A STUDY OF THE CITATION PATTERNS OF OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS IN LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES

By

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Abstract

This paper tries to describe, in bibliometric terms, the characteristics of the literature of linguistics and languages. Specifically, the paper was designed to present the citation patterns of open access publications in linguistics and languages. To achieve this, some bibliometric indicators were used in accordance with the six specific objectives that guided this research paper. The database used to extract data for the citation analysis was Scopus. This database is highly regarded and well known as the world largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature and quality web sources with smart tools to track, analyze, and visualize research. Data extracted from this database were further analyzed using percentages and ranks. The most used channel or outlet for scholarly communication in linguistic research was found to be journals. This shows that journals have become prominent in linguistics scholarship. It was also found that the highly cited open access journal in linguistics and languages research was Computational Linguistics. This shows that researchers in this area are aligning linguistics with the natural sciences. The list of 10 most cited open access journals in linguistics research as well as academic librarianship.

Introduction

This study aims to analyze the bibliometric characteristics of the linguistics literature by focusing on their citation patterns. This analysis is beneficial to librarians and linguistics scholars in many ways. It will help academic librarians with collection development responsibilities and who have little background knowledge of the linguistics discipline to perform their duties effectively. Secondly, this analysis will keep linguistic researchers abreast of high impact journals especially open access journals for their research and publication. Thirdly, it will help librarians to work with linguistics scholars. Finally, it will help to meet the needs of librarians unfamiliar with the linguistics discipline.

It must be stated that the needs of librarians unfamiliar with linguistics are very important (Georgas and Cullars, 2005). The reason is that librarians must provide reference service in a discipline in which they have no subject expertise (Adams and Benefiel, 2000). Another reason as pointed out by Delgadillo and Lynch (1999) is that most scholars would like to work with librarians who have knowledge of their discipline.

Librarians need to understand the discipline in which they are expected to provide reference service. As argued by Georgas and Cullars (2005), one important aspect of understanding a discipline is that of knowing where it fits within the humanities, the social sciences and the sciences. This understanding is relevant for linguistics because its basic subject classification has been disputed in the literature. For instance, Tannen (1989) has argued that linguistics can be scientific, humanistic and aesthetic. Finegam (1992) has described linguistics as the most scientific of the

humanities and the most humanistic of the sciences. Although Zawan and Nederhof (1990) have both agreed that linguistics can be classified with the humanities, they, however, observed that theoretical linguistics showed publication patterns closer to the social sciences than to literal or historical studies. While Sealey and Carter (2004) clearly state that linguistics has only the social sciences side, Matthews (2003) also state that linguistics has the arts side, the social sciences side and the sciences side. In justifying his claim, Matthews (2003) asserts that some linguistic researchers are historians of languages while others work with philosophers. He further states that linguistics has links with sociology and anthropology. As evidence of its science side, he (i.e., Matthew) also states that authors like Yngve and Wasik (2004) are primarily concerned with aligning linguistics with the natural sciences such as physics, chemistry and biology.

Librarians are also expected to understand the differences in the citation characteristics of disciplines in the humanities, the social sciences and the sciences. This is primarily the reason for this paper that seeks to characterize linguistics literature through citation analysis. It is hoped that the results of this study will not only help librarians to familiarize themselves with linguistics discipline but also know where linguistics fits into the broad disciplinary continuum. Ultimately, academic librarians will be placed to gain better understanding of scholarship in linguistics.

