Introduction

Recently, there has been an active discussion concerning the publication practices of plurilingual scholars who use English as an additional language (henceforth, plurilingual (EAL) scholars) (see Curry & Lillis, 2018; Corcoran, Englander, & Muresan, 2019). Multiple aspects of these scholars’ experiences have been documented, including the pressures to publish in indexed journals (Curry & Lillis, 2004; Mirhosseini & Shafiee, 2019) and the increased burden when publishing in an additional language (Gea-Valor, Rey-Rocha, & Moreno, 2014; Hanauer & Englander, 2011). Others have reported on the interesting challenge of positioning oneself within a plurilingual environment, balancing the advancement of field themes in international venues and the development of national discussions (Muresan & Pérez-Llantada, 2019; Pérez-Llantada, Plo, &
Ferguson, 2011). Pedagogical responses to these pressures have been diverse, and in our research context—one Colombian university—have included an English program for PhD students, complemented by an English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP) tutoring service.

During a program evaluation of this tutoring service, Janssen and Restrepo (2019) noticed that PhD students who were publishing more easily were relatively well-networked (i.e., working closely with research teams, advisors, colleagues), while those who were publishing less easily were less-networked (i.e., working much more alone). This observation aligns with Curry and Lillis’s conclusion: “participation in research networks provides an important means of access to English-medium publishing” (Curry & Lillis, 2010, p. 293). This chapter explores the relationship between publication practices and network participation focusing on the following research questions:

(a) In what ways do two emerging scholars describe their writing as changing over the past four years?
(b) In what ways do two emerging scholars connect changes in their writing and network participation?

Review of the Literature

Much work has been conducted in Spanish-speaking contexts describing the pressures and needs of plurilingual EAL scholars publishing in English (see Gea-Valor et al., 2014; Hanauer & Englander, 2011; Moreno, Rey-Rocha, Burgess, López-Navarro, & Sachdev, 2012). Pérez-Llantada et al. (2011) described how scholars in Spain feel that English is now “a requisite for full participation in a globalised and highly competitive academic world” (p. 27). Addressing these needs (and distinct from pedagogical responses), Lillis and Curry (2006) focused on the people—the literacy brokers—who help plurilingual EAL scholars mediate the publication process. These authors defined three groups of literacy brokers: academics, including general academics, discipline experts, and sub-disciplinary experts; language professionals, such as copy-editors and English language
teachers; and non-professionals, such as family and friends (p. 14). More recently, Willey and Tanimoto referred to language professionals as convenience editors (2013), and Luo and Hyland (2016, 2017, 2019) have called literacy brokers text mediators, to avoid the “commercial connotations” (Luo & Hyland, 2019, p. 38) of the word broker.

Widening their scope to the broader networks the plurilingual EAL scholars are involved in, Curry and Lillis (2010) posited several lenses through which networks can be understood: strong/weak; local/transnational; formal/informal. Furthermore, Zappa-Hollman and Duff (2015) considered how networks support literacy development and the learning of academic discourses. Recently, Lillis and Curry (2018) have described how networks have “gendered dimensions” (p. 60).

Methodology

Participants

In 2015, 12 Colombian PhD students from different fields self-selected to participate in the first iteration of their university’s ERPP tutoring program. They met with the tutor—this chapter’s first author—between 1.5 and 15.0 hours, depending on their needs, to develop a written document (Janssen & Restrepo, 2019). Ten of these participants had also studied a semester-length course on publishing research with the first author (Leah, an informant here, is an exception). This prolonged engagement between the first author and the study participants—based within different roles, contexts, and across four years—builds the trustworthiness of these data and thus the study’s credibility (Yin, 2016).

Of these 12 students, three did not sign the original informed consent and were excluded from all studies; three others, having graduated, were unreachable. The six remaining participants agreed to participate in an unpaid interview in 2019. Based on this interview, two participants (Eli, Leah) took part in a second, paid interview in 2020, focusing on their publication trajectory. These two participants were chosen because of their differences. While Eli and Leah were both PhD graduates and
provided comparisons about network participation as PhD students and later in the academic workforce, Eli was the only internationally located participant and could describe how this impacted his research productivity and network participation. Furthermore, Eli and Leah had differences in our estimates of their English proficiency and research productivity; their selection also allowed us to observe the impact of gender on network participation (see Table 15.1).

