



Editorial Introduction to the Inaugural Issue

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Abstract

This article introduces the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Critical Study of Communication and Disability* (JCSCD) by explaining its origins in the Speech, Language, Hearing Scientists Equity Action Collective. The editors describe the vision behind the journal, its mission, and the six articles comprising the first issue of JCSCD.

Keywords

Communication and disability; criticality; social justice; pathologized languaging; open access



The *Journal of Critical Study of Communication and Disability* (JCSCD) is a scholar-initiated project that was conceived from a collective desire to create a space that brings together scholars, educators, clinicians, and community members interested in promoting transformative research,

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policy, and practices related to critical examinations of communication and disability as they intersect with race, gender, class and other sociopolitical constructions. This project has transcended the publication of a journal. It is a movement committed to a stance against the pathologization of languagers and their languaging practices. Acknowledging the constraints and biases of our own disciplinary socialization, we aspire as a community to dismantle all forms of “isms” – racism, ableism, heteronormativity, sexism, classism, and Eurocentrism that are perpetuated through claims about people and the ways they communicate. The journal is a mechanism for emerging knowledge production built on principles of equity, justice, inclusivity, and decoloniality, hosting interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary dialogue that center marginalized perspectives.

JCSCD grew out of the *Speech, Language, Hearing Scientists Equity Action Collective*. This group was formed in 2020 for the purpose of challenging ideologies, values, structures, policies and practices that perpetuate racism in the field of *Speech, Language, Hearing Sciences (SLHS)* which includes the subfields of speech-language pathology and audiology. Our political and professional activism was informed by our intimate familiarity of and dissatisfaction with approaches to communication rooted in white, monolingual, Eurocentric, ableist, cissexist/heteronormative ideologies. The initial motivations for creating a new journal were discipline-specific, including: (1) to establish a forum for disseminating research related to social justice in SLHS; (2) to build community among researchers and clinicians dedicated to social justice work in the profession; (3) stimulating continuous publication of scholarly works in the area of social justice and SLHS; and (4) promoting transformative scholarly engagement. The work soon became about much more than fixing a discipline. We began to see that the solutions did not lie in the improvement of

fundamentally flawed systems, but in imagining and forging an alternative. We invested in building an interdisciplinary scholarly community with a shared interest and investment in creating an alternative space. The journal is a manifestation of this communal work, representing perspectives across and at the intersections of disability studies, critical race theory, linguistics, psychology, ethnomethodology, critical feminist theory, literature, education, cultural studies, and language teaching.

In the yearlong effort to launch the JCSCD, the editorial board engaged in ongoing conversations about the work we wished to see in the journal. There were several shared aims that came out of these conversations even though the editorial members represented quite different backgrounds, expertise, perspectives, and experiences. First, we wanted this journal not only to bring together scholars who already had a body of work in critical inquiry, but also to provide an inviting space for scholars interested in exploring what it means to adopt a critical stance toward the study of (pathologized) communication and disability. This is not just a space for accumulating knowledge, but also a community of practice where we can be supported through peer dialogue and feedback to engage in collective and self-inquiry. These inquiries are meant to disturb deeply entrenched ideological, epistemological, institutional, and praxeological bases underlying the disordering of marginalized communicators, the construction and commodification of pathologies, and the maintenance of discriminatory standards. Our goal is to develop new ways of knowing that center disabled perspectives, that promote liberatory languaging, and that illuminates how different axes of oppression work collusively to devalue people through the denigration of their language practices.

With these aims in mind, JCSCD encourages scholars to move beyond inclusionism and performative diversity to

address systemic inequities that lead to linguistic discrimination. The journal itself, the form it has taken, and the processes involved in its production are manifestations of this commitment. The journal title suggests a disruption of *Communication Sciences and Disorders* (CSD), a discipline that has dominated the discourse on communication disabilities. JCSCD emphasizes *criticality* as an integral part of communication scholarship, questioning the ways in which science is weaponized to justify disablement. We do not conceptualize a *scholar* as only someone with academic credentials, but value knowledge production from diverse forms of expertise, including but not limited to the lived experiences of disabled communicators, practitioners, community organizers, and activists.

JCSCD is an open access journal in which scholars maintain full ownership of their works and are charged no article processing charges (APCs) in the process. This is made possible by funding from our publisher, the Adelphi University Libraries, and our partnership with a librarian scholar with expertise in open access scholarship, Dr. Christopher Barnes. He serves as the production editor for the journal and has been instrumental in ensuring it is a high-quality publication which operates according to best practices and in ways that align with our values.

Authors and reviewers are both asked to provide positionality statements during the review process. Author positionality statements accompany each article in the journal. This self-reflexive exercise helps to locate the authors in a world shaped by social, cultural and political forces that affect, explicitly and implicitly, the types of research questions they ask, the research design they choose, and the interpretations they make of findings, especially in relation to constructions of knowledge about marginalized people (Boveda & Annamma, 2023; Holmes, 2020; Milner, 2007).

