English as an International Language and Language Policies in Economics Journals

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1. Introduction

It is often stated that English is the language of international research. For example, Graddol (“The Future of English?” 8) lists the “working language of international organizations and conferences” and “scientific publication” as the first two major international domains of English, ahead of international banking, economic affairs and trade, and advertising for global brands. Ten years later he writes: “Academics, like many other professionals, desire to gain international experience early in their careers. English as the global academic language facilitates the international mobility of young researchers” (Graddol, “English Next?” 74). While Graddol has been criticised for not grounding his position in social theory (Phillipson 188), there is, nonetheless, evidence to justify the claim that English is an important vehicle for the dissemination of knowledge among scientific communities. A growing body of literature attests to the dominance of English in academic publishing. See, for example, Swales (Genre Analysis 96-109) for a synthesis of the literature on the share of research articles published in English; Schroeder-Gudehus (93-117) for an account of how, following the First World War, the newly founded International Research Council ostracised German as an international language for science, and replaced it with English and French; Russack (107-111) and Baldauf (141-146) for accounts of the consolidation of English in the scholarly publishing industry since the Second World War; Brock-Utne (226-231) for the rise of English in Norwegian academia and the concomitant decline in the use of Norwegian; and Smeyers and Levering (71-77) for a similar discussion of the decline in Dutch-medium publications as well as an overview of the expectations for scholars to publish in different countries. See also Hamel (53-61) for a historical analysis of the dominance of English
in international scientific periodical literature. In the field of economics, Diamond (3) notes that of the 27 core journals in the field, only one major journal is not in English. He infers that the US has become the centre of economic research since the Second World War, with 15 of the core journals being inaugurated there since the late 1960s.

Graddol’s view of “English as the global academic language” rests on two assumptions. The first is that the researchers are participating in a globalised, international discourse community. While studies on the characteristics of a discourse community (e.g. Swales, Genre Analysis 21-32) and of the social mechanisms by which a community constructs knowledge (see, for example, Berkenkotter and Harkin 45-77; Braine passim; and Hyland 1-131, 167-172) have drawn attention to the gatekeeping practices of participants in the publishing process, little attention has been given to the actual language policies of journals. The second assumption underlying Graddol’s view is that English is performing the role of a lingua franca, enabling researchers from different language backgrounds to communicate with each other, thus it can be argued that the English found in academic journals should be accounted for in theoretical models of World Englishes. Indeed, Jenkins (World Englishes 17) notes that Kachru’s (12-15) model of concentric circles does not account for the English used for science and technology. The aim of this article is to analyse journal language policies and re-examine two theoretical models of World Englishes in light of the results.¹

The choice of topic is motivated by the internationalisation process of the institution where I work. As has been the case in other universities in Europe (see Brock-Utne 239-231; Gazzola, 4; Curry and Lillis 680), the internationalisation process has prompted changes to the system, and new criteria for faculty performance evaluation have made it advantageous for scholars to publish in English in certain international refereed journals. The journals are listed on an internal list or included in the Institute for Scientific Information’s (ISI) Journal of Citation Reports (JCR). There is tremendous international competition to get published in the right journals in the field of economics (Klamer and Hendrik 291), so manuscript

¹ See Jenkins, World Englishes 14-21 for a discussion of other models.
submission guidelines are an important source of information for prospective authors who seek to disseminate their work to an international group of peers. Because the JCR is often used as a reference internationally, I shall restrict the analysis to the journals in the economics category of the JCR Social Science Edition, 2009. I shall begin by summarising the results of an analysis of the language specifications in the submission guidelines of these journals with regard to international scope as seen through the readership, language variety, region, and publisher. I shall then discuss the relation between the results of this analysis and some theoretical positions on English as an international language, and finish with some conclusions and suggestions for future research.

2. Publication norms in economics journals

The Journal of Citation Reports Social Science Edition, 2009, lists 247 journal titles under the field of Economics. One of the journals on the list was discontinued in 2010, so it was excluded, leaving 246 journals for analysis.

English clearly holds sway over the greatest share of journals (91.9%), followed by multilingual journals (5.7%). Of the 14 journals classified as multilingual, 11 specify that articles may be written in English or other specified languages, and three give no information about what languages can be used. Of the latter, it can be inferred that two accept articles in English because they present webpages and instructions for authors in English, but one, a Czech journal, presents its journal website in Czech only. While it claims to accept author contributions from other countries, all the journal articles online seem to be written in Czech. The remaining journals are monolingual, with Spanish (5 journals) making up 2% of the sample, and French (1 journal) less than 1%.

When the sample was analysed for journal country of origin on the basis of the country given in the ISI index, the results show that the USA (35.4%) holds a dominant position, followed by the UK (22.8%) and the Netherlands (16.3%). These three countries, which make up almost three quarters of the sample, publish in English only. Australia, who also publishes in English only, accounts for a further 4.1% of journals, followed by Germany (3.7%), and Spain (2.0%). Of the remaining 22 countries,
Switzerland and Argentina account for 1.6% and 1.2%, respectively, and the rest — Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, People’s Republic of China, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korea and Sweden — each make up less than 1% of the sample. (See appendix 1 for the full distribution by country and language.)

