



2022 금연 연구회

제6차 심포지엄

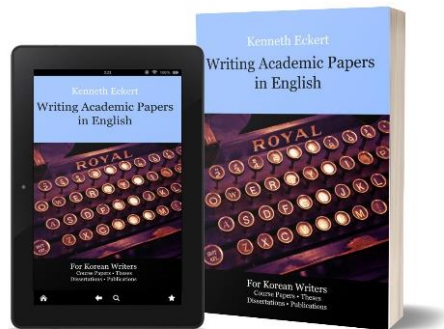
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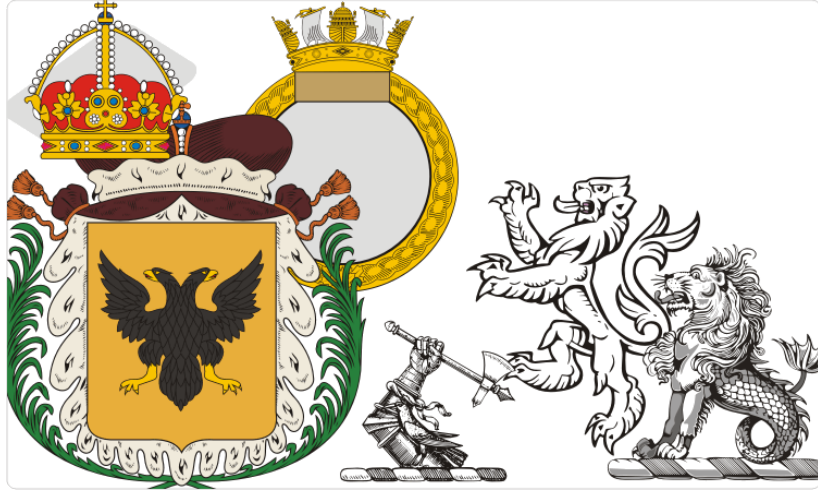
Academic Writing in English

Why Wasn't My Article Published?

Dr. Kenneth (Ken) Eckert

- Associate Professor of English Literature
- Hanyang University ERICA, Ansan
- 28 articles printed or in submission (18 A&HCI); two books; two novels
- Book & YouTube videos: *Writing Academic Papers in English*





Topics

- Ways to publish or be heard (conferences, chapters, monographs, digital)
- Journal articles: why was mine rejected?
 - Choosing journals
 - Making and proving arguments
 - Content & grammar issues
- Dealing with rejection and revision orders

Conference Presentations

- In some faster-moving fields, reading papers and having them published in collections (proceedings) is more valuable than articles
- Less important in humanities, where there are demographically fewer academics and in slower-moving fields of study with more single authors
- An excellent way to keep current and make contacts—and of testing a journal article submission and getting advice



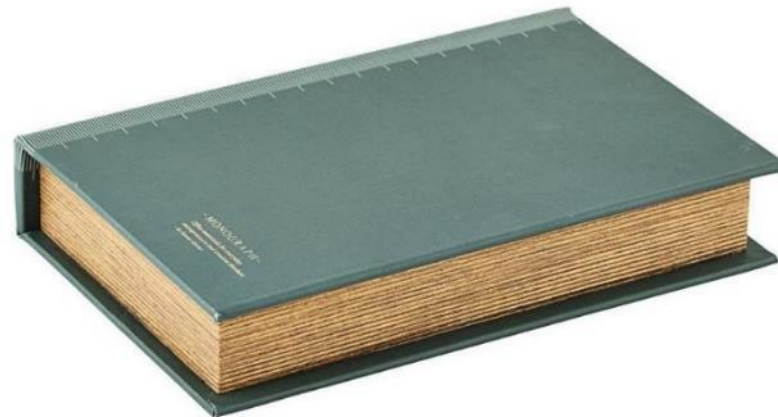
Being Published in Proceedings

- A proceedings is a published book of papers read
- Papers are usually shorter in length than journals
- Lower barriers of entry if you've already read
- Reputation varies by field, but proceedings are of some value in STEM as they are more current than journals
- If your conference publishes one and you only presented with slides, you might be able to write a short article



Edited Collections

- You may be invited to contribute a chapter to an edited volume—a book project with numerous contributors on a single theme
- Often these themes are loose enough to allow writings that may not have much in common—they might just be about a scholar’s subfield (a *festschrift*)
- More than other publishing, being invited by *someone you know* is important
- Your paper was invited. You don’t need to defend it so strongly. You may be able to have a more relaxed, discursive style
- But an edited chapter is probably not as prestigious as a journal article



Other Ways to “Publish”

- Publishing a textbook or monograph (single-author study or *habilitation*). Can make money. But **very** difficult and lengthy to get a manuscript accepted, as it’s an expensive risk for publishers!
- Self-publishing. Easy to get accepted, but much less scholarly reputation.
- Online and digital publishing, e.g. Wikipedia. A wonderful act of philanthropy, as your work might be read by far more people— but as with self-publishing, little professional prestige.



