

An Analysis of the Preprint Policies of the Communication Disorders Journals

Dr.Shijith Kumar C*

Abstract

Publicly disseminating scholarly papers as preprints has gained momentum in every subject field. The recent pandemic demonstrated the importance of the preprint as a channel of scientific communication. The preprints are getting recognized as the formal component of the publication process. Hence, the publishers must announce a clear policy regarding the preprints to the authors. Communication disorders is a combined discipline of audiology and speech-language pathology that deals with speech, hearing, and language sciences and disabilities. There are several journals on communication disorders publishing research from across the world. The publishers in the field include non-profit organizations, learned societies, and commercial publishing companies. Understanding the preprint policies of communication disorders journals will help the professionals in the area quickly disseminate their research results. The present study aims to analyze the preprint policies of the major communication disorders journals. The journals indexed in the Web of Science database under the subject category 'Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology' have been selected as the dataset for the study. A descriptive analysis of the preprint policies of these journals are performed by collecting relevant information from their official websites.

Keywords: Preprint Policy;Communication Disorders Journals

Introduction

Preprints, the non-peer-reviewed scholarly research papers, are fast becoming a formal component of the scientific publication system. The National Institute of Health, USA initiated the first known preprint program in 1961, and distributed the pre-published biology papers among the members of the 'Information Exchange Group'. The program was discontinued in 1967 due to stiff opposition from the publishers (Till, 2001). The modern version of preprints geared up in 1991 when physics researchers launched a network server called 'arXiv' (<https://arxiv.org/>) to share their research papers before publication (Ginsparg, 2021). Following the success of arXiv', several preprint servers have emerged. In 2013, bioRxiv (<https://www.biorxiv.org/>) was started in biology and life sciences, and medRxiv (<https://www.medrxiv.org/>) in health sciences. During the first year of its establishment, the medRxiv received more than 11,000 submissions (Krumholz, et. al., 2020). The need for rapid dissemination of research findings on the corona virus during the 2021 pandemic accelerated the growth of preprints, diminishing the scope of the peer-review process to a reasonable extent (Fraser et. al., 2020; Malički et. al., 2021)

Meaning and Definition

From the stage of draft submission to a journal, through peer-review, revision, to the final article publication, a scientific manuscript can have several versions. Of these, the initial version is known as preprint. The preprint is also known as Author's Original Manuscript.

The National Information Standards Organization (NISO) defined the Author's Original Manuscript as "Any version of a journal article that is considered by the author to be of sufficient quality to be submitted for formal peer review". The Committee on Publication Ethics(COPE) defined the preprint as a "scholarly manuscript posted by the author(s) in an openly accessible platform, usually before or in parallel with the peer review process." Moshontzet al. (2021) broadly defined the preprints as scientific documents made available outside of the traditional publisher-managed framework and often disseminated online via trusted repositories. Bourne et al. (2017) defined the it as "complete written description of a body of scientific work that has yet to be published in a journal"

The present study

Communication disorders is a combined discipline of audiology and speech-language pathology that deals with speech, hearing, and language sciences and disabilities. There are hundreds of journals on communication disorders publishing research from across the world. The publishers in the field include non-profit organizations, learned societies, and commercial publishing companies. Understanding the

*Library and Information Officer, All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Manasagangotri, Mysuru, Karnataka, India, 570006;Email:shijith@aiishmysore.in, cshijithkumar@gmail.com;Mob.91-8618667835,8904430355

preprint policies of communication disorders journals will help the professionals in the area quickly disseminate their research results. The present study aims to analyze the preprint policies of the major communication disorders journals.

Related Studies

Researchers have investigated the preprint policies of the scholarly journals in various fields. Teixeira da Silva & Dobranszki, J. (2019) reviewed the preprint policies of 14 reputed scientific publishers based on the Sherpa/RoMEO database. The study reported change in publishers' policy, and over a period of one-year, the number of publishers permitting the self-archiving of the preprints increased considerably. Massey et al. (2020) studied the preprint policies of 100 top-ranked clinical journals across all fields. The journals were selected based on their impact factor for the year 2018. Eighty-six journals allowed preprints, and one journal prohibited it. The remaining 13 journals permitted preprints on a case-by-case basis. Choi et al. (2021) studied the status of preprint acceptance policies of 383 Asian academic society journals in 2020. The data set for the study was taken from the Science Citation Index Expanded. Only 28 journals reviewed in the study accepted preprints and eight journals allowed reference entries for preprints and thirty had preprint policies. Fleming and Cook (2022) reviewed the preprint, postprint, and open access policies of 51 special education journals and their publishers. They reported that 13 journals provided information regarding the preprint policy on their websites, but only two had accepted preprints for publication.

