

## January 2022 update on the progress of translatE project

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We hope you are all doing well and safe (and enjoyed Christmas/New Year, or will enjoy Lunar New Year soon, if you celebrate either of them)! It is our pleasure to give you the first update of the year on the progress of our translatE project.

### 1. Non-English-language evidence now in the Conservation Evidence database

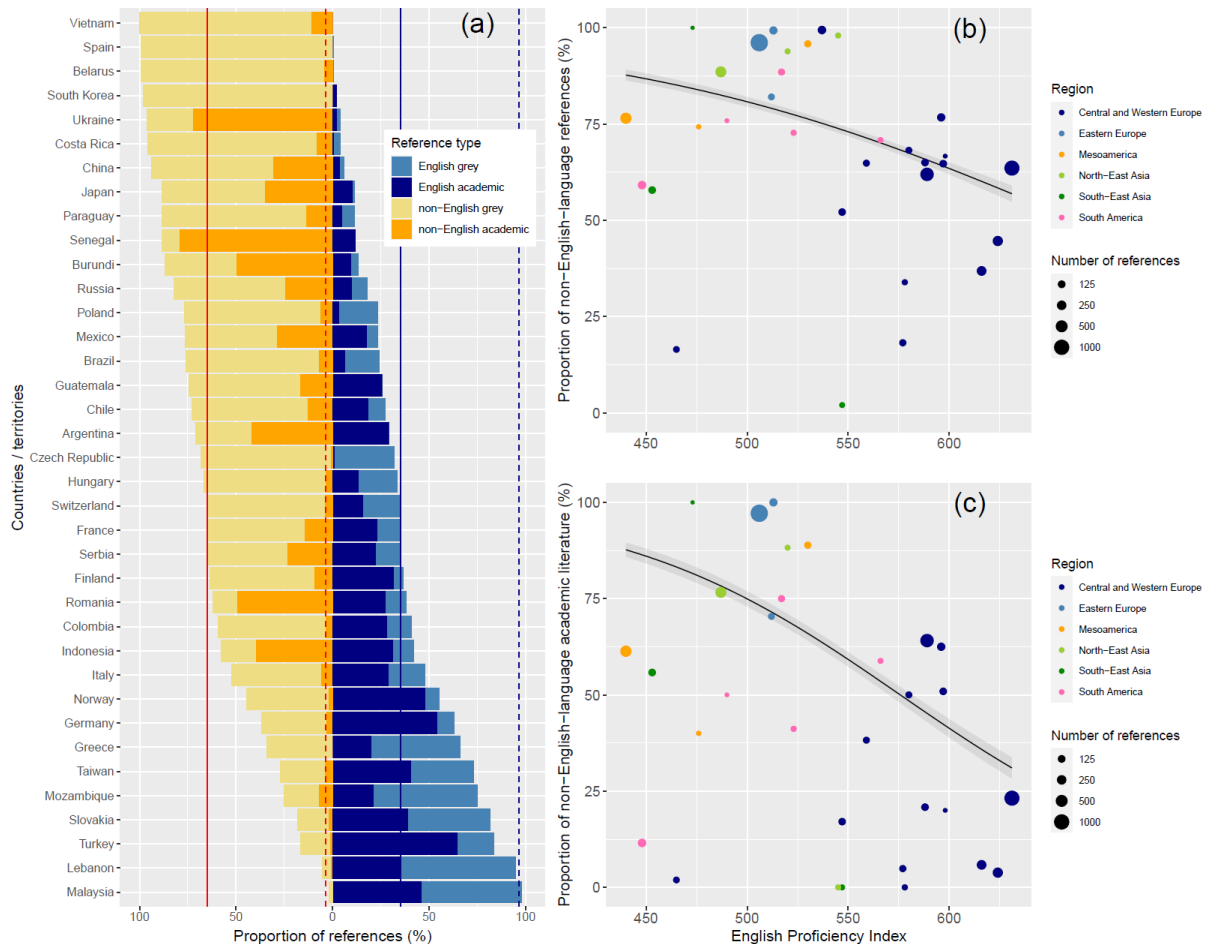
We are excited to see that the non-English-language studies we identified in [this study](#) are now all stored as [a part of the Conservation Evidence database](#). This is a huge step forward towards fully incorporating scientific evidence available in non-English languages into evidence-based conservation.

Many thanks again to all collaborators and the Conservation Evidence team!