### Materials

Eli and Leah provided four papers that they had written during the last four years; using their own opinion and criteria, these papers represented them best and included one paper per publication year. These four “detailed and varied” documents and interviews permitted us to collect rich data: (Maxwell, 2013, p. 125). The participants’ documents added to the study’s trustworthiness: Eli’s publications were the only four he had published; Leah’s four publications were those for which she described herself as first author.

| Participant | Current location | PhD graduate | English proficiency | Perceived productivity | Location: Research focus |
|-------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Amy         | COL              | No           | Proficient          | Emerging               | COL                     |
| Berna       | COL              | No           | Very proficient     | Emerging               | Not context specific    |
| Dino        | COL              | Yes          | Extremely proficient | Very productive        | COL                     |
| Eli         | Int’l            | Yes          | Very proficient     | Productive             | Not context specific    |
| Leah        | COL              | Yes          | Moderately proficient | Very productive        | COL, LATAM              |
| Lina        | COL              | No           | Proficient          | Emerging               | COL, LATAM              |

Note: Grey, italicized = in-depth interviews (2020). COL = Colombia; LATAM = Latin America
Procedures

Because of his established relationship with the participants, the first author conducted all semi-structured interviews. In 2016, the nine consenting tutees completed a 30-minute interview for member checking purposes. These pre-existing data provided a baseline for comparisons with the information participants reported in 2019 and 2020 and provided arguments for the study’s validity (Maxwell, 2013). All interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. All data presented are stripped of identifying information; names are pseudonyms, according to the established ethics committee procedure. English language quotes include non-standard usages; all translations from Spanish have been noted. Outlines of the interview protocols are found below in Table 15.2.

Table 15.2  Semi-structured interview protocols

| Year (n)      | Topics                                                                 |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2016 (n = 9) | • Member checking                                                      |
|              | • Article status                                                       |
| 2019 (n = 6) | • PhD program, other experiences, current professional activities:     |
|              |  > Which contribute to your situation today?                           |
|              | • Factors, strategies when developing academic articles: Has your      |
|              |  > position changed?                                                   |
|              | • Publications today                                                   |
|              | • Current networks and their contributions to your                     |
|              |  > Productivity                                                        |
|              |  > Professional development                                             |
|              |  > Publication process                                                  |
|              | • Recommendations concerning                                          |
|              |  > PhD program                                                          |
|              |  > Writing for publication                                              |
|              |  > Professional networks                                               |
| 2020 (n = 2) | • Each document: The successes / challenges                            |
|              |  > Linguistically                                                      |
|              |  > Academically                                                         |
|              |  > Professionally                                                       |
|              | • Each document: Relationship to your networks                          |
|              | • Next steps                                                            |
Data Analysis and Interpretation

To provide additional data triangulation, the participants’ documents were analyzed according to different metrics describing the article (e.g., genre) and the authors’ relationships with their research networks (e.g., co-authors, institutions), presented in Table 15.3 below. Both researchers independently listened to all interview files twice, noting the time and quotations that gave us insight regarding the research questions (investigator triangulation, see Yin, 2016). Research notes were compared and two themes were found within the first and second interviews: writing and relationships between writing and network participation. The interviews were then transcribed, and quotations were sought to illustrate these emerging themes. Based on these data, we provide a thick description of our participants’ understanding of their worlds, “incorporat[ing] the intentions of the actors and the codes of signification that give their actions meaning for them … one that represents the meanings and perspectives of the participants, not simply those of the researcher” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 136). To strengthen the study’s credibility, discrepant evidence was sought to illustrate differences in the participants’ accounts; participants also checked accounts for accuracy (member checking; Yin, 2016).

Findings and Discussion

Eli

Biographical Data

Eli completed his PhD studies in a quantitative area of the social sciences. Since graduation, he has held a post-doc at a top-200 research university (Times Higher Education, 2019) in Europe. Eli mentioned several job offers in this context, but will return to Colombia after his fellowship to fulfill obligations placed upon him in his PhD loan agreement.
|   | Eli–1 | Eli–2 | Eli–3 | Eli–4 | Eli–average | Leah–1 | Leah–2 | Leah–3 | Leah–4 | Leah–average |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|
| Author # | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1           | 2\(^a\) | 1      | 1      | 1      | 1           |
| Year    | 2016  | 2019  | Submitted | 2020 Forthcoming | 2017 | 2017 | 2019 | 2019 | 2019 |
| Genre   | LR    | COM   | COM   | RA    | Mix         | RA     | RA     | RA     | RA     | RAs         |
| Co-authors | 4     | 1     | 2     | 5     | 3           | 8      | 6      | 18     | 10     | 10.50       |
| Institutions | 2     | 1     | 2     | 5     | 2.50        | 7      | 8      | 19     | 9      | 10.75       |
| Countries | 2     | 1     | 2     | 2     | 1.75        | 3      | 5      | 7      | 4      | 4.75        |
| Days to publication | 267   | ?     | ?     | ?     | 267         | 199    | 373    | 196    | 208    | 244         |
| Quartile | Q1    | Q1    | –     | Q1    | Q1          | Q1     | Q1     | Q1     | Q1     | Q1          |

\(^a\)Leah is listed second; the publication states that both first and second authors contributed equally.