Methodology

The journals indexed in the 'Web of Science (WoS) database under the category 'Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology' were selected for the study. This category of Web of Science listed 30 publications. Of these, three titles were excluded from the study due to the following reasons: *The Hearing Loss: Mechanisms, Prevention and Cure* was not a journal, the *Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology* did not belong to the domain of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, and the *Journal of Medical Speech-Language Pathology* was a discontinued journal. The remaining 27 journals were taken for further analysis. The official websites of each of these 27 journals were checked for the following parameters related to the preprints in August 2022.

1. Availability of a written policy statement on preprints
2. Availability of an exclusive preprint policy statement for the journal
3. Acceptance of preprints for publication
4. Conditions for accepting preprints for publication
5. Permissible locations for sharing the preprints

Results

The publisher-wise details of the 27 journals selected for the study are given in Table 1. They were published by eleven publishers. The publishers include both commercial and non-profit organizations.

The status preprint policies of the selected journals are tabulated alphabetically by the name of the journals and provided in Tables 2 to 4.

Table 1*Selected Journals and their Publishers*

S.N.	Journal	Publisher	S.N.	Journal	Publisher
1	American Journal of Audiology	ASHA	15	Journal of the Acoustical Society of America	AIP
2	American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology	ASHA	16	Journal of the American Academy of Audiology	Thieme
3	Aphasiology	T & F	17	Journal of Fluency Disorders	Elsevier
4	Audiology and Neuro Otology	Karger	18	Journal of Speech-Language and Hearing Research	ASHA
5	Augmentative and Alternative Communication	T & F	19	Journal of Voice	Elsevier
6	Brain and Language	Elsevier	20	Language and Speech	Sage
7	Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics	T & F	21	Language Cognition and Neuroscience	T & F
8	Ear and Hearing	WK	22	Language Speech and Hearing Services in Schools	ASHA
9	Folia Phoniatica et Logopaedica	Karger	23	Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology	T & F
10	Hearing Research	Elsevier	24	Noise and Health	MK
11	International Journal of Audiology	T & F	25	Phonetica	DG
12	International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders	Wiley	26	Seminars in Speech and Language	Thieme
13	International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology	T & F	27	Trends in Hearing	Sage
14	Journal of Communication Disorders	Elsevier			

AIP: American Institute of Physics; ASHA: American Speech–Language and Hearing Association; DG:De Gruyter; MK:MedKnow;T& F: Taylor & Francis; WK: Wolters Kluwer

Table 2*Status of Preprint Policies of the Journals (AJOA-FPEL)*

Parameters	Journals (AJA-FPEL)								
	AJOA	AJSP	APHS	AANO	AAAC	BRAL	CLAP	EAHE	FPEL
Written policy on preprints?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Policy is specific to the journal?	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Acceptance of preprints?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mandatory conditions for acceptance?	Yes	Yes	No	I.N.A.	No	No	No	Yes	I.N.A.
Optional conditions for acceptance?	No	No	Yes	I.N.A.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	I.N.A.
Specified locations to share preprints?	Yes	Yes	Anywhere with e.g.	Anywhere	Anywhere with e.g.	Anywhere	Anywher e with e.g.	Any where	Any where

AJOA: American Journal of Audiology; AJSP: American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology; APHS: Aphasiology; AANO: Audiology and Neuro Otology; AAAC: Augmentative and Alternative Communication; BRAL: Brain and Language; CLAP: Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics; EAHE: Ear and Hearing; FPEL: Folia Phoniatica et Logopaedica

