

5th anniversary of the Helsinki Initiative Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication

Multilingualism in the
reform of research
assessment

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Linguistic diversity in Latin America and the Caribbean

- + 400 million people in the Americas speak Spanish as their First Language. 247 million people speak English as their mother tongue, 204 million people speak Brazilian Portuguese, about 8 million people speak French or French Creole.
- + Only four of the dominant language families, **Quechua** (9 million speakers) and **Aymara** (2.2 million speakers), **Guarani** (5 million speakers) and **Nahuatl** (Aztec; 1.5 million), the most widely spoken languages of indigenous peoples of the Americas, are considered to be not endangered.



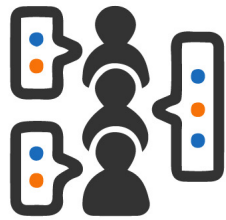
Source:

https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/american_languages.htm#google_vignette



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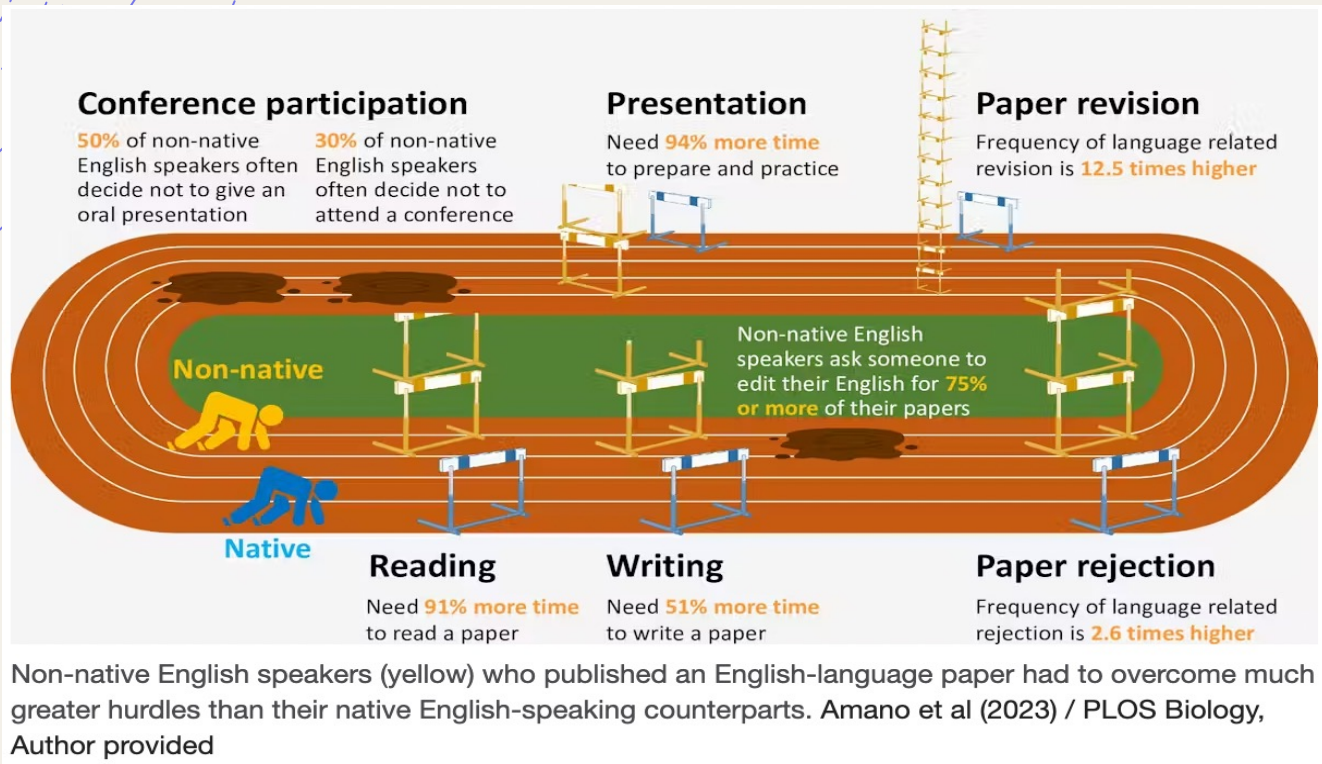
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Multilingualism

