator mindful of the programme's aim to improve access but also to challenge inequalities of access, the central dilemma was how to challenge dominant practices while helping writers to meet the expectations of the *Compare* reviewers. The academic literacy facilitator's input could be seen as helping to create a uniform, formulaic style of academic writing to meet the expectations of an assumed 'English' reader – raising questions about how appropriate such norms are within a journal that aims to be 'international'.

The *Compare* editor's perspective

The editor's main role has been at the beginning of the process – recruitment of participants and inviting suitable mentors. The recruitment process took longer than anticipated following the decision not to allocate places on a first-come, first-served basis (since this might discriminate against the people we wanted to reach – for instance, those based outside the UK, without easy access to the Internet or with no current attachment to a higher educational institution where they might get writing support). Whilst in all three years of the programme participants have been a very diverse group in terms of country background, we were (and continue to be) aware that some of the prospective participants, particularly those based with smaller non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the South, had to withdraw due to lack of funding to attend the initial workshop. There has also been a larger proportion of participants based at UK universities than we had originally envisaged. However, by holding the workshop in conjunction with a large biennial international conference, we have been able to include a sizeable number of writers from outside the UK.

An important aspect of the programme is that many members of the *Compare* UK editorial board and International Advisory Board have taken the opportunity to become actively involved in mentoring the writers. Undoubtedly, this is an element of the programme which the participants have greatly appreciated – the individualised interaction with an expert in their field, alongside specific feedback on their writing from the academic literacy facilitators. Two academic mentors have worked on all three programmes and two have contributed for two years; a few mentors have also continued to give support informally to writers after the formal stages of the programme have formally ended. It has however sometimes been difficult to identify mentors in appropriate fields for some individual participants (as the aim was to match by both area of research specialism and country of experience).

The editor was initially concerned about the possible conflict in her roles – of being involved in the workshop as an 'adviser', yet also continuing her existing role of overseeing the reviewing process of the final articles submitted to *Compare.* In this role, the editor would sometimes have to liaise and negotiate with reviewers who had differing views about an article and make the final judgement about whether to publish. It was therefore agreed with the facilitators that after the workshop, the editor would not be involved in the follow-up mentoring process and this was conveyed explicitly to the writers. This distance minimised any conflict of interest. No

participants interacted with the editor about their articles after initial discussions at the workshop and all communication was with the facilitators.

Articles submitted to *Compare* as a result of the programme have been anonymously reviewed in the usual way (reviewers have not been informed that the writers were on our programme). From the editor's perspective, it has been useful to see how some of the journal's standard response letters sent out with initial reviews were misinterpreted by authors – particularly that a 'major revision' recommendation was seen by some as a negative outcome. In subsequent workshops, more explanation has been provided by the editor about the meaning and frequency of the standard recommendations through the peer review, as well as emphasising that participants need to have realistic expectations of the programme – viewing it in terms of a contribution to their professional development rather than a guarantee of publication.

Overall, the editor noted that her involvement in the programme and interaction with participants had encouraged her to take a more critical approach to the texts produced at *Compare* (particularly letters to authors and guidelines for reviewers and authors):

> In particular, I have learned more about how these might be 'read' and interpreted by newcomers to the journal and academic publishing, and to some extent I have gained an 'outsider' perspective on some of the reviewing practices that we (editors and publishers) tend to take for granted as 'given'. It has been interesting to observe the contrasting ways in which some articles were read and responded to by the peer reviewer, as compared to the academic mentor – which brought up issues about how the author's identity can be transformed through the anonymisation of the peer review process. For instance, a reviewer interpreted the term 'immigrant' as having possibly racist overtones – whereas the mentor had not reacted to the word at all, knowing the background of the writer and that she considered herself to be an 'immigrant'.[11]

Such misreadings do raise issues about what is lost once a text is anonymised and how or whether an editor should try to convey some aspects of the author's identity to the peer reviewer (for discussion on politics surrounding practice of anonymous reviewing, see Belcher 2007).

Identifying and discussing the material for the workshop from *Compare*'s database of published articles offered detailed insight into how reviewers and editors shape the identity of a journal. This opportunity to reflect critically on the body of material as a whole was welcomed by the editor who was involved in the practical task of responding to a constant flow of material from writers and reviewers. She observed that:

> I have sometimes tended to see the role as reactive – rather than recognising the subtle ways in which a journal editor is proactive in promoting and validating certain kinds of knowledge. In some respects, the process of 'educating' new writers about *Compare*'s expectations through our programme has raised tensions for me about how far we are encouraging authors to conform to, rather than to challenge, dominant conventions. This is particularly so with respect to genre – since the majority of *Compare* articles are the standard research article format with literature review, research problem, analysis and conclusion – and by taking authors through a 'successful' published article of this kind in the workshop, we could be seen to reinforce assumptions (often held by reviewers) that there is only one way to write a research article.

