# Natalie Reid, *Getting Published in International Journals: Writing Strategies for European Social Scientists* (2nd ed.).  Albuquerque: Professional Publications Press, 2018; 301 pp., ISBN: 978-0-682-92995-7 (pbk).

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"Improve the language", "Have your paper edited", "Write clearly", "Make your writing focused" are some of the most confusing comments non-native writers in English receive from reviewers of international journals. These comments state the fact that there is a problem, but do not necessarily explain what the actual issue is, which makes it nearly impossible to solve for writers who did not develop in the English-speaking community and do not possess the relevant background knowledge. Natalie Reid in her book *Getting Published in International Journals: Writing Strategies for European Social Scientists (2ⁿᵈ edition)* gives clear explanations what reviewers' comments imply and what exactly needs to be changed in the paper. Or, even better, anticipated and avoided altogether while working on the manuscript.

The purpose of the book is to explicate "the unwritten rules of English rhetoric" (p. 3) and specific strategies that help non-native English writers implement those rules and get published in international journals. The author draws on her broad experience of working with academic texts in the capacity of a teacher and an editor. This makes the recommendations very practical and highly relevant to anyone writing an academic text in English. At the same time, "the unwritten rules of English rhetoric" presented in the book will be helpful to manuscript editors and potentially even reviewers who might learn ways to understand where the writers' problems come from and how they can be addressed. Clear explanations of linguistic concepts throughout the book and key definitions in Part I make this publication accessible to academics with no or limited linguistic background.

"The unwritten rules" are features of Anglo-American rhetorical tradition characteristic of this linguistic community. The difficulty here is that these rules are expectations, conventions, or even obligations that are
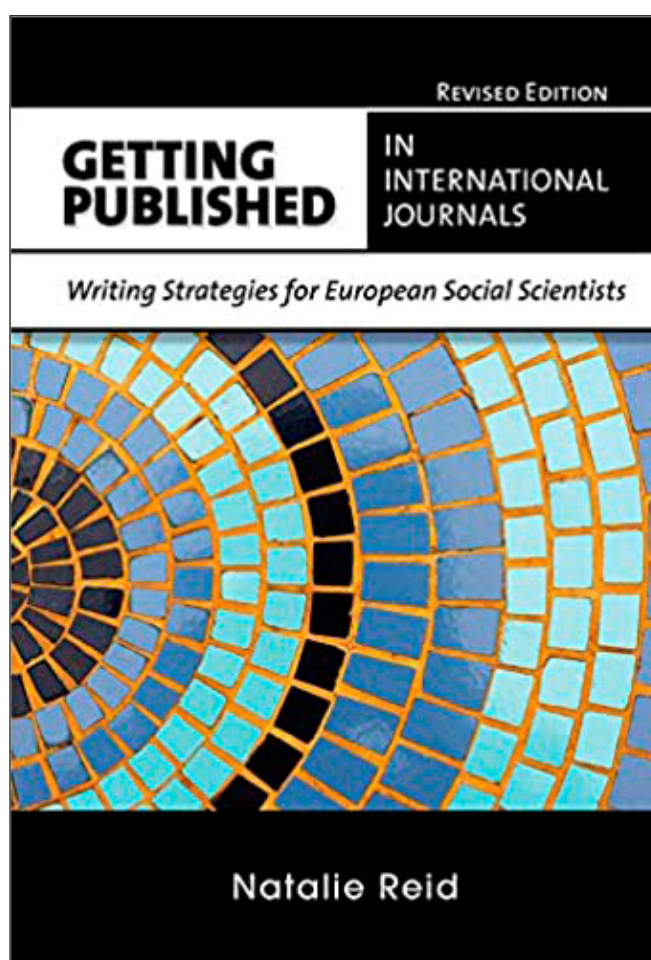
engrained in the English-speaking education, so they are generally subconscious, but well familiar to those who went through the system. Therefore, those who did not do it will struggle to understand what is required of them, while English language speakers might find it difficult to explain those conventions.

Starting with the "psychology of reading" (p. 3), or putting us in the position of the readers of our texts, the author takes us through specific expectations that English readers will have. First and foremost, the readers expect the writer to respect their effort; therefore, they appreciate clarity and lack of ambiguity on the level of both language and organization. This is otherwise known as English being a writer-responsible language and its belonging to low-context cultures (according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions). Secondly, readers want writers to show respect to their time by being concise and compact in expressing their ideas. Thirdly, writing is expected to be linear and argumentative rather than allusive, descriptive, or narrative. The last two principles are closely related to the theory of contrastive rhetoric (Connor, 1996), widely used in this book. These three expectations are brought together by the overarching principle that writing serves as a means of producing knowledge and is seen as a reflection of one's thinking process (Lea, 1998, Lea & Street, 2006, Kozak, 2020). That is why poor writing can undermine the research it presents, making an unfavourable impression on the reviewers.

The approach of raising awareness and presenting the theory that underpins the writing conventions seems particularly suitable for academics. Rational people tend to appreciate more explicit explanations rather than a prescriptive set of rules, since it is easier to subscribe to something that makes sense instead of adhering to something because it is said to be true.

Although awareness of Anglo-American writing conventions is beneficial for writers in various disciplines, the book presents a specific focus on writing for Social Sciences. It is indeed believed that each discipline or group of disciplines is characterized by its own writing genres and norms that a successful writer should be familiar with. Therefore, discussing writing in the discipline with examples from relevant texts is likely to be more helpful (Wingate, 2012).

