

FROM BIBLIOGRAPHIC TO FULL TEXT OPEN ACCESS DATABASE ON LITHUANIAN STUDIES

Lina Bloveščiuilienė, Rūta Petrauskaitė

Lithuania has a sufficient legal basis supporting Open Access (OA). The law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania (2009) voices a demand for the results of research activity to be made publicly available¹. Contract agreements between principal investigators of research projects and the Research Council of Lithuania echo the demand and register the requirement to make research data accessible after the embargo period. Academic and governmental institutions participate in EU and global OA initiatives, projects and events, such as the FP7 project PASTEUR4OA, (Open Access Policy Alignment STRategies for European Union Research), Open AIRE plus (Open Access Infrastructure for Research in Europe), EIFL-OA open access advocacy campaigns, SPARC (The Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition), Open Access Forum, Science Europe Working Groups on Open Access to Publications and Data to mention a few. They also open their institutional repositories and publish journals that have adopted the Open Journal System and are registered in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). Replying to the Minsk Recommendation for Open Access to Scientific Information², the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO initiated a group of experts that prepared a statement on Lithuania's position towards the issue. In spite of an overall positive predisposition towards OA, a lot has to be done in promoting and realizing OA on the institutional and personal, i.e.

researcher's level. However, the effort and action is directed towards the future steps in that direction, most existing data collections and publications are still not accessible. The database of publications on Lithuanian studies³ (the *Lituanistika* database) fills in the gap and makes full texts of thematic research in Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) available. Here follows an attempt to give some insights into its design, functions and objectives.

Originally the *Lituanistika* database was designed to provide bibliographic information, as well as a full text approach, to a variety of genres in Humanities and social sciences research, the object of which is the past and present of Lithuania's state, society, culture, nation and language. Since 2006 it has been built in the framework of three consecutive projects of EU Structural Funds, coordinated by the Research Council of Lithuania. The main idea was not only to compile a unique specialized thematic database of national importance, but also to give priority to qualitative evaluation of SSH research over the widespread quantitative assessment. The project appeared as the result of a public and legal debate on how to evaluate publications of SSH. At the time, before the reform of the Research Council in 2008 and its reorganization into two committees (for soft and hard sciences), the dominating pattern for research assessment was based on external factors such as internationally recognized publishers, references in international databases, as well as quantity of papers. Some specific SSH genres like monographs, publications of original research resources (archives, documents, etc.), overviews, studies, and some others were ignored by the ministerial evaluators. In other words, the hard science assessment pattern was imposed on SSH, although the prevailing quantitative assessment was inadequate and even distorting the view of the SSH output. After the interference of the President's office and the Research Council of

1 Lietuvos Respublikos mokslo ir studijų įstatymas, 2009: Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo 2009 m. balandžio 30 d. įstatymas Nr. XI-242. *Valstybės žinios* [online]. Nr. 54-2140. [cited 25-05-2013]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=343430&p_query=&p_tr2=>>.

2 Minsk Recommendations for Open Access to Scientific Information: Final Recommendation of Regional Consultation on "Open Access to Scientific Information and Research - Concept and Policies", 2012 [online]. 05-07 September 2012. [cited 25-05-2013]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/recommendation_minsk_oa_sept2012_en.pdf>.

3 Lituanistika database, 2012 [online]. [cited 25-05-2013]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.lituanistikadb.lt/en/home.html>>.

Lithuania, the assessment rules for the output of SSH research were changed taking into consideration the specificity of SSH research and publication culture. One of the instruments for evaluation was the above mentioned database, compiled from peer reviewed publications.

A distinctive feature of the *Lituanistika* database was the reassessment of the candidate texts that were published before. The necessity to re-evaluate research output was caused not only by the need to identify thematically suitable texts but also to assess the novelty and originality of SSH research, its impact on the society, the quality of the research in general. Another distinction of the *Lituanistika* database was the variety of the publication channels. Peer-reviewed research journals as well as the so called cultural and educational magazines published both inside the country and abroad were searched for candidate texts. In this way emphasis was put on the text itself instead of its publication channel. This approach turned out to be a good exercise, as 1/5 of the previously evaluated publications was rejected for quality reasons. Rejection of specific texts had to be suggested by both reviewers of the database, in the case of contradictory opinions; one additional reviewer was invited to support either side.

