

Editorial: Special Issue “Language and Landscape”

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The special issue is special in a few different ways. It will mark the beginning of International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022-2032) by focusing on Indigenous languages. Second, it will showcase the research, teaching, and learning of current and recent graduate students at the University of Regina and First Nations University of Canada in the area of Indigenous languages. And finally, the issue built capacity in publishing through a mentored approach.

Kinwâs, a number of years ago, I heard Dr. Emma Larocque recite her poem, “Long Way From Home,” which expressed her feelings about being an Indigenous academic in a colonial institution. It stuck with me because it opened my eyes to challenges Indigenous scholars face in navigating their way through academia. Western academic institutions maintain the colonial project when Indigenous scholars are silenced, excluded, or marginalized (Kaleimamoowiahinekapu Galla & Holmes, 2020).

Dr. Larocques’s poem would come to mind when I was a graduate student especially when I was feeling like I should not be there. Indigenous graduate students can find academia challenging when there are limited or no supports, such as with scholarly writing for publication. There is a phenomenon called *imposter syndrome* that is experienced by many graduate students where they doubt their abilities and they become very sensitive to criticism. In my own experience, I found that this imposter syndrome affected my ability to publish. I was scared of sending my work out in fear of being found lacking or my work not worthy. This coupled with the marginalization of Indigenous knowledges can leave Indigenous graduate students feeling like their voices do not have legitimate space in the academy.

Indigenous scholars Candance Kaleimamoowiahinekapu Galla and Amanda Holmes (2020) wrote about their experience as doctoral students at the University of Arizona when they “created a space for Indigeneity within the academy” through relationality (p. 53). They identified that “individualism, competition, commodification, and ownership” are normalized through hegemony of academic knowledge production and serve as exclusionary practices (p. 54). As scholars in the academy, we are faced with publish-or-perish, which engenders exactly what Kaleimamoowiahinekapu Galla and Holmes identified. However, instead of submitting to these traits, they brought together a group of Indigenous doctoral students and created spaces of resistance, resilience, survivance, and transformation. Likewise, we saw an opportunity to build capacity through a mentored approach to the review process and potentially transform how these Indigenous graduate students experience one aspect of academia.

The theme of this special issue is Language and Landscape. As guest editors, we invited graduate students to submit articles that focused on Stories of places and language, Stories of communities and language, or Connections between land and language in your community. We provided interested graduate students with an opportunity to attend a workshop that included information on how to navigate the process of submitting to a journal, how to write an abstract, and how to write different types of scholarly articles e.g. a conceptual paper, literature review, research paper, book review. The students were then given several months to create a first draft of their articles. Then the four guest co-editors distributed the articles so that each article was reviewed by at least two co-editors. The students were then given time to consider our feedback

and suggestions and re-draft their articles. We paired each student with an Indigenous scholar to provide them with the experience of peer review in a safe and relational space. The student authors had the opportunity to engage in collegial and supportive dialogues about their writing with their mentors through an open-review process.

We thank the several mentors who took the time to support these graduate students in the writing process.

Guest Editors: Melanie Griffith Brice, Anna-Leah King, Andrea Sterzuk, and Angelina Weenie

References

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