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Scopus- and SSCI-indexed L2 Journals: A List for the Asia TEFL Community

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Introduction

Scopus and the Web of Science's Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) are the two main indexes of prestige within academia (Chadegani, Salehi, Yunus, Farhadi, Fooladi, Farhadi, & Ebrahim 2013; Guz & Rushchitsky, 2009). For those within the Asia TEFL space, the emphasis on these two indexes may be observed in relation to how publications are recognized and rewarded for academic promotions and tenure. Informal communication with academics from various Asian countries, such as Korea, China, and Saudi Arabia, shows that faculty members can be rewarded around three times more for publishing in a Scopus-indexed journal than in a locally indexed journal (e.g., the Korean Citation Index), and around seven times more for publishing in an SSCI-indexed one.

Lack of L2 Specialization in Scopus and the SSCI

Asia TEFL researchers, however, do not currently have access to a list of field-specific publication venues within Scopus or the SSCI despite the noted emphasis on them. Scopus and the SSCI currently list about 22,800 and 3,200 journals, respectively, from various disciplines, which can make locating L2 journals a challenge. They do provide more specific categories, such as 'education' or 'linguistics,' but these also list hundreds or even thousands of journals not specific to L2, thus making them less helpful to TEFL agents. From a professional development perspective, this also presents a problem in that teachers and administrators do not have a go-to list of field-specific journals to inform their practice.

There have been past efforts to build journal lists for the field. However, indexing in Scopus and the SSCI has not been a consistent inclusion criterion. Egbert (2007) presented a list of 35 field specific journals primarily based on expert opinion rather than indexing. Jung (2004) presented a list of 17 journals where referencing in *Language Teaching* was the inclusion criterion. All these journals were SSCI-indexed. Benson, Chik, Gao, Huang, and Wang (2009) noted the subjectivity of Jung's approach but still followed it in presenting a list of 10 journals for their purposes of auditing qualitative practices in the field. From these past listing efforts, it appears that the following issues vis-à-vis providing a useful resource to the Asia TEFL context exist:

- 1) Lack of focus on indexing.
- 2) Selectivity in the list construction, rather than comprehensiveness.
- 3) Difficulty in gauging the relative prestige and relevance of each journal.

Journal Quality Metrics

Considering the third point above, both Scopus and the SSCI provide quantitative metrics that represent the extent to which a journal's publications are cited within the index. These citation metrics are usually used as an indication of the journal's quality, though the reader should be aware that the use of these metrics to evaluate journals is controversial. Egbert (2007), for example, discusses the need for a multifaceted approach to truly gauge a journal's quality (also see Colledge, Moya-Anegón, Guerrero-Bote, López-Illescas, Aisati, & Moed, 2010; Leydesdorff & Opthof, 2010). Past listing efforts such as Egbert (2007) and Jung (2004) have drawn from these metrics as a component of journal quality analysis, while others have not (Benson et al., 2009).

Despite the limitations and valid concerns about an overreliance on citation metrics for judging a journal, these metrics can be useful indicators for researchers within the Asia TEFL space. These metrics facilitate an efficient assessment of the numerous and diverse journals in the field. Scopus ("Journal Metrics – Powered by Scopus," 2017) lists three citation analysis metrics as gauges for overall journal quality: CiteScore, Source Normalized Impact per Publication (SNIP), and Scimago Journal Rank (SJR). CiteScore (da Silva & Memon, 2017) was launched only as recently as 2016 and still requires time to be thoroughly evaluated within academic circles. SNIP does not consider relative journal prestige in its calculations (Guerrero-Bote & Moya-Anegón, 2012; Moed, 2010). We have therefore chosen to include SJR for consideration in the present paper.

The SSCI employs the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) Impact Factor as its chief metric. This metric dates to the 1950s (Garfield, 2006). As such, we added it to consideration of SSCI-indexed journals. Each of the metrics, SJR and JCR, are calculated slightly differently:

- SJR: A metric maintained by Scopus. It refers to the number of times the journal was cited in the previous three years in papers published within the Scopus index. Citations are additionally weighted, depending on the rank of the citing journal, while excluding self-citations (Guerrero-Bote & Moya-Anegón, 2012).
- JCR: A metric maintained by the Web of Science. It refers to the number of citations of a journal's published papers in a given year within the Web of Science divided by the journals' total number of published papers during the previous two years (Garfield, 2006; "InCites Journal Citation Reports," 2017).