The notion of country of origin is somewhat problematic, yet, at the same time, symptomatic of both the internationalisation of the research community, and the importance of the role of the publisher. In some cases, the country of origin is tied more closely to the country of the publisher than the country where, in fact, the journal originated. Two examples can illustrate this. The English-medium journal, *Kyklos*, which originated in Switzerland and is published by Wiley-Blackwell, is listed as a UK journal while the English-medium *Portuguese Economic Journal*, whose origins lie in Portugal and whose chief editor is Portuguese, is published by Springer and listed as a German journal. The journal attempts to distance itself from any geographical boundaries or limitations stemming from its title in its opening blurb:

*Portuguese Economic Journal* aims to publish high quality theoretical, empirical, applied or policy-oriented research papers on any field in economics. We will infuse [sic] a rigorous, fair and prompt refereeing process. The geographical reference in the name of the journal only means that the journal is an initiative of Portuguese scholars. There will be no bias in favor of particular themes and issues.

Because the notion of internationalisation is relevant to the aims of this paper, the sample was analysed on the basis of the criteria listed in appendix 2 to determine whether the journals projected themselves as belonging to an international research community. Over half the journals (54.6%) could be considered to be specifically addressing such a community. Of the journals that do not explicitly claim to address an international readership, 44% were based in the US and a further 19% were from Anglophone countries (UK, Australia, Canada). These results are open to two interpretations: the first is that an international readership is assumed, therefore does not have to be stated explicitly. The second is that more than a quarter of the journals indexed on the ISI that are not, in fact, international in scope.
Rather, they might focus on domestic or Anglophone concerns. A more detailed analysis would be necessary to explore this result, but it is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, the issue of readership is important because if a journal claims to be addressing an international readership, it could affect the kind of language, English, that its authors are expected to use. For this reason, I analysed the author guidelines for submissions to determine whether each journal had a preference for a particular variety of English, and if so, what it was.

The sample for this analysis was 239 journals, made up of English-only journals and multi-lingual journals. The Czech journal whose information was available in Czech only was excluded. The criteria for classifying language are detailed in appendix 3. Just over a third of the journals (34.7%) gave no information on language. A small proportion (5.9%) specified the use of British English norms (BrE), while a larger share (11.7%) specified American English norms (AmE). In the former case, authors were often requested to use Fowler’s Modern English Usage for questions of usage and the Oxford English dictionary for spelling, and in the latter, authors were referred to the Chicago Manual of Style and Webster’s dictionary. Many more journals (21.3%) accepted submissions in AmE or BrE; however, in this case, there would be a specification that there should be no mixing of AmE and BrE norms. Some journals (16.3%) merely specified English but gave no further details. The remaining journals specified language in either normative terms (6.3%) or reader-oriented terms (3.3%). Normative specifications included requests for “Standard English”, “grammatically correct English”, or specifications such as “Works by non-native speakers must have been checked by a native speaker”.2 “We appreciate any efforts that you make to ensure that the language is corrected before submission” [emphasis added]. Such specifications imply external standards for language control. Two journals stipulated that “any consistent spelling style is accepted”, which in theory might mean any one of the 18 varieties on Microsoft’s software.

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2 Although the terms ‘native speaker’ and ‘non-native speaker’ have been contested, I shall continue to use the terms when describing the language policies as these are usually the terms used in the journal guidelines.
On the other hand, reader-oriented specifications drew attention to aspects of clarity or intelligibility, or highlighted the characteristics of the readership. For example, specifications such as “Authors should make their writing attractive, and as clear and easy to follow as possible”, “While important ideas should be expressible in plain English, there should be no dumbing down of ideas”, “The article should be intelligible and, if possible, interesting, for someone without much economics experience”, or “Where quotations in languages other than English are required, authors are asked to provide a translation into English in the text or a note” were considered to be reader-oriented. In one case, the US Journal of Policy Analysis & Management, the journal seems to recognise linguistic diversity, but this is quickly qualified by referring to the constraints of the readership.

The editors hope to preserve each author’s distinctive style of presentation in the final edited version of any piece. Bear in mind, however, that JPAM’s fundamental purpose is to promote more effective communication among those interested in policy analysis and public management. Our readers include many academics, but also some executives in the public service as well as interested lay people.

It should be noted that both the normative specifications and reader-oriented specifications are under-represented due to the classification criteria. Many journals that were classified as AmE/BrE also called upon writers to use “good English” and some that were classified normative included requests for “intelligibility”.

To determine the extent to which specifications for particular varieties of English might be regional, the relative share of language specifications in the journals by region was calculated (see table 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>AmE</th>
<th>BrE</th>
<th>AmE/BrE</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Reader oriented</th>
<th>No info.</th>
<th>Regional share in total journals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK &amp; Ireland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Europe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia &amp; N.Z.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Latin America</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All regions</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. English-medium journals: language variety by region (in units and as a % of regional total, 239 journals).

The results show that there seems to be a preference for BrE over AmE in the UK and Ireland, and the same preference is more marked in Australia and New Zealand. Such a language preference is not surprising in the latter region in view of the fact that the countries making up the region are ex-British colonies. Although North America shows a parallel preference for its local variety AmE over BrE, the region appears more tolerant of variety than does the UK and Ireland region in that the relative share of journals accepting either variety, AmE or BrE, in North America is almost double that of journals in the UK and Ireland. Continental Europe, on the other hand, is clearly flexible; well over half the journals either accept both AmE and BrE or do not specify any particular variety. The low relative share of journals from Asia, Latin America and South Africa in the sample precludes any meaningful analysis although it could be noted that, in the latter two regions, no journal specifies a particular language variety.

Normative specifications are restricted to journals from North America, the UK and Ireland, Continental Europe, and South Africa, where, with the exception of South Africa, they make up less than 10% of
each region’s total share. By contrast, reader-oriented specifications appear only in the Anglophone regions of North America, the UK and Ireland, and Australia, where they also account for 10% or less.