LR = literature review; COM = commentary; RA = research article
2016: Writing

In 2016, Eli’s main challenge in writing concerned expressing his ideas clearly. When describing his experience in the writing course and tutorial sessions, *language professionals* formed an important part of his network. They worked with him on his self-reported challenge of writing clearly and introduced him to writing strategies:

> I’ve seen a lot of benefits because I was writing [and] there are some parts of my mind I don’t know how to command. [The tutorials] help me to find a way to express [those] ideas. [2016; 1:26–1:52]

In 2016, Eli was submitting his first article for publication. He described this process and his article’s problem of scope:

> The journal. … they say no, but not because the work was bad or the language was bad but [it] was because the editor said that they didn’t know that the theme was so specific that they didn’t … [commit] to edit it. [2016; 5:49–6:15]

Subsequently, Eli submitted this article to a second journal, which in 2016 was still under review. He learned from several obstacles in the submission process, especially how different journals require different organizational structures and how a writer needs to produce these structures:

> I did something that maybe is not so good, but because of the time I send it like that, [the structure is] exactly the same to the other journal. That is where it is right now. … but the structure of that journal is different [so] then I had to change the structure of the paper. [2016; 6:23–7:48]

2016: Networks

Regarding other collaborators in his writing process, Eli discussed the importance of working together with colleagues to develop ideas for his papers:
This document that I share with you was written around two years before that, and it was something that we were sharing and sharing for a long process. Because of that, I was so clear what I wanted to say and it was a process where my advisors and partners in the writing were very involved. [2016; 19:27–20:05]

In this context, Eli consolidated his understanding of field themes by socializing his research ideas, which became a central theme in his interviews four years later.

2019–2020: Writing

From Table 15.3, one can see that Eli was productive between 2015 and 2019, publishing three Q1 pieces as first author in a variety of genres, including one research article. Nevertheless, Eli emphasized the distance between his current and ideal ability as a writer:

I would say I was kind of a medium writer in the PhD and now I am a medium writer plus 2% more, so I still have a long way to go. [2019; 23:37–23:48]

When discussing his four papers, he described overall improvements throughout this time period, especially with regard to language use. He reported how his post-doc advisor perceived his work:

[She said] I was writing well, the general grammar was good, but, well, I needed to be more clear with the ideas. [2020; 34:22–34:31, author translation]

Despite “writing well,” Eli underscored one struggle that has continued since his 2016 interview: the clear transmission of his ideas. Indeed, during his 2019 and 2020 interviews, he made 15 statements concerning the development of clarity in his writing. He maintained that understanding the literature is quite different from explaining it clearly. To this point Eli stated:
It is hard to try to come up with the point I want to discuss, with the central idea of the paper. ... I am trying to summarize everything in a few words. [2019; 17:08–17:30]

Eli’s difficulty with explicitness and conciseness is a common challenge for plurilingual EAL scholars when writing for publication (see Biber & Gray, 2010; Wu, Mauranen, & Lei, 2020).

2019–2020: Writing and Networks

To transmit his ideas clearly, Eli emphasized the strategy of having discussions, also mentioned in 2016. In particular, he described how face-to-face discussions were akin to a digestive process that ensures the clarity of ideas. The usefulness of discussions is a recurring theme in his later interviews:

You really develop the ideas by discussing and not by reading. Reading is a way that you “eat” research, but the way ... you really ingest research is by discussing. [2019; 57:11–57:28]

Eli’s participation in frequent discussions with peers served as a way of providing him with the “interactions and support involved in the L2 academic (discourse) socialization of learners” (Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015, p. 356). In his case, it also led to collaborations and the development of ideas.

