

Wikipedia in curriculum for Translation Studies MSc

Wikipedia translation assignment developing linguistic skills, writing for different audiences and digital literacy.

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What was done

Wikimedian in Residence, Ewan McAndrew, supported by the Programme Directors of the MSc in Translation Studies MSc, Dr. Charlotte Bosseaux (Senior Lecturer in Translation Studies) and Dr. Hephzibah Israel (Lecturer in Translation Studies) integrate a Wikipedia translation assignment into the Independent Study module within the Translation Studies MSc - Semester One curriculum and the outcome was thirty-six new Wikipedia articles adding to the global open knowledge community.

The cohort of twenty-eight postgraduate students were asked to translate an article totaling not less than 4000 words from one language Wikipedia to another. 2 x two-hour sessions at the beginning of the semester inducted the students into the process and they were later offered three voluntary drop-in advice clinics at the end of the semester.

Session 1

The first two hour session was an introduction to Wikipedia given by Ewan McAndrew, the university's Wikimedian in Residence. This involved a presentation outlining Wikipedia's main policies and guidelines and then practical guidance on how to format a Wikipedia page using Wikipedia's new Visual Editor. The students were encouraged to ask questions to ensure their comprehension of the technical skills and their understanding of Wikipedia policy were equally assured. The first session closed with the students being shown different ways in which they could select an article: including using the Wikipedia category [Articles needing translation from foreign language Wikipedias](#); the [Gapfinder](#) tool; and the [Not in the Other Language](#) tool. The chosen articles then had to be approved by the course tutor to ensure the subject matter was appropriate and the language difficulty was sufficiently challenging.

Session 2

In the following week's two hour session, the students were shown how to utilize Wikipedia's new Content Translation tool to bring up an article in one language Wikipedia on one side of the screen and translate it paragraph-by-paragraph on the other side of the screen into a different language Wikipedia; taking all the formatting aspects such as links, citations, headings, images, references and categories across to the new language Wikipedia as much as possible. Therefore the students, had only to concentrate on translating the text and ensuring the quality of translation was as good as possible. The session closed with the students beginning their translation using the Content Translation tool in a supportive environment.

Overview

Summary

Translation Studies MSc students selected existing Wikipedia articles in one language (totaling 4000 words in length) and translated the article(s) into a different language Wikipedia. Integrating Wikipedia into coursework allows students and staff to explore the affordances of virtual (online) spaces for public engagement whilst building upon digital literacies training and application. Simultaneously, students develop research skills for academic outcomes and life-long learning, whilst demonstrating online, collaborative writing for a different audience.

Context

- **Level:** Postgraduate
- **Discipline/Subjects:** School of Literatures, Languages & Cultures; Translation Studies MSc
- **Supported by:** Learning, Teaching & Web Services

Contact Details

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Themes

- [Curriculum Development](#)
- [Learning Communities](#)

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Drop-in clinics

Once their chosen topic had been approved, the students worked in their own time to complete the task with email support from the Wikimedian in Residence, Ewan McAndrew. As the deadline approached, a series of three drop-in clinics at the communal computing labs were held. These 60-90 minute sessions were offered to students so they could voluntarily attend, work in a supportive environment with class colleagues and ask questions of the Wikimedian as necessary in order to publish their chosen articles. The first clinic was attended by most students while the two subsequent clinics had fewer and fewer students as any problems that arose were quickly dealt with. As the semester concluded, students published their translations onto the live space of the target language Wikipedia. The students were reminded as a final check to ensure that Wikipedia's guidelines were followed in terms of writing with a neutral point of view, ensuring the statements made in the article were verifiable with reliable sources, adding appropriate links to & from pages in the target Wikipedia and adding a final touch of a template on the new article's Talk page which indicated that the article had been created by a student as part of a Wikipedia course assignment (with a link back to the specific course assignment page for Translation Studies MSc). Microsoft Word copies of the original source article(s) together with MS Word copies of the newly published translated article were then uploaded to the Learn Virtual Learning Environment for quality assurance from their course tutor.

Motivation and aims

There were several areas of interest: integrating digital literacies training and application into curriculum to support skills for academic outcomes and life-long learning; and, developing students as online, collaborative writers, and building research & communication skills with valuable practical experience. The project allowed students and staff to explore the affordances of virtual (online) spaces for public engagement. Through publishing collaboratively via Open Education repositories like Wikipedia, students and staff alike can contribute to the University's knowledge exchange and educational impact agenda.

