

DE-MYSTIFYING THE PUBLICATION PROCESS

Where to start?

- Book reviews
- Session reports, conference reports
- Course papers and conference papers that can be developed into a manuscript
- Collaborative scholarship

Identifying a publishing forum

Options: newsletters, journals (print, online), edited books

Consider:

- Suitability for research focus
 - Length of time
 - Prestige/reputation of journal (impact factor)
- Based on a range of “quality indicators,” Egbert (2007) identifies the top seven journals in TESOL and applied linguistics as:

Applied Linguistics
English Language Teaching Journal
Journal of Second Language Writing
Language Learning
Modern Language Journal
Studies in Second Language Acquisition
TESOL Quarterly

- Probability of acceptance
- Acceptance rates

Journal	Estimated acceptance rate	Average time to publication after acceptance
<i>Applied Linguistics</i>	15-20%	5 months
<i>Canadian Modern Language Review</i>	20	4-6 months
<i>Discourse Processes</i>	30	6 months
<i>ELT Journal</i>	10	12-18 months
<i>English for Specific Purposes</i>	25-30	6 months
<i>Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) Journal</i>	10	9-15 months
<i>Journal of English for Academic Purposes</i>	25-30	3 issues
<i>Journal of Language, Identity, and Education</i>	25	2.5-6 months
<i>Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development</i>	40	8 months
<i>Journal of Pragmatics</i>	23	At least 12 months from submission to publication
<i>Journal of Second Language Writing</i>	15	6 months
<i>Korea TESOL Journal (KOTESOL)</i>	<25	3-12 months
<i>Language Learning</i>	15-18	6 months
<i>Language Testing</i>	30	About 18 months from submission to publication
<i>The Modern Language Journal</i>	15-20	9-12 months
<i>Research in the Teaching of English</i>	16	3-6 months
<i>Studies in Second Language Acquisition System</i>	10-20	1 year from first submission
	20	6 months
<i>TESL Canada Journal</i>	10-20	12-18 months
<i>TESL-EJ</i>	5	3-6 months
<i>TESOL Quarterly</i>	8.5	6-18 months
<i>World Englishes</i>	20-30	6-8 months

Data from Egbert (2007)

What is the submission process?

After you've identified an appropriate forum for your work...

1. Read through submission guidelines carefully.
2. Prepare manuscript specifically for your target forum (audience, references, documentation style, length)—*remember that a manuscript can only be under review at one forum at a time.*
3. Get feedback from at least one trustworthy reader.
4. Proofread and prepare manuscript with attention to detail.
5. Submit manuscript according to submission guidelines; you should receive a confirmation email that the manuscript has been received and is being sent to readers.
6. Wait (this can take anywhere from 3 weeks to 6 months, or even longer).
7. Receive reviews and editor decision (reject, revise and resubmit, accept with minor revisions, accept as is).
8. Once the final version of your manuscript is accepted, you'll sign a contract for copyright permissions and receive page proofs to correct before the article is published.

Some variations...

Book reviews

Contact book review editor to determine whether the book has been reviewed → submit review → receive acceptance/contract → revise where necessary → receive page proofs

Book chapters (edited books soliciting chapters)

Submit chapter proposal → receive acceptance/rejection → submit full chapter → wait for feedback from editor(s) (2-9 months) → receive feedback, possibly reader reviews → revise where necessary → wait for book contract, if not already secured (a few months-2 years) → receive acceptance/contract → receive page proofs (3-6 months)

What to expect from reviews

When you receive reviews

- Be thick-skinned
- Pay careful attention to the editor's letter and recommendations
- Revise and resubmit! (or send it elsewhere)

Common weaknesses in manuscripts

- Lack of familiarity with the journal and its readership (wrong genre, research paradigm, conversations)
- Not situating work within a disciplinary conversation
- Not situating work within a theoretical framework

Worsham (2008) also suggests the following practices for writers:

- Familiarize yourself with the types of articles that a journal publishes and only submit work appropriate for that journal.
- Pay close attention to the tone and style of work published in the journal and try to duplicate it in your own work.
- Follow, religiously, the style guide used by the journal. No hybrid styles!
- Only submit work that you believe to be final, publishable copy. A poorly proofread manuscript wastes your time and mine.
- Placing your work in the context of articles previously published in the journal is good scholarly practice and helps make your article a better "fit" for the journal.
- Follow the journal's submission rules — exactly.
- Develop a healthy attitude toward rejection. You know from the outset that competition is fierce, so maintain a positive attitude.

