

How credible are open access online-only journals? A situational analysis in the humanities

Ana BOCANEGRA-VALLE
University of Cadiz (Spain)
ana.bocanegra@uca.es

Open access (OA) scholarly publishing has grown rapidly over the last decade and reached a consolidated position for the publication of journal articles and the dissemination of research findings (Laakso et al., 2011). At its most basic, OA journal publishing refers to the free and unrestricted online access to articles published in scholarly, peer-reviewed journals. Predatory journals have also barged in on academic publishing along with the rise of OA journals. This phenomenon is not only impacting the OA movement and the reliability of peer-reviewing (Bartholomew, 2014; Beall, 2012; Bohannon, 2013) but also putting the credibility of a rigorous piece of research at stake and puzzling scholars when seeking a target journal for their work. OA is known to enhance the visibility of an article – thus, raising its impact and citation counts – but probably because of the misleading influence of predatory practices, the OA model still casts doubts on the reputation of certain journals, particularly if only published on line. This paper examines OA online-only journals in the field of the Humanities and aims at identifying those requirements which might threaten their content credibility thereby posing a challenge to the OA movement and today's academic publishing industry. For this purpose, I rely on the work carried out by the Spanish Foundation of Science and Technology regarding quality assessment in scientific publishing (Delgado López-Cózar et al., 2006) and set out to study some formal features which have been qualified as mandatory for a quality journal. After this, I explore a number of OA online-only journals pertaining to the humanities and contained in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) to discuss how such mandatory quality requirements are addressed. Conclusions are aimed at (i) raising awareness of the existence of both trustworthy and fake academic journals within the humanities, and (ii) helping scholars to discriminate credible from bogus outlets for their publications.

References

- Bartholomew, R.E. (2014). Science for sale: the rise of predatory journals. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 107, 384-385.
- Beall, J. (2012). Scholarly open access. Available at: <http://scholarlyoa.com/>
- Bohannon, J. (2013). Who's afraid of peer review? *Science*, 342, 60-65.
- Delgado López-Cózar, E., Ruiz-Pérez, R., & Jiménez-Contreras, E. (2006). *La edición de revistas científicas. Directrices, criterios y modelos de evaluación*. Madrid: FECYT.
- Laakso, M., Welling, P., Bukvova, H., Nyman, L., Björk, B-C., & Hedlund, T. (2011). The development of open access journal publishing from 1993 to 2009. *PLoS ONE*, 6(6): e20961. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0020961

Biodata

Ana Bocanegra-Valle is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Cadiz (Spain). Her main research interests include English for scholarly publishing, ESP/EAP methodology (needs analysis and learning strategies), and Maritime English as a particular branch of ESP. She was former editor-in-chief of the LSP-related journal *Ibérica* (ISSN 1139-7241) and is at present associate editor of *ESP Today – Journal of English for Specific Purposes at Tertiary Level* (ISSN 2334-9050).