Breaking these reader-oriented journals down by journal audience can shed light on the analysis. Only two of the journals, both from UK, were classified as having an international audience. One stipulated the need to translate any non-English text while the other — *World Bank Research Observer* — described the readership as broad and non-specialist. The other six journals were not classified as international, thus might be considered to be writing for a domestic audience. They all specified a wide range of readers, e.g. from students to government officials and the business community.

While any attempt to explain these results is speculation, two explanations can be hypothesised for journals with an international readership. The specification for translating citations from other languages into English might confirm that English is being used as a lingua franca within a community of multi-lingual scholars. However, an alternative interpretation is also possible. Because these journals are based in inner circle, norm providing countries (Kachru 12), the readers in these countries might not be able to understand other languages, and so require all information to be in English. The second group, which may be writing for a domestic market, might assume that its authors are also domestic. As native speakers, then, they would be expected to be able to write in a wide range of styles. As already stated, these explanations are speculative.

One final result is worth commenting on. The relative share of journals that provide no information on language is higher in inner circle Anglophone regions (North America, UK and Ireland, and Australia and New Zealand) than in Continental Europe, Latin America and Asia, which can be considered to represent countries from the expanding circle or the outer circle. In the Anglophone countries this share ranges from 36.0% to 60%, whereas in the second group it ranges between 0% and 33.3%. This result suggests that Anglophone countries may take the question of

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3 The concern that lack of foreign language skills will prevent UK born and educated researchers from engaging in international projects that require a language other than English has, in fact, been raised by the British Academy (Levitt, *et al.* 47; British Academy 5-6).
language for granted; in other words, the journals assume that authors will naturally use an acceptable English, while non-Anglophone countries may be more aware of varieties of English. Nevertheless, any interpretation must be treated with caution in view of the small number of Asian, Australian and New Zealand, and Latin American journals in the sample.

In order to shed light on the relation between the publisher and language policy, the sample of journals was broken down by journal publisher. Table 2 depicts the distribution of journals by publisher and language specifications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLISHER</th>
<th>AmE</th>
<th>BrE</th>
<th>AmE/BrE</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Reader oriented</th>
<th>No info</th>
<th>Regional share in total journals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N3</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N4</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiley-Blackwell</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsevier</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routledge Taylor &amp; Francis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUP</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uni Chicago</td>
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<td>60.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUP</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME Sharpe</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkeley Electronic Press</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage Publications</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other US (20)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other UK (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (25)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>66.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>All publishers</td>
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<td>11.7</td>
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<td>5.9</td>
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<td>21.3</td>
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<td>16.3</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. English-medium journals: language variety by publisher in units and as a % of publisher total (239 journals)
The most striking feature is the relative share of publications held by 3 major publishers, who, together, hold sway over more than half of the total number of journals. Wiley-Blackwell (28.8%), Elsevier (19.2%) and Springer (11.7%) clearly dominate scholarly publishing in economics. The next three publishers — Routledge, Taylor & Francis (7.9%), Oxford University Press (5.9%) and University of Chicago (2.1%) together publish well under one fifth of the total number of journals. The remaining journals are produced by 51 publishers, 23 of whom are American and who publish a further 15.6% of the sample. The 25 non-US and non-UK publishers produce a little over a quarter of the sample.

The large relative shares held by Wiley-Blackwell, Elsevier and Springer confer them with a degree of power over language policy. However, only Elsevier, a Dutch publisher, sets norms with regard to language and applies a common language policy to all its journals. Authors are advised that they may use AmE or BrE, but must not mix the two varieties. Further, they are called upon to write in “good English”. The publisher makes a language/copy editing service available to its authors at pre- and post-submission stages of the process for a fee.

Wiley-Blackwell, originally an US company, has expanded through mergers, acquisitions and alliances into a corporation with subsidiaries on every continent, the Blackwell component being the acquisition of a prestigious UK-based publisher. Although Wiley-Blackwell appears to leave choice of English variety to the individual journal, it is interesting to note that not one Wiley-Blackwell journal accepts both AmE and BrE in the same journal. This suggests that a Wiley-Blackwell journal identifies itself with a particular English variety, although, given that almost half Wiley-Blackwell journals provide no information on language, this is speculative. The corporation publishes almost one third of the journals that specify AmE. Another third specifying AmE is published by other US-based publishers.

The third dominant publisher, Springer, which is German, also leaves language policy to the individual journal with the result that most of them (85.7%) provide no information on language, suggesting that they operate on unstated assumptions.

Despite lack of a common language policy, Wiley-Blackwell and Oxford University Press journals, like Elsevier, systematically advise authors
of the need for professional language editing. The authors are then directed to the publishers’ webpages that provide such an editing service. Once again, authors must pay to have their manuscript revised. In particular, arguing that it will help the editor and referees to assess the worth of the manuscript, ‘non-native speakers’ are singled out as needing this service with varying degrees of force. The following advice illustrates various ways this is done.

If you are not a native English speaker, we strongly recommend that you have your manuscript professionally edited before submission. (Wiley-Blackwell)

Non-native English speakers are strongly encouraged to have their articles copy-edited prior to submission. (Wiley-Blackwell)
Authors for whom English is a second language may choose to have their manuscript professionally edited before submission to improve the English. (Wiley-Blackwell)
Particularly if English is not your first language, before submitting your manuscript you may wish to have it edited for language. (OUP)

In general, Springer gives very little information about language on individual journal websites. However, the publisher offers general information for authors on a separate webpage, which informs authors that Springer usually copy edits accepted manuscripts. They also state that non-native speakers may want to have their manuscripts revised by a native speaker, and Springer provides such a service.