The Present Study

Informed by the needs of the Asia TEFL context, what is observed in the SSCI and Scopus indexes, and previous efforts to build L2 journal lists, we aimed to construct a comprehensive list of L2 journals that are indexed in Scopus and the SSCI. We tried to follow objective and systematic procedures, and annotated each journal with up-to-date quality metrics. We hope that this list will offer Asia TEFL researchers and practitioners a better chance of keeping up with the latest in their field, as well as a wider scope of publication venues.

Method

To add objectivity to the journal selection process, a keyword title analysis was employed. We drafted an initial list which we then modified via expert review in a fashion similar to Ebgert (2007), who used iterations of expert review to refine, modify, and ultimately create a field-specific TESOL journal list. In the present study, three scholars with editorial experience were subsequently consulted over two iterations resulting in additional keywords. The complete list of keywords is available in Appendix A. Journal titles indexed in the most recent editions of Scopus and SSCI lists (“Scopus Source List,” 2017; “Social Sciences Citation Index Master List,” 2017; “Social Sciences Citation Index Journal Coverage Changes,” 2017), were then inspected against these keywords, resulting in a list of 55 journals. Two well-known journals our keywords did not capture were then added (*System* and *RELC*), resulting in a total of 57 journals.

Beyond the journal’s title, at least five empirical articles from the last issue(s) of each journal were then examined against the following inclusion criteria:

- 1) The journal is within the second/foreign language learning and teaching research area.
- 2) It presents original research.
- 3) It uses English as its primary medium.

These criteria were applied to the 57 journals and 13 journals were disqualified. Most exclusions resulted from journals having a literary or arts focus. Some journals were also excluded due to their theoretical linguistic focus, which makes them less relevant to the TEFL community (see Appendix B for further details).

Because bilingualism and multilingualism might be relevant to some L2 researchers, we included such journals in a separate list (see Appendix C). The list also involves a commentary on the potential relevance of each journal to L2 researchers based on the most recent issues of that journal.

Results

Our analysis resulted in a list of 44 journals: 24 indexed in both Scopus and the SSCI, 19 in Scopus only, and 1 in the SSCI only. Table 1 presents the complete list of journals. The table presents each journal’s title, ISSN, as well as its 2016 SJR and JCR. In the table, the keywords are identified with bold lettering.

TABLE 1
Scopus- and SSCI-Indexed L2 Journals

Title	ISSN	Issue(s) Reviewed	SJR	JCR
1. <i>Annual Review of Applied Linguistics</i>	0267-1905	36	1.291	2.083
2. <i>Applied Linguistics</i>	0142-6001	38(4)	1.479	3.593
3. <i>Applied Linguistics Review</i>	1868-6311	8(1)	—	0.351
4. <i>Asian EFL Journal</i>	1738-1460	19(2)	0.159	—
5. <i>Asian ESP Journal</i>	2206-0979	13(1)	0.111	—
6. <i>Australian Review of Applied Linguistics</i>	0155-0640	40(1); 40(2)	0.288	—
7. <i>CALL-EJ</i>	2187-9036	18(1)	0.134	—
8. <i>Canadian Modern Language Review</i>	1710-1131	73(3); 73(2)	0.394	—
9. <i>Computer Assisted Language Learning</i>	0958-8221	30(5)	1.760	2.121
10. <i>Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching</i>	0219-9874	14(1)	0.204	—