The challenge for an editor is how to create spaces for innovation in terms of style and voice, when it is in many ways easier for a 'conventional' research article to succeed in the peer review process, as she commented: 'After running the programme, I am perhaps more aware of the ways in which centre journals can end up solidifying rather

than transforming academic writing practices – thus intensifying inequalities for those not familiar with such practices'.

Does the programme meet its objectives?

The above section has gone some way to evaluating the success of the programme in broad terms. Here we consider the extent to which it is meeting its core goal of encouraging and supporting writers who have previously not published in *Compare* – particularly those writers based in the South.

Around a third of the articles submitted through this programme (9 out of 29) have so far been published. Another 8 are still being revised by authors following a 'major' revision recommendation in the review process so these articles may eventually be published. This compares favourably with submission to publication rates of the journal in general, suggesting that the in-depth process of feedback from mentors and literacy facilitators has helped the articles reach publishable status. Only 23 out of 55 were based outside the UK and the figures above suggest that a smaller proportion of these writers (as compared to UK-based participants) managed to complete the programme and submit their article for the peer review process. Many of the participants who did not finalise their papers (only 29 out of 55 participants actually submitted a paper in the end) were doctoral students, who had underestimated the time that would be involved or who had not reached the appropriate stage of data collection/analysis to write up their findings. A few participants realised or were advised that their papers would not easily fit within *Compare* and decided to submit to an alternative journal.[12] The relatively large proportion of English as an Additional Language (EAL) writers (39 out of 55 total participants) reflects the fact that many of the UK-based participants came from countries in the South (and were studying for PhDs in the UK at the time of the programme). Looking at the profile of participants in the programme, it is clear that we have not succeeded in reaching as many writers based in the South (as compared with writers from the South and currently working/researching in the UK) as we had hoped – and issues around recruitment from this group continue to be a major challenge.

As indicated earlier, our indicator of success is not limited to the number of published writers by the end of the programme, but also lies in evidence of the impact of the workshop and mentoring support on the participants' writing. Comments from non-UK affiliated writers on their experiences of the programme suggested that participation was valued even if they were not successful in publishing their paper during this period of support, as in the comment: 'Totally stimulated and mobilised me to write at the early stage of my career'. Further evidence of the impact of the programme is the opening up of debates amongst some mentors, editors and the editorial board about the nature of 'reviewing' practices as well as opportunities to engage in a more positive relationship with writers around text production.

Table 2.   Profile of writers participating in the programme.

	Taken part	Submitted	Published
Number of writers overall over 3 years	55	29	9
Number of non-UK affiliated writers over 3 years	23	7	3
Number of writers using English as an additional language over 3 years	39	24	6

Conclusion and future challenges

Evaluating the impact on individual writers' access to the journal's practices and their individual development, we consider the programme to have been a success. As discussed earlier, the workshop and intensive support from mentors has meant that a higher than usual proportion of articles submitted were eventually approved for publication. However, this was not our only criterion of success, and there was evidence of the impact of the programme on participants' confidence and understanding of the writing processes involved in developing an article for publication. Over the three years, we have made some changes to the programme in response to writers' and mentors' suggestions. These include: addressing the recruitment criteria to ensure that writers who are selected to take part have undertaken research and already have data which is available for analysis in the form of a journal article; adapting the explicit aims of the workshop so that participants have more realistic expectations regarding the likelihood of their article being published and offering a 'stand-alone' workshop for doctoral students (without mentoring support) in recognition that this group may already be getting similar follow-up feedback on their writing from their supervisors.

The greatest challenge has however been how to adapt the programme to reach our intended 'target' group, particularly experienced researchers based in countries in the South. This has been intensified by a lack of understanding around the aims of the programme by many 'centre' scholars who assume that it is intended for 'novices' or 'students'. Although there has always been interest from researchers outside the UK, most have been unable to secure funding for travel and accommodation costs to attend the initial workshop. Recognising this major constraint on participation, BAICE has now agreed to fund the development of a 'distance-based' module similar to the workshop input that will be available online. After participants have completed this introduction to the programme, they would then receive similar individualized feedback by email on their draft article from one mentor and one academic literacy facilitator. We hope that this model of support has more flexibility, making it possible for the editors to offer this option to writers who show promise/originality yet receive an 'initial reject'[13] when they submit an article to *Compare*.

