

February 2024 update on the progress of translatE project

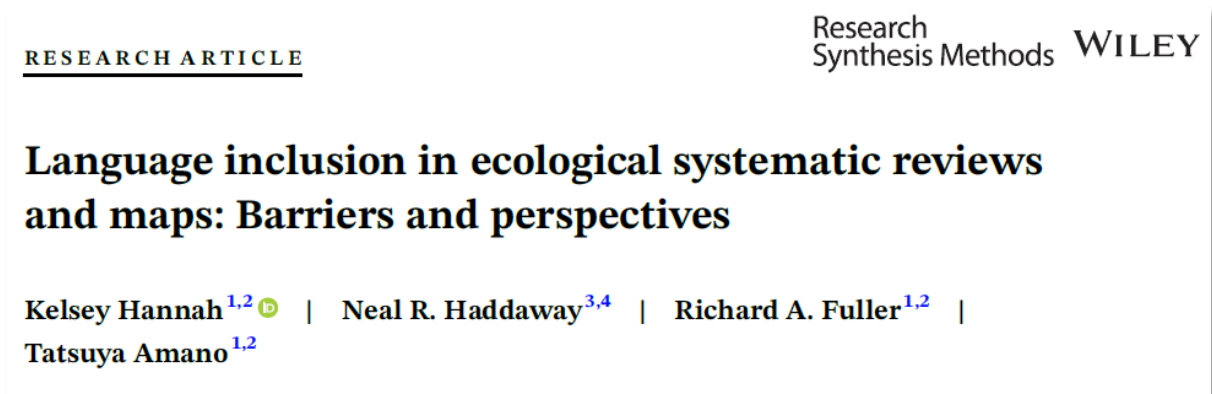
08/02/2024

Tatsuya Amano and Violeta Berdejo-Espinola (University of Queensland)

We are glad to share with you our first project update of the year, covering our recent outcomes, media coverages, and some other news including a new call for collaborators.

1. **New paper: Hannah K, Haddaway N, Fuller R, Amano T. Language inclusion in ecological systematic reviews and maps: Barriers and perspectives. 2024. *Research Synthesis Methods*.**

Read the open access article [here](#).



We are excited to announce a new publication “**Language inclusion in ecological systematic reviews and maps: Barriers and perspectives**” led by Kelsey Hannah, a PhD student at translatE. In this paper she examined the inclusion of non-English-language literature in environmental systematic literature reviews and maps, and the factors that explain the inclusion of non-English language literature. She analysed 72 systematic literature reviews and maps published in the journal *Environmental Evidence* and also surveyed 32 authors of the reviews/maps.

The paper found that 44% of the reviewed papers excluded non-English-language literature from their searches and inclusions, mainly due to lack of language skills and resource / time constraints (Figure 1). Larger author teams, authors from diverse countries (especially those where English is not a primary language), and multilingual teams used more languages in their searches (Figure 2).

To make a better use of non-English-language literature in systematic literature reviews, the study recommends increasing diversity within review teams, utilizing machine translation alongside the language skills of collaborators, including translation costs in funding applications, and establishing language exchange systems like [Cochrane Engage](#).

This is Kelsey’s first PhD chapter. We want to congratulate Kelsey for leading this amazing research!

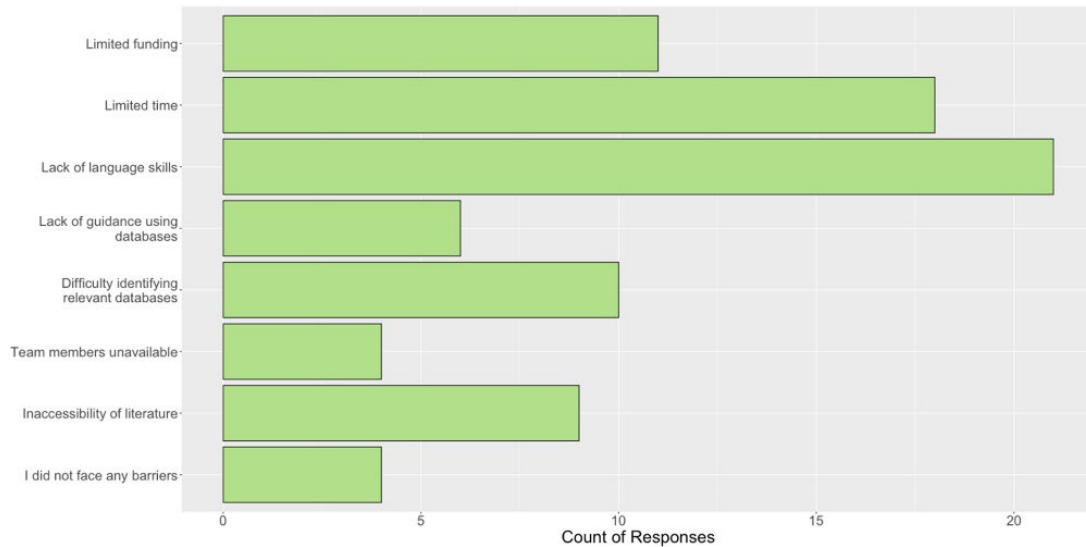


Figure 1. Count of barriers that impeded the searching for and screening of non-English-language articles in the specific systematic review/map published in Environmental Evidence. The 32 respondents were allowed to select multiple barriers