Academic Journal Articles: Perhaps The Best Place to Start

- Why? It's usually easier for a new scholar to get an article accepted to a journal, as there's less risk
- Some fields and many universities (e.g. Korea) strongly prioritize journal publications (pubs) in hiring and promotions
- Article lengths often are similar to dissertation chapter lengths, allowing re-use of work
- In rapidly changing fields, journals are slower than conferences, but usually *far* faster than books

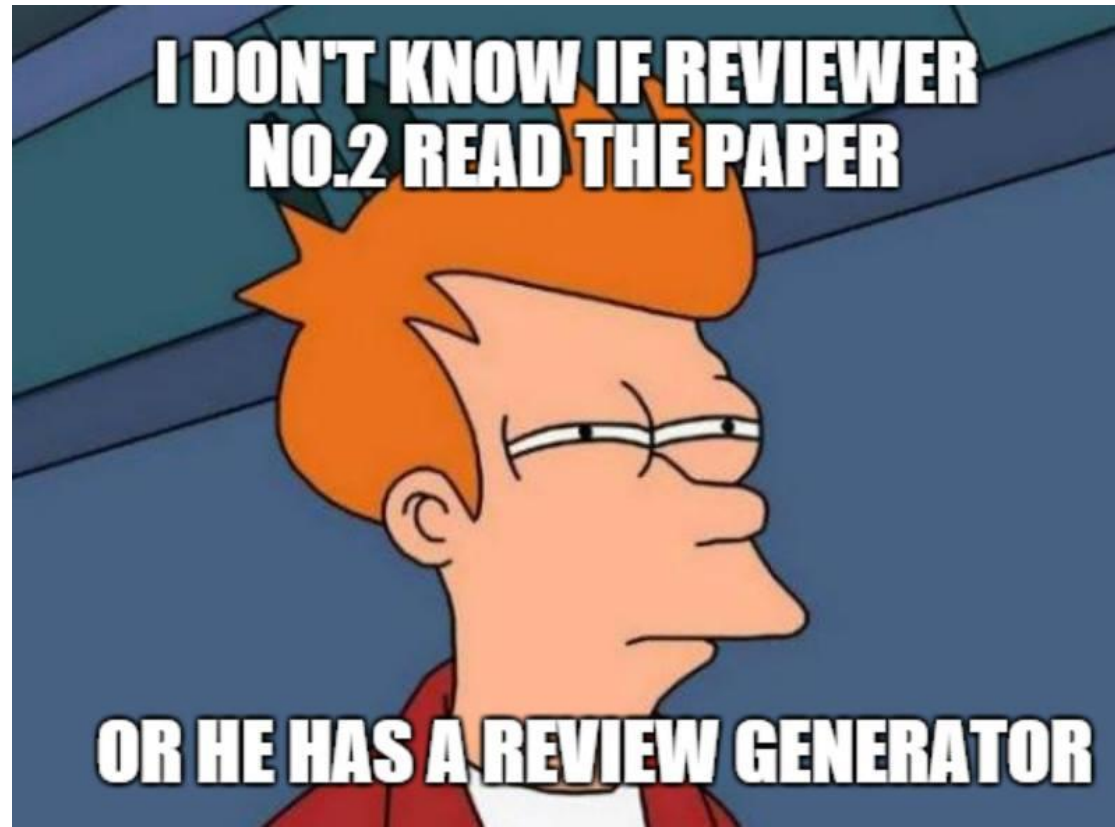


Then Why Won't They Publish My Article?



My Confession: I am a Journal Reviewer

Probably not in your field. But perhaps some of my advice will help.



#1: Unrevised Dissertation Chapters Don't Always Translate into Articles



Is there a rationale for the article that is interesting for an outside reader? (the “who cares” question)?

