



Writing Scientific Papers in English Successfully: Your Complete Roadmap

By Ethel Schuster Editor, Haim Levkowitz Editor, Osvaldo N. Oliveira Jr Editor

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Scientific writing is recognized as a key ingredient in science and technology because of the need to share ideas and findings. According to distinguished scientists 'writing paper may account for “half the importance” of scientific work. Indeed, successfully publishing papers is the primary indicator of a scientist’s performance. Yet students rarely receive any training in scientific writing. Their only way to learn the main components of a paper and how papers are organized is by intuition, which is ineffective and inefficient, or by trial and error, which wastes a lot of their time and hurts their confidence. Consequently, scientists often write papers with poor grammar and structure lacking clear focus. Many such papers do not get published despite their valuable contributions. Having to communicate in English is necessary in today’s world. English is the lingua franca of science, and of the speedy communications we depend on, namely the Internet, the World Wide Web, social media, crowdsourcing, and other information-sharing resources. The challenge to produce well-written papers is especially hard for non-native speakers of English, the majority of scientists around the world. Effective scientific writing requires both mastery of the English language and proficiency in the specific academic genre. Many years of teaching courses in scientific writing have taught us that the combination of the language barrier and the lack of knowledge of the academic writing style can have a detrimental effect on the quality of writing produced by nonnatives in English. In many cases, students are unable to identify their main difficulties and whether these are the result of the lack of English proficiency or their poor organization of ideas. Students seldom realize that it is harder to produce (i.e., write) in a foreign language than to consume (that is, read and understand). We have developed a strategy to tackle the problems faced by writers who are new to the scientific writing genre and style. This strategy can help both non-natives attempting to overcome the language barrier and native speakers of English. The strategy consists of using a variety of techniques and tools. Using this strategy will help students grasp the skills necessary for language-independent scientific writing. The strategy, its techniques, and its tools are at the heart of this book. We provide a complete roadmap for you, our reader, to learn the skills necessary to write well and successfully. This book is divided into two parts: the first part

provides the theoretical foundations of scientific writing. The second part details the strategies, techniques, and tools that are at the heart of our approach. Chapter 1 lays out the characteristics of scientific writing and how it differs from other writing styles. Chapter 2 is devoted to the models that define scientific writing. You cannot write a good paper without reading good papers. In Chapter 3, we offer you an efficient and effective technique for reading many papers (and other publications). This should help you not only with your writing skills, but also with your general research tasks. Chapter 3 will also teach you how to read and annotate documents to build your own collection of well-written text samples. This collection is referred to as a corpus. Chapter 4 introduces the notion of corpus linguistics, which is a linguistics-based approach that uses text collections to help you determine the most appropriate language patterns for your own writing. Chapter 5 walks you through a set of computer-based tools that can guide you through the writing process and help you verify that your writing achieves your goals as best as possible. Finally, Chapter 6 teaches you how to systematically identify textual patterns that are prevalent in each section of a scientific paper. Learning to use these patterns well will aid you in writing papers using the language and style accepted by your research community.

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