Re-defining Peace Linguistics: Guest Editor's Introduction

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Along with the *ELT Journal* (celebrating its 70th year in 2019) and the *TESOL Quarterly* (first published in 1967), the *TESL Reporter* is one of the few journals in our field that has been going for more than half-a-century. The *TR* may not be as well-known as the *ELTJ* or *TQ* but it has nonetheless stood the test of time, and made many valuable contributions over the years. I am, therefore, grateful to the current editor of the *TR*, Dr. Mark James, for giving me the honor of being one of the relatively few guest editors the *TR* has had in its 50-plus-year history. As noted on the *TR*'s website: "it has remained a journal for teachers by teachers, with a solid focus on the classroom" (https://tesol.byuh.edu/tesl_reporter) with readers in nearly 110 countries around the world today.

With that "solid focus", this special issue came out of – and should feed back into – the classroom. In this case, a classroom on the campus of the Brigham Young University in Hawaii, or BYUH, in January and February of 2017, then again, in January/February 2018. When I received an invitation to develop a new course, to be titled 'Peace Linguistics' and offered by the English Language Teaching and Learning Department at BYUH, my first thought was: 'OK. Great. Let's see what's already out there.' As it turned out, in terms of Peace Linguistics (PL), very little was out there already. After several months of research, and after reviewing hundreds of journals articles in the areas of peace research, peace studies, and peace education, it appeared that we had stumbled across a 'gap' in the field (Curtis, 2017a, 2017b). The 'gap' we found was between the work done in the different areas of peacebuilding, and the work done in the different areas of linguistics.

As far as we could tell, a course of the kind I was developing for BYUH – a university-level, credit-bearing course on PL – had never been offered before. Nor could we find any books or journals titled 'Peace Linguistics', and although there were some publications referring to 'PL', those were relatively few and far between, and largely unknown to the wider applied linguistics community. As a language teacher, a language learner, and an applied linguist I did not understand how such an oversight had continued for so long, given the crucial role played by lan-

guage in the starting of wars and in the making of peace. After some months of PL course-development, I came to believe that language and conflict are inseparable, and without language, there can be no conflict. Not surprisingly, though perhaps somewhat ironically, taking such a position – that there can be no conflict without language – has brought me into conflict with a number of applied linguistics over the last couple of years. This PL business, they say, is not 'new'. We've been doing it for years – we just never called it that, they say. That is a curious, and possibly even untenable, position for people who describe themselves as applied linguists to take, given that applied linguists – of all people – should know the importance of names and naming.

With apologies to the Bard, and to Juliet, who said that: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose, By any other word would smell as sweet" (*Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, Scene 2, lines 43-44), but *what we call things matters*. For example, if a new variety of rose were to be called 'A Fresh Pile of Steaming Dung', nobody would go anywhere near it, much less bend down and smell those roses. Likewise, if the work that was being done was not being called 'PL' then perhaps it was not PL, in the sense of 'the scientific study of language', which is how 'linguistics' has been defined for a century or more (Lyons, 1968). And in some cases, even when the work was being called 'PL', the 'L' was often conspicuous by its absence.

That absence brought us to the idea of 'a new PL' or 'PL for the first time, with a focus on the L'. That is not to say that there were no books, articles and courses on 'the language of peace'. There were many, but those existed almost entirely within the realms of peace research, peace studies and peace education, and even then, the role of language seemed to be, at best, acknowledged only in passing, and explicit references to the role of applied linguistics were pretty much invisible (Curtis, 2017a, 2017b). To return to the first PL course of its kind, the fact that it was to be offered by English Language Teaching and Learning Department at BYU-H, rather than as part of the University's long-established Peacebuilding programs, reflected the focus on the applied linguistics of the language of peace – and its opposites, i.e., the applied linguistics of the language of conflict, from individual disagreement to international wars.

One of my goals in developing and teaching the first PL course was to ensure that the course participants were aware of the previous PL work that has been carried out by applied linguists as opposed to Peacebuilding scholars, as the work of

the latter was already well-known to those majoring in the BYUH Peacebuilding programs. One of the very few people in language education who connected language and peace in ways that focused on the critical importance of language is Francisco Gomes de Matos, a TESOL professional and a Professor Emeritus of Linguistics in Brazil, who dates the first formal mention of PL back to 1977 (Gomes de Matos, 2014). However, in spite of the 40-plus years since then, very few of the applied linguists I consulted, while preparing the PL course, had ever heard of PL. Gomes de Matos has written about the potential contribution of peace linguists to the "harmonizing and humanizing of political discourse" (2000, pp. 339-344), as well as many articles on the peaceful use of language over more than 35 years, since the early 1980s (Gomes de Matos, 1982). Some of his most recent work in the area of PL includes a chapter titled '16 Planning Uses of Peace Linguistics in Second Language Education', in *Un(Intended) Language Planning in a Globalising World* (Chua, 2018). Gomes de Matos distinguishes between 'communicating about peace' and 'communicating peacefully' and in his version of what he has called 'Peace Linguistics' *communicating peacefully* is the focus (2018, p. 290). We are, therefore, thrilled that this special issue of the TR concludes with a brief but wide-ranging interview with Professor Gomes de Matos.