- Dominant forms of evaluation stimulate the publication of articles in English, in detriment of other formats and communication languages, thereby excluding a large part of knowledge production in many countries and regions of the world.
- Monolingualism disincentive fluid dialogue among academics who share the same language, or who speak and understand multiple languages.
- In 2020 (Web of Science), 95% of the total articles in scientific journals were in English, and 1% in Spanish or Portuguese.
- Growing trend in Portugal and Brazil to publish in English.
- Even in the social sciences and humanities, the publication of articles in English is increasingly being chosen as a format.

Language barriers have a widespread impact



+ English hyper centralism not only impoverishes the record of science but also substantially affects the publishing possibilities of researchers from non-English speaking countries, who are constantly subjected to reviews requested by journals claiming that they need to have their texts proofread by “native speakers”.

+ Ramírez-Castañeda V (2020) Disadvantages in preparing and publishing scientific papers caused by the dominance of the English language in science: The case of Colombian researchers in biological sciences. PLoS ONE 15(9): e0238372. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0238372>

CLACSO-FOLEC Declaration of Principles

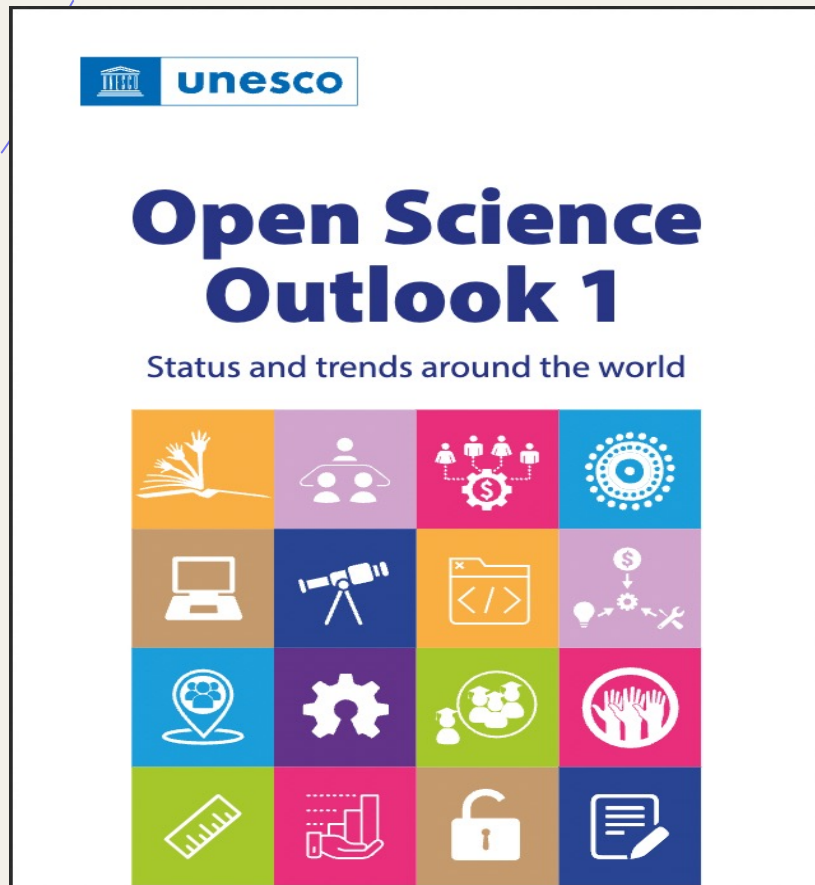
- Writing in English does not confer a merit per se superior to publications in other languages. Multilingualism favors the development of socially relevant research and contributes to sustaining cultural diversity.



there is no reason to apply a general language or format hierarchy in the review of social and human sciences. All forms of publication and local languages are necessary.



Multilingual Open Science for all



- + Open access to scientific knowledge and interaction between science and society is possible only if scientific knowledge is produced, communicated and used in multiple languages and formats.
- + Inequalities among the scientific communities of developed and developing countries caused by Article Processing Charges, (APC) and Book Processing Charges (BPC), as they transfer costs to authors and/or their institution (UNESCO, 2021).

