



Investigating predatory publishing in political science: a corpus linguistics approach

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In recent years, predatory publishing has become a much-debated topic within academia. A working definition of this term is provided by [Grudniewicz et al. \(2019, p. 211\)](#) as follows: “Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices.” Indeed, predatory publishing is a complex, multifaceted and multi-layered development in academic publishing. As a result, the phenomenon has now been investigated from a range of different angles, and its general characteristics have been well documented (cf. [Eriksson and Helgesson 2017](#)). In particular, some key features of predatory publishing have generated concern because of the fraudulent nature of the practices that these publishers frequently engage in. Such malpractices include: lack of proper peer-review ([Stromberg 2014](#)), plagiarism ([Martin and Martin 2016](#)), manipulation of metrics (e.g. providing fake journal impact factors) ([Shamseer et al. 2017](#)), concealing author processing charges ([Djuric 2015](#)), lack of retraction policies ([Umlauf and Mochizuki 2018](#)), providing false claims of journal/publisher location ([Kurt 2018](#)), hijacking names and websites of established journals ([Dadkhah et al. 2016](#)), and spamming authors to attract as many article submissions as possible ([Lewinski and Oermann 2018](#); Author & Other 2019).

In addition to describing the practices predatory publishers engage in, much of the debates about this phenomenon tend to concentrate on meta-data analyses, including large-scale mapping of the geographic origin of outlets of this kind and of authors who publish in them (cf. [Shen and Björk 2015](#); [Xia et al. 2015](#)). In their overview study, [Shen and Björk \(2015\)](#) manage to document the exponential increase of predatory publishers: from 53,000 articles in 2010 to 420,000 in 2014, published by an estimated number of 8,000 journals. In terms of the location of publishers and origin of authors, Shen and Björk find that Asia and Africa

are over-represented regions in this kind of publications. The latter is emphasised by [Xia et al. \(2015: 1406\)](#), who find that those who publish in predatory journals tend to be “young and inexperienced researchers from developing countries”. As a result, there is a commonly widespread assumption in the literature on predatory publishing that most of those who publish in these journals are naïve victims that simply fall prey of the marketing tactics employed by these presses. So far, however, little attention has been paid to the content of articles published in predatory journals, an aspect that has indeed been pointed out as important in order to better understand the phenomenon ([Eriksson and Helgesson 2017](#)). The present study is an attempt to fill the gap by addressing the topic of predatory publishing from a linguistic perspective. Our previous study ([Soler and Wang, 2019](#)) is one of the few that addresses the topic of predatory publishing from a linguistic perspective. By means of a keyword analysis, the study reveals that words of general English are over-represented in articles drawn from a predatory journal in political science whereas those from a top-ranking counterpart feature research-related keywords. To delve further into the content of predatory journal articles, the present study shifts attention away from individual words and focuses on recurrent word combinations, as they are often associated with frequently occurring meanings in a given discourse community (e.g., [Hyland 2008a](#); [Durrant 2017](#), 2019).

Advantages

In order to encourage mass communication of negative ideas, supporters of overt negative campaigns also claim motives. Negative ads are used by the Office of National Drug Control Policy to direct the public away from health risks. Similar adverse campaigns have been used to refute cigarette products' mass marketing or to prevent drunk driving.

Many who perform negative election campaigns often argue that, even though it is terrible, the public wants to know about the person for whom he or she votes. In other words, if an opponent of a candidate is a crook or a poor guy, then he or she should be able to speak about it to the public.

In 1995, a subsequent report conducted by Ansolabehere and Shanto Iyengar corrected some of the deficiencies in the previous study. This research concluded that negative ads, especially for independent voters, suppressed voter turnout. They hypothesized that campaigns appear to go negative only if the rival is leaning towards the independent vote. They ensure that the swing voters remain at home by doing so, leaving the election up to the voter base. Negative commercials have a greater effect on Democrats than on Republicans, they also found. According to them, no matter what, base Republicans can vote, but Democrats may be swayed by either staying home and not voting at all or switching sides and voting for a Republican.

Risks and consequences

Most strategists say that the negative impact of campaigning is that it can alienate centrist and undecided voters from the democratic process while motivating the support base, reducing voter turnout and radicalizing politics. In a survey performed by Gina Garramone on how negative advertisement influences the electoral process, it was found that higher image discrimination of candidates and greater attitude segregation are the product of negative campaigning. Although positive campaigns have led to image discrimination and polarisation of attitudes, Garramone found that negative campaigning played a more important role than positive campaigning in discrimination and polarisation. Candidates also promise to refrain from negative attacks because of the potential damage that can come from being perceived as a negative campaigner.

In the 2006 federal election, a similar backlash occurred with the Liberal Party for running an attack ad that claimed that Conservative leader Stephen Harper would use Canadian soldiers to patrol Canadian cities and enforce some form of martial law. "we're not making this up; we're not allowed to make this stuff up"we don't make this up; we're not allowed to make this stuff up. "whoever the idiot who approved that ad was,"whoever the idiot who approved that ad was. The result of the commercials was to decrease the reputation of the party's other campaign commercials.