The purpose of this citation analysis is to determine specifically:

- 1. The top 10 percent open access journals in linguistics and languages
- 2. The primary vehicles of scholarly communication in linguistics and languages
- 3. The citation patterns of the 1st quartile open access journals in linguistics and languages
- 4. The highly cited open access journals in linguistics and languages
- 5. The highest percentiles open access journals in linguistics and languages
- 6. The frequency distribution of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th quartile open access journals in linguistics and languages

Literature Review

Open access model

The open access (OA) model has become an integral part of the global movement on access to knowledge. It is a vital component of scholarly communication (Oguche, 2018). The aim of OA is to provide unrestricted access to peer-reviewed literature. Authors like Koler-Povh et al (2011) have maintained that unrestricted access can be achieved through the Green route or Gold route. With the gold route or author pays, the public is given free access to publications at a publisher's website. In other words, Gold OA is achieved by publishing in a peer-reviewed scholarly open access journal in which articles are freely available online (Oguche, 2018; Yang and Li, 2015). With the green route of OA or self-archiving, the public has access to available publications kept in repositories or storages and findable with customary search engines (Ohuche, 2018). Yang and Li (2015) maintain that the green route can be achieved by publishing in any peer-reviewed journal and then depositing a peer-reviewed version or reprint of the article in an OA repository.

It must be noted that in open access journals, articles are freely available online. Many disciplines like linguistics have open access journals for scholars, researchers and students. According to Dilon (2011), there are two factors that are responsible for the emergence of open access journals. The

first is the information overload and the second is the fact that publishers now charge those who want to access their publications as well as those who submit their works to be published.

Studies now exist on the use of open access journals by students, academics and researchers (Relmans et al., 2019; Sheikh, 2019; Shuva and Taisir, 2016, Gul et al., 2010; Dulle, 2010; Fullard, 2007; Masango, 2006). These studies covered many aspects of OA such as the choice of OA venues for publication (Swan and Brown, 2004); OA publishing (Nicholas et al., 2005), reasons for possible failure of OA sources (Masango, 2006), author's current knowledge and perception of OA (Schroter and Tite, 2006), current awareness, concerns and depth of support for OA among researchers (Fullard, 2007), the experience, attitudes and perceptions about OA among researchers (Sheikh, 2019; Gul et al., 2010) and factors affecting the adoption of OA in research activities (Dulle, 2010).

The above studies focused on the perceived benefits of open access publishing for the academics. However, Bose and Harnard (2005) have argued that with the increased citations, open access journals would have more scientific impact for researchers. The studies by Swan (2010) and Gargouri et al. (2010) reported higher citation rates for OA journals when compared with non –OA publications.

Citation analysis

Literature review has revealed that though there were abundant citation studies, there were very few of these studies in linguistics. The reason for this could not be unconnected with the uncertainty about where to classify linguistics because citation studies were generally based on a single discipline or the humanities, the social sciences or the sciences (Georgas and Cullars, 2005). The review of citation studies carried out by Bowman (1990) in the humanities, the social sciences and the sciences reported only one citation study on linguistics. Within the humanities, there was no single citation study on linguistics. However, Line's (1981) study on citation analysis reported that linguistics was one of the thirteen disciplines examined. Within the sciences, it was found that the work by Yngve and Wasik (2004) on 'hard-science linguistics' was one of the publications that had argued for the alignment of linguistics with the natural sciences.

Furthermore, the in-depth citation analysis in linguistics with emphasis on theoretical linguistics by Zwaan and Nederhof (1990) revealed that some aspects of theoretical linguistics conformed to the social sciences than the humanities. The authors went further to identify a list of core journals in theoretical linguistics. These findings supported the previous study by Nederhof et al. (1989) which found that some studies in linguistics conform to the social sciences than the humanities. Other important citations studies include the chronology of citations in the linguistics publication of several university departments (Nederhof and Noyons, 1992), citation study of foreign-language use by humanities scholars which included linguistics (Kelley and Knievel, 2004) and the examination of gender and its relation to publications and citation within socio-linguistics and linguistic anthropology (McElhinny et al, 2003).

Methodology

The database used to extract data for the citation analysis was Scopus. This database is highly regarded and well known as the world largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed

literature and quality web sources with smart tools to track, analyze, and visualize research. The Scopus database uses citescore as a measure of the impact of a journal article. The citescore uses a 3-year window, and this informed the three-year period, 2015 - 2018 considered in this study.