The work of Gomes de Matos and some of his contemporaries was and is about how people could and should communicate with each other in ways that are respectful, compassionate and *peaceable*, in the sense of "behaving or happening in a way that avoids arguments and violence" (*Macmillan Dictionary*). 'Peaceable' can also be read as 'peace-able', in relation to 'enabling peace'. However, that approach had little to say about how people actually used language, as opposed to how they could or should use it. Therefore, that approach might be called Language for Peacebuilding Purposes (LPP). LPP has generally been more prescriptive, in the sense of giving advice on what should be said and written in order to avoid conflict, rather than descriptive or analytical, looking at what is actually being said and written, especially by those people with the power to start and to end wars and other forms of armed conflicts.

As far as I can tell, the phrase 'Language for Peacebuilding Purposes' has not been used before. For example, when 'Language for Peacebuilding Purposes' is entered as a term in the *Google* search engine, no exact matches were found, i.e., among the tens of trillions of pages searched by *Google* (Koetsier, 2013) the search

term 'Language for Peacebuilding Purposes' did not result in a single exact match. Similarly, of the two million 'hits' found in *Google Scholar*, there were no matches for LPP, i.e., no journal articles, book chapters, books, etc. were found to be titled, or to include in their title, 'Language for Peacebuilding Purposes'. The closest match found was the Liberia Peacebuilding Program (peaceinsight.org). However, LPP would fit well within the idea of 'Language for Specific Purposes' (LSP), which goes back decades, to books such as Pauline Robinson's *English for Specific Purposes* (ESP) (1980) and Louis Trimble's *English for Science and Technology* (1985). That was followed by researchers such as John Swales (1992), who broadened ESP to include other languages, under the umbrella of LSP.

In more recent years a different approach, called a 'Language of Peace Language Approach (LPA), has been developed by Rebecca Oxford, starting in 2013, with her book *The Language of Peace: Communicating to Create Harmony*, followed in 2014 by the book *Understanding Peace Cultures* (2014), edited by Oxford, 2014. Together with Tammy Gregersen, in the UAE, and Matilde Olivero, in Argentina, Oxford wrote the first paper in this special issue: 'The Interplay of Language and Peace Education: The Language of Peace Approach in Peace Communication, Linguistic Analysis, Multimethod Research, and Peace Language Activities'. In that paper, Oxford, Gregersen and Olivero state that the LPA

"continually undergoes research-based refinement, but the elements are clear and consistent:

- definitions and values from key figures in the areas of peace, peace language and linguistics, peace cultures, and communication for peace…
- a major theoretical framework for multiple peace dimensions, including inner, interpersonal, intergroup, intercultural/international, and ecological peace…
- detailed linguistic analyses of peaceful and violent communication, with linkages to the peace dimensions…
- the integration of the peace dimensions and related peace language activities into language education and language teacher education…[and]…
- the enhancement of peace communication, both verbal and nonverbal" (p. 11)

In their paper, Oxford, Gregersen and Olivero recognize the important work of our predecessors in this area, whose research has enabled us to reach this point, including Schäffner and Wenden (1995), Galtung (1996), Roy (2003), and Friedrich (2016), as well as the work of Gomes de Matos. Oxford, Gregersen and

Olivero also explain that the purpose of the LPA is to: "foster peace understanding and peaceful communication through (a) peace language activities that are smoothly interwoven into language teaching and language teacher education and (b) expert research, including multimethod research designs and linguistic analysis" (p. 16). The first part of that statement of purpose relates to the LPP work of Gomes de Matos and his contemporaries, focused on communicating peacefully, while the second part of the statement relates to the more recent version of Peace Linguistics, which is the focus of the last paper in this special issue, co-authored by myself and Nancy Tarawhiti, at BYUH.

The focus of the Curtis and Tarawhiti paper is how the first PL course of its kind came to be, how it was developed and presented, including details of tasks and activities, assignments and assessment. Curtis and Tarawhiti use the following definition of PL: "an area of applied linguistics, based on systematic analyses of the ways in which language is used to communicate/create conflict and to communicate/create peace. PL is interdisciplinary, drawing on fields such as peace studies/peace education and conflict resolution/transformation, bringing those together with fields such as sociolinguistics and critical discourse analysis, including text/genre analysis" (Curtis, 2018 e, p.12). However, as with the LPA, the definitions and descriptions of PL are emerging as the field grows and develops.

