



Hidden Linguistic Discrimination in International Academic Publishing: ESL Scholars' Experiences with Major Journals

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Abstract

This study investigates language discrimination in international academic publishing. It examines the experiences of ESL scholars through detailed interviews with 20 international researchers. After careful analysis of journals' feedback, we found strong evidence of systematic bias against non-native English speakers. Results also show that journals often reject quality research solely due to language issues. This led ESL scholars to spend excessive time and money on editing services. The Arab scholars face the heaviest burden, spending up to \$1,500 per paper on language editing and proofreading. Additionally, the document analysis revealed that most reviewer comments focused on language rather than research content. The study proves that current publishing practices create unfair barriers that prevent important research from reaching the global academic community. This bias affects scholars from regions where English is not commonly used in academia and creates a cycle of reduced publication success and slower career progress. Our findings demand urgent changes in how journals evaluate ESL scholars' work and how universities support their publishing efforts.

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Introduction

Publishing academic research today requires writing in English. Most Scopus indexed international journals accept English papers more than any other language (Martín *et al.*, 2014) ^[24]. This language selection creates many problems for scholars from non-English speaking countries. These scholars work hard to share their findings with the world. However, they experience rejection and delays in publication because of language issues. A recent study shows that language problems stop many good research papers from being published (AlQbailat, 2019) ^[3].

Scholars need perfect English grammar and academic writing style when writing for international journals. For most ESL scholars, this means paying professional editors and spending months improving their English (Corcoran, 2015; Nesfield, 2023) ^[8, 26]. A recent study found that ESL scholars pay between \$500-1500 for each paper they try to publish. Journal reviewers often reject papers because of English mistakes, even when the research is excellent. They ask authors to send their documents to their journal's editing services or any other company. In this context, the authors are obliged to send their papers and spend a large amount of money to get their papers published. The research adds that this phenomenon affects ESL scholars from non-speaking and low-income countries most (Singhal & Kalra, 2021) ^[38].

Few studies have examined how language problems affect scholars' careers and research success. It is well known that ESL scholars face challenges in publishing their work (Badah *et al.*, 2024) ^[5]. However, how these challenges affect their work and professional growth is still unclear. It is challenging to find good ways to help these scholars succeed in international publishing, get academic promotions, and benefit the world from their research (Richard *et al.*, 2015) ^[35].

Based on the short preview above, this study examines how language requirements in academic publishing affect ESL scholars. The authors want to understand ESL scholars' experiences with international journals, how they handle language challenges,

and how these issues affect their careers. In this study, we interviewed 20 scholars to explore the real impact of language barriers in academic publishing.

Based on this background, this study aims to investigate two main questions

1. What types of language-related feedback do ESL scholars receive from journal reviewers?
2. How does language bias affect ESL scholars' publication success and career progress?

We believe that this study is essential because there are many ESL scholars publishing academic work internationally, and many of them are experiencing such challenges in the publication process. Additionally, this study analyses how language bias affects these scholars in their careers. We assume that universities and research institutions can use these findings to create support programs for their instructors, such as academic English workshops. Moreover, the results of this study help journal editors and reviewers recognize their own language comments for ESL scholars. The results can help journal editors and reviewers treat ESL scholars' work fairly. Finally, these changes are necessary for making academic publishing fairer for all scholars.

This research shows how ESL scholars experience academic publishing. Their input will help create better publishing guidelines for non-native English speakers. These new guidelines will make academic publishing more accessible. As a result, important research from ESL scholars will have a better chance to reach readers worldwide.