Routledge also informs its authors that it copy edits manuscripts; however, instead of offering a pre-submission service to authors, it directs authors via links to a number of companies that offer professional language services such as translation or English-language revision by native speakers. Routledge stresses that these companies are unaffiliated with the publisher and makes no guarantee of the quality of the service. Sage has a similar policy. Cambridge University Press neither gives advice nor advertises a language editing service to authors. It states that it will correct typographical mistakes but “reserves the right to charge authors for excessive correction of non-typographical errors.”
None of the other publishers advertised language editing services in the instructions for authors with the exception of the multi-lingual Czech journal published by Slovak Academic Press, which undertakes to have all accepted submissions copy edited by a language editor, who they specify as being a "native English speaker".

Further insights into the role language proficiency plays may be gained by looking at the information provided to referees. Here, there appears to be no common policy for publishers, and it is up to individual journals to decide on the importance of language proficiency. A few journals state that poor language proficiency can result in an article being rejected either by a reviewer or by an editor, i.e. a desk rejection where the article is not reviewed at all. One Wiley-Blackwell journal, having advised authors on the need to have papers revised, uses language proficiency as a criterion for assessment in the referee guidelines:

The paper should be well written. In particular, the logical structure of the paper should be clear, and the paper should be relatively free from errors of grammar and usage. A skilful author can usually make an intrinsically difficult argument reasonably easy to follow, while poor writing can make even minor or trivial points hard to understand.

Routledge, on the other hand, is more supportive with regard to perceived language problems.

Referees do not need to make corrections to the English in an article: Routledge, Taylor & Francis will undertake editing for clarity where necessary. It is, however, helpful if you correct the English where the technical meaning is unclear.

Such criteria suggest that there is a certain amount of tolerance with regard to language proficiency despite the normative guidelines for authors of many of the journals.

This section sought to throw light on the language norms stipulated by economics journals, most of which claim to be writing for an international readership. It has been found that a majority of economics journals are published by three major groups: Wiley-Blackwell, Elsevier and Springer. This concentration has enabled Elsevier to implement a common language policy in which AmE and BrE are treated on an equal footing.
In the other publishers, individual journals are responsible for language policy. When language policy is considered from the point of region, it appears that North America, the UK and Ireland, and Australia and New Zealand tend to operate on unstated assumptions about the variety of English they expect. In other words, it has not been shown that North American journals will systematically specify the use of AmE, or that UK and Irish journals BrE, although there is evidence that when they do specify a variety, it is the variety of the region. Nor has it been shown that journals from ex-British colonies will ask for their native varieties. Rather they lean towards BrE, in line with Kachru’s (13) claim. In a similar vein, there is no evidence to suggest that Continental Europe prefers AmE to BrE or vice versa. Instead, journals from this region tend to accept either variety, providing that the variety is consistent. Nonetheless, overall, the native speaker norms of AmE or BrE remain the reference in submission guidelines and reflect a normative view towards language despite some leeway afforded to non-native speakers in a few journals.

A second finding is that the consolidation of publishers has enabled them to create spin-off services from the journal publishing core. Four of the major publishers are able to generate revenue from such a service.

Requiring authors to submit manuscripts written in AmE or BrE reinforces the hegemony of native-speaker varieties of English and this has implications for scholars who use English as an additional language (EAL). It raises questions about who has access to publishing in international journals in a community that purports to be international. Moreover, it raises questions about the roles English plays in international communication, in other words issues relating to English as an international language. I shall discuss these points in the following section.

3. English as an international language and economics journals’ English language norms

The plethora of names and uses of terms to describe different varieties and functions of English has been synthesised in Bolton (367-391), Erling (40-43), McArthur (2-3, 7-9), and Sargeant (100-108). For the purposes of this paper I shall use a definition based on function:
‘International English’ can be read as shorthand for ‘English as an international language’ (EIL). The longer term is, however, though more unwieldy, more precise because it highlights the international use of English rather than suggesting, wrongly, that there is one clearly distinguishable, unitary variety called ‘International English’. (Seidlhofer 7)

On the basis of this definition, it can be argued that the English used in the international economics journals discussed here is EIL. There are, however, certain contextual features that might distinguish it from the EIL as described by Seidlhofer. These relate to differences between contexts for speaking and writing, and the entailing notions of intelligibility and standard, as well as to issues of identity, prescriptivism and hegemony. I shall discuss these issues in turn.

3.1 Speaking, writing, intelligibility and standard

Seidlhofer (11) argues that, if EIL is used solely for the function of intercultural communication, it will not replace other languages, for they serve different functions. This use of EIL is additive, and not subtractive.4 Like Jenkins (“Global intelligibility” 36-37), she seeks to determine a set of characteristics of English that are essential for effective communication, but which does not rely solely on reproducing either AmE or BrE norms of correctness. The characteristics make up a core for EIL. Modiano, (“International English in the global village” 25-27; “Standard English(es)” 11-12), similarly, rejects AmE and BrE varieties as models for EIL, claiming that EIL speakers might mix AmE and BrE varieties without impeding effective communication. He presents two models of international English (“International English” 25; “Standard English(es)” 10), but I shall only refer to the second. In this model different varieties are represented in a Venn diagram, with two concentric circles in the centre. The inner circle represents a set of core features of English for intercultural communication,

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4 The decline in the use of Dutch and Norwegian for academic purposes, as reported by Smeyers and Levering (74-77) and Brock-Utne (226-232) respectively, are examples of subtractive English. These authors raise concerns about consequent language impoverishment in each country’s native language.
EIL. The outer circle represents an area of transition between different varieties of English and EIL. Modiano, Jenkins and Seidlhofer argue that the responsibility for EIL lies with its speakers, who are in the main, non-native English speakers, and the yardstick by which EIL should be judged is intelligibility. In general, discussion on intelligibility focuses on spoken language (e.g. Nihalani 26-41; Sewell 257-268). Modiano (“International English in the global village” 25) claims that it is “proficient non-native speakers of EIL” who are best equipped to define standards. Recently though, even the criterion of ‘intelligibility’ has been questioned. Rajagopalan (467-469) argues that it is not a neutral concept but evaluative, and rather than undermining the authority of the native speaker, it lets him/her creep back in, “only this time through the back door and that too most stealthily” (Rajagopalan 469).