The choice of Scopus database was threefold. Firstly, Scopus covers nearly 36,377 titles from approximately 11,678 publishers, of which 34,346 are peer-reviewed journals in top level subject fields. Secondly, it is the only abstract and citation database available and accessible to the author. Thirdly, the database is used by more than 3,000 academic, government and corporate institutions and it is also the main data source that supports the Research Intelligence portfolio.

The database generates precise citation research results for scholars, and its website is www.scopus.org. The Scopus metric indicators include citescore, number of citations received by a journal, number of documents, percentile scores and quartile listing of journals. To extract data from the Scopus database, the keyword entered was *'linguistics and languages'*. The searches were refined from time to time to get the required citation research results.

Presentation of results

Top 10 percent open access journals in linguistics and languages

The top 10 percent open access journals in linguistics and languages were obtained by using the Scopus database. The results of the citation search for these journals are displayed in Table 1 below. The first in the list of the 10 percent of the cited open access journals in linguistics and languages is Journal of Writing Research (74%). This has only 46 documents or articles from 2015 to 2017, but these articles have received the highest citations within this period. The second journals in the list are Computational Linguistics (71%) and Language, Learning and Technology (71%). Between these two journals, it can be argued that *Computational Linguistics* appears to have more citations with 75 documents than that received by Language, Learning and Technology that has 115 documents. It is expected that having very close to twice the number of documents recorded for Computational Linguistics, the percentage of citations of Language, Learning and Technology ought to have been higher within the period. The fourth journal in the list is XLinguae (48%) with 157 documents. This journal has the highest number of documents, but it has a low citation resulting in the recorded 48. Other journals in the list are GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies (41%), 3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature (39%), LI: Educational Studies in Language and Literature (37%), Revista Signos (33%), SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpretation (32%), and *Translation and Interpretation* (31%).

S/N	Source title	Documents 2015-2017	% cited	Rank
1	Computational Linguistics	95	71	2
2	Language Learning and Technology	115	71	2
3	Journal of Writing Research	46	74	1
4	XLinguae	157	48	4
5	GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies	125	41	5
6	3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature	123	39	6

 Table 1: Top 10 percent open access journals in linguistics and languages

7	LI: Educational Studies in Language and Literature	51	37	7
8	Revista Signos	69	33	8
9	SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpretation	22	32	9
10	Translation and Interpreting	113	31	10

Vehicles for scholarly communication in linguistics and languages

The Scopus database revealed four vehicles for scholarly communication in linguistics and languages. These include journals, book series, conference proceedings and trade publication as shown in Table 2. Results show that the most popular was journal (98%), followed by book series (1.5%) and lastly trade publications (0.5%). It is clear from these findings that conference proceedings were not used.

Table 2:	Vehicles	for	scholarly	communication
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s/n	Source	No. of documents	% of total
1	Journal	196	98
2	Book series	3	1.5
3	Conference proceedings	-	-
4	Trade publications	1	0.5
	Total	200	100

1st Quartile Open access journals in linguistics and languages

Results have shown that there are about 23 different open access journals belonging to linguistics and languages in the Scopus 1st quartile listing of the journals. These open access journals are displayed in Table 3. These journals were generated from the 2018 citations of different open access journals in the Scopus database. The journals with the highest citations in the 1st quartile list are *Learning, Language and Technology* (358), *Computational Linguistics* (258), *XLinguae* (193), *Journal of Writing Research* (95), *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature* (75), and *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies* (76). These results show that only three of the journals have their 2018 citations above 100 whereas about five of them have their citations above 50.

s/n	Source title	Citation 2018	% of total
1	Computational Linguistics	258	16.93
2	Language, Learning and Technology	358	23.49
3	Journal of Writing Research	95	6.23
4	Dialogue and Discourse	16	1.05
5	XLinguae	193	12.66
6	Linguamatica	36	2.36
7	Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research	49	3.22
8	Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching	59	3.87
9	Bijdragen tot de taal-Landen Volkenkunde	30	1.97
10	3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature	75	4.92
11	GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies	76	4.99
12	LI: Educational Studies in Literature and Literature	30	1.97
13	Revista Signos	39	2.55
14	International Journal of English	14	0.92