Literature Review

English Language Dominance in Academic Publishing

English has become the standard language for academic publishing worldwide. Leading journals now require all research papers to be in English (Montgomery, 2013) ^[25]. This requirement presents a significant challenge across the global research community. Publishing research is the core of academic careers (Curry & Lillis, 2017) ^[11]. The ability to share discoveries and findings shapes a researcher's professional growth and recognition. Many talented scholars work in languages other than English, yet they must translate their valuable insights (Hatim, 2014) ^[17]. The translation process demands extra time and resources before scholars can present their work. The global spread of knowledge depends on language accessibility. Research findings travel more slowly through academic circles because of language barriers. English connects scholars worldwide, but this connection brings challenges. Academic communities seek new ways to share knowledge effectively as research and publishing continue to evolve (Sharaievska *et al.*, 2019) ^[36]. Academic databases show that English leads academic publishing today. Most science journals now only publish papers in English. This pattern appears in all academic fields, from science to the study of human society. Researchers must write their work in English to share it with others worldwide. Different fields of study handle language rules differently. Science and technology journals strictly require English. Other fields show more flexibility, but English still remains the main choice. A researcher's ability to write in English has become as important as the quality of their research. Most researchers speak languages other than English. They must first write their ideas in their own language. Then, they must

put all their work into English. This extra step makes sharing research more difficult. The academic world keeps looking at how this English requirement affects the sharing of knowledge globally (Bocanegra-Valle, 2013) ^[7].

Language Barriers and Academic Success

Scholars who use English as a second language face several challenges when publishing their research internationally. These challenges affect their work from the first draft to the final publication. Writing research papers in English creates the most serious difficulty. These scholars must present complex ideas in a language they learned later in their careers. Most struggle with choosing the right words and creating clear sentences that meet journal requirements (Siregar, 2024). This often leads them to simplify their ideas, which may reduce the value of their research. The time needed to prepare papers in English presents another major challenge. These scholars spend many extra hours checking and fixing language issues in their work. While their English-speaking colleagues can complete papers quickly, these researchers often spend several months working on a single paper just to meet language standards. The cost of publishing adds more difficulty. Most of these scholars must pay for professional English editing to meet journal requirements. They often spend hundreds or thousands of dollars to prepare each paper. This expense creates problems, especially for researchers who have limited funding. Many use their own money for editing, which leaves them with fewer resources for new research (Steigerwald *et al.*, 2022).

Review Process and Language Bias

Research shows that scholars who use English as a second language face more challenges during the peer review process. Reviews of their work often focus more on language than research quality, creating an unfair situation in academic publishing. They claimed the language was vague (Ismail *et al.*, 2022) ^[1, 20]. Studies also reveal that reviewers treat these papers differently. Reviewers make many more comments about language use when reviewing work from non-English speaking scholars. They often focus on grammar and writing style instead of the actual research findings. Many reviewers ask for native English speaker checks, even when the research shows good quality. Journal editors also make decisions based on language quality (AIQbailat *et al.*, 2023) ^[4]. Many editors reject papers that they consider to have "poor English" without even sending them for review. This practice especially affects researchers from non-English speaking countries (Pelicioni *et al.*, 2023) ^[30]. These scholars may have valuable research to share but struggle with presenting it in English. This frequent focus on language issues creates real barriers for many talented researchers. Their valuable findings may never reach the wider academic community simply because of language differences. This situation raises important questions about fairness in academic publishing (Li *et al.*, 2022).

The bias extends beyond simple language corrections. Johnson *et al.* (2020) ^[21] found that reviewers often question the credibility of research when it contains language errors. The study showed that identical research methods and findings received different evaluations based on the quality of English used. Papers with perfect English received more favourable reviews, even when the research content was identical to papers with language issues.

Effects on Academic Careers

Language barriers in academic publishing directly affect ESL scholars' career progress in several ways. First, publication delays and rejections slow down their academic advancement. Research tracked the careers of 200 ESL scholars over five years. The study found that these scholars published 40% fewer papers in high-impact journals compared to native English speakers in similar positions. This lower publication rate affected their promotion opportunities and research funding success (Hyland & Jiang, 2019) ^[19].

Salary and promotion decisions often depend on publications in prestigious English-language journals. Publishing requirements in English create serious career challenges for many scholars. These researchers often receive slower promotions and lower pay increases than their English-speaking colleagues. Many remain in junior positions longer because they publish fewer papers in English-language journals. Research funding also connects closely to English language ability (Ramírez-Castañeda, 2020) ^[34]. Scholars need strong records of international publications to receive research grants. Studies show that researchers who use English as a second language receive much less funding than others with similar experience. This creates an ongoing problem: less funding makes conducting and publishing new research harder. These challenges lead many scholars to make difficult choices about their research. Some choose to publish in less prominent journals that have easier language requirements. Others narrow their research topics to avoid complex writing in English. These decisions help them continue publishing but may limit their career growth and contributions to their fields. The effects of English language requirements reach beyond individual careers to shape the broader academic community. When talented researchers face barriers to sharing their work, the whole field loses valuable insights and discoveries (Niles *et al.*, 2020) ^[28].

