Abstract

Emilia is a widely distributed, mainly African, palaeotropical genus in the tribe Senecioneae (Asteraceae). It comprises of 117 species, most of which are annual herbs. Bayesian and parsimony phylogenetic analyses were performed on 51 Emilia species along with closely related genera in the Senecioneae using nuclear ITS and plastid trnL-trnF sequence data to address questions around the generic circumscription of Emilia, including the status of the similar genera Emiliella and Bafutia, assess Jeffrey’s sectional classification of Emilia, and evaluate the distinctness of the morphologically similar species in the large-headed Emilia coccinea complex. Both nuclear and plastid phylogenies reveal Emilia to be paraphyletic and polyphyletic, with Bafutia and Emiliella nested within Emilia, and Jeffrey’s sectional classification is not supported. The phylogenies provide additional evidence that Emilia coccinea and changes are made in this manuscript.