I.N.A.: Information Not Available

Table 3*Status of Preprint Policies of the Journals (HERS-JAAA)*

Parameters	Journals (HE-JA)								
	HERS	IJAU	IJLC	IJSP	JCDI	JFDI	JLSH	JASA	JAAA
Written policy on preprints?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Policy is specific to the journal?	No	No	Yes	No	Yes		No	Yes	
Acceptance of preprints?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	
Mandatory conditions for acceptance?	No	No	I.N.A.	No	I.N.A.		Yes	I.N.A.	
Optional conditions for acceptance?	Yes	Yes	I.N.A.	Yes	I.N.A.		No	I.N.A.	
Specified locations to share preprints?	Anywhere	Anywhere with e.g.	I.N.A.	Anywhere with e.g.	Yes		Yes	Yes	

HERS: Hearing Research; IJAU: International Journal of Audiology; IJLC: International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders; IJSP: International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology; JCDI: Journal of Communication Disorders; JFDI: Journal of Fluency Disorders; JLSH: Journal of Speech-Language and Hearing Research; JASA: Journal of the Acoustical Society of America; JAAA: Journal of the American Academy of Audiology

I.N.A.: Information Not Available

Table 4*Status of Preprint Policies of the Journals (JOVO-TRHE)*

Parameters	Journals (JO-TR)									
	JOVO	LASP	LCAN	LSHS	LPVO	NOHE	PHON	SISL	TRHE	
Written policy on preprints?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	
Policy is specific to the journal?		Yes	No	No	No			Yes	Yes	
Acceptance of preprints?		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes
Mandatory conditions for acceptance?		Yes	No	Yes	No			Yes	Yes	Yes
Optional conditions for acceptance?		No	Yes	No	Yes			No	No	No
Specified locations to share preprints?		Yes	Anywhere with e.g.	Yes	Anywhere with e.g.			Yes	Yes	Yes

JOVO: Journal of Voice; LASP: Language and Speech; LCAN: Language Cognition and Neuroscience; LSHS: Language Speech and Hearing Services in Schools; LPVO: Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology; NOHE: Noise and Health; PHON: Phonetica; SISL: Seminars In Speech and Language; TRHE: Trends in Hearing

I.N.A.: Information Not Available

Written Preprint Policy: Of the 27 journals reviewed, 22 (81%) journals had a written preprint policy on their official website. The journals that did not mention a preprint policy on the official websites were the *Journal of Fluency Disorders*, *Journal of American Academy of Audiology*, *Journal of Voice*, *Noise and Health* and *Phonetica*. Of these, M/s Elsevier publishes the *Journal of Fluency Disorders* and *Journal of Voice* on behalf of the International Fluency Association, and the Voice Foundation the International Association of Phono surgery, respectively. The *Journal of the American Academy of*

Audiology is the scholarly peer-reviewed journal of the American Academy of Audiology, published in collaboration with M/s Thieme. The *Noise and Health Journal* is published by M/s MedKnow and *Phonitica* by De Gruyter.

Own Policy for the Journals: Of the 22 journals with a declared preprint policy, 14 (64%) followed their parent publisher's policy by linking to the policy statement on the Publisher's official website. The remaining eight journals (36%) had their own preprint policies. However, five of the eight journals that claimed to have their own preprint policies mentioned them in a one-line statement on the official websites without providing any detailed description. The journals *Languange and Speech* and *Seminars in Speech and Languange* had a reasonably detailed policy statement on their official websites, while *Trends in Hearing* instructed the authors on preprint submission in a two-line statement.

Acceptance of Preprints for Publication: All 22 journals with a declared preprint policy statement considered preprints for publication.

Conditions for considering preprints: Seventeen out of 22 journals put forth some conditions for considering preprints for publication. The conditions are summarized and given in table 5. They were either mandatory or optional. Five journals did not explicitly state any prerequisites for considering preprints for publishing. Acknowledging the previous posting of the manuscript as preprint, if any, was mandatory for eight journals and optional for two. The three American Speech-Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) journals (*American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, *Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools*, and *American Journal of Audiology*) did not consider the preprints shared on MEDLINE/PubMed databases for publication. The authors of the *Seminars in Speech and Language* had to provide the details of changes made to a manuscript between its deposition in a preprint server and submission to the journal. Seven journals made it mandatory to provide a link from the posted preprint to the final article on the publsher's website, if the manuscript was published whereas this condition was not mandatory for nine journals. The Elsevier published *Hearing Research*, *Brain and Language*, and *Language and Speech* prevented the later modification of the preprints to appear like the published articles. The *Language and Speech* and *Seminars in Speech and Language* instructed their authors not to post an updated version of the paper on the preprint server while it was being peer-reviewed for possible publication in the journal.