Support Systems and Solutions

Most university support services focus on basic language editing (Ngoc & Barrot, 2022) ^[27]. Typical support services include English language workshops, editing services, and writing groups. However, these services often lack the subject expertise needed for specialized academic writing. Many scholars report that general language support does not address the specific challenges of publishing in their academic fields.

Some institutions have developed more innovative solutions. For example, Gast *et al.* (2022) ^[14] described a mentorship program where experienced ESL publishers guide newer scholars through publication. This program improved publication success rates among participating scholars. Other successful initiatives include writing retreats, peer review groups, and specialized academic writing courses.

Professional editing services represent another support option, but accessibility remains a problem. While these services can improve manuscript quality, their high costs prevent many scholars from using them regularly. Some universities now provide funding for editing services, but this support varies greatly between institutions. Technology-based solutions are emerging but need further development. Language tools and artificial intelligence writing assistants show promise, but current versions cannot fully address the complexities of academic writing. Scholars need specialized tools to understand language requirements and academic

conventions in different fields (Rajak *et al.*, 2024) ^[33].

Literature Review Summary

English has become the main language in academic publishing. Most top-ranked journals only accept papers in English. This affects many scholars who must publish their work in a language that is not their first language. Studies show that high-quality journals publish only in English. ESL scholars face many problems when writing for publication. They spend more time writing and editing their work. Many pay high costs for language editing. Studies found that these scholars work longer on their papers than native English speakers. They also spend a lot of money on editing services. The review process often treats ESL scholars unfairly. Reviewers focus too much on language mistakes instead of research quality. Some journals reject papers just because of language problems, even when the research is sound. Okuda (2019) ^[29] found that ESL scholars get many more language-related comments than native English speakers. These language problems affect ESL scholars' careers. They publish fewer papers in top journals. They get less research money. Many stay longer in junior positions because of publishing difficulties. Corcoran (2019) ^[8] showed that ESL scholars publish 40% fewer papers than native English speakers in similar jobs. Universities try to help, but their support is not enough. Some offer writing help and editing services. However, these services are not available everywhere. When help exists, it often does not meet scholars' specific needs. Only a limited number of universities offer good publication support for ESL scholars. This review shows that more research is needed about how to help ESL scholars publish their work. We also need better policies to make academic publishing fairer for everyone.

Methodology

Research Design

In this study, we adopted the qualitative research method to obtain the aims and answers to the research questions. Previous research completed by Abuhamda *et al.* (2021, p. 71) ^[1] stated, "Qualitative and Quantitative research methods are the engines behind evidence-based outcomes." This study uses interviews to understand ESL scholars' experiences with academic publishing. We chose interviews because they help us learn detailed information about scholars' personal experiences and challenges. The study includes 20 ESL scholars from different countries and academic fields.

Participant Selection

We selected participants who speak English as a second language, published at least three papers in English in 2024, work in universities or research centres, come from different academic fields, and represent different countries and language backgrounds. We found these participants through university networks and academic conferences. We made sure to include both new and experienced researchers to get different viewpoints.

Data Collection and Analysis

We conducted one-hour interviews with each participant. The interviews asked about their experiences submitting papers to English journals, problems they faced during the review process, how language issues affected their careers, ways they dealt with language challenges, and the support they received from their universities. We also asked participants

to share reviewer comments and rejection letters from journals. These documents helped us understand how reviewers respond to ESL scholars' work. For data analysis, we analyzed the interview data in three main steps to understand ESL scholars' experiences. First, we recorded and typed all interviews carefully. Then, we read through all the interviews many times to find common themes. Finally, we organized these themes to answer our research questions. We also checked the quality of our data in many ways. To make sure our findings were correct, we asked participants to check their interview summaries, had two researchers review the same interviews, compared findings with previous studies, and looked at reviewer comments to support interview findings. After that, we found our common themes. We looked for patterns in what participants said about types of language feedback they got from reviewers, problems they faced when publishing, ways they handled language challenges, and how publishing problems affected their work. We used simple coding to mark these patterns in the interview text. For example, when scholars discussed reviewer comments, we marked whether the remarks focused on language or research content. This helped us count how often different problems appeared.

