FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Advice for Authors

1. I am not a native speaker of English. Is it acceptable scholarship to have a native speaker review and correct my manuscript?

All authors, especially those whose native language is not English, are encouraged to have colleagues with a very high level of proficiency in English read their manuscripts and suggest adjustments for language and style.

2. What types of EFL studies are likely to be published in the MLJ?

The MLJ considers for publication all studies or essays dealing with second or foreign language learning. Therefore, manuscripts about studies that concern teaching and learning English abroad fall within the parameters of the MLJ. The Journal is receiving an increasing number of such submissions and is most interested in articles that address issues of concern to more than one language and more than one geographic location. Authors of case studies of single institutions are encouraged to discuss what the particular case offers to readers who work in other locations or with other languages. Prospective authors should look at back copies of the Journal and the examples available online. Alternative publication outlets for EFL/ESL studies might be one of the TESOL publications (www.tesol.org).

3. Is it recommended to send the editor an email with an abstract prior to submitting a manuscript?

This practice is not recommended because it is difficult for the editor to judge from an abstract whether a manuscript is likely to be accepted. You can assess whether the topic of your manuscript and how you have developed it match the parameters of the Journal by viewing the sample articles online, or, better yet, by reading the Journal. http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/mlj

4. MLJ currently asks for manuscripts of 20 pages excluding tables, notes, appendixes, references. If my manuscript is longer than suggested in the submission guidelines, can I send it for consideration anyway?

Yes, manuscripts longer than suggested will be considered. Please still prepare them in 12-point font, double-spaced, and, of course, in APA style (http://www.apastyle.org/). Using a smaller font or 1½-line spacing makes them hard to read and sometimes results in frustration for reviewers. Manuscripts submitted in a difficult-to-read font or format may be returned to the author. Manuscripts shorter than those typically published in the MLJ should be carefully considered in terms of how they meet MLJ expectations. Short manuscripts often do not have the depth of analysis and discussion required by the MLJ.

5. Is there a certain organization that all research studies must follow?

No, typically qualitative and quantitative studies do not follow the same format of presentation. Even among studies that would be considered qualitative and those considered quantitative, differences of format are common. The organization of the article should reflect how the study was done and should help readers focus on the main data and results that the study offers to readers. See sample articles online and back issues of the Journal for examples of formats used in the past.

6. The APA manual (5th edition) encourages authors of quantitative studies to report effect sizes. Is this necessary?

Effect size is a measure of the strength of relationship and relates to the power of a study. Effect sizes are usually reported along with reports of statistical significance. Although MLJ policy does not eliminate manuscripts that do not report effect size, because in some instances it may not be appropriate to do so, effect sizes for your data should usually be reported along with reports of statistical significance.
Manuscripts often benefit from reporting effect sizes of both the new study and studies cited in the literature review. To do the latter, it may be necessary to calculate the effect size measures from data summaries or test statistics given in those cited studies. In some cases, of course, such calculation will not be possible. Ideally, the author will relate the effect size of the new study to those of previous studies. Confidence intervals are generally appropriate for this purpose (e.g., Do the effect sizes in other studies fall within the confidence interval estimated from the current study? Do confidence intervals for effect sizes overlap in a particular region?). The practical significance of the obtained effect should be emphasized.

There are quite a few different measures of effect size. Selection of the most appropriate one depends upon the nature of the study conducted. Authors may wish to consult the following publications for guidance:


7. May I use figures or illustrations published elsewhere?

Yes, but you must obtain and supply written verification that the copyright holder will allow *MLJ* to reprint that material and note the source in the manuscript. The author must pay any fees required by the copyright holder. Usually these fees are minimal.

8. May I submit my manuscript to two or more journals at the same time?

The *MLJ* does not accept for consideration manuscripts that are simultaneously submitted elsewhere. Except with special arrangements such as exchange articles, the *MLJ* does not publish articles that have appeared in print elsewhere. For submitted manuscripts, the waiting time for a decision is generally no longer than 2 to 3 months. Reviewers invest substantial time and effort in the manuscripts they read. If a manuscript is accepted, it is expected that it will be available for publication.

9. When should I query the editor to check on the status of a submission?

We try to acknowledge receipt of a manuscript shortly after it is delivered to the *MLJ* office. If you do not receive acknowledgment of receipt within 3 weeks, please contact our office, preferably by email: mlj@lss.wisc.edu. After receiving acknowledgment of receipt, please wait 3 months before inquiring about the status of the manuscript. *MLJ* strives to make decisions sooner; however, sometimes reviewers are heavily committed, and the review process takes a bit longer.

10. If my manuscript is rejected by the *MLJ*, can it be resubmitted to the *MLJ*?

Yes, if it has been revised after the initial submission. The author should call the editor’s attention to the fact that the new submission is actually a resubmission of an article considered previously and include an explanation of the changes made, with specific reference to the comments of the reviewers and how they were addressed. The article will likely be sent to some of the previous readers as well as to some new readers.

For detailed submission guidelines, please see Information about *The Modern Language Journal* in the initial pages of each issue.

Send submissions to:

Sally Magnan, Editor

*The Modern Language Journal*

618 Van Hise Hall

1220 Linden Drive

Madison, WI 53706-1558

USA