Seidlhofer and Jenkins base their descriptions of core characteristics of EIL on the VOICE corpus. Although the VOICE corpus has been criticised for being Euro-centric and setting the grammatical bar too low (Prodromou, 56), Seidlhofer (19) argues that it is in spoken interaction that variation from a standard norm is more apparent, because the context of speaking involves co-construction and negotiation among interlocutors to produce discourse, making it is possible to explore the features that lead to mutual intelligibility. By contrast, written English is influenced by the stabilising nature of writing itself.

The tendency for writing to be associated with standardised norms is well accepted in the literature. (See, for example, Gupta 97; Seidlhofer 19; Trudgill 127, and Widdowson 380). McArthur (445) notes a strong correlation between print standard and standard English. He states that EIL has been used to refer to “standard usage that draws on, and may blend with, such sources [as different varieties of English], but has a transnational identity of its own, especially in print worldwide and in the usage of such organizations as the United Nations”. Svartvik and Leech (156) propose a pyramid of standardisation, at the bottom of which are the most localised and nativised varieties such as dialects, and at the top a prestigious, educated variety, “something close to an international standard of written English” (emphasis in the original). Intuitively, McArthur and Svartvik and Leech’s descriptions seem closer to the use of English in the scholarly journals of an international research community, and, in fact, the latter go on to say:
on the level of serious academic or informative writing, we feel justified in talking of an international standard English or world standard English, sometimes abbreviated WSE. In science, for example, an international standard for printed English (leaving aside the spelling and the style conventions laid down by particular journal) is taken for granted. (156)

The goal of WSE is “intelligibility across national and cultural barriers” (Svartvik and Leech 226). Svartvik and Leech explicitly exclude Modiano, Seidhoffer and Jenkins’ concept of EIL from their model. They claim that it lies outside the model, perhaps undercutting WSE as a “less demanding option for people wanting to communicate internationally” (Svartvik and Leech 234). Yet, they recognise a common function between EIL and WSE — that of intercultural communication — when they suggest that, should EIL become a working international variety, it would represent “a split between the ‘High’ variety of WSE, and the ‘Low’ or deomotic variety of ELF [EIL]” (Svartvik and Leech 234). If Graddol’s (“The Future of English?” 8) claim that English is the global academic language is accepted, English is already a working language for disseminating research, and this seems to be confirmed by the dominance of English-medium journals in this study. The two models — Modiano (“Standard English(es)” 10) and Svartvik and Leech (226) — imply different ideological stances: the former is a flat, two dimensional model, suggesting an egalitarian view towards users of English, while the latter is a three-dimensional, conical model, suggesting a conservative view towards hierarchical relations and a desire to maintain the status quo through hegemonic uses of English.

Given that this paper seeks to explore the relation between EIL and language policy in journal submission guidelines, the influence of writing cannot be ignored in any discussion of the relation. From the discussion above it is apparent that writing is intrinsically mixed with a notion of standard, and once this notion is introduced, it leads to questions relating to identity, prescriptivism and hegemony.

3.2 Identity and prescriptivism

In Seidhoffer and Modiano’s conception of EIL, the sole goal of EIL is intelligibility in cross-cultural communication. In addition to the function
of communication, English can, of course, serve another function, that of defining identity (Svartvik and Leech 226; Widdowson 381).

In plurilingual situations, House (560) and Svartvik and Leech (226) claim that while speakers will choose a variety of English such as EIL for cross-cultural communication, to express their identity they will choose a local language variety. Identity, however, is not only conveyed through local varieties. Widdowson (381) notes the role that standard (written) English plays in expressing a community’s identity, conventions and values. He claims that the security of the community and its institutions is maintained by protecting the communal features of the language, i.e. grammar and spelling, rather than the communicative features. Communities defined by shared professional concerns, such as a community of researchers and scholars in an academic field, are “granted rights of ownership and allowed to fashion the language to meet their needs” (Widdowson 383).

Numerous studies of international discourse communities have highlighted how knowledge is socially constructed by the community members (e.g. Berkenkotter and Huckin 45-77; Flowerdew “Discourse community” 137-144; Hyland 1-19), with some members holding higher status and others more peripheral positions (Brumfit 23). Successful participation implies acceptance of and adherence to the particular community’s ethos and discursive norms, and in scholarly journals these are maintained by means of the publication process, which is mediated by the editor, the reviewers in peer reviewed journals, and the author(s) (Berkenkotter and Huckin 61-64; Flowerdew, “Discourse community” 140-144). Thus, novice members need to be socialised into the discourse conventions of the community’s genres in order to gain membership (Hyland 5 Swales, Genre Analysis 27, van Bergeijk, et al. 5-6).