(How much) To publish or not to publish?

Prioritize your responsibilities and goals; ask yourself:

- What do you *need* to have completed to graduate?
- What do you need to have completed for the kind of position that you are looking for?
- What would you like to have completed, for your own satisfaction and professional development?

Some Further Reading

- Bugeja, M. J., & Wilkins, L. (2006). The pipeline to publication. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved Nov. 12, 2008, from <http://chronicle.com/jobs/news/2006/12/2006120601c.htm>
- Canagarajah, S. (n.d.). TQ editor's ponderings [blog]. Retrieved Nov. 10, 2008, from <http://www.personal.psu.edu/asc16/blogs/TQeditor/>
- Casanave, C. P., & Vandrick, W. (Eds.) (2003). *Writing for publication: Behind the scenes in language education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Egbert, J. (2007). Quality analysis of journals in TESOL and applied linguistics. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(1), 157-171.
- Lauer, J. M. (1997). Graduate students as active members of the profession: Some questions for mentoring. In G. A. Olson & T. W. Taylor (Eds.), *Publishing in rhetoric and composition* (pp. 229-235). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Matsuda, P. K. (2003). Coming to voice: Publishing as a graduate student. In C. P. Casanave & S. Vandrick (Eds.), *Writing for publication: Behind the scenes in language education* (pp. 39-51). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Worsham, L. (2008). What editors want. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved Nov. 12, 2008, from <http://chronicle.com/jobs/news/2008/09/2008090801c.htm>

Sample submission letter (online submission)

Dear Dr. _____ and Dr. _____,

We would like to submit the attached manuscript, “Voice in Academic Writing: The Rhetorical Construction of Authorial Identity in Blind Manuscript Review,” for review at *English for Specific Purposes*. The manuscript, or parts of it, have not been and will not be submitted elsewhere for publication.

Please let us know if there are any problems with our on-line submission files. Thank you, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sample letter detailing revisions to a draft (Email)

Dear _____,

Thanks for your patience as {co-author} and I have worked on revising our original submission. I'm attaching the new version, in which we have addressed the concerns as follows:

Focus literature review

We have completely rewritten the introduction to focus on blind manuscript review. We removed most of the theoretical framework and integrated appropriate materials to various parts of the text.

Self reporting

We have indicated that this study is a self-report survey. We have also added a discussion of the self-reported nature of this study (and other previous studies of blind manuscript reviews), and we have integrated additional reporting verbs to indicate places where the nature of self-reported data becomes relevant.

Voice & related concepts

We have clarified the distinction between the common notion of author identity (autobiographical self) and discursively constructed identity (voice) in the introduction.

Tables 1 & 2

We have removed tables 1 and 2 and incorporated the information into the description of survey respondents.

Downplay disciplinary differences

We have removed the phrase “across disciplines” from Research Question 1. We have also revised the discussion to tone down the disciplinary differences within the population being studied. We have, however, used the discussion of previous studies in sciences to highlight some of the possible disciplinary differences between sciences and writing-related fields.

Please let us know what you think of the changes and if any further work is needed. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Sample Reviews

The following excerpts are taken from two reviews of the same manuscript:

...I find little to criticize in the piece. It's lucid, irreproachable in style, and backed with a solid review of the literature and a reasonable interpretation of the data. *{Journal X}* could publish it pretty much as is, in my opinion. I have two minor reservations...

A substantive study of {topic} would be of considerable interest to *{Journal X}* readers, and so I read this manuscript with considerable interest. Unfortunately, the study reported in this manuscript has some significant problems that lead me to conclude that the study would have to be significantly strengthened to meet the goals set out in the research questions or manuscript would have to be completely rewritten to more successfully reflect the issues that the data can speak to. Because either of these options, in my judgment would require a substantially new manuscript, I am forced to recommend that it be rejected.

Below is an excerpt from the editor's decision letter for the same submission:

Dear _____:

I write regarding your recent submission to *{Journal X}*, "{title}." Your ms has been reviewed by two reviewers, both members of *{Journal X's}* Editorial Board. Based on these reviews, and on my own reading of the ms, I would like to provisionally accept your ms for publication contingent on successful completion of the revisions I specify below.

I like your study very much; the study is well done, interesting, and relevant to our readership, and the writing is clear and direct.

In addition to reviewer comments (which I'll address below), I have three significant problems that I'd like you to address. First, ...