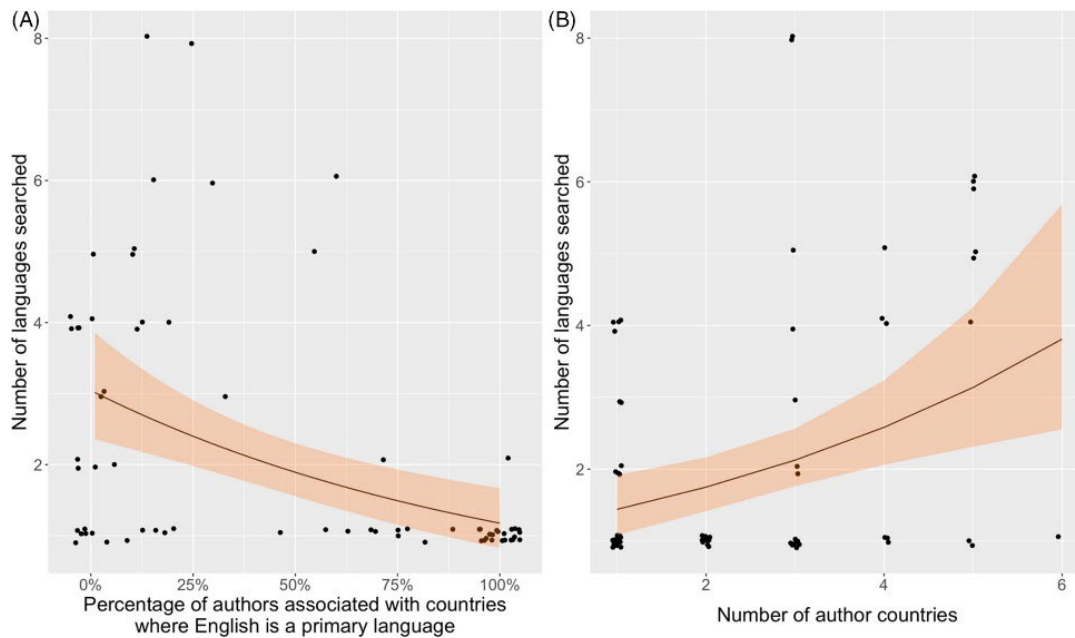


Figure 2. Relationships between the number of languages searched in each systematic review/map and (a) the percentage of authors associated with countries where English is a primary language and (b) the number of author countries. The regression lines are based on the fitted Poisson generalised linear model with 95% confidence intervals shown as shaded areas and with the exclusion of an outlying datapoint. Jitter is used to show all data points.

2. Media coverage: Nature covered our latest work (for the third time last year!)



Tatsuya discussed the pros and cons of ChatGPT and other AI tools for scientific publishing in this Nature News article titled “How can ChatGPT and other AI tools disrupt scientific publishing.”

Read the article [here](#).

3. Media coverage: Our work was covered by the Chemical & Engineering News



The article “What to do when language impedes science” discussed the challenges non-native English speakers face in academia and potential solutions to this issue, covering a lot of our work at translatE.

Read the article [here](#).

4. Other news: Tatsuya's presentation at The Linnean Society of London lunchtime lecture



Tatsuya gave a lecture for The Linnean Society of London lunchtime lecture series, titled “[One-way mirror in the room: how language barriers impede conservation](#)”. He talked about how language barriers can impede evidence-based conservation of global biodiversity in three major ways: barriers to (1) The global synthesis of scientific evidence scattered across different languages, (2) The application of English-language evidence to local decision making in countries where English is not widely spoken, and (3) The generation of scientific evidence by non-native English speakers.

The presentation is now available [here](#).

5. Call for collaborators

In partnership with the Zoological Society of London, we are starting a new global project to synthesise species population data that are available in non-English languages. For this exciting synthesis project, we are seeking collaborators who are native speakers of the following eight languages:

- French
- German
- Hungarian
- Japanese
- Polish
- Russian
- Simplified Chinese
- Spanish.

We will offer co-authorship of the resulting paper to those who screen a certain number of journals for the project (the authorship position will be after the core team members and in alphabetical order by last name).

More details are available from Violeta, who will lead the project, so if you are interested or have any question, please contact Violeta: v.berdejoespino@uq.edu.au

Thanks for reading our first project update of the year. Until next time!