Klamer and Hendrik, both economists, neatly summarise the process of gaining legitimacy in a research community:

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1 The fusion of local norms into the discourses of the writers in Sri Lanka (Canagarajah, Resisting Linguistic Imperialism 162-168; "Addressing issues of power and difference" 120-128) and the development of local conventions in Malaysia (Swales, English as Tyrannosaurs rex 370-379) are examples of this. The former also illustrate Bhatt’s (95) point that English can be used creatively in a way that is both local and global.
In short, when you as a scientist seek recognition for your ideas, you do better by joining a conversation within a cluster of scientists who specialise in a subfield. That means you will have to respect its rhetoric, cite its often cited texts, attend its conferences and so on. (305)

Thus, scholars trying to publish in an international economics journal are not aiming merely for “intelligibility across national and cultural frontiers” (Svartvik and Leech 226); they are aiming to participate in an international research community through what is considered a crucial community genre for the dissemination of knowledge: the research article (Hyland 41; Swales, “ESP - The heart of the matter” 217). As such, their use of English for scholarly publishing is as much about affirming their identity as a community member as communicating with an international, multilingual community through a common language. If this is the case, scholars who submit manuscripts to international economic journals are not writing in EIL as conceived by Seidllhofer (8).

The discourse of socialisation such as that used by Swales (Genre Analysis) has been critiqued as being normative for it positions learners as ‘novices’ and community members as ‘experts’, thus encouraging learners to comply with the discourse conventions in order to become members (Preece 28-31). It can be seen as being imbued with a “politics of conformity” (Bhatt 93), and its normative reach can be seen as similar to prescriptivism, as described by Kachru:

[Prescriptivism implies that] with the spread of English we also expect the learners to acquire norms of behaviour appropriate to the users of the inner circle. The expected behaviour pattern characterizes what one might call an ’educated Englishman’ (or American)”, (21)

When the actors in the publishing process — editors, reviewers, publishers — impose AmE or BrE norms on scholars’ manuscripts, they are privileging the identity function over the communicative, precious guarding the communal features of usage, grammar and spelling in the very way described by Widdowson, thus denying EAL scholars “the rights of ownership” (381). In light of this, the parenthetical qualification to Svartvik and Leech’s (156) international standard printed English used in science, which
was cited earlier, “(leaving aside the spelling and the style conventions laid down by particular journal)” takes on a new, more sinister, air.

Pennycook (42) argues that language and literacy are always political. A similar position is taken by Phillipson and Stubbs, who argue that “[l]anguage policy issues are invariably entangled with non-linguistic matters”, and that the bargaining powers of the participants are asymmetrical, the dominant often resorting to “covert hegemonic processes” (433). In light of the results of the analysis of language policy in the economics journals, Phillipson’s position — “When analysing English worldwide the bottom line is whose interests English serves” (189) — seems relevant here. Whose interests are being served by the dominance of English in scholarly economics journals and whose interests are being served by the preference for AmE or BrE norms?

### 3.3 Hegemony

In the field of economics Frey and Eichenberger contend that the “American market for academic economists is the most developed with respect to standard setting and that due to its efficiency, it is spreading quickly around the world” (21). Empirical studies in the fields of economics and marketing on the factors that affect the acceptance or rejection of a manuscript have identified issues of epistemology and the creation of new knowledge as key factors, (see, for example, Barbin 375), and these findings have been substantiated by reflections from US editors in the field (e.g. McAfee 3; Stewart 425-426).

Other studies posit proficiency in English as a factor to explain the greater share of published articles by US scholars and the under representation of scholars from Europe and some Asian countries in the fields of marketing (Barbin 379; Svensson and Helgerson 394) and information systems (Lyytinen et al. 319-321). By contrast, a survey of US economists’ beliefs by Davis (275-276) found that almost three quarters of the respondents believed that the degree of mathematical exposition in a paper affected the likelihood of being published and over half believed that business or school affiliation, old-boy network influences and being a reviewer on a journal increase the chances of being published. For the 900 economists in Davis’ study, language appears not to be an issue; it is taken
for granted, as it is by over a third of the economics journals published in North America. Overall, these findings suggest that the US may indeed be setting the agenda for publishing in economics and related fields.

To return to the Phillipson-derived questions, the dominance of English in scholarly publishing in economics as shown by the results of this study seems to be serving the hegemonic interests of the American market for economists. More journals in the sample are from North America than from any other region, making it possible for American economists both to determine what gets studied, as well as how, thus ensuring they have access to it. With regard to the second question, however, the journals’ insistence on AmE or BrE norms is as much in the economic interests of the publishers, as it is in the interests of the Anglophone economists. Recommending that EAL scholars should have their manuscripts revised by professional copy or language editors enables the major publishers to provide a complementary non-core business to generate revenue.

The focus on language proficiency as a factor in the publication process strikes a chord with literature dealing specifically with contributions from scholars in non-English speaking countries in other fields, in which several studies point both to the burden of having to learn and write in a foreign language (Curry and Lillis 681; Ferguson, et al. 43-44; Flowerdew, “Discourse community” 145; “Scholarly writers” 78) as well as to limitations or impositions on the selection or focus of a research topic (Curry and Lillis 681-682; Flowerdew “Discourse community” 144). It has been pointed out, however, that EAL scholars writing in English do not necessarily feel themselves to be at a disadvantage (Ferguson, et al. 48-49), and nor do they have to conform to Anglophone discourse conventions. Some research has shown how EAL scholars resist Anglophone discursive norms (Canagarajah, Resisting Linguistic Imperialism 157-168; “Addressing issues of power” 124-128), but this resistance has taken place at the local, not international level. Furthermore, editors may be extra supportive of the authors of manuscripts from non-English speaking countries by providing extra opportunities for revision (Flowerdew, “Attitudes of journal editors” 129).

Indeed some referee guidelines implied a tolerant attitude towards EAL submissions. The sensitive nature of the issue — discrimination on the basis of language proficiency — is highlighted in a lively debate between
Flowerdew (“Scholarly writers” *passim*; “Goffman’s stigma” *passim*) and Casanave (*passim*)\(^6\), with Flowerdew calling on journals to use intelligibility as a criterion for language proficiency rather than conformity with Anglophone conventions.

