

# Pressure to Publish Internationally: Scholarly Writing Coming to the Fore

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JLE editors touch upon the trends and challenges arising out of the changing landscape of scholarly communication as well as two sets of major problems non-Anglophone researchers face in publishing their research in international English-language journals. Firstly, if not desk rejected, they encounter continuous revisions of their submissions to such journals. Secondly, English as lingua franca of international scholarly communication may lead to some disengagement of national scholarly elites who essentially publish in English and to a wider national scientific community decoupled from English and limited to their native language communication. Given the challenges, the editorial offers a refined and widened JLE scope regarding language- and education-related issues of scholarly written communication.

**Keywords:** scholarly publishing, academic english, scholarly communication, writing for publication, international journal, english as an additional language (EAL), intelligibility

JLE is doing its best to sensibly react to new challenges brought about by language- and education-related issues. With much focus on academic requirements for publishing research internationally, academics, faculty members, PhD students, and fully-fledged researchers have to seek ways to produce high- or average-quality articles and get them published. *Ceteris paribus*, quality implies intelligibility of scholarly text. Though some researchers find it nearly impossible 'to objectively judge if a manuscript is intelligible or not' (Flowerdew & Ho Wang, 2016), international journals have to stick to their publishing standards, sometimes obscure and illusive. Depending on their command of English, non-Anglophone researchers meet with various hurdles in submitting research to international journals. In many contexts, such journals often stand for European and North American. In addition, they are substantially English language journals, with the best of them being overwhelmingly Anglophone. On the whole, English is indisputably considered as the dominant language for scholarly communication across the globe. In a sense, dominance may imply both functions of lingua franca and internationalisation-induced and unwelcome usage of the dominant language in numerous science settings.

Researchers in non-English speaking countries have to essentially write and publish in English. Their command of English and obstacles it may pose (primarily efforts to improve their manuscripts via literacy or scholarly editorial services and their academic writing skills) lead to longer cycles of research publishing. Their submissions tend to undergo continuous negotiation between journal editors, reviewers and authors. The non-Anglophone academia at large raises a hot issue of language policy, monolingualism and multilingualism in national science and scholarly communication within national states. There is a rising concern that internationalisation of science via publications in international English-language journals confronts with national language communication in wider national scholarly communities. On the one hand, internationalisation is narrowed to the research at national levels conducted by only a small share of non-Anglophone scholars who may be classified as expert English users. On the other hand, national research published in international English-language journals is often inaccessible for national scholars at large.

Expert language users account for a low percentage of non-Anglophone researchers. They have fewer barriers to international publishing. But their expertise and career trajectories associate with another set of challenges.

Harbord highlights that the thrust toward disengagement of the English-speaking (L2) national academic elite from their national science community (Harbord, 2018) is based on factors discouraging local language publishing. Why publish in English? Research in English often means reaching a larger and more competent professional audience and getting career benefits for non-Anglophone academics. In contrast, local language publishing often implies periphery of science. Thus, English has become the symbol of global high-profile science.

Cheung sets a number of prerequisites for a successful publication in peer-reviewed journals in English. They cover 'gaining entry into a particular discourse community ... and making good use of situated knowledge' (Cheung, 2010). The criteria of the discourse community encompass common goals, participatory mechanisms, information exchange, community-specific genres, highly specialized terminology, and a high-level expertise (Swales, 1990). Entering a new discourse community, i.e. the global English-speaking scholarly writing world, requires lots of effort and expertise. Researchers as novices have to remain at the margins for some time or even permanently as opposed to the core of global science (Cheung, 2010). Only after having familiarized themselves with the conventions of the discourse community, non-Anglophone academics may get a chance to enter it, given the fact that the appropriate English discourse is a kind of entrance ticket but not a warranty to be published or cited internationally.

Scholars with English as an Additional Language (EAL) 'have to overcome considerable difficulties in order to publish their research in international journals' (Flowerdew & Ho Wang, 2016). Flowerdew & Ho Wang summed up the key non-standard ('non-canonical') features of texts by EAL authors who are not expert users of English. The irregularities cause minor and major language revisions of EAL authors' submissions to international journals. Surface-level, or minor corrections include determiners, singular/ plural forms, punctuation, spelling errors, verb forms, confusions between parts of speech. The major revisions entail word/ morpheme level, additions (more frequently at the lexical and grammatical levels of clause/ clause complex and prepositional groups), deletions (clause/ clause complex level, prepositional groups, nouns, conjunctions, adverbs), rearrangements – replacements and substitutions to alter the meaning (prepositional groups, adverbs, nominal groups, verbal groups, clauses) (Flowerdew & Ho Wang, 2016).