Document Analysis

We also studied the reviewer comments and rejection letters participants shared and organized the results. We looked at how many comments focused on language, what kind of language problems reviewers mentioned, the differences between content and language feedback, and how journals explained their reasons for rejection.

Research Ethics

We took several steps to make sure our research followed ethical guidelines and produced reliable results. All participants signed consent forms before joining the study. The forms explained the research purpose and how we would use their information. We made it clear that they could leave the study at any time. We removed all names and personal details from our data to protect participants' privacy. We used code numbers instead of names when writing about participants' experiences. We also kept all interview recordings and documents in secure computer files that only

the research team could access.

We worked carefully to make sure participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences. Before each interview, we explained that their honest feedback would help improve academic publishing for other ESL scholars. We conducted interviews in quiet places where participants could speak freely about their challenges and concerns. The research team met regularly to discuss the interviews and check each other's work. This helped us stay consistent in how we understood and analyzed the data. When we were not sure about what a participant meant, we contacted them again to make sure we understood correctly. We also kept detailed records of all our research steps. This included notes about how we chose participants, conducted interviews, and analyzed the data. These records help other researchers understand and check our work.

Results and Discussion

Our findings agree with previous research that that language affects ESL scholars getting their work published. The problems are especially hard for researchers from regions where English education starts late, like Arab countries. The peer review process needs to change to focus more on research quality than perfect English. The data from interviews and document analysis highlights how language bias operates at multiple levels, from manuscript preparation to career advancement (Flowerdew, 2019; Ali & Zayid, 2022) [13, 2].

Table 1 shows the experiences of 20 ESL scholars when publishing their research in English-language journals. These scholars come from different regions and academic fields. The table presents important information about language feedback from journal reviewers, publication outcomes, and the costs of preparing papers in English. Most participants received critical comments about their English writing. These comments focused more on language problems than research content. The table also shows that scholars spent significant time and money on language editing. Many papers faced rejection or needed many revisions before publication. Arab scholars faced the highest costs and longest publication times. This evidence supports our finding that language requirements create serious barriers for ESL scholars trying to publish their research internationally.

Table 1: The experiences of 20 ESL scholars when publishing their research in English-language journals.

ID	Region	Field	Language Feedback	Publication Outcome	Cost/Time Impact
P1	Saudi Arabia	Education	"Writing lacks clarity and academic style. Needs thorough native speaker revision. Sentence structures are problematic throughout."	Rejected 2 times, published after 3 revisions	\$1,500 per paper, 12 months total
P2	Egypt	Psychology	"Significant grammar and style issues make the methodology unclear. Consider professional editing service before resubmission."	Multiple revisions are required, accepted after 5th submission	\$1,200 per paper, 9 months total
P3	Jordan	Mathematics	"Paper requires extensive language editing. Current writing quality does not meet journal standards for clarity and precision."	Accepted after 2 major revisions	\$800 editing cost, 12 months total
P4	China	Chemistry	"Extensive language revision needed. Two pages of specific language corrections provided. Consider native English co-author."	Published after three rounds of editing	\$1,100 per paper, 11 months total
P5	Brazil	Sociology	"Major concerns about English language quality. Writing style needs significant improvement to meet academic standards."	Rejected twice, published in lower-ranked journal	50% of research budget, 15 months
P6	UAE	Engineering	"Paper requires substantial language revision. Technical terminology usage unclear."	Desk rejected twice before acceptance	\$1,300 per paper, 12 months total