It is our hope that JCSCD continues to mature in both form and process, as we aspire to

expand our publication modalities beyond printed text and to include translinguistic repertoires. The factors that we consider impactful are not represented by numbers but are encapsulated by our ability to meet the need for scholarship that promotes intersectional linguistic justice. We believe that the collection of articles in this inaugural issue represent scholarship that creates such an impact.

“Unsettling Languages, Unruly Bodyminds: A Crip Linguistics Manifesto” by Henner and Robinson introduces readers to Crip Linguistics as a theoretical and abolitionist framework that critiques language scholarship through the lens of disability. It asks, “what is disability if not the interaction of language, the bodymind, and the environment as something done in a particular time and place?” (p. 6). Informed by disability justice, Crip Linguistics prompts us to envision linguistic care work as an investment in collective access and belonging. “Crip linguistics is therefore about putting the people back in languaging” (p. 20). It invites theoretical and applied language scholars to use Crip Linguistics to think with disability and to build coalition through a conscious joining of minoritized forces, that is, being among rather than by or behind each other. In Crip Linguistics, we find a provocative and thoughtful framework for theory and praxis that thoroughly upends the medical approach to communication and disability.

“Let’s Get Political: The Challenges of Teaching a Multicultural Course in Communication Sciences and Disorders” by Farrugia is a reflection essay about being accused of being “political” while teaching a course on multiculturalism in the Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences. Farrugia considers how this experience finds convergence with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association’s apolitical influence, white interests, and the tenets of color evasiveness. The author argues that teaching multiculturalism within an

antiracist framework necessitates getting into the political and personal, even in the face of pressure from students to erase these contexts.

In “Have We Learned Anything? Raciolinguistic Ideologies in Remote Learning Discourses,” Bauler illuminates how raciolinguistic ideologies shaped public discourse in the first year of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This article shows how the racialization of language has had the effect of reinforcing normative expectations for school participation that “reproduc[e] inequalities ... embedded in long-standing classroom routines” (p. 51). It urges us to use the occasion to arrive at alternative conceptualizations of school and learning that “foster creativity, multimodality and diversity” (p. 64).

Working together over several years, the Speech, Language, Hearing Scientists Equity Action Collective found shared experiences as BIPOC scholars committed to dismantling the oppressive systems in their discipline. In “‘Outsider Within’: Lessons Learned about SLHS and Race Scholarship,” Horton et al. critique the peer review process common to SLHS journals by investigating it through Neville et al.’s. (2012) psychosocial model of racism. The article highlights problems with journals’ superficial engagement with diversity and representation that ignore the entrenchment of racism and other forms of systemic exclusion in the production and dissemination of knowledge in the speech, language, and hearing sciences. It investigates the ways in which racialized and marginalized faculty are simultaneously commodified and marginalized through these types of diversity endeavors. The authors offer recommendations for addressing barriers in the peer review process that hinder critical scholarship in SLHS.

In “Speech Impairment and Yiddish Literature, or: An Essay on the Obligation to Communicate and the Responsibility to Listen,” Elhannan demonstrates the importance of literature in challenging language pathologization

by examining the perceptions and representations of language use in Yiddish literature. He shows how three Yiddish novelists from the 19th century contradict the idealized alignment of citizenship, language and identity through the portrayal of characters who are perceived as speech impaired. All three authors assert the culpability of listeners and invite the reader to experience “the reward of listening...as well as the price of being too busy to do so” (p. 102).

In “Accent Modification as a Raciolinguistic Ideology: A Commentary in Response to Burda et al. (2022),” Nair et al. offer a critical response to a research article by Burda et al. (2022) titled “Effectiveness of Intense Accent Modification Training with Refugees from Burma,” published in the *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology* (AJSLP). This commentary argues that the study raises ethical concerns not only for its methodological flaws, but also for its grounding in colonial logic and racist and ableist ideologies.

As a space for new ways of thinking about and living out communication and disability, JCSCD features authors who problematize and use concepts that may not yet be readily familiar to some readers. We encourage and welcome readers to stretch their thinking with us. JCSCD is not only *about* languaging, but fundamentally *of* languaging. We hope to foster forms of negotiated literacy, in which understanding is seen as work distributed between authors and the readers. Conceptual development is valued and taken as the foundation for knowledge creation and the building blocks of theory development (Giddons et al., 2020; Hyter, 2021). In the inaugural issue you will find usage and definitions of concepts – such as crip, languaging, bodymind, and raciolinguistics – that foreground or center identity and other critical frames of reference. These usages may not be familiar to readers whose orientations to communication and disability have primarily been influenced by clinical and medical perspectives. This is not

meant to alienate but to draw in. JCSCD is a learning space in which we recognize that all of us, without exception, are caught in our limited discourses. In that spirit, we remain vigilant and open to critique.

The JCSCD logo features a fire icon designed by a family member. The image of fire conveys our wish to ignite ideas, to illuminate

paths, to fuel activism, and to burn down barriers. It is about building a movement, about walking the change together, about being for each other, and about disturbing the boundaries that maintain outsiders and insiders. The JCSCD is an experience we are grateful to be part of. We hope you will enjoy reading the first issue and contribute to its evolution and growth.

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