Successes and lessons learnt

Over the course of a semester, a cohort of 28 postgraduate students were able to select an article (or articles) totaling 4000 words in length in one language Wikipedia and translate it so that it was published on a different language Wikipedia. Thereby the students were able to gain valuable practical translation experience and publish their translations as a hitherto unrepresented topic on a different language Wikipedia thereby sharing this open knowledge with the world. In total, 36 new articles were published. This demonstrated that providing a wide variety of topics & languages to translate would provide enough personalization & stimulus for students with varied interests to participate in & complete a published translation assignment. The assignment is to be repeated in Semester Two as a result.

Scalability and transferability

The success of this project indicates how this type of project, with a public engagement message, lends itself to incorporation into the curriculum across all disciplines and can be scaled up to provide a successful learning experience for larger cohorts.

Requirements for staffing include tutors to support the teaching of translation skills and a Wikimedian to provide Wikipedia publishing training. Venues should be equipped with learning technology for training purposes and should support students with personal computers.

This type of coursework can be applied to all subjects interested in public engagement and knowledge transaction. Wikipedia has a particular need, & an ongoing commitment to, improving the coverage of subjects in different language Wikipedia's.

Assessment

This assignment formed part of the Independent Study component (outwith the 10 hours tutor-led class time) during which students were required to complete the equivalent of a 1 x 400 word formative translation exercise per week (4,000 words per semester). The assignment therefore was not marked and predominantly a peer group exercise.

Feedback at the conclusion of the project included:

"Useful, interesting, looking forward to see more practical opportunities (such as any internship in Wikipedia?)"

"it is very fun but challenging at the same time. i feel like i am doing something very meaningful. it not only helps me with my translation skills, but also makes me feel that i am contributing to wikipedia, to people, to the society."

"A change to carryout translations in an unconventional setting. Having the opportunity to carryout the task on our own and selecting the topic of our choice was very exciting and illuminating."

"I translated a historical article of Tang dynasty in Chinese into English, I found such translation not only help me to improve my translation skills in ancient historical areas, but also equip me with concrete historical knowledge which I found is particularly useful."

"Experience translating something that is actually published. Japanese to English."

"Constantly picking up cultural knowledge."

Reflections on the assignment by Ewan McAndrew (Wikimedian in Residence):



The artwork “Een vertaling van de ene taal naar de andere” / “A Translation from one language to another” by Lawrence Weiner. Placed in 1996 at the Spui (square) in Amsterdam. It consists of three pairs of two stones placed against each other. On each stone there is an inscription “A Translation from one language to another”, in another language – Dutch, English, Surinam and Arabic. Author: brbb1 (CC-BY-SA)

The University of Edinburgh offers a taught [Translation Studies](#). As part of an independent study module, students were asked to choose a Wikipedia article that was at least 4000 words long and to translate it into another language. 29 people took part in the [assignment](#), translating articles from English to Arabic, Chinese, French, Turkish, Japanese and from Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, and Norwegian (bokmal) into English. Students were allowed to choose the article and language they wished to work on but the article choice had to be run past their course tutor who would check the article’s suitability for a class assignment in terms of the article’s subject and the degree of challenge to the language used in the article. Importantly, the tutors were prepared to reject any articles they thought were too simple in the language being used or too frivolous in the subject matter with students reminded that the purpose of the assignment was to further develop their translation skills in tandem with supporting the dissemination of important articles into another language. (The relative importance of the article being decided in negotiation between the student and the tutor.)

The assignment was structured with two in-person training sessions after which students were expected to translate the articles in their own time and submit them. The first in-person session introduced the students to editing Wikipedia and then got them to select the articles they would be working on. The [Gapfinder](#) tool was used to help identify trending pages with no corresponding coverage in the target language. A week later at the second in-person session, the students began the process of translating their chosen article.

The students used the [Content Translation](#) tool to prepare their translations which helped with the formatting of the article so that they could focus on the translation itself. There is a [screencast](#) demonstrating how to use the Content Translation tool which students watched at the end of session one and received more detailed instruction on the use of the tool in session two. The students had until the end of the semester (15 December) to complete and publish the translations.

As of writing, the assignment is now complete and a third in-person drop-in session was held to assist the students with any issues relating to the publishing of the articles. The students were also supported by email. Issues did arise, such as the source article being edited by a Wikipedia community member during the translation process. However, the student in question was able to flag this concern via email and I was able to look at the issue and advise promptly not to change the nature of the translation but instead stick with the older version they had begun to translate. Referencing and notability has also been flagged up when an article has been published in the target Wikipedia but again the student in question was reassured that ensuring the referencing is as clear & detailed as on the source Wikipedia will mean there is no problem. The course is routinely monitored with any issues noted to ensure best practice is documented for future iterations of this project. Self-selecting students and course tutors are also going to attend an afternoon on 18th January 2016 to provide video interview feedback on the course.