- Your department might find your diss chapter interesting, but it must appeal to a wider scholarly readership that doesn't know you
- Does the article make sense when it is removed from the context of the dissertation?
- A typical article might spend 25-33% of its text justifying the need for the study—which might not be a diss concern

#1: Unrevised Dissertation Chapters Don't Always Translate into Articles

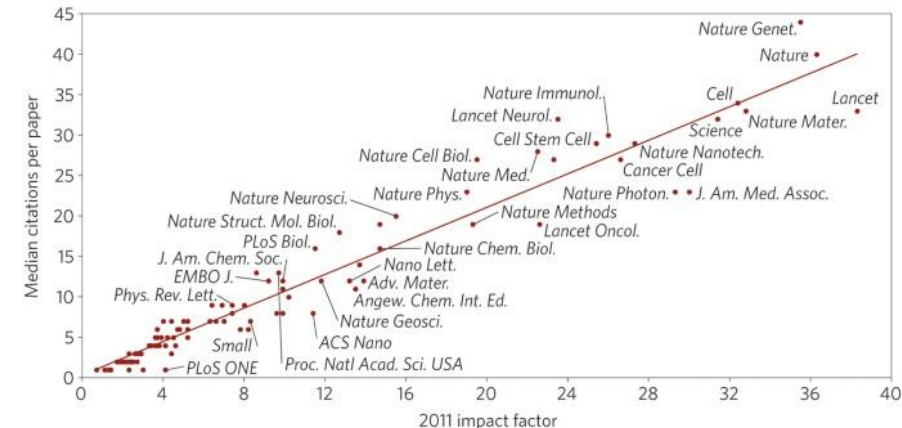
Has it already been done by a million other authors?

- Popular diss topics might be terribly overdone in the broader field (every discipline has its overcrowded subjects—in my field, Shakespeare)



#2: Did You Get Too Greedy in Journal Choice?

- Of course you want to be published in *Nature* or *The Lancet*. Who doesn't? **Why not send it to the best?** Be my guest! You will raise your reputational score, such as “h-index” or IF or your ORCID profile. But:
- When I did this in 2009 with *Chaucer Review*, the journal was not kind about it, and their angry tone discouraged me for several years.
- Review times can be long— from a few weeks to over a year—and you're tying up your article with a journal that will almost certainly say *no*.



#2: Did You Get Too Greedy in Journal Choice?

A better strategy– Understand the “food chain” of journals:

- Gold standard: Thomson-Reuters/WoS: SCI, SSCI, and A&HCI
- Very good: NRF (National Research Foundation of Korea), Scopus, SCI(E) (expanded index)
- Okay: Minor indexes, non-indexed
- Online-only journals *tend* to be less respected, but not always

Then: Gauge the probable best journal for your article in status and interest area

- Read your target journals to get a sense of where you fit in
- Perhaps start with slightly “reach” journals and work your way down



#3. The Central Claim or Thesis is Unclear

- As papers get longer and more complex, it's easy for the essay's main arguments to get lost in the sea of claims and information—and harder for you to see your paper from the outside.
- Make your central claim explicit and obvious. Don't be afraid to have explicit metalanguage (“this paper intends to show that”) or even a subheading indicating the point of your paper—or to repeat it.



#4: The Evidence Is Not Persuasive

- The paper takes the reader's agreement for granted on a controversial issue without giving support, and then moves on to claims built on that premise
- The paper assumes a prior body of knowledge the reader cannot reasonably have
- The paper spends all its time introducing and explaining a subject— or on literature reviews or other materials—but never gets around to evidence



#5: The Structure or Flow of Discussion is Confusing or Over-Abstract

- Do write about difficult things—but writers can get lost in the theory and forget to give concrete details or examples. Occasionally dip down to a lower level to give the paper “air.”
- I was asked to review a paper on water purification in Africa, which only discussed UN meetings or other organizational reports and authorities—but never discussed any actual people or places in Africa affected.
- Again, don’t be afraid of metalanguage— explicit phrases or headings guiding the reader through your discussion.



#6: The Grammar is Bad

- This is typically less of a problem than you think. But I know you expect me to talk about this!
- Is it unfair to reject a paper because of non-native grammar? Maybe. But it's not our decision.
- Native speakers aren't automatically good academic paper writers.
- Typical language interference issues for Korean speakers—the big three:
 - a) *Articles and numbers*. English is maddeningly strict on its use of a and the.
 - b) *Prepositions & connectors*. Confusing or misused directional words (at, in, on, with, by, via)
 - c) *Unclear referents*. Who or what are you talking about? Korean is high-context and assumes these things; English is low-context and *must* make the subject explicit.