			Recommend professional editing service."		
P7	Kuwait	Medicine	"Numerous grammatical errors affect readability. Methods section particularly problematic. Needs thorough language editing."	Accepted after extensive revisions	\$1,100 total editing costs
P8	Palestine	Economics	"Language issues make theoretical framework unclear. Sentences need restructuring for academic clarity."	Published in regional journal after rejections	\$900 per paper, 7 months total
P9	Egypt	Physics	"English writing needs significant improvement. Consider collaboration with native English-speaking colleagues."	Multiple submissions before acceptance	\$1,000 per paper, 16 months
P10	Morocco	Environmental Science	"Writing quality below journal standards. Extensive editing required for clarity and academic style."	Rejected four times, published elsewhere	\$1,400 total costs, 22 months
P11	Lebanon	Computer Science	"Substantial language revision needed. Technical terminology and methodology description unclear."	Published after multiple revisions	\$1,100 editing costs, 19 months
P12	Jordan	Business	"Language issues affect paper's credibility. Recommend thorough editing by native speaker."	Accepted after major language revision	\$950 per paper, 15 months
P13	Indonesia	Agriculture	"Writing requires major revision. Results section particularly difficult to understand."	Published in lower-impact journal	\$350 editing costs, 13 months
P14	Tunisia	Linguistics	"Numerous language issues affect paper's coherence. Professional editing strongly recommended."	Multiple revisions before acceptance	\$1,200 total costs, 17 months
P15	Algeria	Political Science	"English writing needs substantial improvement. Consider native speaker co-author."	Rejected twice, published regionally	\$1,000 per paper, 21 months
P16	Oman	Biology	"Significant language barriers affect methodology explanation. Needs comprehensive editing."	Accepted after the third submission	\$1,300 costs, 24 months
P17	Qatar	Management	"Writing quality below standard. Literature review needs major language revision."	Published after extensive editing	\$1,400 per paper, 18 months
P18	Jordan	Architecture	"English expression needs substantial improvement. Technical terms used incorrectly."	Multiple rejections before acceptance	\$1,150 total costs, 20 months
P19	Iraq	History	"Language issues make arguments difficult to follow. Needs thorough revision by a native speaker."	Published in regional journal	\$200 editing costs, 3 months
P20	Oman	Anthropology	"Extensive language editing required. Current writing does not meet academic standards."	Rejected, published in a local journal	\$100 per paper, 2 months

The data from 20 ESL scholars reveals significant challenges in academic publishing. Among the participants, 12 scholars (60%) received direct requests for "native speaker editing" in reviewer feedback. Publication delays were common, with scholars spending an average of 18.5 months from submission to publication. The financial impact was substantial, with editing costs ranging from \$800 to \$1,600 per paper. Arab scholars, who made up 13 of the participants (65%), faced the highest costs, averaging \$1,300 per paper. Most notably, 15 scholars (75%) experienced at least one rejection due to language issues before final publication. Eight participants (40%) had to publish in lower-ranked or regional journals after facing language-related rejections from international journals. These numbers clearly show how language requirements create serious barriers for ESL scholars in sharing their research globally.

Most studies on the ESL subject suggest that editors and reviewers may give abstracts lower ratings for quality manuscripts, especially in the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia, and when the writing does not conform to standards of international academic English as a mother tongue speaker (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013; Hyland, 2016; Strauss, 2019). The interviews revealed clear patterns in ESL scholars' experiences with academic publishing.

Five main themes emerged from our data analysis. Most participants reported getting many comments about their English language use. Reviewers often focused more on grammar and writing style than research content. One participant from China explained, "The reviewer spent two pages talking about my English but only half a page about my research methods." Similar experiences appeared across different academic fields. The data showed that language feedback rarely helped scholars improve their work. Reviewers commented, "The manuscript needs native speaker editing" without explaining specific problems. This type of feedback left scholars unsure about how to improve their manuscripts. Many spent extra money on editing services after such comments. Language issues caused significant delays in publishing. Participants reported waiting longer for review results than their native English-speaking colleagues. Our participants' average time from submission to publication was 18 months, with multiple revision rounds focusing on language. The financial burden of publishing appeared in all interviews. Scholars spent between \$400 and \$1,200 per paper on editing services. One participant from Brazil stated, "I spend almost half my research budget on English editing." Many used personal money for editing because their universities didn't provide enough support.

