

Do authors prefer to use ‘impact’ over ‘effect’?

Uma Shaanker¹ asks in a recent commentary, ‘Do authors prefer to use impact over effect?’ A global search prompt using the word ‘impact’ in the *Current*

Science (CS) home page indicated an exponential increase in the frequency of finds for this word in titles (including all categories of submission like research

article, correspondence, research communication, editorial, etc.) of papers published in the journal.

He asks a related question: ‘Would replacing the word “impact” with the word “effect” significantly alter the message conveyed by the titles?’ He also offers a ready answer: ‘Perhaps not’, before asking, ‘So why do authors prefer impact over effect?’

A critic being a critic, I repeated Uma Shaanker’s exercise to observe what the use of the word ‘effect’ in the same global search prompt would lead to. Figures 1 and 2 display the answers. Figure 1 shows the frequency occurrence of the words ‘impact’ and ‘effect’ in titles of papers published in CS from 1932 to 2016. It is interesting to note that ‘effect’ went out of fashion suddenly around 1990 and then began picking up slowly again. Figure 2 is an alternative representation of Figure 1. We now see that only briefly was ‘impact’ more likely to appear in a CS title than ‘effect’ and that in the early years, from 1932 to 2005, the reverse was true.

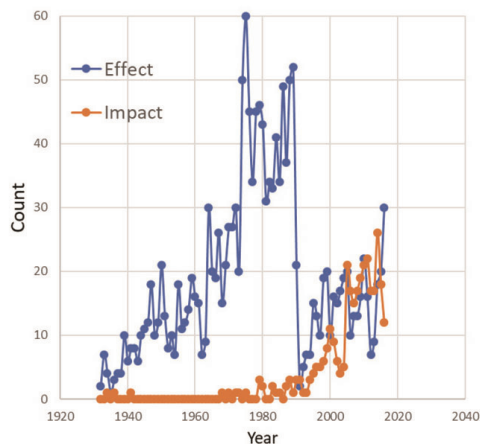


Figure 1. Frequency occurrence of the words ‘impact’ and ‘effect’ in titles of papers published in *Current Science*.

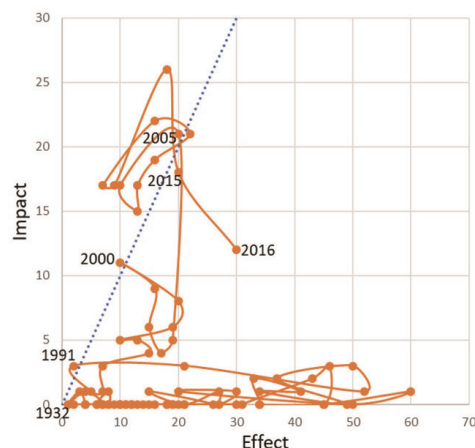


Figure 2. Frequency occurrence of the words ‘impact’ and ‘effect’ in titles of papers published in *Current Science*.

1. Uma Shaanker, R., *Curr. Sci.*, 2017, **113**(5), 851–852.

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A quiet but deep trouble in Tonga subduction zone

The Tonga subduction zone marks the convergent plate boundary between the Pacific and Australian plates, and it produces more large-magnitude deep earthquakes (depth >300 km) than anywhere else in the world. Deep earthquakes constitute less than 1% of the total earthquakes ($M > 6$) of the world and among them, ~66% are hosted by the

Tonga subduction zone alone. On 19 August 2018, it produced globally the second largest deep earthquake (M_w 8.2, depth ~580 km) in the instrumentally recorded history of earthquakes. The 24 May 2013 Okhotsk earthquake with M_w 8.3 still holds the record for being the largest magnitude deep earthquake. A tiny earthquake (magnitude 4.2) on

8 April 2004 near Vanuatu subduction zone with a depth of 736 km holds the record for being the deepest earthquake. However, among the large events, the 680 km deep 30 May 2015 (M_w 7.9) Ogasawara (Bonin, Japan) Islands earthquake is considered as the deepest recorded earthquake. It is not that all deep earthquakes occur in subduction zones only; a