 Table 3: 1st quartile open access journals

15	SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpretation	10	0.66
16	Translation and Interpreting	45	2.95
17	Rusin	68	4.46
18	Anaks Carvantinos	12	0.79
19	NJES Nordic Journal of English Studies	20	1.31
20	Revista de Fittologia Espanola	10	0.66
21	Arts Actena	5	0.33
22	Bolentin de Fitlogia	14	0.92
23	A Literatua Ylinguisties	12	0.79
	Total	1,524	100

The highly cited open access journals in linguistics and languages

The open access journals in linguistics and languages with the greatest impacts based on their 2018 citations are displayed in Table 4. As shown in this table, the Scopus database uses citescore as a measure of the impact of each journal. The open access journals with citescore values of at least one are *Computational Linguistics* (3.44); *Language Learning and Technology* (3.11); *Journal of Writing Research* (2.07); *Dialogue and Discourse* (1.78); *XLinguae* (1.23) and *Linguamatical* (1.03). On the whole, Table 4 displays the first ten (10) open access journals in linguistics and languages with the greatest citation impacts as determined by the citescore of each journal.

s/n	Source title	citescore	Citation 2018
1	Computational Linguistics	3.44	258
2	Language, Learning and Technology	3.11	358
3	Journal of writing Research	2.07	95
4	Dialogue and Discourse	1.78	16
5	XLinguae	1.23	193
6	Linguamatica	1.03	36
7	Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research	0.94	49
8	Studies in Second Language learning and Teaching	0.88	59
9	Language Documentation and Conservation	0.75	24
10	Open Linguistics	0.70	77

Table 4: Highly cited open access journals

The highest percentiles open access journals in linguistics and languages

The percentile scores of the open access journals in linguistics and languages from the Scopus database are shown in Table 5. The open access journals with percentile score of at least 90% are *Journal of Writing Research* (99%); *Computational Linguistics* (98%); *Language Learning and Technology* (97%); *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature* (96%); *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies* (96%); *Dialogue and Discourse* (91%) and *XLinguae* (90%). Other open access journals with high percentile scores are *Linguamatica* (81%); *Open Linguistics* (74%), *Language Documentation and Conservation* (73%) and *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research* (79%). On the whole, about sixteen (16) open access journals in linguistics and languages have percentile scores above 50%.

s/n	Source title	Highest percentile	Citation 2018
1	Computational Linguistics	98%	258
2	Language Learning and Technology	97%	358
3	Journal of Writing Research	99%	95
4	3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature	96%	75
5	GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies	96%	76
6	Dialogue and Discourse	91%	16
7	XLinguae	90%	193
8	Linguamatica	81%	36
9	Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research	79%	49
10	Open Linguistics	74%	77
11	Language Documentation and Conservation	73%	24
12	Kome	67%	24
13	Journal of Asia TEFL	64%	54
14	Child Development Research	61%	10
15	Canadian Journal of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology	52%	16
16	Signo Pensamiento	52%	12
17	Studies about Languages	27%	3

Table 5: Highest percentiles open access journals

The frequency of quartile distributions of open access journals in linguistics and languages The quartile listing of up to the 4th quartile of the open access journals in linguistics and languages are displayed in Table 6. Results show that there are more of these journals in the 2nd quartile (33.91%) and 3rd quartile (30.46%). It is expected that the high impact journals should be seen in the 1st quartile (13.22%). It is also expected that in the 4th quartile (22.41%) the number of journals should not be high because most of the journals in this category may have citescore values of either less than one or zero. This implies that new journals will first find their entry into the 4th quartile before moving up the value chain as result of both awareness and citations.

s/n	Quartile	No.of journals	% of total
1	1 st quartile	23	13.22
2	2 nd quartile	59	33.91
3	3 rd quartile	53	30.46
4	4 th quartile	39	22.41
	Total	174	100