### 2. New preprint: language barriers to national biodiversity assessments

Our new paper “**The role of non-English-language science in informing national biodiversity assessments**” is finally completed and now available as a [preprint](#). In this paper we aimed to understand how language barriers might affect the use of scientific evidence in national-level biodiversity assessments in countries where English is not an official language. Thanks again to the help from many collaborators, we have collected data from **37 countries** spanning **25 different languages**. We found that non-English-language literature is a major source of knowledge domestically. On average, 65% of the references cited in national assessments were non-English-language literature (see **Figure 1** on the next page), and 75% of the report authors recognised non-English-language literature as an important source of relevant knowledge. We also found that a quarter of the report authors struggled with understanding English-language literature. Our results demonstrate the need to use non-English-language knowledge more effectively at the international level and reduce English-language barriers to facilitate the use of English-language knowledge in local decision-making.

Again, many thanks **not only to those collaborators who helped us collect the information but also to report authors/editors who took their time to contribute to this part of the project**. Much appreciated! We will let you know as soon as the paper is published in a peer-reviewed journal.



**Figure 1. The proportion of references cited in national biodiversity assessments by language and literature type.** (a) The proportion of English-language academic (dark blue) and grey (pale blue) literature, and non-English-language academic (orange) and grey (yellow) literature. The red and blue solid lines indicate the mean proportion of non-English- and English-language references cited in national biodiversity assessments across 37 countries/territories, respectively, while the red and blue broken lines represent the mean proportion of non-English- and English-language references in the IPBES’s eight biodiversity assessment reports, respectively. The relationship between the English Proficiency Index of each country and (b) the proportion of non-English-language references cited (academic and grey literature combined) and (c) the proportion of non-English-language academic literature cited.

### 3. Collaboration: overcoming language barriers to academic publishing

In this project component we have been exploring journals’ commitment to overcoming language barriers to academic publishing. With the help from 30 collaborators, we have already collected data from journal’s websites and delivered a structured survey to more than 700 journal editors. Thanks to the diligent leadership and strategic work from our project member Henry Arenas-Castro (he has just submitted his PhD thesis two weeks ago – congratulations!), we have already produced preliminary results. We will soon start writing

a manuscript, where we intend to show factors associated with the barriers in academic publishing.

#### 4. Collaboration: cost of being a non-native English speaker in academia

Last year we have also been busy working on another massive collaboration; here we aim to quantify the extra workload needed for non-native English speakers in science and compare it with that for native-English speakers. Through working with country coordinators from two English speaking countries (Nigeria and United Kingdom) and six non English speaking countries (Bangladesh, Bolivia, Japan, Nepal, Spain, and Ukraine), we have delivered structured surveys to more than 800 people in these countries to collect data from scientists with a wide range of socioeconomic and linguistic backgrounds. We are hoping to produce results from the collected data soon and aim to produce a paper during the first half of the year.

#### 5. Other news

##### New members

We are glad that our translatE project is rapidly growing. A big warm welcome to our new members – [Haonan Wei and Marina Corella](#)!

##### Haonan Wei



Haonan is an honours student majoring in environmental science at the University of Queensland. Her childhood experiences, which had been filled with nature documentaries, provided her with vicarious connections to nature and thus drove her to study her current major. She has a strong interest in the role of popular science as an important medium to gain public attention to environmental issues, and is working on the consequences of language barriers in nature documentaries.