Gradually the assessment exercise was confined only to certain types of publications, mostly research papers, coming from journals with unknown or negative records from previous evaluations. Dissertations, peer-reviewed monographs and papers published in high quality journals (i.e. publications in journals with a quality factor ≥ 0.9 meaning that 90 or more publications out of 100 were evaluated positively) were included in the database without additional assessment, only after the so called regulative evaluation. Due to the recent increase of peer-reviewed publications, the need for re-evaluation abides. In the last period of the project 88% of the publications were re-evaluated, 15% out of them negatively (a detailed statistical account can be found at <http://www.lituanistikadb.lt/lt/apie-duomenubaze/analize-ir-statistika.html>).

At present, the database consists of more than 40 thousand publications in a great variety of genres and languages, but most of them are research papers written in Lithuanian. However, texts of dissertations, monographs, research based textbooks, overviews, biographies, catalogues, linguistic maps, book reviews,

publications of source documents, etc. published in Lithuanian, English, German, Russian, and Polish are included. From the point of view of its functions the *Lituanistika* database is meant to accumulate, analyze, organize, systematize, and preserve these data, to ensure open access to them and provide additional services to the scientific community as a whole. Initially, a set of evaluative criteria had to be approved (more about the issue see Siversten et al.⁴).

The right to put full texts of the reviewed papers into the DB is negotiated with the publishers. At the moment more than a half of all the texts, usually research papers, can be freely accessed by users. The majority of them come from the national open access journals included into the DOAJ index. Open access seems to be the most attractive aspect of the service provided, and therefore an emphasis is put on further development of *Lituanistika*. Recently the DB was included in the Registry of Open Access Repositories (ROAR; <http://roar.eprints.org/>) together with 3416 world OA repositories. Moreover, it was presented to and now awaits acceptance by another authoritative directory of academic open access repositories, i.e. OpenDOAR (<http://www.opendoar.org/>). The dissemination of publications in *Lituanistika* is guaranteed by the use of OAI-PMH protocol (the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting), which is usually used to collect information from various internet sources by all prevailing search engines.

One of the additional aims of the DB is to present lists of the cited authors and cited literature and in this way link to publications used in other publications. More than 290 thousand citation records help to find out how many times the DB authors cite and are cited, and to compile h-indexes and other types of indexes and rankings. Thus the DB can be considered as an experimental national bibliometric database on the Lithuanian studies. SSH usually concentrates on specific national themes and topics, and this is also the case with the Lithuanian studies and research. In addition, they are predominantly published in the national language and therefore rarely accepted by international journals,

4 Siversten, G., Larsen, B., 2012. Comprehensive bibliographic coverage of the social sciences and humanities in a citation index: an empirical analysis of the potential. *Scientometrics* [online]. [cited 25-05-2013]. ISSN 1588-2861. 91:567-575. DOI 10.007/s11192-011-0615-3.

thus hardly reflected in the Thomson Reuters Web of Science or Scopus databases. According to the recommendations of the *European Scoping Project*⁵, national bibliometric databases for SSH have to be created in order to reflect and preserve the specificity of SSH research. The *Lituanistika* DB follows this advice, measuring citations for multiple purposes, i.e.

for transparency and accountability of the public funds spent for research, for the qualitative assessment, for the worldwide overview of *Lituanistika* studies and research outputs, among many other purposes. This is how bibliographic and bibliometric, qualitative and quantitative approaches to the evaluation of SSH are reconciled.



Lina Bloveščiuėnienė Director of Vytautas Magnus University Library, Head of the project "Database Lituanistika" at the Research Council of Lithuania



Rūta Petrauskaitė Professor of linguistics at the Department of Lithuanian Language, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas and a vice-chair of the Research Council of Lithuania, chairing the committee of Social Sciencing and Humanities. The latter position obliges her with the responsibility for the development of the Open Access in Lithuania.

⁵ Towards a Bibliometric Database for the Social Sciences and Humanities – A European Scoping Project : A report produced for DFG, ESRC, AHRC, NWO, ANR and ESF, 2010 [online]. [cited 25-05-2013]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://globalhighered.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/esf_report_final_100309.pdf>.