EAL researchers have to constantly improve their command of English and academic writing skills, seek clarity of their scholarly texts, better text organisation through logic cohesion, well-grounded thesis development, and better general readability. Most of future academics and scientists studied under a writing-enriched curriculum at university. While working with journal editors and reviewers, some of them claimed that 'they had learned a lot from the editor about revising their manuscripts in the process' (Flowerdew & Ho Wang, 2016). Nevertheless, non-English speaking scientists across the globe are often forced to turn to intermediaries who help their manuscripts get better shaped and more intelligible. Two types of so-called 'literacy brokers' are outlined as (1) academic brokers, focusing on the content of articles; (2) language brokers, more concerned with language-related problems (Flowerdew & Ho Wang, 2016).

From time to time Anglophone editors and reviewers revisit the statement that 'non-standard English used by EAL writers should be accepted in international refereed journal articles' in case their language is intelligible (Jenkins, 2013). But if Q1 Scopus-indexed Anglophone journals are considered, only non-Anglophone expert users of English or those supported by scholarly editorial and proofreading services get their articles published there. There is a gaping difference in the English discourse between Anglophone and non-native English-language international journals. Though the latter may occasionally enter Q1 and Q2 in the Scopus database, when they approach expert level in their English, the bulk of Q1 and Q2 journals are either Anglophone or close to the discourse standards of English language native speakers.

Anyway, English scholarly text intelligibility lays foundation for high-level international publication. Linguists, editors, reviewers, and educators may contribute much to improve understanding of the phenomenon and ways to foster researchers' skills in writing for publishing in English.

Scholarly writing is not only about writing, but also about rhetoric schemas in various languages, thesis development and logic. Each language determines the ways people think. Writing in English is successful when an author constructs sentences, paragraphs and the whole text due to the conventions of the English language, barring native tongue interference. If otherwise, perfect grammar and proper discourse may fail to save the

writing. Wrong or foreign rhetoric moves and steps in an article coupled with non-English text organization and thesis development may distort the understanding and perception of the text (Swales, 1990). L2 and EAL researchers have to go a long and painstaking way to become efficient scholarly communicator and expert level users of English to succeed internationally.

Given the trends and new challenges above, below you will find a letter from the JLE Editors communicating the re-shaped journal scope to the Readers.

*Dear JLE Readers,*

*JLE editors are inspired to announce that the Journal of Language and Education has decided to refocus its scope adding studies on scholarly communication to the field of languages and education. This move is part of a strategic relaunch of the journal to provide greater attention to sharing and publishing research findings so that they could get available to a wider academic community. As you see from the above, the landscape of scholarly communication is changing under the influence of technology, internationalisation, global and national policies. These challenges demand new considerations. We are willing to provide an international source of peer-reviewed information on scholarly communication at large, with language- and education-related issues in closeup. It will cover such niches and issues as academic writing, writing for publishing, science editing, canonical patterns and non-standard irregularities of scholarly and academic texts, English as an Additional Language (EAL), English as lingua franca and multilingualism, literacy brokerage, journal writing conventions, structural and thesis-driven aspects of scholarly writing, research readability, self-awareness of writing confidence, publishing norms, fostering academic writing skills, writing-enriched university curricula, moves and steps theory and practice in scholarly writing, rhetoric schemas.*

*Moreover, after several months of planning and re-thinking our strategy, we decided to expand the Education section coverage. The journal will publish original articles on changing universities and their missions, education reframing, innovative models of teaching and progressive learning technologies (flipped class, mixed learning, deep active learning, etc.), virtual education and MOOCs, gamification and game-based curricula, redefining of quality of tertiary education and international rankings, mobility and autonomy in higher education. The list is certain to be regularly updated as the educational settings are prone to fast and constant change.*

*Looking forward to new inspiring submissions from our authors!*

*Best Regards,  
JLE Editors*

## **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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