Publishing in Human Sciences – Highlights of the Panel

The Doctoral Training Programme for Human Sciences organised a panel discussion at the University of Oulu on 15 December 2017. A total of eight scientific journals with their editorial boards located in Finland participated in the panel. Five of the journals were Finnish publishing articles mainly in the Finnish language, and three were international journals publishing articles written in English. The panel covered the themes of classifications of the Finnish Publication Forum (JUFO), open access publication and the so-called blind review. During the afternoon, researchers received good tips for writing a scientific journal and finalising their manuscripts from the viewpoint of the referees.

Publishing a scientific article is a lengthy process. Although researchers may spend a minimum of a year to carefully work on their article, once they have submitted it to publication, they are advised to expect to wait for another year before their article is processed. The researcher will receive information of a “desk rejection” by the editor-in-chief immediately, but the search for referees, the actual reviewing of the article and drafting of feedback typically takes several months. The panellists underlined the importance of a respectful approach whenever communicating with the editorial board. Feedback from the referees is valuable for the further refining of the article, which is something that researchers are encouraged to express in their cover letter when resubmitting a revised manuscript for publication.

How to select the right publication channel? The choice of scientific journal matters. The list of references of one’s manuscript may give an idea on the opportune journal, in addition to which the researchers must consider the forum in which they want to be seen. Also, writing one’s article in Finnish is one thing. Writing about one’s research in English is something different altogether. One could say it is almost like writing two different articles, because one needs to conceptualise the subject matter in a different language from the start, to be read by different target audiences.

The editors-in-chief or representatives of the following journals participated in the panel:

**APPLES: Journal of Applied Language Studies**: Editor-in-Chief Taina Saarinen

A total of 10 percent of articles published in an international journal originate from Finland. According to Dr Saarinen, the threshold for submitting an article to an international journal based in Finland is likely to be lower than submitting an article to a foreign journal. The journal publishes articles in almost any language, provided that competent referees with knowledge of the requested language can be found. Dr Saarinen pointed out the opportunity to suggest themes for special issues to the Editor-in-Chief. At the moment, the journal is seeking articles that discuss their field of science from a theoretical viewpoint and aim to conceptualise current research.

**EUROPEAN ACCOUNTING REVIEW**: Associate Editor, Juha-Pekka Kallunki

Professor Kallunki emphasised the importance of submitting a carefully finalised manuscript that is ready for publication. It is important to showcase one’s piece of research in various forums and systematically exploits the comments received when working on the manuscript.

**FENNIA International Journal of Geography**: Editor-in-chief Kirsi Pauliina Kallio

Dr Kallio discussed the apparent ‘blindness’ of peer review. In case of a niche field of science, for example, cultural geography, referees can often deduct the actual author of the article. Dr Kallio also discussed the possibility of the journal to use open peer review, which has been shown to have a positive – constructive – impact on the tone of comments made by the referees.

**JOURNAL OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY**: Editor-in-chief Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen was appointed Editor-in-Chief of what one might call a newcomer in the field of scientific journals at the beginning of the year. The
The journal has a smooth publishing process, and there is a fair chance that one’s article will be published within only a couple of months. Publishing one’s research is important. It is desirable for other researchers in the field to notice one’s study and make reference to it in their own articles. The journal will feature several themed issues; typically one themed issue per year will be published. Future themes will include Frank Ankersmit (10th anniversary publication of the journal), pragmatism and post-humanism in the philosophy of history.

**KASVATUS**: Editor-in-Chief Janne Varjo

Dr Varjo, Editor-in-Chief of Kasvatus (The Finnish Journal of Education), which has established its position in Finland over the decades, discussed the scientific guidelines of the journal, published by the Finnish Educational Research Association. The publically expressed mission statement of the journal is to maintain Finnish-language discourse in the field of educational research. The journal expects, in particular, more profound texts in educational philosophy, as well as texts discussing secondary-level education. Dr Varjo informed the audience of the coming themed issues, namely, gender studies and assessment of education in 2018, and early childhood education in 2019.

**KASVATUS JA AIKA**: Editor-in-Chief Kaisa Vehkalahti. The journal was represented by Associate Editor Essi Jouhki. The journal is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year by means of a themed issue discussing school memories. The journal discusses articles on the history of the Finnish school system, amongst a number of other themes. The journal is open to high-quality pioneering topics in the field of education.

**SKY Journal of Linguistics**: Editor Mirka Rauniomaa

Mirka Rauniomaa edits the journal published by the Linguistic Association of Finland. The journal publishes articles written in English, German and French once a year. Articles intended for the next issue must be submitted by March, and the editorial board aims to fine-tune the selected manuscripts ready for publication during the year. Her tip to the researchers was to carefully formulate their cover letters, because it will impact the publication process and, in particular, the starting of the publication process. It is easier for the editor to categorise the article and its suitability for the journal if the author has described the objective of their study in their cover letter.

**SOSIOLOGIA**: Editor-in-Chief Olli Pyyhtinen is retiring from his post. The journal has experimented on English-language issues, but after the first two issues, their popularity curbed. Open access publications are not yet available, but will be in the future.

The issues that provoked lively discussion were, in particular, the classifications of the Finnish Publication Forum and open access publications. Almost all editors-in-chief recommended not to be bound by the classifications of the Finnish Publication Forum, but to publish one’s articles where one’s own target group is most likely to read them. The participants also discussed some problematic issues related to the classification of the Finnish Publication Forum and noted that, against a common practice, the classification should not be used when assessing an individual researcher, which is also expressly prohibited in the instructions.

The participants encouraged researchers to become referees. If a request occurs, they encouraged taking a positive stance. The referees are most often than not researchers with a doctoral degree, and they are able to provide valuable insights on how to improve one’s manuscript. The review process is a fruitful experience, even during one’s doctoral studies. Many young researchers face similar problems when working on their own manuscript.

The turn of the year is an opportune, quiet time to focus on writing and working on one’s manuscript. The participants encourage the researchers to boldly start writing an article about their own research, consider
peer review as an opportunity to attract the undivided attention of experts in one’s field to one’s study and receive valuable comments to make progress in one’s research.

The Doctoral Training Programme for Human Sciences organises training in academic writing in January and February. Finnish language training by Professor Pauliina Raento for novice scientific writers will be available at the University of Oulu on 31 January 2018. Training in English by Dr Eelko Huitzingh will be organised on 27 and 28 February 2018. In addition, Maarit Jokela and Tiina Sipola will give a lecture on the key fields of a scientific article with particular focus on the title, abstract and keywords on 13 February 2018.

By Mervi Heikkinen and Riikka Tumelius, 19 December 2017