Table 6: Frequency of quartile distribution of open access journals

Discussion of findings

This paper tries to describe, in bibliometric terms, the characteristics of the literature of linguistics and languages. Specifically, the paper was designed to present the citation patterns of publications in linguistics and languages. To achieve this, some bibliometric indicators were used in accordance with the six specific objectives that guided this research paper. The findings of this study were quite revealing. Firstly, of all the top 10 percent open access journals in linguistics and languages, *Journal of Writing Research* received the highest percentage of citations followed by *Computational Linguistics* and *Language Learning and Technology*. This finding is surprising

because these journals are not really journal tities in humanities, but are more related to social sciences and sciences. The implication of this is that the articles covered by these journals may likely conform to social sciences discipline as well as science discipline. Secondly, the vehicle for scholarly communication in linguistics and languages was found to be mainly journal. This finding is consistent with the study by Georga and Cullars (2005) which found that journal was the most popular channel for scholarly communication in linguistics. This means that figure prominently in linguistics scholarship. Thirdly, there are about 23 journal titles in the 1st quartile open access journals in linguistics and languages. There would have been a greater number of these journal titles if the limitation of open access was not placed on the citation research results. However, these results are indicative and are most likely to help linguistics scholars in their quest for outlets for communication of their research findings. Fourthly, the most or highly cited journals in linguistics and languages are Computational Linguistics, Language Learning and Technology and Journal of Writing Research. In a related study, Georga and Cullars (2005) found that Computational Linguistics was the most cited of all the linguistics journals studied. This means that researchers in this area have started to align linguistics with the natural science or are moving towards hardscience linguistics.

The study further revealed that the highest percentiles open access journals in linguistics and languages are *Computational Linguistics, Language Learning and Technology*, and *Dialogue and Discourse*. In the frequency distribution of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th quartile open access journals, more journals in linguistics and languages were seen in the 2nd and 3rd quartile. This is not surprising because the 1st quartile should normally have the highly cited journals, and they are usually few in number. Finally, the journal articles abstracted by the Scopus database seem to conform to the social sciences discipline. This suggests a classification of linguistics with the social sciences, and it means that the nature of publishing and citation in humanities is changing. As identified in this present study and supported by other related studies (Nederhof et al., 1989), journals are now important channel of publication in humanities discipline of which linguistics was claimed by many scholars to be part of.

Conclusion

This paper contributes to the citation studies in linguistics. While the highly cited journal in linguistics and languages is *Computational Linguistics*, which reveals that researchers in this area are aligning linguistics with the natural sciences. However, it does appear that majority of the articles indexed by Scopus database seem to conform to the social sciences as evidenced from the list of the most cited journals. The most used outlet for scholarly communication in linguistics and languages were found to be journals. This implies that journals have become prominent in linguistics scholarship. The list of 10 most cited open access journals in linguistics and languages is the major contribution of this paper to the bibliometrics studies in linguistics research as well as academic librarianship.

The results of this study have implications for both academic librarians and linguistic scholars. By understanding the nature of scholarship in linguistics discipline, the librarian will be better placed to identify relevant sources. This understanding will also increase the interaction, in whichever form, between the librarian and the linguistics scholars. Further, the identification of relevant sources arising from this citation analysis will help the librarian with collection development responsibilities to take appropriate decisions with respect to budget allocations to resources.

However, this study has some limitations. It does appear that the Scopus database has bias towards the social sciences. Thus, to avoid the possibility of bias, future citation studies in linguistics should include other citation databases as source documents for data extraction. For instance, Arts and Humanities Index should be used with Scopus database to compare results and for reliability of findings. As noted by some authors, it is impossible for any single database to abstract or index journals in a discipline (Nederhof et al., 1989). There is need to further verify the finding of this paper that the articles indexed in Scopus database with reference to linguistics discipline seem to conform to the social sciences. This is necessary so as to situate properly the conclusion already drawn that this finding reflects a changing trend. Further citation studies in linguistics research, the types of linguistics topics that scholars are examining and in which language, and the interdisciplinary nature of linguistics research.

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