When we established the programme, we also saw this as an opportunity to provide a critical outsider perspective on *Compare* peer reviewer and writer guidelines, response letters and other email interaction with authors. The editor involved has begun to adapt *Compare*'s procedures and communication with writers in response to feedback from those on the programme (as discussed in the section under the 'editor's perspective' above). Mentors' feedback on the list of recurring issues they encountered whilst commenting on writers' drafts could also feed in to *Compare* guidelines as additional information for writers considering submitting to the journal. The proposed web-based version of the programme may also provide more opportunity to share this approach with other journals and organizations. The editor of another journal in comparative education has requested details of our programme, and there is clearly the potential to adapt this model of support in relation to other journals.

In the wider context of our aim to address inequalities in academic publishing, the programme has raised questions about how far an intervention such as this can be effective without wider socio-political changes. The programme could be seen to take a 'deficit' approach by targeting individual writers to succeed in developing an English language article for publication in a 'centre' journal – rather than challenging the institutional hierarchies which have meant such writers are seen to be in a disadvantaged

position. For instance, there could be more explicit debate within centre journals (and their publishing organizations) about the ways in which citation indices are constructed and serve as indicators of quality – based on assumptions about whose research 'counts most'. At a micro level, journal editors, reviewers and editorial boards can begin to interrogate their practices on an ongoing basis, through the following questions which underpinned and emerged from the *Compare* mentoring programme:

(1) What assumptions are reviewers making about writers, their linguistic and geographical locations? How are these impacting on reviewing practices?
(2) What assumptions are held about the kind of English(es) in which articles can/should be written?
(3) To what extent are a range of generic practices valued rather than the standard research article structure (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion)?
(4) What assumptions are made about citation practices and what count as relevant and appropriate citations?

Initiating such debate within just one journal has drawn attention to the difficulties of making changes within what can be seen as a very complex institution: *Compare* is made up of academics who work in a range of organisational, cultural, disciplinary and geographical contexts. Their academic experiences, values and practices are diverse, yet all influence the direction and character of the journal through their regular roles as reviewers, editors and board members. In addition, *Compare* cannot be seen as an isolated institution, but also as integrally connected to BAICE and the publishing company – long-established organisations with differing agendas and perspectives on academic publishing. The question of how to initiate and sustain any changes in *Compare*'s editing, reviewing and publishing practices that have been suggested by our mentoring programme has to be considered in relation to the complexity of political and institutional factors outlined above. Perhaps for these reasons, we have found it easier to identify change in terms of the professional development of the individuals involved in the programme, rather than at an institutional level.

Even if the programme is seen to have succeeded on its own terms (that is, that more non-Anglophone writers are being published in *Compare*), there is the larger question about how far enabling writers from the 'periphery' greater voice and access to centre-based journals is strengthening the position of dominance of Anglophone centre and English language journals over all others. It is important to recognise that the *Compare* editorial board may be caught in a conundrum here: the journal is seeking to challenge the publication hierarchy (such as the emphasis attached to high status citation indexes), while at the same time it is seeking to establish its own status within such hierarchies.

The inequalities evident in academic publishing globally will not be disrupted by one journal's writing for publication programme. However, this initiative does indicate that it is possible to work at providing wider access to the necessary resources for publishing and that in so doing it is also possible to generate debate and awareness about the practices in which Anglophone centre journals routinely engage.

- The academic mentors whose enthusiastic and constructive feedback to participants, has been an important element in the success of the programme: Sheila Aikman, Terry Allsop, Joseph Ampiah, Roy Carr-Hill, Pat Drake, Shailaja Fennell, Ruth Hayhoe, Anne Hickling-Hudson, Anthony Hopkin, Germ Janmaat, Jonathan Jansen, Geeta Kingdon, Yann Lebeau, Elizabeth McNess, Karen Monkman, Paul Morris, Mina O'Dowd, Birgit Pepin, Rosemary Preston, Rosalind Pritchard, Alan Rogers, Pauline Rose and Wiel Veuglers.
- The published *Compare* writers and reviewers who agreed that anonymised drafts of their articles and reports could be used in the workshop.
- Miriam McGregor, *Compare* editorial assistant, who provided excellent administrative support for the programme.
- BAICE Chairs, Professor Rosalind Pritchard and Dr Lore Arthur, and the BAICE Executive Committee for their ongoing support of the programme and its goals.

