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Person 1
Affiliation 1

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Abstract

The aim of this research project is to assess the impact of "Teaching translation via Wikipedia" training activities from the perspective of their impact on the Wikipedia community. While there seems to be abundant evidence of the positive contribution of Wikipedia-based translation activities to the development of a sound translation competence, little attention has been paid so far to the impact of education-based translation initiatives on the Wikipedia community. It is precisely this gap that the present research project aims to fill, by carrying out an extensive survey of translation programmes that are experimenting with Wikipedia-based translation practice activities at both undergraduate and postgraduate level along with a multifactoral investigation aimed at assessing the impact of such translation activities on the community itself in order to enhance their potential for a positive contribution to the multilingual ecosystem of Wikimedia projects.

Introduction

Recent research has discussed the impact of "Teaching translation via Wikipedia" projects stressing the positive contribution of such projects to the development translation competence in the context of a mutual interest and synergy between Translation Studies and the Wikipedia Community. However scarce attention has been paid so far on the impact that such activities have on the Wikipedia community. It is precisely this gap that the present research project aims to fill, by carrying out an extensive Janus-faced investigation. On the one hand a comprehensive survey will be carried out on translation programmes in Italy that are experimenting with Wikipedia-based translation practice activities at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. On2 the other hand an investigation will be carried out in collaboration with the local Wikipedia community on the basis of the following questions:

- Primary Question:
  - How many translation programmes in Italy are using "Teaching translation via Wikipedia" activities?
  - How are these activities carried out, especially in terms of follow-up?
  - What is the impact of such Wikipedia-based translation training programs on the Wikimedia community?
- Secondary Questions:
  - What are community members' perceptions of student-translators and their work?
  - To what extent do students continue contributing after the course ends?
  - How do translation trainees' contributions affect the diversity and quality of content in target Wikipedia editions?
  - How can translation pedagogy align better with Wikimedia's standards and community culture?

- Do trainee translators use the in-built translation tool in Wikipedia? What is their feedback on its efficacy?
- Which resources, if any, are produced in the context of Wikipedia-based translation training activities that can be profitably shared with the community (e.g. bilingual/multilingual comparable/parallel corpora? glossaries? term banks)?
- How can the interaction with training programmes improve Wikipedia projects from a translation perspective?

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Related work

The role that Wikipedia's multilingual ecosystem can play as a dynamic environment for innovative translator training (McDonough Dolmaya 2015; Al-Shehari 2017; Shuttleworth 2017; Martinez-Carrasco 2018; Calzada Peréz 2019; Musacchio 2020; Gatto 2023) has been largely discussed in a number of articles, all stressing the unique role of Wikipedia-based translation projects in supporting innovative translation pedagogy approaches based on the triad "autonomy, experience and expertise" (Kiraly 2019; Calzada Pérez 2019).

When working on Wikipedia, students are confronted with highly motivating translation projects that are appropriately addressed to an external audience, but what happens once the translation has been published in Wikipedia is an uncharted territory, so far.

For its part, Wikipedia openly argues, in the "Translate us" page, that the translation of articles is particularly well-suited for students, "who will be motivated by the fact that their work will be seen by thousands of Wikipedia readers". In this way, students do not only test their translation competence on authentic tasks, but are also given an opportunity to actually contribute to Wikipedia's linguistic diversity and accessibility (Jiménez-Crespo 2017; McDonough Dolmaya 2019), and can also contribute to bridging existing gaps in terms of language diversity or gender equity by choosing appropriate language pairs or focusing on specific subjects for translation. The presence of as many different languages as possible is indeed one of the major assets for the Wikipedia community, as it makes its contents accessible to the widest possible audience – not to mention the fact that engaging students as new editors obviously expands its base of active users. Furthermore, participation in volunteer translation projects fosters critical reflections on ethical considerations in non-professional translation, preparing students for their role as global knowledge disseminators, implicitly aligning with the broader societal goals of university education.

