



Description

Editing: More Than a Wish List Item

Preparing a research proposal can be hard enough these days—[research funds](#) aren't as plentiful, and the providers of those funds only seem to be interested in supporting work that has a high chance of subsequent publications in prestigious journals. If English is not your native language, the prospect of adding the cost of a [professional editing service](#) to that budget can, therefore, seem to be very unattractive.

So, you add that expense as a 'wish list' item and make other plans. Maybe you could have your colleagues review your paper whose English proficiency is better than yours? Perhaps Microsoft's spelling and [grammar](#) check functions and/or Google Translate will be your last resort to save you from any embarrassing mistakes?

Such rationalizations can make sense when you are facing budgetary or even time limitations in delivering a [research paper](#). However, the danger here is that such short-term economic measures can do long-term damage.

Unedited Papers are Rarely Peer Reviewed

Often, a poorly written manuscript is outrightly rejected at the time of submission without the [peer review](#) process. The journal editor may find that your manuscript doesn't adhere to the structure or writing guidelines of the journal.

Moreover, if the editor sends your paper for review, those peer reviewers may well resent the expectation that they are being asked to check more than the methodological accuracy of the paper (they are unpaid, remember!) and reject the paper without the invitation to resubmit.

Editing Can Save You from Professional Embarrassment

English is the preferred language of science and it is a harsh reality. Critics and historians may argue that [Latin](#), French, German, and Russian have equal claims on a scientific legacy, but the Science communication is preferred in English. Attempting a DIY (do-it-yourself) approach to [research paper editing](#) in a non-native language can sometimes lead to embarrassing results or unnoticed mistakes.

Let us have a look at few examples.

- Clairol launched a new hair curling iron called *Mist Stick* in Germany without realizing that *mist* is German slang for manure.
- Mercedes-Benz entered the Chinese auto market with a localized brand name of *Bensi* that translated to 'rush to die'.
- The American Dairy Association clearly avoided any professional editing when the association's 'Got Milk?' advertising campaign was translated for Spanish-speaking countries into 'Are You Lactating?'.
- Professor Paul May at the University of Bristol tracks a different approach to the potential misuse of language by recording 'Molecules with Silly Names' such as *Moronic Acid*, *Furfurfyl Furfurate*, and others that are a little too 'colorful' for this blog.

The Above Humor Has a Serious Message

While the silly names may represent an attempt to provoke some mild rebellion against academic standards, the commercial examples above had real and expensive consequences for the companies involved. If you consider the tens of thousands of dollars invested in aggressive marketing campaigns and advertisements, all of that seems to be wasted as a result of either overconfidence in the language skills of someone in the marketing department, or a budgetary decision of not to 'waste' money on a professional editor!

In the realm of scientific research, dollars can now get just as big. The risk is, therefore, just as great. For instance, a significant piece of [research work](#) can go unnoticed or, worse still, receives infamy for a simple and unintended error in editing and/or translation. A professional [editing service](#) is, therefore, a wise and necessary investment.

Category

1. Language & Grammar
2. Reporting Research

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