

# PLOS ONE

## 因一字错用撤稿说明什么？

张媛媛



2016年1月5日，华中科技大学某研究团队的论文“Biomechanical Characteristics of Hand Coordination in Grasping Activities of Daily Living”在开放获取期刊 *PLOS ONE* 上发表。他们通过运动数据统计分析检视手部协调性的特征，并寻找肌腱关联特性与抓取协调性的相关性，最终确定人手结构与协调性之间的机能关系。这篇从设计到结果看似完美的论文却因一字错用而引起轩然大波。

3月2日曼彻斯特大学计算分子进化学者 James McNerney 首先在 Twitter 上，矛头直指期刊：*PLOS ONE* is now a joke. "...proper design of the Creator" absolute joke of a journal. 该论文被攻击是神创论，宣扬上帝造人。

3月3日，论文第一作者 Mingjin Liu 在 *PLOS ONE* 论文

评论区郑重道歉并予以说明。

We are sorry for drawing the debates about creationism. Our study has no relationship with creationism. English is not our native language. Our understanding of the word Creator was not actually as a native English speaker expected. Now we realized that we had misunderstood the word Creator. What we would like to express is that the biomechanical characteristic of tendinous connective architecture between muscles and articulations is a proper design by the NATURE (result of evolution) to perform a multitude of daily grasping tasks. We will change the Creator to nature in the revised manu. We apologize for any troubles may have caused by this misunderstanding.

We have spent seven months doing the experiments, analysis, and write up. I hope this paper will not be discriminated only because of this misunderstanding of the word. Please could you read the paper before making a decision.

作者的道歉并未挽救这篇论文。*PLOS ONE* 于3月3日公告：综合内部讨论以及两位编委

会专家的意见，这篇论文确实存在问题，并暴露出同行评议过程并没有对该文各方面给予充分的考量。*PLOS ONE* 编辑部决定，此文将被尽快撤回。

目前在 *PLOS ONE* 的网站上能看到如下声明：

Following publication, readers raised concerns about language in the article that makes references to a 'Creator', and about the overall rationale and findings of the study.

Upon receiving these concerns, the *PLOS ONE* editors have carried out an evaluation of the manuscript and the pre-publication process, and they sought further advice on the work from experts in the editorial board. This evaluation confirmed concerns with the scientific rationale, presentation and language, which were not adequately addressed during peer review.

Consequently, the *PLOS ONE* editors consider that the work cannot be relied upon and retract this publication.

The editors apologize to readers for the inappropriate language in the article and the errors during the evaluation process.

撤稿事件之后，不少中国科研工作者为该文作者感到委屈。认为英语并不是我们的母语，中国作者不理解英文中 Creator 的特定含义并没有什么好奇怪的。况且论文已经通过了编辑、审稿人审阅。那么责任到底在谁？

让我们来仔细读读这篇论文，“The Creator”在文中出现了三次，第一次在摘要：即

“The explicit functional link indicates that the biomechanical characteristic of tendinous connective architecture between muscles and articulations is the proper design by the Creator to perform a multitude of daily tasks in a comfortable way.”

通常而言，摘要需要简明扼要的表达出研究目的、方法、结果和结论。而且摘要中的结论一定是要能被研究结果支持和证实的。那么作者这句话合不合适呢？我们认为，不仅“the Creator”不适合，“proper design”的使用也是不合适的。

第二次出现在引言：即

“Hand coordination should indicate the mystery of the Creator’s invention.”

同样，不仅“the Creator”，“mystery”的使用也是大错特错的。

第三次出现在结论：即

“In conclusion, our study can improve the understanding of the human hand and confirm that the mechanical architecture is the proper design by the Creator for dexterous performance of numerous functions following the

evolutionary remodeling of the ancestral hand for millions of years.”

作者在“the proper design by the Creator”之前还用了单词“confirm”。这真的被本研究 confirm 了吗？

如果只是一次出现“the Creator”，我们还可以尽量理解作者是想表达“巧夺天工”、“天衣无缝”等意思。但是这三次出现的“the Creator”，还有文中的“Invention”，“Mystery”，“Superior”等词，都是很不适合的表达。

科技论文写作，不是文学，不是为了审美。我们不仅要把我们的科研工作真实、客观、准确的呈现出来，更要从根本上回答我们的研究解决了什么科学问题，逻辑性在其中发挥最关键的作用！而作者的错误，并不只是用错了英文词汇，更是没有从逻辑上正确解释自己的研究成果。作者本来已经恰当地描述了实验方法和结果，却在结论中不恰当地使用了文学语言来赞美“造物主”之“神奇”、感叹“大自然”之“美妙”。结果“画蛇添足、弄巧成拙、贻笑大方”。当然，这个错误责任不只是在第一作者，其他作者也有份。

其实，这样的错误在同行评审阶段就应该被发现，被提出，被修改。但是为什么这篇论文带

着这样的错误走到了公开发表的阶段？PLOS ONE 更难辞其咎。PLOS ONE 的编审体系到底出了什么问题，以至出现这么大的失误？而且，PLOS ONE 仅仅匆匆回应和迅速撤稿，并未彻底反省审查自身的评审机制，也未表明以后将采取什么具体措施以改进自己的评审机制。这些都令母语非英文的作者，尤其中国作者担忧！

作为母语非英文的我们，不能坐以待毙。我们必须努力提高自己的英文科技论文写作水平，谨慎选择期刊，并有技巧性的与期刊编辑沟通。同时在必要时寻求质量优异、声誉良好的专业编辑公司的帮助。■

