

Proposal on the establishment of standards for editing English scientific articles in China

October 18, 2015

The rapid development of scientific research in China over the past decades has resulted in increasing outputs, as reflected by substantial breakthroughs, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in the publications of scientific articles in English journals. These achievements are largely owing to continuously increasing investment and improved research environment in China, and the hard and diligent work of researchers across the country. In addition, the gradual development of a mature scientific editing industry has contributed to the achievements.

Indeed, English scientific journals are the major platform for international academic communication and most research results can only be recognized internationally once they have been published in English scientific journals. However, many Chinese researchers are not able to publish their research in English journals due to their limited English writing capacity, and can successfully do so only with the help of a native English speaker who has a similar scientific background, or a professional editing company with a strong and compressive team of editors.

Currently there are up to one thousand editing companies providing services to Chinese researchers. These myriad services differ in their missions and visions, service styles and content, and more importantly, their service quality. Some companies are mainly or even solely driven by profit and thus may take whatever measures to achieve that goal, including fraudulent and unethical activities. Even worse, a few companies tolerate, encourage or even participate in academic misconduct, which not only significantly affects the reputation of the scientific editing industry, but also severely damages the credibility of Chinese researchers and increases the difficulty for Chinese researchers to publish in English scientific journals.

To facilitate the healthy development, self-discipline and monitoring of the scientific editing industry in China, and further provide high quality editing services for Chinese researchers, with particular attention to the prevention of any form of academic misconduct, we hereby announce that we voluntarily form a self-discipline body, named The Alliance for Scientific Editing in China (ASEC). We also officially propose the establishment and execution of The Standardized Practice for Editing English Scientific Articles (SPEESA) in China. All editing companies registered in China are eligible for joining the ASEC, and the SPEESA must be signed by company leadership. All signatory companies must strictly follow the SPEESA by putting in place policies and practices, which include but are not limited to the following principles:

1. Authors hold full responsibility for the accuracy of an article's scientific content; thus, the contribution of the article's scientific content must be solely the work of the authors (as defined by international standards such as ICMJE definitions on the role of authors and contributors). Further, it is the role of authors to finalize and confirm the scientific content of articles prior to submission and for any revisions made during peer review.

2. Services must provide editing by qualified editors who have received appropriate training, including that on ethics policies.
3. Services must not falsify or fabricate research data provided by the authors, or gather data for authors.
4. Services must publicly display their ethics policies, and must decline any request from authors that would breach research ethics and academic integrity, with explanation to the authors on the potential life-long implications of the misconducts on the authors' research and academic career.
5. Services must not provide false information on potential peer reviewers; nor help authors manipulate the peer review system.
6. Services must not participate in any form of research article trading.
7. Services must not participate in any misconduct as set out by Chinese authorities and institutions.
8. Services must keep confidential any personal and content information provided by authors, and all communications with authors.
9. Services must accept acknowledgement for editing if authors wish to, thus indicating language quality of the manuscript.
10. Signing of the ASEC is based on an honor system that brings with it an obligation to carry out its principles in good faith and with due diligence. All signatory companies must obey the SPEESA, and any companies that breach it shall be expelled from the ASEC.

This proposal is to be announced at The First Summit on Medical Research and Publication held on October 17–18, 2015. All signing companies will be listed at the ASEC's official website and the magazine "Medical Research and Publication".

Signatures of company leadership:



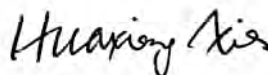
Liqin Cai, COO of Editage (China)



Benjamin Shaw, COO & China Director of Liwen Bianji (Edanz China)



Lindsey Gendall, Managing Editor of Accdon-LetPub LLC



Harry Hua-Xiang Xia, President of Medjaden Bioscience Limited



Sharad Mittal, CEO of Crimson Interactive Pvt Ltd



Kehong Zhang, CEO of The Ivyediting (China)