**The politics of academic text production: language, locality, knowledge**

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Research questions for this paper/analysis:

* How do reviewers orient to English and language when reviewing papers submitted for publication?
* Do (and how do) orientations to English and language matter in overall evaluation of papers?

**Example of one Text History**

**Brief summary and extracts from reviewer and editor comments**

**Background:** Article was written by five co-authors in the field of psychology. The main author was a mid-career academic researching and writing with four junior academics. The main author had 17 journal article publications in English and 13 in the national language. The article was submitted to and rejected by one journal then submitted to a second journal, where it was accepted.

**JOURNAL 1**

**Editor’s response:** Reject -- letter accompanying 3 reviews

In a long covering letter (95+ lines), the decision to reject is stated based on the reviews and the editor’s ‘own reading of the manuscript’. The editor’s comments are based on her ‘careful reading of the manuscript myself’, signaled in her widespread use of the first person ‘I’ (I think, I felt, etc.). The critical comments centre on concerns about methodology, analytic tools used and forms of analysis, and are written in the register of hedged commentary (‘it seems to place in opposition’, ‘you seem to assume’, ‘it seems to me that’) with only one emotionally loaded negative evaluation, ‘nonsensical’.

In concluding her comments, the editor signals, however, that the paper could be publishable: ‘I think it could be, but for me, and two of the reviewers, this would involve significant work’. The nature of this *significant* work is not specified but it is clearly not considered do-able by the editor.

**Reviewer 1.** Explicitly negative overall. Many concerns about rhetorical organization, language and style are echoed across the review:

*I found the organization of this manuscript to be very confusing.*

*This paper would benefit from significant reorganization.*

*Perhaps it is personal preference, but I find the writing style of this/these authors to be very flowery and containing an excess of verbiage.*

*The length of the sentence, the multiple embedding of concepts, and the way they “back into” an explanation reduces the “reader-friendliness” of the manuscript.*

*This manuscript would benefit from significant editing to present concepts in a more straightforward manner.*

*The author(s) also present a lot of redundancy.*

*Throughout the entire document you create sentences that are so long that the meaning becomes obscured.*

**Reviewer 2:** Explicitly positive. *This is a really interesting paper that touches on an area as yet unexplored. It contributes to the literature of both [XX] and [XX] and is generally very well written.[[1]](#footnote-1)*

**Reviewer 3**: Brief report (12 lines), points to only one concern and concludes the comments with a request for further information which signals that this reviewer might have recommended a revision rather than rejection

**JOURNAL 2:**

**Editor’s response**. Accept. Brief letter reporting the acceptance decision impersonally, indirectly using the two reviewers’ comments as a warrant. *The referees have recommended publication, but also suggest some minor revisions to your manuscript. We would like you to take account of the referee(s)’ comment and revise your manuscript accordingly*.

**Reviewer 1:** makes no explicit comments on English or language, but some of the comments signal that language/rhetorical revision is needed:

*I understand that---, however perhaps at the beginning you could----*

*I appreciate how well the writers describe ---, but would like just a bit more on the settings---*

*I believe somewhere it might be helpful to mention when you begin discussion about---*

*I am uncertain if you intent [sic] to say---*

**Reviewer 2** opens her/his comments with congratulations and an explicitly positive evaluation:

*I wish to congratulate the author(s) on a well written and engaging paper. I have recommended it be accepted for publication pending revision.*

**Publications from the PAW Project**

Curry, M.J., Lillis, T., \*Alsheri, A., \*Mushi, O., & \*Xu, X. (in preparation, 2022). Multilingualism as a pillar of academic research practices and communications. In K. McKinney, P. Makoe, & V. Zavalas (Eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Multilingualism* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Lillis, T., & Curry, M.J. (in press, 2022). The dynamics of academic knowledge making in a multilingual world: Using a situated heuristic to explore academic writing for publication. To be included in the special issue, The dynamics of academic knowledge production: Text histories and text trajectories. *Journal of English for Research Publication Purposes*

Curry, M.J., & Lillis (in press). Multilingualism in academic writing for publication: Putting English in its place. Invited position paper, *Language Teaching*

Curry, M.J., & Lillis, T. (2019). Unpacking the lore on multilingual scholars publishing in English: A discussion paper.*Publications, 7*(27). doi:10.3390/publications7020027

Lillis, T., & Curry, M.J. (2018). Multilingual women scholars writing in academia: Trajectories of knowledge and desires. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes.*

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Lillis, T., & Curry, M.J. (2015). The politics of English, language and uptake: The case of international academic journal article reviews. *AILA Review*, 28(1), 127-150. DOI:10.1075/aila.28.06lil.

Curry, M.J., & Lillis, T. (2014). Strategies and tactics in academic knowledge production by multilingual scholars. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives, 22*(31). Available at: [http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v22n32.2014[dx.doi.org]](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v1/url?u=http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v22n32.2014&k=p4Ly7qpEBiYPBVenR9G2iQ%3D%3D%0A&r=s3%2BTFzDE%2Fo13LGb3knuYMHCCZ8sCzd3xZfuoOT3xBbY%3D%0A&m=KXufmc2LjPwCO1HVKc8lZFmciWOZoyuN%2BI1IG%2BoRJWw%3D%0A&s=947cd392d0668ef0632bd17e5973c37c7b70fae5a69c692ca77c185eb47dacd1).

Lillis, T.M., & Curry, M. J. (2013). English, scientific publishing and participation in the global knowledge economy. In E. Ehrling & P. Sargeant (Eds.), *English and International Development* (pp. 220-242). Multilingual Matters.

Curry, M.J. & Lillis, T.M. (2013). *A scholar’s guide to publishing journal articles in English: Critical choices, practical strategies.* Multilingual Matters.

Lillis, T.M. & Curry, M.J. (2010). *Academic writing in a global context: The politics and practices of publishing in English*. Routledge.

Curry, M.J., & T.M. Lillis. (2010). Academic research networks: Accessing resources for English-medium publishing. *English for Specific Purposes, 29*(4), 281-295.

Lillis, T., Hewings, A., Vladimirou, D., & Curry, M.J. (2010). The geolinguistics of English as an Academic lingua franca: Citation practices across English-medium national and English-medium international journals. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics,* *20*(1), 111-135.

Curry, M.J., & Lillis, T.M. (2008). Designing research-based heuristics to support English-medium academic publishing. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 156*, 29-30*.*

Lillis, T.M., & Curry, M.J. (2006). Reframing notions of competence in scholarly writing: From individual to networked activity. *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses, 53*, 63-78*.*

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Curry, M.J., & Lillis, T.M. (2004). Multilingual scholars and the imperative to publish in English: Negotiating interests, demands, and rewards. *TESOL Quarterly, 38*(4), 663-688.

1. Possible identifying features of extracts have been removed. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)