Eli described strong contrasts between his participation in networks during his Colombian PhD program and his European post-doc. He attributed this to the general lack of Colombian scholars in his field:

In my case, I was doing something in the field of SCIENCE [that] was kind of new in Colombia and there [were] not many people doing the same kind of stuff, so basically I was reading papers and trying to understand what they were doing ... but I [didn’t] have many opportunities to talk with people in the same field. [2019; 13:05–13:42]
In Colombia I was completely alone. … I didn’t talk with my advisor for two months. [2019; 38:05–38:10]

In contrast, during his international post-doc Eli reported increased engagement in discussions, as part of a strong, local network in both formal and informal contexts. Describing his post-doc, Eli stated:

The way to do research is completely different because here [Europe] basically everything is networking. … many times in the year you go to talk with other labs and people from other labs are also coming here, so there is a more fluent discussion. [2019; 14:01–14:28]

Eli signaled the particular importance of his post-doc advisor, with whom he works “95% of the time” [2019; 34:28–34:32]. He described benefiting from her active involvement in his research, which he mentioned 10 times in his interviews. This involvement took multiple forms, including invitations to be the lead author on reviews, introductions to relevant people in their field, and co-authorships; all of this increased Eli’s publication productivity. In this sense, she served as his network-broker by “providing access to resources and opportunities for publishing” (Curry & Lillis, 2010, p. 283).

Eli’s post-doc advisor also served as his biggest critic and gatekeeper in the writing process. Eli stated:

The filter is always my boss. … She tells me everything about what could maybe offend someone and which ideas do not have a replacement. Anything we write, we have already discussed it with her. Practically every week, we have meetings and we talk about what we have done, what we can say about this, what we cannot say about this, before we start writing. [2020; 30:09–30:47; author translation]

This advisor’s active involvement giving feedback shows the ways in which an established member of a research community may shape a manuscript and guide novice members in the politics of publication process (Li, 2006; Lillis & Curry, 2006).
Besides working with his advisor, Eli emphasized the importance of working with small groups several times during these interviews. He described how in his current international context:

There are many small meetings and some of these meetings are very good. So we go to present there and we just get in contact with [people]. I mean there are meetings that are less than 50 people, maybe less than 80 people, but [they] are quite good people. We just meet there and we have more opportunities to chat, to [share] some interesting things in common. [2019; 42:48–43:22]

Eli affirmed the benefits of these small groups in terms of networking and learning about relevant research taking place in the field. These meetings involved socializing and also included providing specialized courses, sharing data, and applying together for money/grants. This illustrates the crucial involvement of “participation as a way of learning—of both absorbing and being absorbed in—the ‘culture of practice’” (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Leah

Biographical Data

Leah completed her PhD studies in the biological sciences. After graduation, she spent two years informally employed in various projects. In 2020, she began a post-doc at an unranked Colombian university (Times Higher Education, 2019) in an area related to her PhD and personal interest.

2016: Writing

Leah’s 2016 interview provides an important baseline to contextualize her 2019–2020 interviews. There, she described her progress on the article that she would eventually publish from her dissertation study. Like
Eli, Leah demonstrated awareness of publication structures and how her publication would require the restructuring of the introduction section:

The methods and results are done. … I have now currently have more. … more co-authors, so and they know more about the species, so they have to provide me a lot of new comments. … so I have to replantating [reconceptualise] the introduction and all the discussion. [2016; 7:47–9:11]

In 2016, Leah described how her article was nearly ready:

Maybe in a month I have. … maybe less than [that]; really maybe I need one week, but I have to only write, [XXXX] and that I teach and take classes and, yeah but maybe one week. [2016; 9:49–10:20]

In the 2016 interview, Leah made two references to her mixed feelings about her writing. When describing the impending rewrite of her introduction, she stated: “I don't know why, but for me like to start again es como ohhhhwaaaaahhhh [it’s like argggghhh!]” [2016; 8:08–8:35]. Later on, Leah described the process of writing in English:

Sometimes I feel frustrated because for example in the introduction with you [the tutor] I thought, “Oh, I have to finish my introduction,” and then you check and mistake mistake mistake. Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhh my God, againnnnn?? But and I think in the process and I have improve my English with this with your comments. [2016; 16:03–16:24]

Here, Leah’s frustration about her writing reflects what Willey and Tanimoto’s informant “Keith” stated: “essentially the volume of errors or problems in a paper is so great that you can’t hope to get it right in one sitting” (2013, p. 26). This is also an example of how the publication process can “stretch the [author’s] abilities” (Luo & Hyland, 2019, p. 37).

2016: Networks

In 2016, Leah was not asked to describe her networks. However, from the data presented above, one can see that Leah demonstrated “agency on
the author’s part” (Luo & Hyland, 2016, p. 47), through her voluntary participation in ERPP tutoring, despite frustrations. Elsewhere, Leah directly referenced her English teacher and her hope to reframe a course project to support her in-progress publication.