Flowerdew’s argument for intelligibility implies an attitude of scholarly writing that is much more aligned with EIL. It replaces a hierarchical, centripetal model with a pluricentric one. Seidhlofer also questions the legitimacy of imposing Anglophone norms on journal submissions when she writes:

> As these written modes [journal articles] become increasingly appropriated by non-native users, one might speculate that, in time, self-regulation might involve a detachment from a dependence on native user norms so that these written modes also take on the kind of distinctive features that are evident in spoken EIL. (19)

But she seems to ignore the powerful role played by publishers in the process. Swales, on the other hand, endorses Anna Mauren’s view that scholars do not have to try to comply with the Anglophone norms as this would render irrelevant and invalid any gatekeeper’s argument that “these foreigners just don’t know how to frame issues and arguments in ways that we feel comfortable with” (“English as Tyrannosaurus rex” 380). However, he ultimately implies that it is up to the scholars themselves to decide whether they wish to resist or comply with Anglophone discourse community conventions. Gupta recognises the importance of standard English in writing:

> In practice, skill in Standard English, or lack of it, is the linguistic form of inequality that really matters. And we

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\(^6\) Flowerdew (“Scholarly writers” *passim*) argues that EAL scholars are at a disadvantage when it comes to getting published. He provides anecdotal evidence in order to highlight their predicament and likens their situation to Goffman’s ideas on stigma. Casanave (*passim*) rejects Flowerdew’s characterisation, finding it not only offensive, but inappropriate on the grounds that EAL writers suffer from the same disadvantages as novice English-speaking scholars. Flowerdew (“Goffman’s stigma” *passim*) rebuts Casanave’s critique, drawing attention to the added factor of the burden of having to write in an additional language.
cannot predict that skill from birth, nationality, ethnicity or native-speakerdom. Users of written English are judged by their skill in Standard English. (99)

It would seem that, for the moment, the discourse conventions of research articles in the international economics research community are entwined with standard English and what is actually meant by Graddol’s (“The Future of English?” 8) “English as the global academic language” is standard English, or rather standard American English or standard British English.

4. Conclusions, limitations and future research

This article sought to re-examine two models of World Englishes in light of the language policies of the Economics journals indexed on the ISI JCR. It was found that journals from Anglophone regions tend to operate on unstated assumptions about language or hold a normative view of language, taking AmE and BrE as norm providing references. A second result is that publishers play a major role in maintaining the hegemony of standard AmE and BrE in their journals by recommending that EAL scholars have their manuscripts revised before submission. This practice enables some of them to generate revenue through a spin-off service. It has also been found that none of the models of World Englishes discussed fully accounts for the hegemonic use of AmE or BrE for international communication such as that found in the economics journals, although Svartvik and Leech come close.

There are, of course, limitations to the study. The sampling criteria suffer from two main limitations. First, the ISI list is biased towards English language journals (Swales, Genre Analysis 97). Second, the journals indexed in the JCR Social Science Edition do not represent all the possible international research communities for economics. Many other journals, both in English and in other languages, circulate and are read internationally, but they are not indexed by ISI. Analysis of other databases’ journals’ language policies could provide a more well-rounded view of the languages used by the global research community in economics. Another limitation is that the criteria for classifying a journal’s language policy did not enable more than one attribute to be assigned to the policy, even when
the policy may have specified a particular language variety, a particular standard and a reader-oriented request for intelligibility. Future research could resolve this problem by applying cluster analysis.

Finally, it would seem that a more complex set of features needs to be incorporated in a model of World Englishes. Such a model would need to account for context-dependent variation in the functions of communication and identity.

Works Cited


Accessed 20 March 2011


Russack, B. “Publishing in Western Europe and Great Britain: A survey and


## Appendix 1

Economics journals by country and language (units)

| Country              | English | French | Spanish | Multi-language | (Languages accepted)                     | Total journals by country |
|----------------------|---------|--------|---------|----------------.|------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Argentina            | 2       | 1      |         | 3              |                                          |                           |
| Australia            | 10      |        |         |                |                                          | 10                        |
| Austria              | 1       |        | 1       | 2              | no information given, webpage in English |                           |
| Belgium              |         |        | 1       |                | Fr Eng                                   | 1                         |
| Canada               | 1       |        | 1       | 2              | Fr E                                     |                           |
| Chile                | 1       |        | 1       | 2              | Eng Fr Pt Span                           |                           |
| Croatia              | 1       |        | 1       | 2              | Eng Croatian Fr Ger It                    |                           |
| Czech Rep            | 1       |        | 1       |                | no information given, webpage in Czech only |                           |
| France               | 1       | 1      | Fr Eng  | 2              |                                          |                           |
| Germany              | 8       |        | 1       | 9              | Ger Eng                                  |                           |
| Hungary              | 1       |        |         | 1              |                                          |                           |
| Italy                | 1       |        | 1       | 2              | Eng It                                   |                           |
| Japan                | 1       |        | 1       |                | no information given, webpage in English | 2                         |
| Latvia               | 1       |        |         | 1              |                                          |                           |
| Lithuania            | 2       |        |         | 2              |                                          |                           |
| Mexico               |         | 1      |         | 1              |                                          |                           |
| Netherlands          | 40      |        |         | 40             |                                          |                           |
| People’s Republic China | 2     |        |         | 2              |                                          |                           |
| Romania              | 1       |        |         | 1              |                                          |                           |
| Singapore            | 1       |        |         | 1              |                                          |                           |
| Slovakia             | 1       |        | Slovak, Czech Eng | 1 |                                          |                           |
| South Africa         | 1       |        |         | 2              |                                          |                           |
| South Korea          | 1       |        |         | 1              |                                          |                           |
| Spain                | 1       | 2      | 2       | 5              | Span Eng (1 journal prefers E)            |                           |
| Sweden               | 2       |        |         | 2              |                                          |                           |
| Switzerland          | 4       |        |         | 4              |                                          |                           |
| UK                   | 56      |        |         | 56             |                                          |                           |
| USA                  | 87      |        |         | 87             |                                          |                           |
| Total journals by language | 226 | 1 | 5 | 14 | 246 |
Appendix 2

