# Demystifying publishing in academic journals:
## Insights from an author's/reviewer's/editor's perspective

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# My motivation to become a journal editor:

## Experiences as an author

**From my application cover letter for editorship:**

"I have… inadvertently spent my career trying to bridge disciplinary silos through trying to get my work published."

**Reviewer 3:** "Again, having instructional focus can be acceptable to this paper, if needed, but… the authors should keep in mind that the article is written for the group of assessment not for SLA."

# My motivation to become a journal editor

## Experiences as an author

**Reviewer comments for mixed methods study**

**Reviewer 1**: “Findings related to qualitative data were informative & interesting.”

**Reviewer 2**: “The discussion of qualitative results is very long & can be abbreviated.”

**Journal publishing tips, latest developments, Q & As**

# Finding a home for your paper

- Ideally, think about the target venue when *planning* your paper
- Identify a Plan A, Plan B & Plan C.
  - Consider practical factors
    - word count
    - journal prestige
    - Processing time


Note that journal metrics fluctuate year on year

**Citation metrics**

- **1.4 (2023)** Impact Factor
- **Q2** Impact Factor Best Quartile
- **2.9 (2023)** 5 year IF
- **6.4 (2023)** CiteScore (Scopus)
- **Q1** CiteScore Best Quartile
- **1.735 (2023)** SNIP
- **0.912 (2023)** SJR

**Speed/acceptance**

- **43** days avg. from submission to first decision
- **88** days avg. from submission to first post-review decision
- **15%** acceptance rate

# Finding a home for your paper

- How does the journal describe itself? What is the scope?

What 3 things can you learn about the journal from this extract?

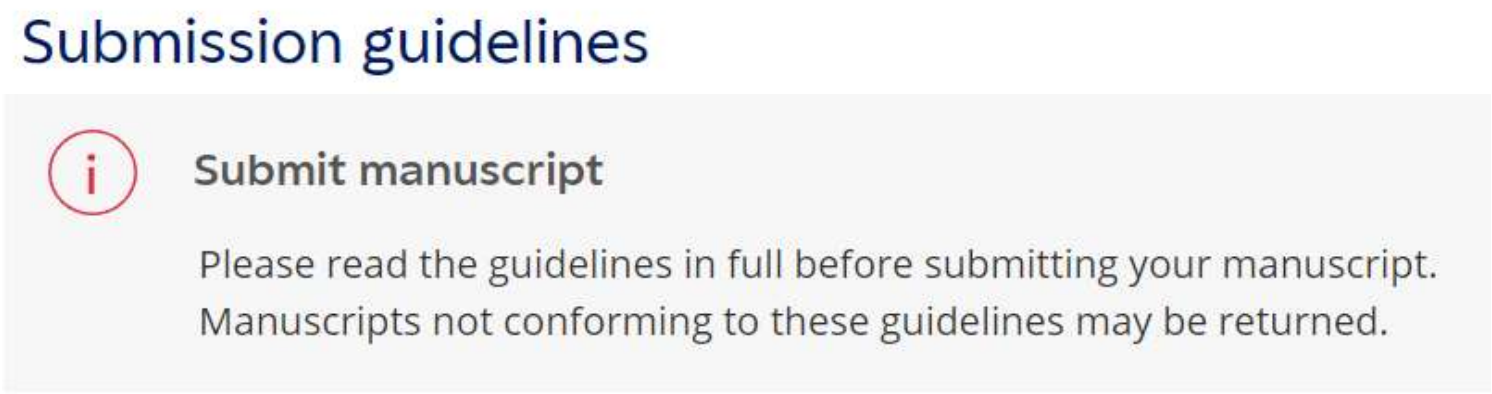

profession, it particularly welcomes submissions that address the implications and applications of research. *TQ* prefers that all submissions be written in a style that is accessible to a broad readership, including those individuals who may not be familiar with the subject matter. *TQ* is an international journal. It welcomes submissions from English language contexts around the world.

# Get a feel for the journal to assess fit & prioritise

- Sift through issues over the past 5 years & special issues
  - Is you paper a hot topic?
- Any relevant articles from the journal you could cite?
- Who is on the Editorial Board?
- Who is the target readership? This should inform
  - the focus of the article
  - what you can assume readers will already know & what they will need explained

# Plan A journal identified: Prepare your manuscript

Language Testing




**What to put in your cover letter** → See APA 7th Edition

- Disclose previously published or concurrently submitted related outputs (now required for *Language Testing*)
- Highlight any additional points to flag to Editor (e.g., preprint, disclosure of interests, use of generative AI)

# Peer Review Process


WILEY

## Editorial decision categories

- Internal reject
- Reject
- Minor revisions
- Major revisions
- Accept

# Common reasons for internal (or desk) rejections

- Out of scope
- Quality/calibre not high enough
- Methodological irregularities
- Data not sufficiently robust
- Not a strong enough case for novelty
  - Looks like a technical report
  - Salami slicing (fragmented reporting)
- Too much work to bring to publication
  - Authors do not adhere to guidelines after several chances
- Academic integrity → Plagiarised content; suspected paper mill use; suspected generation of chunks of text using AI

# Gain reviewer experience

**Why?**

- Excellent insight into peer review
- Service to the field; good karma?
- Documentable activity (Publons)

**How?**

- Create profile on manuscript submission system for each journal you want to review for
- Use lots of journal-relevant keywords
- Make sure you have an ORCID

https://orcid.org/

# Models of peer review

- **Double-blind:** identity of authors concealed to reviewers & vice versa → most applied linguistics journals
- **Single-blind:** reviewers knows authors' identity but authors don't know reviewers' identity
  - *Frontiers*; *Language Testing* Special Issue Proposals
- **Open/Transparent Reviews:** Peer review reports (and/or reviewer identity) revealed upon publication
  - *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*

**Open Access Peer Review Report for LT-23-0120**

**Article Title:** Evaluating the Impact of Nonverbal Behavior on Language Ability Ratings

Submitted July 16, 2023
Comments to author September 13, 2023
Revised Version 1 resubmitted January 9, 2024
Comments to author February 25, 2024
Revised Version 2 resubmitted April 1, 2024
Manuscript accepted April 21, 2024

**Author:** Dylan Burton

**Handling Editor:** Daniel R. Isbell (Language Testing 2024 Special Issue Guest Editor)
**Reviewer 1:** Anonymous
**Reviewer 2:** Anonymous
**Reviewer 3:** Anonymous
**Reviewer 4:** Anonymous

Language Testing

**Initial Submission**

**Reviews**

***Reviewer 1***

The present study investigated the effects of test takers' nonverbal behavior in a speaking test on perceived speaking proficiency. The author adopted an innovative approach to extract nonverbal behavior of test takers using a software called iMotion. Guided by preregistered research

## View 3 exemplars soon on LT website: Reviewer resources

Transparent peer review files from 2024 Special Issue:
(1) Anonymized Reviewer comments,
(2) Authors' response to those comments,
(3) Editor's decision letter

UCL

# Thank you!

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