2019–2020: Writing

Table 15.3 documents how Leah’s writing has progressed: Leah now has published four Q1 articles as first author. In her 2020 interview, she specifically discussed the difficult time she had with article 2, echoing what she had stated about this article in 2016. Concerning article 2, Leah reported how these changes took over one year to make, not the week that she had predicted in 2016. Leah also explained the reconceptualization that this article required and the work it took to assimilate the contributions of the other authors:

Genetically, I had many errors, so when I submitted it the first time, the peer-reviewer totally destroyed it, so much, even I was surprised [it wasn’t rejected]. … the second version was really writing another article, another dissertation, 60 pages, it was completely new. … in the end, I submitted it four times … I was so bored with this paper, I don’t know why, although the result is really nice. [2020; 15:02–15:42; author translation]

In contrast to the frustration and work invested in her second article, in 2020 Leah described herself as having much more confidence and speed when writing. She highlighted in several moments her ease when conceptualizing research projects and bringing them to fruition in manuscript form.

But truly, this [fourth] article, well, is one of the nicest that I have done, because I did it all, I practically did all of it, I led it, and it came out so well-done that it was accepted quickly. … but I dragged my feet a little. … it could have been accepted in two months or less. [2020; 3.05:10–05:58; author translation]
it feels like, I flowed the best, and I feel like this [fourth] article is that which has opened the door for me at this moment to continue writing papers and feel confident about myself that yes, I can do it, and I can publish my ideas and my things because this paper was so easy for me to do. [2020; 3.13:01–13:58; author translation]

From these extracts, one can see how Leah believes her writing to be changed after engaging in the publication process (Bardi, 2015). This aligns with theories of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and how, with time and experience, a person learns to participate in their research field’s conversation. As Casanave writes, “I rarely struggle the way I used to in trying to situate my work, my voice” (2008, p. 28).

2019–2020: Writing and Networks

In her 2019 and 2020 interviews, Leah made no causal attributions concerning the development of her writing and her participation in research networks. This being said, Leah’s comments illustrate the impact of both academic literacy brokers and her research network on the development of her publications. Critically, Leah described the key role one academic literary broker played in moving her manuscript for article 2 toward publication. As reported above, this editor “destroyed” her manuscript. However, Leah also intimated that the editor was very invested in this project, precisely because of his insistence and the number of revisions that he made:

I don’t know why he didn’t reject the article. “Reject it, already!” But he insisted and made so many comments, and clearly, they made it much better because it seems like, you know, the discovery the article made was beautiful. … Based on this work, well, the government of COUNTRY began to pay attention, we received a lot of support, I mean media support, and financing from the foundation XXXXX who have financed all of this, have financed me, and who continue to do so. [2020; 23:06–23:58; author translation]
This experience reflects the second case study found in Lillis and Curry (2006), in which an editor “made considerable efforts toward publishing th[e] article” (p. 24). It also reflects the ideal community of practice, in which experts help novices gain the community’s knowledge and practices (Lave & Wenger, 1991). While Leah made no assertion as to whether the editor understood the political and financial impact that this article would have, the investment of this academic literacy broker importantly shaped this publication’s content (Lillis & Curry, 2006, p. 29) and impacted Leah’s academic future.

As seen in Table 15.3, Leah typically wrote her manuscripts with about eight co-authors, from eight institutions in four countries. This is to say that Leah generally conducted her research and published within an extensive, domestic, and international network. Below, Leah explained why the third article included so many more co-authors (18!), and why large-scale co-authorship was a means to gather and process the data that represent a major geographic region.

Because [the second study; article 2] was really small, and we wanted to do it at the REGIONAL level, and based on that well, we contacted all of that giant mountain of people. … CO-AUTHOR 7 was my student and she had worked with habitat models. … CO-AUTHORS 8, 9, 10, 11, with these women I did the second project, so because of this they were already involved in the article, and the other researchers basically gave me data from their expeditions to complement our data base. [2020; 28:19–29:29; author translation]

While this group of 18 co-authors collaborated to make this large study possible, Leah also underscored the importance of both the affective bond of this large group of co-authors and of working with other women scientists:

I also like the third a lot because it’s like it demonstrates what I like, which is to collaborate and because there also are my best [women] friends from work. … with these women I work very smoothly without problems, and you can say that this article for me demonstrates camaraderie … we were so many people contributing, and there wasn’t any problem sharing data, there wasn’t any problem sharing ideas, everybody contributed in their
way. … it was this, this friendship, for that reason I like the third. [2020; 3.13:01–13:58; author translation]