Table 5
Conditions for considering the preprints for publication

S.N.	Conditions	Journals
1	If the preprint is already shared, it should be acknowledged during the manuscript submission	American Journal of Audiology, American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, Ear and Hearing, Journal of Speech-Language and Hearing Research, Language and Speech, Language Speech and Hearing Services in Schools, Seminars In Speech and Language, Trends in Hearing (<i>Mandatory</i>) Aphasiology, Language Cognition, and Neuroscience (<i>Not mandatory</i>)
2	Will not accept, if indexed in MEDLINE or PubMed	American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools, American Journal of Audiology (<i>Mandatory</i>)
3	Should state what adjustments and/or updates the draft has undergone between deposition in a preprint server and submission to the journal.	Seminars in Speech and Language (<i>Mandatory</i>)
4	If accepted for publication, the preprint should be linked to the published article on the Publisher's site	American Journal of Audiology, American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, Ear and Hearing, Journal of Speech-Language and Hearing Research, Language and Speech, Language Speech and Hearing Services in Schools, Seminars In Speech and Language (<i>Mandatory</i>) Aphasiology, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, Brain and Language, Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics, Hearing Research, International Journal of Audiology, International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, Language Cognition and Neuroscience, Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology (<i>Not mandatory</i>)
5	Should not be added to or enhanced in any way to	Hearing Research, Brain and Language, Language and Speech

	appear more like, or to substitute for, the final versions of articles	(Mandatory)
6	Should not post an updated version of the paper on the preprint server while it is being peer-reviewed for possible publication in the journal	Language and Speech, Seminars in Speech and Language (Mandatory)

Locations/ Platforms for sharing preprints: Of the 22 journals which accepted preprints, nine stated specific locations or platforms for sharing preprints and twelve journals said that the preprint might be shared anywhere. One journal, the *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, did not comment on the location for sharing preprints. Seven out of twelve journals which indicated that the preprints could be shared anywhere, provided examples of places for posting preprints. The preprint servers, followed by authors' personal websites, were the most suggested places by the journals to deposit preprints and the social media was the least favoured platform.

The 'Guide for Authors' section of the *Journal of Communication Disorders*, an Elsevier published journal offers the authors to post the manuscripts as preprints on SSRN, the publisher owned preprint server. The *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* permitted to post preprints on "any website, providing the site does not have the semblance of an archival online journal." A summary of various locations suggested by the journals to post preprints is given in table 6.

Table 6

Locations for sharing preprints for publication

Sl.No.	Locations/Platforms	No. of Journals recommended
1	Preprint servers	14
2	Personal websites	11
3	scholarly collaboration network	7
4	Institutional repositories	5
5	Social media	1

Discussion

The prevailing policies of most journals on communication disorders under study are encouraging and supportive of sharing research in the form of preprints. Only five out of 27 journals did not reveal the preprint policies on their official websites. This is in contrast with the recent study of Fleming and Cook (2022) who reported that only two out of 51 special education journals had provided information on preprints and considered preprints for publication. Three of the five journals in the present study that did not mention any preprint policies on their websites, were society publications. M/s Elsevier who published two of these society-owned journals, has a standard preprinting policy for all the journals they publish. However, official journals of societies and non-profit organizations are exempted from that policy. The Publisher's website says, "Some society-owned titles and journals that operate double-blind peer review have different preprint policies." The journal, *phonetica* another journal which did not support preprints was recently acquired by M/s De Gruyter.

Providing the details of the preprints, if any, including the URLs and locations, is mandatory for many journals during the manuscript submission stage. This can be observed as a realistic and necessary requirement. While submitting a manuscript to a journal, the authors should think of voluntarily sharing the details of the preprint publication associated with it.