Parts II, III, and IV start with readers' expectations, move on to general writing strategies, and then list specific techniques and language frames that help meet those expectations. This order of presenting information seems to be one of the most noticeable strengths of the book. Unlike some writing manuals organized by language means or discourse level, *Getting Published in International Journals* is built on the function-based principle, according to which we need to begin with identifying a rhetorical or communicative goal. This goal is actually determined by the writing norm and the readers' expectations presented at the beginning of each Part. Only after that the means of achieving this goal are presented, and this way, they fit into a bigger writing picture. For example, discussing consistent pronouns without explaining that they hold the text together and ensure clarity leaves them a yet another isolated grammar rule, which should be tracked at the stage of proofreading. Another common approach in writing books is organizing information by the level, from whole-text to paragraphs, sentences and then to words. Some may consider it appropriate for teaching purposes, but for researchers working independently, it makes it very hard to locate the necessary strategy. This is why grouping specific techniques and language items according to the function they fulfill, rather that the linguistic principle or the level they belong to, is highly beneficial from the practical point of view. In this case, writers can determine what they need to do – make the text concise, ensure clarity, organize ideas – and then easily find tools in a corresponding chapter of the book.

The second feature that distinguishes *Getting Published in International Journals* from similar publications is its cross-cultural nature. It is manifested in a comparative analysis of writing conventions in different cultures. Although presented briefly (e.g. pp. 17, 22, 138, 182), these parallels and contrasts highlight the differences and help bring out the expectations inherent to the Anglo-American writing tradition. By becoming more aware of researchers' native writing features along with the target rhetorical tradition, the readers can gain a deeper understanding of English conventions and of what needs to be changed in their own writing approach to ensure their English texts meet these expectations. The English norm often presented by itself without any comparisons, may contribute to the impression that it is the absolute truth, and writers may form a belief that other rhetorical traditions including their own are deficient or plain wrong. It is by presenting a variety of writing norms in an unbiased way that we promote the attitude to them as being different without the negative connotations of being inferior.

One of the most difficult to implement writing norms is its internal logic, or argumentation in a text. This aspect of discourse is almost always subconsciously familiar to members of a particular linguistic community; therefore, it is hard to grasp for members of other communities, but mandatory for successful communication. The Anglo-American approach is described in Chapter 13 "How to Develop and Frame a Logical Argument". Understanding expectations of English readers presented in earlier Parts, the readers can understand why English logic is linear, explicit, chronological, and deductive, moving from general to specific. Overall, argumentation in this rhetorical tradition follows Aristotelian reasoning, including appeals to logos, ethos, and pathos. Apart from this model, however, the Toulmin model of argumentation could have been introduced in this chapter as well, since it is a good operational pattern of thought organisation, which can contribute to coherence and strength of research writing.

When developing her arguments in the book, Reid resorts to a variety of supporting points. It includes theoretical background, empirical and anecdotal evidence from the author's editing experience. Extracts from published and unpublished texts serve as examples of good writing and less successful attempts that are then thoroughly analysed. The book seems to be an effective balance between different modes of informing and engaging with its readers. Apart from descriptions and arguments, it includes helpful checklists (e.g. tips for ensuring clarity pp. 25-26), metaphors ("every English text is a self-contained universe" p. 156), lists of framing language and sample statements fulfilling a certain function (e.g. countering objections p.167), diagrams (e.g. p. 166), tables (comparing British and American versions), and personal stories highlighting the impression that different quality texts produce on the target audience. The reader is approached from various directions, but even higher engagement could have been achieved through short analytical or reflective tasks.

The book goes beyond the writing process itself and speaks about essential pre-writing and very common post-paper-writing stages. They include selecting journals and dealing with reviewers' comments covered in Parts V and VI respectively.

The author refers to the selection process as "mesolevel journal analysis" (p. 200), which is based on a number of publications enabling the writer to draw reliable conclusions without making the process too time-consuming. To maximise efficiency and chances of publication, the analysis should be done before starting the paper. By encouraging writers to answer a set of questions, this approach will first help eliminate the journals that are not suitable for publishing the research. After that the author provides guidelines for a closer analysis of articles already published in the selected journal to make sure the contribution is the same in format and style. As Reid argues, the writer and the editor know that the paper is a good fit for a particular journal when "looks exactly like a paper that the journal has already published" (p. 199).

Part VI focuses on the post-writing stage of making revisions. It gives recommendations on how to plan and conduct self-editing and proofreading along with specific most common style and language problems to avoid. The part also includes the main differences between two varieties of English, British and American, which should be found in the paper and made consistent before submission. Finally, the author shared strategies and language patterns useful for writing cover letters and responses to reviewers' comments. This is an essential part of the book which does not pertain to writing a paper per se, but is still a significant stage of the submission process, which proves challenging to many researchers regardless of their experience.

Overall, the book *Getting Published in International Journals: Writing Strategies for European Social Scientists (2nd edition)* by Natalie Reid is a successful combination of theory-based explanations, stories from writing and editing experience, practical recommendations, examples of effective and ineffective texts, and useful language frames. All these enable the reader to become familiar with the Anglo-American rhetorical tradition and to acquire linguistic means to adhere to it, but perhaps more importantly the book explains the rationale behind the tradition, the implications, and the consequences of not observing the conventions. Therefore, it not only teaches European social scientists to write effectively, but also creates powerful motivation to actually do so.

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