Dealing with Rejection

- You're running with the big dogs with publishing. Some rejections will not be kind or helpful, especially at top journals.
- Sometimes it's hard to know when to persevere or to give up. One of my papers was on students using Wikipedia in Korea. Most journals either weren't interested in Wikipedia or in Korean students.
- It *was* published. But sometimes it's best to abandon a paper and save your work for potential use elsewhere someday.



Other Tricks

Having a really hard time getting a journal to accept your paper?

- You might attend an academic conference on the subject where you present your paper and ask for advice from the audience to help publish it



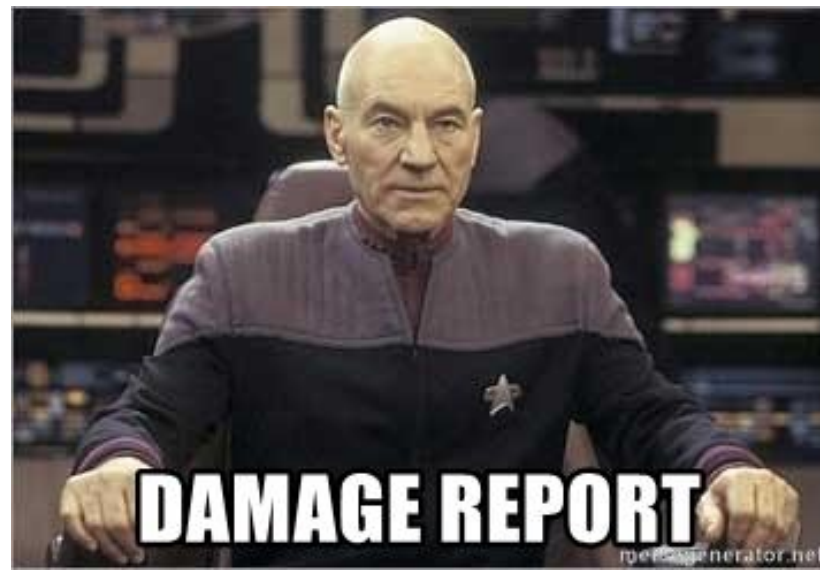
Should You Dispute a Review?

- A few times I've had reviewers who were abusive. I politely objected to the editor and asked for a different one.
- If you disagree with R2 (or R1 disagrees with R2!), you may be able to politely explain and defend your decisions to the editor with your revision (it has *often* worked for me)
- Keep in mind objecting to a rejection is the nuclear option. It probably won't work—and you may be antagonizing the staff should you submit again someday. But sometimes there is nothing to lose.



Rejection

- It's human to be frustrated or angry when receiving a rejection—leave it alone until you cool down
- A kindly rejection may recommend a different journal for you
- If there are constructive comments with the rejection, act on them and edit your article
- But as soon as possible, *send your article elsewhere* before you lose focus or become discouraged