Criteria for classification as having an international readership.
1. The journal specified an international readership in the aims and scope; and/or
2. The journal contained ‘international’ in its title; and/or
3. The journal’s editorial board included people affiliated in more than 1 country, including a non-Anglophone country.

Appendix 3

Criteria for classification of language
To be classified as a particular variety, i.e. AmE, BrE or AmE/BrE the following criteria were used.
1. Guidelines included a specific request for language variety. E.g. “Please use British spelling (e.g. colour, organise) and punctuation” or “Please write your text in good English (American or British usage is accepted, but not a mixture of these)”; and/or
2. Guidelines included a direct reference to a style guide representing a particular variety. E.g. “In questions of detail, the Journal of Regional Science attempts to follow the guidelines established by the Chicago Manual of Style (14th edition).”

To be classified ‘normative’ the following criteria were used:
1. No specific variety of English was mentioned; and
2. Guidelines included references to “grammatically correct” language, “good English”, “consistent spelling”, or “standard English”. E.g. “Manuscripts should be written in clear, concise, and grammatically correct English.” “In Standard English to aid the review process.” “Any consistent spelling style is acceptable”; and/or
3. Guidelines included specification that the language be “edited” or “corrected” by a professional or native speaker of English. E.g. “All papers should be professionally edited before submission.” “We appreciate any efforts that you make to ensure that the language is corrected before submission. This will greatly improve the legibility of your paper if English is not your first language.”

To be classified ‘reader-oriented’ the following criteria were used:
1. No specific variety of English was mentioned; and
2. No normative specifications were mentioned; and
3. Guidelines included specifications for “clarity”, “intelligibility” or requests for “plain” language rather than “jargon”. E.g. “The common language of this journal, as a rule, must be English. I reject the work of writers who cannot express their ideas clearly.” “The article should be intelligible and, if possible, interesting, for someone without much economics experience.” “Contributors should write plainly, avoid unnecessary jargon, and employ economy in the use of footnotes”; and/or
4. Guidelines included references to the readership, particularly in terms of range. E.g. “Papers must be written in a highly literate style, with the main arguments accessible to non-specialists.” “A prime concern is that the journal should reach the widest possible audience.” “In preparing papers for the Journal, authors should bear in mind the diverse membership of the NTA, which includes academic, private sector, and government economists, accountants and attorneys, as well as business and government tax practitioners—and write in a style accessible to all these individuals”; and/or
5. Guidelines included requests to translate all quotations in a foreign language to English. E.g. “Where quotations in languages other than English are required, authors are asked to provide a translation into English in the text or a note.”

All other references to English that specified neither a variety of English nor quality of language were classified ‘English’. E.g. “Only articles written in English will be considered.”
ABSTRACT

English is often claimed to be the international language of science and research. Indeed Svartvik and Leech (156) include such a variety — international standard English or world standard English — in their model of Englishes. In their conception they disregard the spelling and style conventions imposed by journals. Given growing pressure for academics from around the world to publish in certain English-medium journals, the journal submission guidelines offer important information for authors. Yet, while there is increasing awareness of the burden imposed on EAL scholars in having to write scientific articles in English, little attention has been paid to the language policies of the international journals.

The aim of this article is to synthesise the language policies of the economics journals referenced on the Institute for Scientific Information’s (ISI) Journal of Citation Reports (JCR) and re-examine two models of World Englishes in light of these policies. The overview shows that many journals operate on unstated assumptions of English and normative views prevail. The ensuing discussion raises issues related to intelligibility and standard, identity, prescriptivism and hegemony.

KEYWORDS

English as an international language; Language policy; Economics journals; Scientific publication

RESUMO

A língua inglesa é muitas vezes considerada a língua internacional da ciência e da investigação. Svartvik e Leech (156), por exemplo, incorporam no seu modelo de variedades de inglês exactamente uma intitulada “inglês padrão internacional” ou “inglês padrão mundial”. Neste modelo são postas de lado as normas ortográficas e de estilo estipuladas pelas revistas científicas. Uma vez que é cada vez mais importante que os académicos publiquem artigos científicos em língua inglesa em certas revistas, as normas dessas revistas constituem uma fonte indispensável de informação. No entanto, as políticas de língua dessas revistas não foram objecto
de estudo, embora seja cada vez mais reconhecido que publicar em inglês requer um maior esforço dos autores que falam inglês como uma língua adicional (EAL).

Este artigo pretende sintetizar as políticas de língua das revistas de economia que são indexadas no Journal of Citation Reports (JCR) do Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), e, tendo em conta essas políticas, reexaminar dois modelos de ‘World Englishes’. Os resultados demonstram que muitas revistas se baseiam em pressupostos de Inglês não declarados e que prevalecem visões normativas. Na discussão, levantam-se questões relativas a inteligibilidade, padrão, identidade, regulamentação, prescritividade, e hegemonia.

**Palavras chave**

Inglês como língua internacional; Políticas de língua; Revistas de economia; Publicação científica.