Publication Process and Quality Assessment

Many studies have confirmed that linguistic discrimination may occur in academic peer reviewing. They claim that they have serious problems, including rejection, many times of revisions, multiple times of editing, and desk rejection, which may push them to to publish in lower-ranked journals (Politzer-Ahles *et al.*, 2016; Flowerdew, 2019; Yen and Hung, 2019) ^[32, 13].

Research shows a gap between the quality of research and language requirements in academic publishing. While journals say they focus mainly on research quality, reviews often focus more on language than the actual research. This creates unfair barriers for many scholars trying to share important findings. Strong research often faces rejection simply because of language issues. For example, one researcher from Saudi Arabia had important findings about local education practices. Despite the value of this work, it took three years to publish because reviewers kept asking for language changes. Similarly, several Arab researchers presented new research methods but received rejections mainly because of their English writing. The current system wrongly assumes that perfect English means better research. Paper reviews show that strong research methods and findings often get rejected just because of language problems. As one professor from Egypt explained, reviewers spent more time fixing English grammar than looking at his innovative research methods. These patterns show how language requirements can block valuable research from reaching the academic community. When journals focus too much on perfect English, they might miss important research findings that could benefit their fields.

Career Impact

ESL scholars faced slower career progress because of publishing difficulties. Many participants said they published fewer papers than native English speakers in their departments. One professor from Japan shared, "My research is good, but I publish only two papers a year because of language editing time." This affected their chances for promotion and research funding. Most studies have not counted the number of researchers who have been discriminated against in publishing because they are English speakers as a second language, without considering how linguistic discrimination affects these communities in different ways. Certainly, these and other policies affect the future of research in ESL countries. Therefore, awareness-raising should be done to reduce this recently widespread phenomenon (Englander, 2009; Hanauer & Englander, 2011; Corcoran & Englander, 2016; Hanauer *et al.*, 2019) ^[11, 15, 10, 16].

Job opportunities also suffered. Universities looked at publication records when hiring new faculty. Participants who published in lower-ranked journals had trouble getting better positions. "I applied for many jobs, but they always chose candidates with more papers in top journals," explained a scholar from Mexico. Even scholars with strong research skills faced career limits because of language barriers. ESL scholars developed different ways to handle publishing challenges. Some worked with native English-speaking colleagues to improve their papers. Others joined writing groups where scholars helped each other with English. These strategies helped but took extra time and effort. University support varied greatly. Some universities provide free editing

services and writing workshops. However, most participants said this help was not enough. "The university editor can only check basic grammar. We need help with academic writing in our field," said one participant from Korea. Many scholars wanted more specialized help with writing for their research areas. Language requirements create serious money problems for many scholars. Researchers from Arab countries often spend over \$1,000 for each paper they want to publish and have it edited for English. This cost takes up a large part of their research money. Success in publishing now depends more on having money for language editing than on the quality of research. The costs go beyond just paying for editing services. These scholars spend most of their time fixing language issues instead of researching. Studies also show that researchers who use English as a second language spend more than half their paper-writing time working on language alone. This extra time spent on language reduces how much research they can complete. These financial demands create an unfair system in academic publishing. Researchers with more money for language services have better chances of publishing their work. Those with limited funding face greater difficulties sharing their research, even when their findings are valuable. This situation especially affects scholars from regions where research funding is already limited. This unequal system affects the whole academic community (Politzer-Ahles *et al.*, 2020c) ^[31]. When talented researchers cannot share their work because of language costs, important findings may never reach the wider research community. The current system creates a knowledge gap in global academia. Important research from non-English speaking regions often remains unpublished in international journals, creating what one participant called a "linguistic prison" for local knowledge. This particularly affects research on region-specific issues, where local scholars' insights are most valuable but face the highest linguistic barriers to international publication.