Language diversity in regional publications

- + In LAC, Spanish and Portuguese subsist as languages of publication, regional infrastructure with its own indexing system (Latindex, SciELO, Redalyc), including thousands of predominantly university-based journals managed by the community itself with diamond open access.
- + Open access institutional repositories that reflect the production of each university give more visibility to the bibliodiversity and multilingualism of scientific-scholarly production in Latin American universities. In the region, there is a longstanding tradition of publishing books through university or specialized publishing houses.

Articles by language (n=790,304)


Language	Articles [%]
Spanish	43.7%
Portuguese	32.09%
English	23.91%
French	0.2%
No data	0.12%
Total	100%

Source: The OLIVA database (June 2019).

Beigel, F. et. al. (2024). OLIVA: The Scientific output in journals edited in Latin America. Disciplinary Diversity, Institutional Collaboration, and Multilingualism in SciELO and Redalyc (1995-2018), Revista Dados. Rio de Janeiro Vol.67 N.1. <https://doi.org/10.1590/SciELOPreprints.2653> (Original work published 2021)

Motives for change in evaluation systems

- + Heteronomous assessment indicators, used in ranking systems and accreditation of institutions, based on international commercial services only reflect a small percentage of quality publications in our region.
- + Improving the coverage of open scientific information in global open infrastructures is a master key to make visible and expand the circulation of scientific and local knowledge produced in different languages, formats and in diverse geographic regions, linked to different critical local and development problems.



LA Referencia
Red de repositorios de acceso abierto a la ciencia


Inicio Institucional Nodos Servicios Documentos

EXPLORA LAS PUBLICACIONES CIENTÍFICAS DE AMÉRICA LATINA EN ACCESO ABIERTO


OpenAlex

Ingresar texto... Todos los Campos Buscar Búsqueda Avanzada


12 NODOS NACIONALES	3.869.878 DOCUMENTOS	2.380.039 ARTÍCULOS 104.031 REPORTES	406.531 TESIS DE DOCTORADO 859.908 TESIS DE MAestrÍA
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SciELO
Scientific Electronic Library Online



OLIVA
Observatorio Latinoamericano de Indicadores de Evaluación de la Producción Publicada e Indexada



redalyc.org
UAEM



latindex

Sistema Regional de Información en línea para Revistas Científicas de América Latina, el Caribe, España y Portugal

Including Multilingualism in Research Assessment Reform



**Helsinki Initiative
on Multilingualism**

Hi!

- Explicit or implicit language priorities in assessment may:
 - Compromise equal opportunities for individual researchers and institutions
 - Endanger locally relevant research and knowledge transfer beyond academia
- Ensuring that high quality research is valued regardless of the publishing language entails:
 - Taking into account publications outside the so called “mainstream” databases.
 - Engaging sufficiently diverse pool of experts and linguistic skills in the assessment panels.

Incentives for multilingualism in responsible research assessment



- + Academic career assessment: *encourage multilingualism and publishing in local languages*. Examples: percentage of publications in Spanish / Portuguese / French / German / others with respect to the production; at least 1 publication in indigenous languages.

Supportive initiatives promoting multilingualism

+ *An important initiative for mapping scholarly publishing is “ES-CIENCIA”, an Interdisciplinary Thematic Platform developed by the CSIC, which constitutes an important resource to value and understand scientific communication in Spanish.*

Repositories have made systematic progress in harvesting and curating institutional output, but still require major investments to achieve their integration at a national or inter-institutional level.

+ *For open access academic books, there is an international indexing system, the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB), which includes more than 600 publishers, but still has a limited number of diverse presses from all regions of the world.*

+ *The Norwegian model Cristin is a noteworthy experience, as it includes books for the faculty’s performance evaluation, using a qualitative classification that ranks the contributions of these disciplines and their publications in the local language, including a categorization process.*



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Hi!

**All languages have value in scientific
communication.
Let's make it worthy in research
assessment**

Working Group:

Multilingualism and language biases in research assessment

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