NIH Preprint Pilot is a recent initiative of the National Institute of Health, USA (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/about/nihpreprints/>) to make the NIH-funded research publicly available in the form of preprints through the PubMed Central and PubMed. The decision of the two ASHA journals in the present study, to not consider the MEDLINE or PubMed indexed preprints may adversely affect the dissemination of NIH-funded research on communication disorders through these journals. It is mandatory to post all the preprints of NIH-funded research in NIH Preprint Pilot.

The preprint policy of the *Journal of Communication Disorders* is incomplete. It is not clear whether the journal allows posting of preprints in servers other than SSRN. Similarly, the policy of the *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* to accept preprints shared on websites that did not resemble with an archival online journal is highly obscure.

Preprint servers are found to be the most popular platform for sharing preprints. Encouraging authors to share preprints on non-profit preprint servers like arXiv, bioRxiv, and medRxiv is a welcome move from the journals. However, directing the authors to publish the preprints on specific preprint servers may be avoided. Unlike those reported by Massey (2020), none of the journals in the present study decided on publishing preprints as journal articles on a case-to-case basis.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the preprints are here to stay. Transparent and unambiguous policies from the part of the journal publishers and strict adherence to the submission guidelines from the authors will surely foster the preprint scientific literature. The present study was an attempt to analyse the preprint policies of the communication disorders journal. Except a few cases, the communication disorders journals reviewed in the study are in favour of preprint publication of research. However, a few journals lack of explicitness in policy statement was observed in a few journals. The study investigated only a few aspects of preprints based on the information collected from the official websites of the journals. Also, it was limited to the journals in the field indexed in the web of science database. Despite its limitations, the present study is the first known attempt to understand the status of preprint publications in communication disorders.

References

- Bourne, P. E., Polka, J. K., Vale, R. D., & Kiley, R. (2017). Ten simple rules to consider regarding preprint submission. *PLoS Computational Biology*, 13(5): e1005473. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1005473>
- Choi, Y. J., Choi, H. W., & Kim, S. (2021). Preprint acceptance policies of Asian academic society journals in 2020. *Science Editing*, 8(8), 10–17.
- Committee on Publication Ethics. (2018). Discussion document on preprints. London: Committee on Publication Ethics. Available from: <https://publicationethics.org/node/38176>
- Fleming, J.I., & Cook, B.G. (2022). Open access in special education: A review of journal and publisher policies. *Remedial and Special Education*, 43, 1, 3-14. doi:10.1177/0741932521996461
- Fraser N, Brierley L, Dey G, et al. Preprinting a pandemic: The role of preprints in the COVID-19 pandemic. bioRxiv 2020;2020.05.22.111294. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.05.22.111294>
- Malički M., Costello, J., Alperin, J.P., Maggio, L.A. (2021). Analysis of single comments left for bioRxiv preprints till September 2019. *Biochem Med (Zagreb)*, 31, 2. [https://doi:10.11613/BM.2021.020201](https://doi.org/10.11613/BM.2021.020201).
- Ginsparg, P. (2021). Lessons from arXiv's 30 years of information sharing. *Nature Reviews Physics*, 3, 602–603. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s42254-021-00360-z>
- Krumholz, H.M., Bloom, T., Sever, R., Rawlinson, C., Inglis, J.R., & Ross, J.S. (2020). Submissions and downloads of preprints in the first year of medRxiv. *JAMA*, 324, 18, 1903-1905. [https://doi:10.1001/jama.2020.17529](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.17529).
- Massey, D.S., Opare, M.A., Wallach, J.D., Ross, J.S., & Krumholz, H.M. (2020). Assessment of preprint policies of top-ranked clinical journals. *JAMA Network Open*, 3, [https://doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.11127](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.11127).
- Moshontz, H., Binion, G., Walton, H., Brown, B.T., Syed, M. (2021). A guide to posting and managing preprints. *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*, 4, (2), 1-11. [https://doi:10.1177/25152459211019948](https://doi.org/10.1177/25152459211019948)

Teixeira da Silva, JA, & Dobranszki, J. (2019). Preprint policies among 14 academic publishers. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 45,2,162–70

Till, J.E. (2001). Predecessors of preprint servers. *Learned Publishing*, 14, 1, 7-13.