In between the opening paper, by Oxford, Gregersen and Olivero, and the closing paper, by Curtis and Tarawhiti are two papers that help illustrate how the intersection between language education and peace education is evolving. For example, the title of the paper by Kirk Johnson and Tim Murphey (both in Japan), "'Promoting Students' Trajectories of Agentive, Reflective, and Peace-Making-Languaging in TEFL Classes… and Beyond" reflects the complex nature of the relationships between peace education and language education. In their paper in this special issue, Johnson and Murphey draw on the idea of 'languaging', as they prefer the term 'peace languaging' to PL. According to Lankiewicz and Wąsikiewicz-Firlej (2014), the foundations of the concept of 'languaging', "rest on the assumption that language is a way of knowing, making personal sense of the world, becoming conscious of oneself and a means of creating an identity" (p. vii). It is not clear how 'using language' and 'languaging' are different, as we all use language everyday to do those things, i.e., as "a way of knowing, making personal sense of the world, becoming conscious of oneself and a means of creating

an identity". Another word for doing all those things could be 'communicating'. Also, although Lankiewicz and Wąsikiewicz-Firlej (2014) described 'languaging' as being "still a fresh and unexplored concept" (2014, p. vii), Swain (2006) found that the term was first used at least 40 years ago, by the American linguist Robert Lado (1915-1995), in his 1979 paper titled "Thinking and 'Languaging': A psycholinguistic model of performance and learning".

In Lado's (1979) paper, he explained that: "Since English has no generic term globally to refer to the various uses of language, I will use 'languaging' for convenience" (1979, p.3). Again, 'communication' could globally "refer to the various uses of language". Swain (2006) vigorously challenged Lado's notion that: "In languaging, our attention is not on the language" (1979, p. 3), and I would agree with Swain here – if 'languaging' is not about language, then it is an extremely unfortunate misnomer! Swain's use of 'languaging' is more specifically focused on second/foreign language learning/acquisition, as she states that: "Languaging about language is one of the ways we learn [a second/foreign] language" (2006, p. 98). That conceptualization of 'languaging' brings us back to the Johnson and Murphey paper in this special issue, as their version of 'peace languaging', departs from Lado (1979), Swain (2006), Lankiewicz and Wąsikiewicz-Firlej (2014) and others. Instead, the Johnson and Murphey notion of 'peace languaging' builds on their earlier PAAL model, based on Peace, Altruism, Activism, and Love, (Johnson, Johnson & Murphey, 2017). We can now see some sort of continuum or Venn diagrammatic representation of the overlaps between Gomes de Matos' Language for Peacebuilding Purposes (LPP), Oxford et al's Language of Peace Approach (LPA), and Johnson and Murphey's work, which could be categorized as 'Peacebuilding through Language Teaching and Learning' (PLTL). And, in the same way that LPP would fit well into LSP, PLTL would fit well into Task-Based Language Teaching and Learning (see for example, Ellis, 2003).

The third paper in this special issue, by Jennie Roloff Rothman, in Japan, and Sarah Sanderson, in Uganda, is titled: 'Language and Peace: Using Global issues in the English Language Classroom to Create a More Sustainable Dialogue'. Drawing on Oxford et al's LPA, Rothman and Sanderson: "propose that the integration of the LPA and global issues education is a natural fit for the second language classroom, particularly those in which global citizenship and critical thinking are actively promoted" (p. 53). Like Oxford et al., Rothman and Sanderson provide a

useful summary of some of the earlier work in the area of PL, adding details of some of the work carried out in the areas of global education and critical thinking. Like the other papers in this special issue, Rothman and Sanderson's is classroom-based, and they conclude that: "University classes that focus on teaching both language and global issues encourage a practice of empathy and vulnerability, foster an atmosphere of respect, increased tolerance and mutual understanding, require critical thinking and promote a habit of lifelong learning – all important and valuable characteristics of sustainable and peaceful communities" (p. 70). As noted above, LPP (Language for Peacebuilding Purposes) could fit within the broader notion of LSP (Language for Specific Purposes), and 'Peacebuilding through Language Teaching and Learning' (PLTL) could come under the umbrella of Task-Based Language Teaching and Learning (TBLTL). In that same way, Rothman and Sanderson's could fit well into Content-Based Instruction and/or Content-Language Integrated Instruction (CBI or CLIL, see for example, Lightbown, 2014).

That leaves the questions of where Oxford et al.'s LPA and Curtis' 'new PL' fit into this emerging field of enquiry. However, before we consider that, we need to first spend some time with the four main papers in this special issue, and the interview with Prof. Gomes de Matos, after which I will return to this set of relationships and consider where and how PL might go forward from here.

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