11. <i>English for Specific Purposes</i>	0889-4906	47	1.008	1.311
12. <i>English Language Teaching Journal</i>	1477-4526	71(3)	0.840	1.125
13. <i>English Teaching and Learning</i>	1023-7267	41(1)	0.105	—
14. <i>Foreign Language Annals</i>	1944-9720	50(2)	0.609	0.756
15. <i>Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics</i>	2301-9468	7(1)	0.112	—
16. <i>Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching</i>	1750-1229	11(2)	0.275	—
17. <i>International Journal of Applied Linguistics</i>	0802-6106	27(2)	0.350	—
18. <i>IRAL - International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching</i>	1613-4141	55(1); 55(2)	0.279	0.545
19. <i>Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research</i>	2322-1291	5(2)	0.244	—
20. <i>ITL - International Journal of Applied Linguistics</i>	0019-0829	168	0.188	—
21. <i>JALT CALL Journal</i>	1832-4215	13(1)	0.175	—
22. <i>Journal of Asia TEFL</i>	2466-1511	14(2)	0.228	—
23. <i>Journal of English for Academic Purposes</i>	1475-1585	28	0.972	1.414
24. <i>Journal of Second Language Writing</i>	1060-3743	36	1.985	1.591
25. <i>Language Assessment Quarterly</i>	1543-4311	14(2)	1.018	1.000
26. <i>Language Learning</i>	1467-9922	67(3)	2.334	2.079
27. <i>Language Learning and Technology</i>	1094-3501	21(2)	1.734	2.290
28. <i>Language Learning Journal</i>	0957-1736	45(20)	0.220	—
29. <i>Language Teaching</i>	1475-3049	50(3)	0.952	1.913
30. <i>Language Teaching Research</i>	1477-0954	21(5)	1.114	1.714
31. <i>Language Testing</i>	1477-0946	34(3)	0.713	0.981
32. <i>Language, Culture and Curriculum</i>	1747-7573	30(3)	0.750	1.385
33. <i>Modern Language Journal</i>	1540-4781	101(2); 101(3)	1.450	1.745
34. <i>ReCALL</i>	1474-0109	29(3)	1.704	2.333
35. <i>RELC Journal</i>	1745-526X	48(2)	0.378	—
36. <i>Second Language Research</i>	1477-0326	33(3)	1.142	1.405
37. <i>Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies</i>	1727-9461	35(1)	0.237	—
38. <i>Studies in Second Language Acquisition</i>	1470-1545	39(3)	2.055	2.044
39. <i>Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching</i>	2084-1965	7(2)	0.000	—
40. <i>System</i>	0346-251X	68	0.988	1.400
41. <i>Teaching English with Technology</i>	1642-1027	17(3)	0.219	—
42. <i>TESOL Journal</i>	1949-3533	8(3)	0.112	—
43. <i>TESOL Quarterly</i>	1545-7249	51(3)	1.309	2.056
44. <i>VIAL - Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics</i>	1697-0387	13; 14	0.115	0.077
<i>M</i>			0.738	1.554
<i>(SD)</i>			(0.65)	(0.76)

Discussion and Conclusion

Current List in Relation to Past L2 Journal Lists

Comparing the present list to three often-cited lists (Benson et al., 2009; Egbert, 2007; Jung, 2004), one can argue for the complimentary aspects of this current list in relation to them. Jung ($N = 17$ journals) and Benson et al. ($N = 10$) limited their list to SSCI-journals referenced within *Language Teaching*. This current list employed a systematic and reasonably objective process to capture 24 SSCI-indexed journals as well as Scopus-indexed ones. Additionally, the current list presents a clear rationale for why certain journals were discounted. Like Egbert, this current list has strived to be as inclusive and comprehensive as possible. Unlike Egbert, this current list is confined to indexes which Asian academic institutions

appear to value over others. What is also noteworthy is the overlap between the three past lists and this current one (see Table 2).

TABLE 2
Current List and Past Lists Journal Coverage

	Jung (2004)	Egbert (2007)	Benson et al. (2009)
	17 Journals	35 Journals	10 Journals
Journals shared between current list and past list	15 (88.2% of past list's journals in current list)	19 (43.1%)	10 (100%)
Journals in past list not in current list	2	16†	0

† Egbert did not use indexing as a criterion for inclusion.

The current list includes all journals in Benson et al.'s list as well as most of those in Jung's. Egbert's list and this current one also have considerable overlap. The few exceptions where journals were not included in our list concern journals that are not indexed by either Scopus or the SSCI.

Academic and Practice Usages for the List

In terms of research and academia, this list identifies journals in two indexes that many Asia TEFL contexts value over others. Academics with manuscripts to publish can therefore employ this list as guidance for potential places to publish their work for maximum recognition. The observed journal quality metrics can be used to gauge, noting the limitations of these metrics (see, e.g., Egbert, 2007), the relative prestige of each journal. Conversely, this resource can be used to guide the reading of academics in a similar fashion.

This list in our view is by no means contained to academia. With an ever-growing demand for TEFL instructors and teachers to engage in professional development and frontline research, this list can serve as a reading list resource. Observed journal quality metrics and SSCI versus Scopus indexing could inform their engagement with the papers found in these journals. Many journals on this list, moreover, such as *TESOL Journal* and *JALT CALL Journal*, have special publication pathways that invite teacher-orientated papers. Thus, this list also acts as an entry into beginning academic publishing.