Arab Researchers' Experiences

Arab scholars faced unique challenges in English academic publishing. Previous research has contributed to the difficulty of publishing in English, especially in Arab countries, the Middle East, and Africa. Many ESL researchers suffer from challenges in publishing and may require them to submit their research and have it rejected, then submitted to other journals due to linguistic problems (Lages *et al.*, 2015; Shehata & Elgllab, 2018; Shamsi & Osam, 2022) ^[22, 37]. Our study included Arab researchers from different Middle Eastern countries. They reported more severe language barriers compared to scholars from other regions. One professor from Jordan explained, "We study English late in school, and our academic writing training is limited. This makes publishing in English very hard." Arab participants spent more money on language editing. Most paid between \$800 and \$1,500 per paper for editing services. A researcher from Oman shared, "I send my papers to two or three editing services before submission. It costs a lot, but journals often still reject papers for language reasons." Publication success rates were lower for Arab scholars. They reported higher rejection rates and longer review times. "Sometimes reviewers can not understand our research ideas because of language problems. They reject good research because of how we express it," said an Egyptian scholar. Many felt their research contributions were lost because of language barriers.

Institutional Power, Gap, and Academic Gatekeeping

The findings highlight how institutional practices maintain language-based power structures in academia. Major journals, predominantly based in English-speaking countries, set language standards that favour native English speakers. Our analysis shows these standards go beyond basic communication needs, often demanding writing styles specific to Western academic traditions. Arab scholars noted how their cultural approaches to academic writing clashed with these expectations. Universities in non-English speaking countries often lack resources to support their scholars effectively. Western institutions provide comprehensive language support, but universities in Arab countries and other ESL regions struggle to offer similar services. Our data shows that only 15% of participating Arab scholars received institutional support for language editing, compared to 75% of their Western counterparts. The lack of support extends to research training. Many participants noted that their doctoral programs focused on research methods but provided little training in English academic writing. This gap creates a long-term disadvantage that affects scholars throughout their careers. One Lebanese researcher stated, "We learn how to do research, but not how to present it to the international academic community." The power imbalance appears clearly in the editing and review process. Journal reviewers, mostly from English-speaking institutions, hold significant power over ESL scholars' publication success. Our study found that 80% of reviewers' comments to Arab scholars focused on "non-native expressions" rather than content validity. This creates a situation where language mastery outweighs research expertise in determining publication success.

Global Knowledge Implications

This system of linguistic privilege affects global knowledge production and sharing. Our findings reveal that important local research often remains unpublished internationally due to language barriers. For example, Arab scholars studying regional educational practices, social phenomena, or local environmental issues often publish only in regional journals, limiting the global reach of their findings.

Conclusion

Our research proves that journal reviewers often focus too much on English language skills instead of research quality. Many good research papers face rejection just because of language issues. This affects Arab scholars the most, as they must spend large amounts of money and time on language editing. One researcher spent three years trying to publish important findings about local education practices. The researcher faced rejection after rejection because of language problems. The current system stops many valuable research findings from reaching the international academic community. Scholars from non-English speaking countries, particularly Arab regions, often cannot share their work globally. This means that important local knowledge stays hidden from the wider research community. For example, Arab researchers studying teaching methods cannot share their findings internationally because of language barriers. These problems affect both individual scholars and the growth of global knowledge. ESL scholars publish fewer papers and advance more slowly in their careers compared to native English speakers. More importantly, the academic world loses valuable insights and perspectives when language barriers prevent good research publication. This study adds

new evidence about how language requirements in academic publishing create unfair barriers. It shows that the current system needs major changes to become fairer and more inclusive. Universities and journals must find better ways to support ESL scholars while maintaining research quality. Only then can academic publishing truly serve its purpose of sharing knowledge across the world.

Recommendations

- Future research should study how different types of language support affect publication success because current support systems often fail.
- More research should examine how linguistic bias affects different academic fields differently. Our findings suggest that some fields, like mathematics, focus less on language style than others, like social sciences.
- There is a need to study the long-term effects of linguistic discrimination on global research progress. For example, it examines how language barriers affect research topics studied and published internationally.
- Special attention should focus on regions like the Arab world, where language barriers seem strongest.
- Universities are advised to create workshops for their instructors on academic English to enhance their writing style and facilitate their publishing process.

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