In this text, Leah described the article as being built through a network, echoing the benefits that Bardi (2015) described of working within a wider network: more opportunities to learn and better quality texts. Intentional or not, Leah repeatedly characterized her research network as one of friendship, contribution, and women. Notably, while Leah could use the unmarked masculine form [amigos] to refer to both men and women friends, she linguistically marks how many co-authors are women friends [amigas]. This theme of sharing and friendship with other women scientists is highlighted in multiple other places in the interview, a theme of “collegiality” that has been noted by Lillis and Curry (2018, p. 60) in their work studying publication, networks, and women.

In Leah’s case, her network of women scholars was multi-directional in its collegiality. As one example, Leah described how a co-author initiated this positive relationship:

COAUTHOR 1 invited me [to work on article 1] but she saw that I contributed so much, so she said to me that to be fair [about author order], we didn’t know how to decide, so we left it to a coin toss. … with COAUTHOR 1, we are very good [women] friends and we like have this trust, to collaborate like this; we are very relaxed with each other. [2020; 7:29–7:39; author translation]

Elsewhere, Leah initiated this affective relationship:

A [woman] friend of mine from the PhD program said to me, “Leah, doesn’t that make you feel ashamed, having a girl from undergrad who knows more than you,” and I told her “CO-AUTHOR 13 helped me run the statistics, and I don’t know how to run that program, because I don’t know anything about R,” and so I invited her to be a co-author, and she was happy because she’s young. … and happy to have her first article. [2020; 3.04:12–04:28; author translation]

These interview excerpts further illustrate the importance of local networks (Curry & Lillis, 2010) and gender. Leah’s reported experiences—a
tendency of scholars in her women-centered networks to minimize hierarchies and to be open to sharing potential collaborations—adds to conversations concerning “the gendered nature of practices around research and academic writing for publication” (Lillis & Curry, 2018, p. 66). This experience broadens the traditional community of practice framework of novices apprenticing with experts (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and suggests that there may be additional gendered structures available to scholars that can provide support when producing research.

Conclusion

This study used longitudinal interview data to describe how two early-career plurilingual EAP scholars’ writing for publication changed over four years and how these scholars connected changes in their writing to their developing research networks. Our findings add two case studies to the literature from an off-center context where scholars benefited from the mentorship of a field expert, in these cases, a post-doc advisor and journal editor. These experiences affirm the importance of diverse field experts in the publication process and that mentorship should also be sought outside of the typical advisor–student relationship. This evidences what Lillis and Curry have written: that many people “influence the texts in different and important ways” (2006, p. 3).

In this study, each scholar commented on one network characteristic—ongoing discussions and gendered relationships—that, for them, supported their publication process. For Eli, the importance of socializing ideas with his peers in both formal and informal settings led to the “digestion” of his ideas and more clarity in his writing. Leah utilized her wide network of *amigas* to build collaborations. These types of interactions can be especially important for off-center scholars, as productivity in writing may be directly or indirectly attained through “each individual’s personal relationships within or beyond a social group, community, or institution” (Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015, p. 339).

These two case studies suggest the importance of early-career scholars being proactive in participating in networks, a recommendation of Lillis and Curry (2006; see also Luo & Hyland, 2016). Early-career scholars
should consider privileging collaboration and not competition when engaging in research activities, and participating in graduate student groups and special interest groups where they can have extensive conversations about field concerns. They can also participate in the abundant webinars and online discussion groups that the COVID-19 era has inspired. Individuals, engaged in these multiple activities in their community of practice, personify how “expertise is a holistic attribute” (Wray & Wallace, 2011, in Bardi, 2015, p. 108).

Institutions, especially those in off-center contexts, should consider case studies such as these, and take concrete steps to support their plurilingual EAL scholars’ research network participation. Zappa-Hollman and Duff write that “it should therefore be a priority for educators and institutions to help design systems” to involve young scholars in their own individual networks (Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015, p. 362). This applies to general fields of study as well. Steps can include funding for travel and conference participation, “key resources involved in research and publishing activities” (Curry & Lillis, 2010, p. 293). Funding can be used to develop small, local networks, since these “are often stronger and more durable than transnational networks” (Curry & Lillis, p. 293). By doing this, institutions and fields can create more access to opportunities for emerging scholars (Duff, 2019), something that is critically important for these scholars in research contexts like Colombia.

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