On a more practical level, translation projects regarding the translation of Wikipedia entries do not only require linguistic expertise, but also skills in information mining, time management, and audience engagement, addressing all the various competences and sub-competences outlined under the European Master's in Translation (EMT) framework,[2] thus contributing to the achievement of an overarching translation competence that encompasses language proficiency, intercultural understanding, information retrieval, and mastery of tools (Gambier 2009; Toudic and Krause 2017). In addition, as already noted in Gatto (2023), teaching translation via Wikipedia projects harnesses the already existing synergy between Wikipedia and Translation Studies, which is evident from dedicated translation policies and tools, as well as from the existing literature addressing several facets of this growing research field (Jones 2021). For instance, research into "foci of translation" in Wikipedia has provided new inspiring insights into its complex multilingual "labyrinth" (Shuttleworth 2017), whereas corpus-based translation studies scholars see Wikipedia as a

whole as a unique corpus in which texts are linked to each other by a complex, hybrid and dynamic relationship. Wikipedia contains texts that can be the translation of each other (parallel); texts in different languages on the same topics (comparable); and texts that are a hybrid of both because they started out as translations and then developed independently, while still maintaining parallel segments: hence the definition of 'comparallel' corpus (Bernardini et al. 2011), whose potential still needs to be exploited to the full.
Compared with this abundant literature, the impact that such pedagogical activities can have on the wikipedia community is largely underexplored. The present project, building on the University of Bari's year-long experience in running translation marathons at Univerity level (https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progetto:Coordinamento/Universit%C3%A0/UNIBA/Translatathon) , aims to fill this gap by focusing on the follow-up of translation training activities in collaboration with the local Wikimedia communities, both on the basis of existing data it their disposal (resulting from previous experiences with translation training activities) and with new data resulting from activities carried out ad hoc for the present project.

Methods

1. **Survey on "Teaching translation via Wikipedia projects in the target countries**

Questionnaires will be sent to all Italian universities running translation-related programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level (L12 and LM 94). The survey will include a suggestion to promote Wikipedia-based translation activities and an offer to support translation teaching staff potentially interested in the implementation of such activities via a dedicated toolkit.

2. **Implementation of Translation Training toolkit for a 6-week course to be integrated into existing translation curricula.**
   Modules will include: Wikipedia policy, translation ethics, source-text critical analysis for reliability and bias, collaborative editing practice , style, use of ICT for translation (including CAT tools and Wikimedia transaltion tool) as well as instruments and indication for monitoring in follow up.

3. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Observation of student participation and community interactions.
Analysis of translated articles for quality, reliability, and impact (pageviews, edits).
Focus on potential NPOV issues in translation
Focus groups with students and follow-up interviews with Wikimedia volunteers.

4. **Post-Course Tracking**

Collection of data from the translation activities (e.g. multilingual resource, comparable/parallel corpora) for reuse at both academic and community level
Community assessment via metrics (e.g., number of new editors retained, number of deletions/reverts, engagement in talk pages).

Expected output

1. **Scholarly Publications:** at least two peer-reviewed papers to be published in A-rank level open access journals
2. **Translation Training Toolkit**: a modular, Wikipedia-based translation training toolkit including pedagogical guides, assessment tools, and community engagement protocols.

This could be addressed to both trainers and trainees, and enhance the involvement of universities in Wikipedia-based translation

training activities, which in turn might result in more data for the present investigation.

3. **Dissemination**

Presentations at Wikimedia Conferences and Translation Studies conferences.
Organization of one international conference focussed on the synergy between the Wikimedia community and the world of Translations Studies.

This would help bridge the gap in terms of research focus between the two communities.

Risks

One typical risk is time management during the translation activities, especially the time required to peer review and revise translation before publication. Mitigation can be achieved by a carefully planned schedule and by involving more people in the revision process (see Gatto 2023).

Community impact plan

Involvement of the Wikimedia community in the design of the initial survey.
Involvement of the Wikimedia Community in the design of the toolkit for translation training.
Involvement of the Wikipedia community for final assessment.

Evaluation

A measure of success will be the quantity information gained on the evolution of pages translated in the context of translation pedagogy activities: visualization data, number of edits, reuse of information, rejections

Budget

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1L0xBvvfaH_Qj9Ypby1KxnnQNuFaQH8vOIrhRrNIxUcQ/edit?usp=sharing

Please note that institutional overhead may be up to 15% of the total budget requested.

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