

OPEN PEER COMMENTARY

Voices of Three Junior Scholars: A Commentary on “(Why) Are Open Research Practices the Future for the Study of Language Learning?”

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Open research can (soon) become the norm in language sciences. Major funders and journals have begun to encourage or require more open and transparent research practices, from making materials and data available to disseminating results. Marsden and Morgan-Short closed their review article by suggesting that open research practices are the future. As junior researchers (an early-career scholar and two graduate students), we, too, are sometimes referred to as the future of the field. For some of us as junior researchers, there are no nonopen research practices to abandon because we have already

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been encouraged to carry out research in an open and transparent manner thanks to our mentors who have wholeheartedly supported open scholarship. Thus, junior scholars going through research training during the open research movement can provide insights and drive important changes in the field. We begin this commentary by illustrating how junior scholars can benefit from open research practices as an integral part of research training. We then discuss what junior scholars can offer. We conclude by extending Marsden and Morgan-Short's call for an incentive structure that will move the field toward openness and transparency.

Junior scholars can learn about and take advantage of various open research practices, including those identified by Marsden and Morgan-Short, as part of their research training. For example, new data analysis techniques and methods are uncovered when analytical code is shared. Furthermore, preregistration obliges researchers to lay out methodological details, including the more practical aspects of data collection, processing, and analysis. Perhaps the most important advantage for junior scholars practicing open scholarship comes through their being pushed to critically examine various aspects of a study more thoroughly than they would normally do. For example, when considering a replication attempt, researchers should decide which variable changes might have the greatest theoretical implications. They must also assess the extent to which the methodology of the initial study is appropriate for new study participants and provide evaluations of the validity and reliability of the instrument(s). These opportunities extended by open research practices can allow junior researchers to sharpen their critical thinking and analytical skills that are indispensable for an academic career.

Time is the first challenge to open research that Marsden and Morgan-Short discussed. As junior researchers call for more training in open research practices (Zečević et al., 2021), we argue that strong mentorship practices, including hands-on experience provided by established researchers, are warranted. In no way are we arguing that senior researchers should exploit their junior colleagues to perform tedious tasks. On the contrary, mutually beneficial relationships between more and less experienced researchers can facilitate crucial knowledge transfer and development of ideas. In some cases, junior scholars might possess the critical open research skills (e.g., coding) that will facilitate certain laborious tasks in efficient and reproducible ways. We stress that established researchers must shoulder the responsibilities of not letting this labor be invisible (e.g., Pownall et al., 2021). Potential co-authorship, along with accurate and detailed description of junior scholars' contributions (e.g., CRediT statement), should be discussed when they are

significant enough. These discussions would also be a powerful motivator for junior researchers' participation in the research (Kathawalla et al., 2021).

In addition, junior researchers are valuable assets in the open scholarship movement. Many not only support open research but feel enthusiastic about it (e.g., Pownall et al., 2021). This is critically important because mentorship is a two-way street. Although many discussions have focused on how advisors shape the research practices of their students, we argue that students and early-career researchers can also influence their advisors and mentors. For example, advisors are often listed as secondary authors in a student's publication. When that is the case, the student may take the lead in practicing open scholarship by, for example, sharing their materials, data, and analysis code or by choosing to publish the research in a journal that supports such practices. In fact, such a process can create significant learning opportunities for both senior and junior researchers.

Notwithstanding the positive role that junior scholars can play, we need support. We need an incentive structure that provides a safe space for us to practice open scholarship. However, junior scholars are not in a position to create such an incentive structure ourselves, at least not directly. Faculty research positions provide an example. The ability to carry out original research is often listed as a desired qualification for a position. In the United States, for instance, graduate students may have only one or two publications when entering the job market. If their publications include replication studies, these students' support for open research practices might put them at a disadvantage because replications might not be considered as original research. For promotion, too, open scholarship is seldom included as a criterion. This is where junior scholars need support from professional bodies such as the American Association for Applied Linguistics, the British Association for Applied Linguistics, the European Second Language Association, and others. If leaders in the field provide clearer promotion guidelines for open scholarship, junior scholars would be in a better position to practice open research without reluctance. With such efforts, professional bodies could establish systematic guidelines that, for example, specify what research is worth replicating that is independent of the research outcome (Romero, 2018). Changing the incentive structure should also be supported by research funders. As securing funding is sometimes considered a promotion criterion, allocating funding to open science projects can further encourage junior scholars to engage in open research. Finally, faculty members will more likely use open scholarship in their research when academic publishing requires it.

We began this commentary by suggesting that open scholarship can soon become the norm. We believe that many of our peers share our excitement about and support for open practices. As junior scholars, we have undoubtedly benefited from the work of other researchers practicing open scholarship, and we hope to continue this move toward openness and transparency. However, there are issues that junior researchers are also not in a position to address. Therefore, we call for an incentive structure that can protect and expand open scholarship, including for early-career scholars and graduate students.

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