

The language issue in Brazilian Ophthalmological Journals

A questão do idioma nas Revistas Oftalmológicas Brasileiras

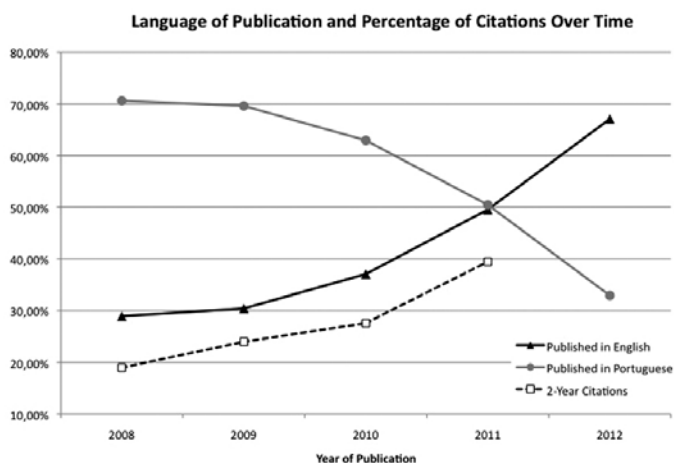
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In this issue of *Arquivos Brasileiros de Oftalmologia* (ABO), Lira et al., studied the quality of Ophthalmological Brazilian Journals by means of the number of citations in sources indexed at Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) after two years of publication (Impact Factor[®]) and the quality of reporting according the Consolidated Standards for Reporting Trials (CONSORT)^(1,2). Their work is excellent in pointing out that well quality papers written in English are well more cited (and probably read more often) than their counterparts.

It is important do understand that there are no universal databases; each analysis applies only for the sample evaluated by its database provider. Therefore, one should understand the Universe that was considered as the background for citation reports. Web of Science is one of the services provided by Thomson Reuters[®], an English company founded by a German immigrant in 1851⁽³⁾. Thomson Reuters[®] was created as a fusion of two companies form the same group (Thomson Corporation and Reuters Group) that took effect in 2009. Thomson Reuters[®] has 17,621 Journals indexed on its database and the subset of SCIE indexes 8,630, being 59 ophthalmological journals.

Other companies offer scientific and knowledge databases to compete for this market. Scopus[®] is a searchable database of peer-reviewed literature, offered by Elsevier[®], that includes more than 19,500 journals⁽⁴⁾. SciELO[®] is a Brazilian initiative developed by FAPESP (Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo), in 1998⁽⁵⁾. SciELO[®] only indexes sources that provide open access and does not accepts any embargo, such as postponing the free access to the manuscripts after publication. SciELO[®] database includes 1,021 sources, from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, México, Portugal, Spain, South Africa and Venezuela. Four journals from SciELO[®] are related specifically to ophthalmology.

Nowadays, ABO accepts papers written in English, Portuguese and Spanish. Using the same database as Lira et al., graph 1 shows that during the last years the number of submissions in Portuguese has decreased and, since last year, most of the manuscripts are in English. When analyzing the percentage of citations during the next two years of publication one can notice the important increase since 2008.



Graph 1. Language of publication and percentage of citations over time at the *Arquivos Brasileiros de Oftalmologia* (ABO). Notice that for this database all publications were included (not only citable ones) and the same manuscript may have been cited more than once.

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ABO's editorial team has focused strongly in selecting better manuscripts for publication, our decision was to lessen the number of published papers per year and increase their quality. Considering original articles, case reports, review articles, letters to the editor and editorials, the number of papers per year dropped from approximately 200, in 2008, to 100 during the last three years. This may have accounted for the improvement of quality, observed by the percentage of cited papers. Also, the natural increase of papers published in English as well as the findings of Lira et al., leads to the questioning of if ABO should consider accepting only English written manuscripts⁽²⁾.

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