

Choice of Journal, Topic and Article Structure

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A journal article/paper is a product of research findings or a contribution to theoretical questions or a guide to practical issues in academic research. Choosing the right journal for your paper is as important as the paper itself. Some articles are rejected because they were sent to journals that would generally return the verdict: “outside our scope” or “not within the scope of this journal.” But the truth is: there is a right journal for every good paper. For instance, journals of discourse studies include:

Discourse studies (SAGE), Discourse & Society (SAGE), Discourse and Communication (SAGE), Discourse Processes (Taylor & Francis), TEXT & TALK (De Gruyter), Journal of Language and Politics (John Benjamins), Critical Discourse Studies (Taylor & Francis), Language and Communication (Elsevier), Research in Language and Social Interaction (Taylor & Francis) etc. A good journal for works on Multi-modal discourse analysis is *Social Semiotics* (Taylor & Francis).

Publishing in reputable and high-impact journals holds a lot of promise. It not only gives you (if published) global recognition but also prepares you for great opportunities in the academic career. If your paper is rejected, you receive quality reviews, training and guidance on how to write publishable articles.

Unfortunately, some scholars dislike criticism, ‘delay’ or quality review. Such scholars fall prey to predatory (exploitative) journals.

The Challenges of Predatory Journals and Publishers: Choosing where to publish

As the need to publicise significant qualitative research findings becomes more imperative than ever before, the need to locate the right publishing outlets becomes more important. Unfortunately, academics and authors appear to be under pressure to publish their works for the purpose of promotion and tenure, and many are faced with the harsh reality of “publish or perish.”

The choice of the right publisher or journal becomes more complicated with the rise of online “predatory journals” and “predatory publishers.” A predator is an animal that feeds on another. As a metaphor for non-standard, low quality and fake (online) publishers and journals, they prey on (especially) young and early career academics, who are in a hurry to publish in “international journals.” There is also the “hijacked journal,” which are credible and reputable but have been hijacked by fraudsters who create fake websites under the their names

(legitimate journals) to make profit. These fake websites offer academics the opportunity to publish their research for a fee, and they often use industry-standard tactics to recruit contributors, including sending out “call for papers” (IGI Webinar).

These fake journals and publishers promise quick publications and turn out hundreds of poor quality articles in quick successions, and charge between \$200 and \$2,000 dollars for articles and monographs. The Beall’s list of predatory journals is still a reference point for guide on predatory journals: please see [journalshttps://bealllist.weebly.com](https://bealllist.weebly.com)

NOTE: Very good/important papers have been “killed” in non-standard journals (local or international). The paper you spent a fortune publishing in a predatory journal can as well be published in a high impact journal for free.

Characteristics of Predatory Journals

- They are open access
- They are not indexed by recognised data bases, though they often claim to be indexed by some data bases like DOAJ
- They publish articles without review
- Most of their editors do not have university affiliations
- Article entry for an issue sometimes exceeds 20 etc.

Choosing a Topic for your Research Article

Consider the following topics:

- (i) Social Media and the Production and Spread of Spurious Deceptive Contents
- (ii) Deception, Fake News and Misinformation Online

A topic should encapsulate the content of an article. It is recommended that topics should be;

- Focussed
- Succinct /precise
- Clear
- As short as possible (some journals recommend titles not exceeding 25 words)

An important research work should be able to be entitled appropriately.

The Structure of a Research Article

The textual structure of a research article is the same in most disciplines, usually including the following key items:

- **An introduction** (explanation of key words in the topic where necessary an overview of the topic in general. Some introductions may include recent developments in research in the particular area of study etc.).
- **Research problems/objectives/questions**
- **Review of Literature** (may include literature of theories and approaches and not just findings)
- **Theoretical Framework**
- **Methodology** (methodology includes data description, research tools, instruments, strategies etc., how you intend to do the research)
- **Analysis and Findings**
- **Conclusion** (this will include stating the significance and contributions of your findings and relating to the social context of the study. This will also include what general lessons learnt from the research, and possible new research directions and suggestions).

Good research works/findings are always needed. Many research papers are rejected for the following reasons:

- Lack of focus/no objectives
- Insufficient literature
- Unclear methodology
- Insufficient data
- Poor analysis

Minor revisions are required if a paper has sufficient merit for publication but needs revision in the area of:

- Language use
- Length of article (this depends on the journal)
- Clarity of expressions
- Other recommendations of the reviewers that do not change the structure of the paper.