Notes

1. Figures of journals are taken from *Ulrich's Periodicals Directory*, the most comprehensive database of academic journals. Figures on scholars are from *The International Handbook of Universities* produced by the International Association of Universities (2008/09) (London: Palgrave Macmillan).
2. See http://thomsonreuters.com/ (accessed October 20, 2010).
3. 'Anglophone centre' is used throughout this paper drawing on both economic and linguistic categorisations – the centre/periphery perspective outlined by World Systems theorists such as Wallerstein (1991) and Sousa Santos (1994), and the inner/outer/expanding circles of English speakers used by Kachru (1992, 2001). Anglophone centre journals are those journals which are published in English dominant *centre* contexts, notably the US and the UK.
4. The total does not add up to 100% because some publications are in more than one language but the difference in numbers between the medium of English and other language use is clear. Securing precise figures from journal databases is not straightforward because of the categories that are used. 'Some English' is the only category available for searching how many journals are in the medium of English and encompasses journals published fully in English as well as journals which include titles and abstracts only in English.
5. There is considerably more research yet to do on this vast enterprise of academic publishing/writing for academic publication, and particularly important given that it is an example of an 'occluded' (after Swales 1996) practice: that is, a practice about which insiders (academics, reviewers, and so on) feel they 'know' a lot, but about which there has been little systematic and critical research – reviewing practices being a key example. The existing qualitative research focuses on multilingual scholars and scholars writing from outside of the Anglophone centre and foregrounds issues of inequality and access. Another area that is receiving attention is that of citation practices – who is citing who and why (see, for example, Harwood, Austin, and Macaulay 2009). This is an important research area bridging as it does the politics of knowledge making with the politics of knowledge evaluation (see, for example, Lillis et al. 2010; Hewings, Lillis, and Vladimirou 2010).
6. See for example an initiative by *TESOL Quarterly*, http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/seccss.asp? CID=632&DID=2461 (accessed August 20, 2010).
7. Theresa Lillis became an editorial board member after the design and first year of the programme so her status has shifted over the three-year period. The team seek to sustain this outsider-insider critical stance.
8. Permission was sought and given by mentors and writers to include anonymised extracts from their feedback about the programme in research publications.
9. This paper was unusual in being officially 'co-authored', that is the name of second author was listed on the drafts submitted to the facilitator – even though it seemed that only one person was actually writing the paper. Most articles were 'single' authored that is with only one named author and single authorship was an underlying (albeit implicit) assumption in the design of the programme. However, co-authorship (of a range of kinds) is common in academic text production and is a dimension we would need to take account of in future developments in the programme.
10. For a discussion on varieties of English, or World Englishes (Kachru 1992); see also *Journal of World Englishes*, http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0883–2919&site=1 (accessed August 20, 2010).

11. The quotes from the editor included here are drawn from her written reflections on the programme.
12. At least one participant successfully published elsewhere. Though we also consider this to be a successful outcome, we had encouraged participants to develop their papers for *Compare* in the first instance so have not included these 'unexpected outcomes' in the figures above.
13. When the editors make this judgement on initial reading of an article, it is not entered for the journal's peer review process.

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Appendix

Appendix.   Overview of programme and deadlines.

Steps	Writer	Academic mentor and academic literacy facilitators	Dates and deadlines
Step 1 New writers' workshop	Participate in the workshop. This will focus on academic journal article writing and the specific demands of the *Compare* editorial board.		September 10 2007
Step 2 Writers send draft 1 to academic mentor. Academic mentor gives feedback on draft 1.	Send draft 1 to academic mentor and a list of any issues writers are concerned about. By October 10 latest.	Academic mentor: a) provides structured written feedback; b) has email or phone discussion about draft. By October 20 latest.	To take place between September 10 and October 20.
Step 3 Writers send draft 2 to academic literacy facilitator. Academic literacy facilitator gives feedback on Draft 2.	Send draft 2 to academic literacy facilitators. By November 20 latest	Academic literacy facilitators: a) provide structured written feedback; b) have email or phone discussion about draft. By November 30 latest	To take place between November 20 and November 30.
Step 4 Writers send draft 3 to academic mentor. Academic mentor gives feedback on draft 3.	Send draft 3 to academic mentor. By December 20 latest	Academic mentor: a) provides structured written feedback; b) has email or phone discussion about draft. By January 16 latest	To take place between December 20 and January 16
Step 5 Writer submits article to *Compare* editorial office	Revise final draft and submit to journal for publication. By January 31 latest		By January 31 2008
Step 6 Writer revises article taking account of reviewers' comments. Academic literacy facilitator provides guidance where necessary.	Revise article/contact academic literacy facilitator to discuss reviewers' comments. Submit revised article and covering letter to *Compare*.		Reviews expected around April 2008-contact academic literacy facilitators if support needed to make revisions.