Community Call:
Managing Multilingual Communities

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Forest loss and community structure in hummingbirds

~450 decisions
~300 new manuscripts
~110 papers published
~40% student 1st author
2018: contributing authors from >40 countries

Location of *Biotropica* authors 1969-2018
Working with a (really) multilingual community

Policy
1) As a society journal, one of our important roles is to advance the scholarship of the ATBCs global membership
2) Language issues are never grounds for rejection.
3) A geographically diverse editorial board is central to our success.

People
1) 52 Subject Editors in 20 countries*
2) >1000 reviewers around the world.
3) Editors are key! They select diverse reviewers, often communicate with authors and referees in native language, ‘translate’.
4) Because many editors & reviewers are also not native speakers, they also make mistakes and hence are understanding.

Actions
1) We pay for manuscript editing.
2) Eliminate “native English speaker“ from reviews & decision letters
3) Request abstracts in second language (10 languages in 2017)
4) Advertise incessantly to increase awareness

*Mexico, UK, Spain, USA, Germany, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Costa Rica, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Peru, Canada, Rwanda, Switzerland, Thailand, India, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia
Why this matters (and some suggestions)

1) It’s not about the community members you have, it’s about the ones you could have

2) A review process in English is fine. So are occasional comments (or even reviews) in a foreign language.

3) Don’t get hung up on language issues unless they get in the way of reviewing the work.

4) Editing and translation is low hanging but high impact fruit. Hire professionals to do it.

5) Show people you’re welcoming (explicitly & indirectly)
These efforts are appreciated...

...and they can stimulate change.

Kannada in @Biotropica thanks to @tncvidya @jncasr. Was happy to help in translation. May be such Indian language abstracts in International pure science journals counted on fingers. But it is exciting to see them like this, and more exciting in print.

American Naturalist @ASNAmNat · Mar 29, 2018
We're following the lead of @Biotropica (and @JEcology) too. We will have native language abstracts on the abstract page and html (and ebook) versions. We'll get the instructions up soon. Thanks for the inspiration!

David Gibson @DavidJohnGibson · Mar 28, 2018
Native language abstracts. Really important initiative for #Scicomm #Equality #Diversity @JEcology follows @Biotropica lead. "Why is it important to publish an abstract in the indigenous language of the research country?" jecologyblog.wordpress.com/2018/03/28/ind...
We even use them to dunk on the competition.