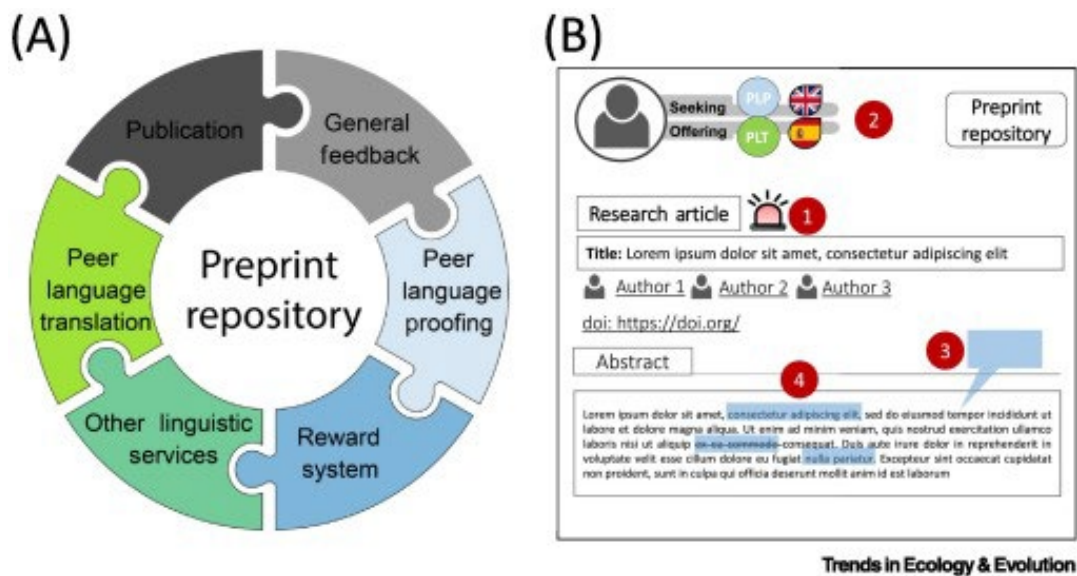
##### Marina Corella Tor



Marina is a PhD candidate at the University of Queensland, working under the supervision of Dr Tatsuya Amano and Prof Richard Fuller. After working as a Research Assistant in the Fuller Lab for the last two years, they are very excited to turn all that work into a PhD. Marina hopes to uncover the current state of international environmental agreements and legislation around migratory bird protection worldwide. They are also interested in the effect of language barriers on international migratory bird agreements across the world.

**New paper: Khelifa, R., Amano, T. and Nuñez, M.A. (2021) A solution for breaking the language barrier. Trends in Ecology & Evolution.**

Tatsuya has collaborated on a paper titled [“A solution for breaking the language barrier”](#) published in Trends in Ecology & Evolution. Here, they propose integrating new systems, such as peer language proofing and peer language translation, into preprint repositories, as a potential solution for overcoming language barriers for both native and non-native English speakers (see **Figure 2**). Please have a read for more detail.



**Figure 2.** (A) In addition to the functionalities already present in preprint repositories, new features can be added, such as peer language proofing (PLP) and peer language translation (PLT), other linguistic services. (B) New functionalities implemented in preprint repositories: (1) The manuscript is flagged with an alert icon, highlighting that it needs a peer service (PLP or PLT); (2) Service requested and offered. Here, the authors seek English PLP and offer Spanish PLT; (3,4) e.Proofing software integrated into the preprint platform, including commenting (3) and text modification (4).

**Congratulations to Tatsuya**

Tatsuya has been awarded [the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science \(JSPS\) Prize](#) for his work, [Assessment of Global Biodiversity with Special Focuses on National Governance and Information Gaps in Language and Research](#). Congratulations, Tatsuya, hugely well-deserved! (Tatsuya would like to thank all the collaborators, mentors, supervisors, friends & family for their support – this would not have been possible without all the help.)

## Presentations on language barriers

Since last September Tatsuya has been busy presenting the outcome of the translatE project at five seminar series/conferences. These were amazing opportunities to disseminate the project's outputs.

22nd Sept: *Language barriers in conservation and science*. (2021) Lab seminar. The Invasion Science & Wildlife Ecology Group, University of Adelaide, Australia.

20th Oct: *Why language matters in ecology and conservation*. (2021) iDiv seminar, German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research (iDiv), Germany.

3rd Nov: *Overcoming language barriers in science*. (2021) Keynote presentation at the Bioconductor Virtual Conference Asia 2021. Watch the presentation [here](#).

30th Nov: *Sharing and using evidence on conservation in a multilingual world*. (2021) Major Topics in International Bird Conservation Webinar Series. The Taiwan Endemic Species Research Institute and Taiwan Wild Bird Federation, Taiwan.

3rd Dec: *Why language matters in conservation*. (2021) Keynote presentation at the 29th Philippine Biodiversity Symposium Virtual Meeting. The Biodiversity Conservation Society of the Philippines, The Philippines.

## Removing files from Dropbox folder

We are currently organising our files that were shared with collaborators. As a part of this we are soon going to stop sharing all the data used for the study "Tapping into non-English-language science for the conservation of global biodiversity" in Dropbox and save them in The University of Queensland's data repository. If you wish to keep any of these files for your record, please do it before 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

That's all for now. We hope that we can keep collaborating on exciting research in the year 2022 to break language barriers in conservation and science! Keep safe and well.