Scientific Writing for the Non-English Speaker is the distillation of Lövei's lecture notes and experience gathered over two decades; it is the coursebook many have been waiting for.

The book's three main sections correspond with the three main stages of a paper's journey from idea to print: planning, writing, and publishing. Within the book's chapters, complex questions such as 'How to write the introduction?' or 'How to submit a manuscript?' are broken down into smaller, more manageable problems that are then discussed in a straightforward, conversational manner, providing an easy and enjoyable reading experience.

This volume stands out from its field by targeting scientists whose first language is not English. While also touching on matters of style and grammar, the book's main goal is to advise on first principles of communication.

Scientific Writing for the Non-English Speaker is an excellent resource for any student or scientist wishing to learn more about the scientific publishing process and scientific communication. It will be especially useful to those coming from outside the English-speaking world and looking for a comprehensive guide for publishing their work in English.

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My reader, allow me to greet you with the words of the Latin writers: *lectori salutem*. You are holding a book that, while it cannot claim to be unique, distils many years of experience, spanning virtually my entire career as a scientist, publishing author, and editor. As a young scientist, eager to publish internationally, the book that first caught my attention in the field of scientific writing was Robert Day’s *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper*. I have used this book widely in its various editions, and I am glad to record my gratitude to this author for his fine book (now, in the latest editions, with co-author Barbara Gastel).

As Gastel and Day (2016) correctly observe, scientific writing is a rather rigidly regulated area of writing. Consequently, any book aiming to provide advice in this area will resemble others. Why, then, is there a need to write about this again and again?

My reply to that question is that I found Day’s book too closely tailored to the traditions and views of the North American scientific community and, despite the occasional nod to acknowledge alternative traditions in publishing, they did not really aim to enlighten non-native English speakers. This shortcoming still characterises the latest edition (Gastel and Day, 2016). True, there are a lot of similarities, perhaps more than there are differences. However, “non-native” scientists working and writing in a different environment have a different view and, perhaps, would benefit from the approach of a non-native writer, whose own publication record is in mostly non-U.S.-based forums.

One area where my advice deviates considerably from Gastel and Day’s (2016) is on scientific figures. This is more than a slight difference of opinion—it seems a different philosophy. I confess to adhere to the principles advocated by William Cleveland and Edward Tufte and find much to lament about the current standard of figures, even in the most prominent scientific journals. This field is in dire need of more attention.
and the practice of designing figures would benefit richly from a more attentive approach. Thus, I place significant emphasis on constructing figures for both analysing and presenting data.

In general, though, this is not a “how-to” book. Allow me to use an analogy: You can possibly learn to swim when thrown into the water, with the trainer standing at the edge of the pool, explaining the motions to make. She will certainly have your full attention. I believe that this “learning while doing” method has some merits. However, it just may be of use if you first familiarise yourself with the swimming pool area: the general setup, the types, kinds and features of different pools, where to get into the various pools and how to get out, the water temperature and depth in each, where to go if you want to change, how to get help, and so on. Only then, of course, should you jump in. This book follows the second approach, and seeks to inform you about the publication process itself, including information on journal types, as well as the process of scientific and technical editing. I believe that knowing the whole process by which your manuscript will become a published paper can help you to navigate this process more effectively, less painfully, and — of utmost importance to scientists — faster.

In this volume, I discuss aspects related to writing and publishing different kinds of scientific papers. Most of the emphasis will be on the so-called primary scientific paper, whilst shorter chapters detail special features of reviews, conference proceedings papers, and book chapters. My approach is also distinct in that I do not extensively discuss the elements of style. There are many good books available on this subject (Turabian, 2007; Barrass, 2015; Cargill and O’Connor, 2013). Given my own background, most of my examples come from environmental science in the broad sense. However, with extensive teaching experience, I can claim that scientists from various other fields, from economics to social sciences, have found the material usable and useful.

Another caveat: I assume that my reader has, first of all, valuable scientific results and her interest is in how to present them to best effect. In other words, my reader has some publishable results which she trusts. This book is not to help the confused, who have generated a lot of data, and do not know what to do with them. Secondly, I do not offer a kind of “cookbook”, with recipes detailing how to get your results published. I shall provide some guidance but there is no guarantee that, if you follow these points, your manuscript will be published in the first journal you
submit to, and will be published quickly. Rather, my philosophy is different: I try to instil an attitude (see Chapter 1), so that you see the publication process more in perspective, and I urge you to pay attention to the work others are doing on your manuscript — this consideration will pay off handsomely. I hope you will find this approach helpful.

During the last 25+ years, I have gained much from teaching courses on scientific writing to students and scientist with widely different cultural backgrounds, from Hungary to Denmark, and from China to Burkina Faso. I am grateful to the participants of these courses for their enthusiasm, probing questions, and feedback. I also thank many colleagues who inspired me with their discussions, comments and papers, especially my dear friend Dr Ferenc Szentkirályi, who first suggested that I hold a course on scientific writing; to my colleagues at the Training Centre in Communication, Nairobi, Kenya and to Drs Søren Toft, Éva Vincze, Miklós Sárospataki, Marco Ferrante, Béla Tóthmérész, Judit Fazekas, László Gallé, Erzsébet Hornung, Jørgen Jakobsen, László Körmöczi, Fang-hao Wan, Min-sheng You, Nian-wan Yang, Eric Danso, Paolo A.V. Borges, Margarida Matos, and Eve Veromann, as well as Lene Gregersen, Anne Olsen, Karen Konradi, and Warwick Thomson for comments and support. Special thanks to Ms Joy Owango, with whom we established the Training Centre in Communication, devoted to such training in Africa, who then worked tirelessly to develop this endeavour in Kenya, and now in several other African countries.

When writing this book, I have had support from the former Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences, now Aarhus University (Denmark), for which I am grateful. I thank Drs Zoltán Elek and Marco Ferrante who helped me to produce several of the figures. I also thank warmly Open Book Publishers, especially Dr Alessandra Tosi, for their trust in this book and for a multitude of editorial help, from organising reviews to designing a cover; Drs Richard Primack, Miklós Sárospataki, and John Wilson for helpful comments, Dr Clive Nuttman for linguistic review, Ms. Lucy Barnes and Melissa Purkiss for editorial assistance.

Notwithstanding the assistance, advice and encouragement from many people, this book is an individual interpretation of some common rules of scientific publishing. I tried to present my arguments supported by facts, experience and examples. Any bias, error or omission remains solely my own.