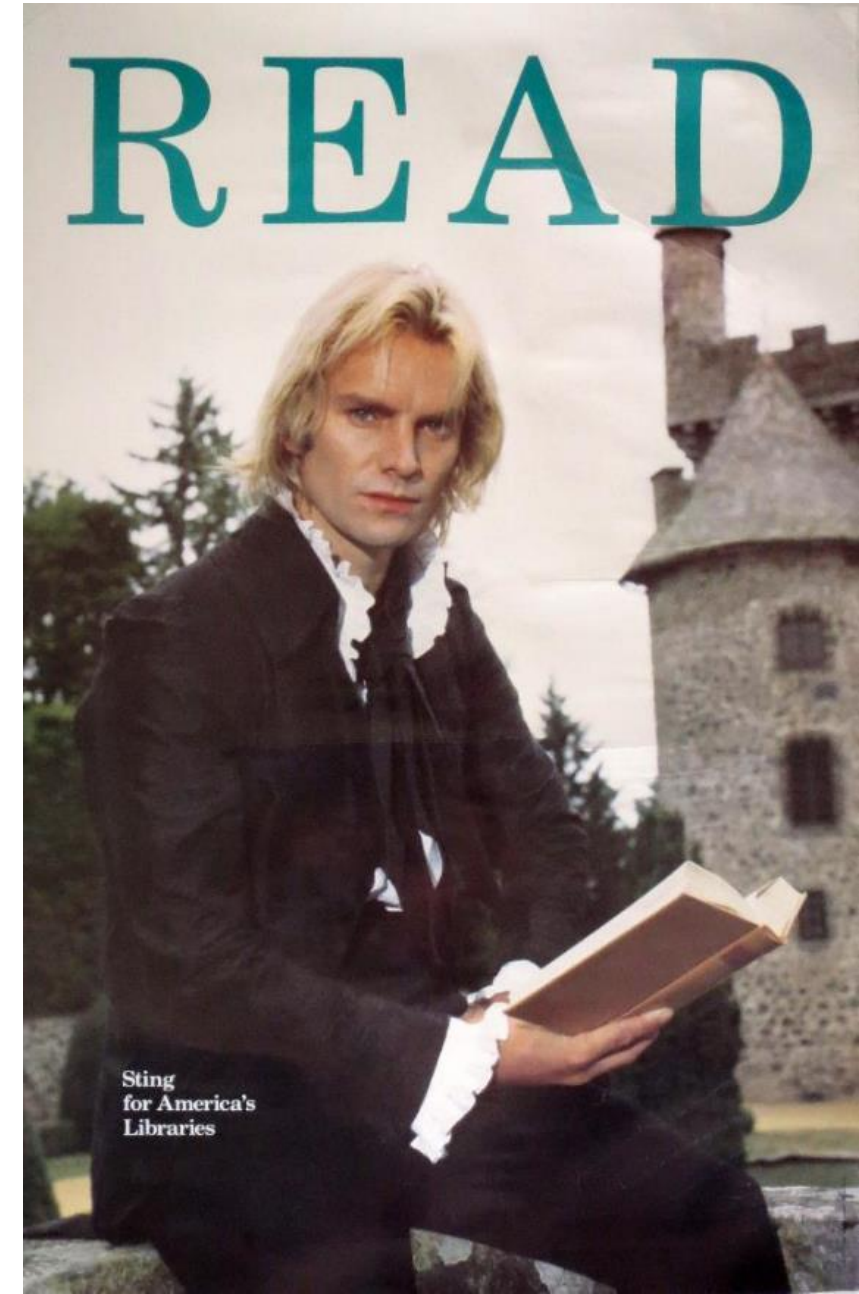
Revision Orders

- It's just as human to be frustrated when receiving revision directions—leave them alone for a day.
- Do not message the editor when you are angry, unless it's just to agree to do the revisions
- Try to do the revisions as soon as possible, while the article is fresh in your mind
- Again, you don't need to agree with everything reviewers recommend, particularly if their reports conflict—but be prepared to explain your choices; some submission websites request this



When It's Been a Long Time

- When you receive revision reports many months later, the paper may no longer be fresh in your mind
- My advice: First, handle low-level errors such as grammar or citation, or easy factual fixes, to build your confidence and bring you back inside the paper
- Revisions may say things like “missing citation on p. 8 line 17”— tick these off before you start rearranging your paper’s text
- Read the new sources you’ve been directed to



When It's Been a Long Time

- What I do: I reverse-engineer a new outline
- I number each paragraph and make a point-form summary of it
- This allows me to visualize the paper in logical blocks and rearrange arguments and sections as needed

1. Quick take: Higgins is a replacement father for Doolittle.
2. Shaw very prescriptive in his plays
3. Shaw did not want them to marry
4. Shaw doesn't have many positive marriages.
- 4a. Biographical and psychoanalytic readings of Shaw-->his mom
6. Critics still insist that they are meant to marry
 5. No one asks whether Eliza wants to marry Higgins --> move to 7
7. Eliza shows no interest in Higgins
8. The interesting complication is Doolittle
9. Doolittle is a cohort of Higgins in age
10. Doolittle's arrival allows play to show agreement is not sexual
11. Doolittle an absentee father [Lack of dad in Shaw's life?](but wouldn't this show Eliza needs love?)
12. Eliza long separate from her father?
13. Higgins easily takes on parental role (does this explain Eliza's anger with him, transferred from her father?)
14. Eliza's return forms a family, not a romance
15. Act V demonstrates that Eliza sees Higgins as father
16. None of this requires radically revisioning the play
17. Conclusion: lack of dad mirrors Shaw's lack of dad?

#7: Bad Luck

- Sometimes your article is rejected unfairly or without good reason. Publishing requires persistence and patience.
- I've had articles accepted within a month, and I've had ones desk-rejected a year later.
- I've had articles accepted on the first try, and ones that took five years and over a dozen journals.
- Don't beat yourself up when you're not immediately successful.

