

How to Get Published in International Journals: Part I

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Source Material

- ***Getting Published in International Journals: Writing Strategies for European Social Scientists***

by Natalie Reid, (NOVA, 2010; Oslo)

www.nova.no/reid

www.amazon.com

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Why Writing in English is Different

- Theory of contrastive rhetoric
- The psychology of reading
- Different expectations of readers and writers
- Different rhetorical tradition
- “Writing is thought made visible”

The Five Essential Strategies for Maximizing Your Publication Chances

- Analyzing journals both for elimination and for submission
- Organizing and arguing in Aristotelian logic
- Editing for strength (less is more)
- Editing for clarity (clarity rules!)
- Revising rigorously for language, clarity, argumentation, punctuation, etc.

What writing in English demands

- Every sentence must be clear on first reading, for only one meaning.
- An English paper is a self-contained universe. Everything that the reader needs to know must be in the paper—and precisely where it belongs—so that the reader never gets confused.
- The writer must **frame** everything: not only the paper but also every section and paragraph.

[continued]

- Nothing in English is implicit. You must spell everything out, and define all terms the moment you first mention them.
- An English paper creates an airtight proof. You do not narrate, discuss, or theorize—instead, you tell the reader what you will or won't do, then do it, then show the reader that you have done it and *how* you have done it.

Your obligation as a writer

- You must never take reader knowledge for granted. Assume nothing. Put everything where it belongs, as if nothing exists in the universe beyond your paper.

WHY?

Because...

- Academic English is the world's only 100% **writer-responsible** language. In English, only the reader and the reader's needs matter. If the reader has to think about the writing, to figure out what it means or where the writer is going, then the writing, by definition, is not acceptable.

The Five Strategies in the order we will discuss them

- Editing for strength (less is more)
- Editing for clarity (clarity rules!)
- Organizing and arguing in Aristotelian logic
- Analyzing journals for elimination and submission
- Revising rigorously for language, clarity, argumentation, punctuation, etc.

Strategy 1: Less is More

Shorten all structure words

- due to the fact that = because
- in view of the above = therefore
- in the course of = during
- the fact that = that
- in relation to = about
- for the purpose of doing = to [do]/for [doing]
- until such time as = until

Strategy 1: Less is More

Eliminate all redundancies—condense!

- various kinds of theories = various theories
- in the month of August = in August
- to a large extent = largely
- in a professional manner = professionally
- in the amount of \$5,000 = for \$5,000
- fear and trembling = dread
- each and every one = each one / every one
- aggregate together = aggregate

Shorten these structure words

- at this point in time
- in conjunction with
- for a period of 10 weeks
- in the amount of \$_____
- in the [Russian] context
- on a [monthly] basis
- up to and including
- not later than
- in certain respects

Eliminate clichés

- each and every one
- first and foremost
- tried and true
- invisible to the eye
- last but not least
- day-to-day routine

Recommended References

The Dictionary of Concise Writing, 2nd Edition,
by Robert Hartwell Fiske

[Over 10,000 alternatives to wordy phrases]

ISBN 1-933338-12-1

www.vocabula.com / www.amazon.com

Recommended References

- *The Writer's Digest Dictionary of Concise Writing* by Robert Hartwell Fiske

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www.vocabula.com / www.amazon.com /
www.abe.com

Avoid “it is” and “there is/are”

- Poor: *It is* obvious from Equation 3 that we can identify only one specific D and one specific E, not all the D’s and E’s.
- Better: Equation 3 *makes clear/demonstrates* that we can identify....
- Poor: It is not immediately clear what the results suggest.
- Better: What the results suggest is not immediately clear.

Avoid these two constructions

- It is argued that....
- It is obvious that....

Prune these sentences:

“It may be that one of the problems facing research laboratories is that....”

“Exams concerning the theoretical knowledge are held on a regular basis.”

Eliminate “hedge words”

Examples: appear, seem, would [do], might be, could be, can be said to, would like to, try to, may indicate

Sometimes, however, these words are accurate—or, at least, appropriate:

Ex: The findings *indicate a slight* trend towards.... [52%]

The findings *show* a trend towards.... [85%]

Pruning longer text

Norway had by the turn of the century a high labor force participation rate compared to the average standard for OECD countries. By 1997 the overall participation rate of Norway was 90.9 percent compared to an OECD average of 70.6 percent.

[41 words]

Pruning Longer Text (cont.)

By the turn of the century, Norway's labor force participation was higher than the OECD average. For example, its 1997 participation was 80.9 percent, compared to 70.6 percent for the OECD. [32 words]

By 1997, Norway's labor force participation rate (80.9 percent) was higher than the OECD average (70.6 percent). [17 words]

Strategy 2: Editing for Clarity

- Avoiding Ambiguity: Using pronouns correctly
- Writing in the Active (not passive) Voice
- Placing Words Where They Belong: Using modifiers correctly
- Using Parallel Structure
- Punctuating for Clarity in UK or US (or other) English

Using pronouns correctly

- Do not use “this” (or “these”) by itself. Add the appropriate noun:

“This discrepancy led to....”

“These findings are inconclusive....”

- Use personal pronouns only when the sentence has only one word that each can refer to. For example, do not use “it” or “they” when a sentence has two or more words to which the word could refer. Instead, repeat the noun.



Using “which” & “that”

“Which” & “that” must refer only to the word immediately *before* them—not to anything else.

Edit this sentence for its “which” problem:

“This lack of data standardization both within and between [institutions] is often identified as a barrier to both the take-up and the efficient use of [X], which causes the following problems:”

Rewrite Possibility 1

- This lack of data standardization both within and between [institutions] is often identified as a barrier to both the take-up and the efficient use of [X]. *The absence of [institutional] standardization causes the following problems:*

Rewrite Possibility 2

- This lack of data standardization both within and between [institutions] is often identified as a barrier to both the take-up and the efficient use of [X]. *This barrier* causes the following problems:

Rewrite Possibility 3

This lack of data standardization both within and between [institutions] is often identified as a barrier to both the take-up and the efficient use of [X], *thereby causing* the following problems.

[This option, however, is not a good one, because precisely *what* is doing the “causing” remains unclear.]

Rewrite Possibility 4

- This lack of data standardization both within and between [institutions] is often identified as a barrier to both the take-up and the efficient use of [X]. *These take-up and efficiency problems* cause the following problems:

[This option is not good because of the repeated word “problems.”]