Limitations and Updating the List

Benson et al. (2009) noted that creating journal lists and the methods used to construct them can be debatable and contentious. Accordingly, we do not contend that the list presented here is final. Although our keyword analysis has added a level of objectivity, a level of subjectivity has also been unavoidable. Additionally, it is not unlikely that we have missed some important journals, and therefore this document should be treated as a living document and should be updated over time. We hope that TEFL researchers would find this list useful.

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Appendix A

Key Words for Title Analysis

1. Foreign language
2. Second language
- 3.1 TESOL, 3.2 Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, 3.3 Teaching English
4. TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language)
5. EFL (English as a Foreign Language)
6. ELT (English Language Teaching)
7. SLA (Second Language Acquisition)
8. FLA (Foreign Language Acquisition)
9. CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning)
10. ELL (English Language Learner)
11. ESP (English for Specific Purposes)
12. EAP (English for Academic Purposes)
13. TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language)
- 14.1 Language Teaching, 14.2 Language Teacher, 14.3 Language Teachers
- 15.1 Language Learning, 15.2 Language Learner, 15.3 Language Learners
- 16.1 Language Assessment, 16.2 Language Testing
17. Language Classroom
18. Language Curriculum
- 19.1 Language Education, 19.2 Language Educator
20. Language Acquisition
21. Language Proficiency
22. Applied Linguistics
23. Modern Language

Appendix B

Disqualified Journals

Title	ISSN	Issue(s) Reviewed	SJR	JCR	Rationale for Exclusion
1. <i>Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics</i>	2211-7245	6(1) 5(2)	0.166	—	English not primary medium
2. <i>English Teaching</i>	1175-8708	16(1)	0.275	—	Mostly ELA with some ESL
3. <i>Forum for Modern Language Studies</i>	1471-6860	53(3)	0.107	—	Literary focus
4. <i>Journal of Language, Identity, and Education</i>	1532-7701	16(4)	0.448	0.477	Lack of L2 and TEFL focus
5. <i>Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association</i>	0742-5562	49(2)	0.101	—	Literary and ELA focus
6. <i>Language Acquisition</i>	1532-7817	24(3)	1.004	1.303	Theoretical and developmental linguistic focus
7. <i>Language and Education</i>	1747-7581	31(6)	1.168	1.254	Lack of L2 and TEFL focus
8. <i>Language Learning and Development</i>	1547-3341	13(3)	1.378	—	Theoretical and developmental linguistic focus
9. <i>LIA Language, Interaction and Acquisition</i>	1879-7873	8(1)	0.383	—	Theoretical and developmental linguistic focus
10. <i>MLN - Modern Language Notes</i>	1080-6598	132(3)	0.138	—	Literary focus
11. <i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>	0026-7929	78(3)	0.219	—	ELA focus
12. <i>Modern Language Review</i>	0026-7937	112(3)	0.111	—	ELA focus
13. <i>Research in the Teaching of English</i>	0034-527X	52(1)	1.193	1.193	ELA focus

ELA = English Language Arts.

Appendix C

Journals Tagged by Bilingualism and Multilingualism Keywords

Title	ISSN	Issue(s) Reviewed	SJR	JCR	Comments
1. <i>Bilingual Research Journal</i>	1523-5890	40(2); 40(3)	1.154	—	A minority of articles are L2 focused
2. <i>Bilingualism: Language and Cognition</i>	1469-1841	20(3); 20(4)	1.275	3.010	Empirical articles tend to be theoretical
3. <i>International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism</i>	1367-0050	20(6)	1.131	1.373	Possibly relevant
4. <i>International Journal of Bilingualism</i>	1367-0069	21(5)	0.511	0.974	Lacks L2 focus
5. <i>International Journal of Multilingualism</i>	1479-0718	14(3)	0.391	—	Lacks L2 focus
6. <i>International Multilingual Research Journal</i>	1931-3160	11(3)	0.799	—	Lacks L2 focus
7. <i>Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development</i>	0143-4632	38(6)	0.675	1.015	Possibly relevant
8. <i>Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism</i>	1879-9272	7(5)	0.383	1.000	Lacks L2 focus