This is the first time Wikimedia UK has supported a translation classroom course, and the first time it has encouraged the use of the Content Translation tool – and we are keen to learn how this will develop. The course has been making a very positive impression within the university so far and there's an commitment on both sides to continue this assignment next semester too.

In addition, through the running of this course in Translation Studies MSc, the residency has been introduced to Edinburgh University's Translation Society (EUTS). This student society has in excess of 100 student members. Student representatives from EUTS learned of the Wikipedia Translation assignment through the Translation Studies MSc course leader and requested to take part in the exercise. As there was not enough in the computing lab to accommodate them during the in-person sessions, the EUTS reps sought to meet in order to learn more about how their society could collaborate with Wikimedia in a way that would be mutually beneficial. The meeting was extremely positive and there are now plans to have an EUTS translation project in January or March 2017 where the student reps will invite all 100+ of their members to attend and take part in. Discussions are at an early stage but both parties are keen to see this happen with current consideration being given to whether the project should have an over-arching theme, fitting in with students' interest areas and Wikimedia's strategic priorities; using University College London's [translation editathon themed on women's health](#) as a model for the collaboration.

There have been additional benefits from the session as also in attendance during the assignment was a staff member from Edinburgh University's MRC Centre for Regenerative Medicine. The staff member in question works as a Eurostemcell Translation Manager and is keen to support the translation of Eurostemcell related articles into different languages as the MRC Centre for Regenerative Medicine works closely with European partner labs to share research knowledge related to the study of stemcells; particularly on Wikipedia as they receive research funding on this very basis. Consequently, a Danish Wikimedia trainer has been contacted and secured for a scheduled [Eurostemcell Wikipedia editathon](#) at a Danish partner lab in Copenhagen at the end of November 2016. If this Danish pilot works well then the Eurostemcell team plan on holding Wikipedia editathons every year for World Stem Cell Day.

Links:

- [Wikipedia:Five pillars](#)
- [Translation Studies MSc – Wikipedia assignment](#)
- [Content Translation \(guide\)](#)
- [List of different language Wikipedias](#)
- [Gapfinder tool](#) - an app that helps you find missing content in any language for which there is a Wikipedia edition.

Articles created

| Student# | Chosen article(s) | Language translating from | Language Translating to | Newly translated article |
|----------|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1. | الحديث العربي الأدب | Arabic | English | Modern Arabic literature |
| 2. | Long-toed salamander | English | Chinese | 长趾钝口螈 |
| 3. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Portrait of a Lady 2. The Wings of the Dove 3. La Curee | English | Chinese | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 贵妇画像 2. 鸽之翼 (小说) 3. 贪欲的角逐 |
| 4. | Crime in New York City | English | Chinese | Not yet published. |
| 5. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Osterreichisch-Ungarische Nordpolexpedition 2. Frankfurter Hauserkampf 3. Deutsche National hymne | German | English | Not yet published. |
| 6. | United States Presidential Election Debates | English | Chinese | 美国总统大选辩论 |
| 7. | Romanticism in Scotland | English | French | Romantisme écossais |
| 8. | Romanticism in Scotland | English | French | Romantisme écossais |
| 9. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Various books by Jens Bjerneboe 2. Johan Augusti nussen 3. Lerchendal gard | Norwegian (bokmal) | English | Not yet published. |
| 10. | 丸目長恵 | Japanese | English | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Okuri-inu - a kind of yokai: a class of supernatural monsters, spirits and demons in Japanese folklore. 2. Marume Nagayoshi - a famous Japanese swordsman. 3. Rōjinbi - A demonic flame that supposedly appears deep in the mountains on rainy nights. |
| 12. | أبو دية تمهيد | Arabic | English | Muhannad Abu Diah |
| 13. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cosmetics in Ancient Rome | English | Chinese | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 古罗马化妆习俗 |

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|-----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| | 2. Japanese street fashion | | | 2. 日本街头时尚 |
| 14. | 1. The Penelopiad 2. 北宋 - 维基百科，自由的百科全书 | 1. English 2. Chinese | 1. Chinese 2. English | 1. 佩涅罗珀_(小说) 2. The Northern Song Dynasty |
| 15 | 1. The Book of Hours 2. Letters to a Young Poet 3. The Waves 4. Flush: A Biography | English | Chinese | 1. 时刻之书 2. 致一位年轻诗人的信 3. 海浪_(弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫作品) 4. 奔流：一部传记 |
| 16 | Anarchism in Chile | Spanish | English | Anarchism in Chile |
| 17 | Harry Potter influences and analogues | English | Chinese | 哈利·波特的创作灵感来源及相似作品 |
| 18 | 1. Art for Art's sake 2. 唐宋與吐蕃關係史 | 1. English 2. Chinese | 1. Chinese 2. English | 1. 为艺术而艺术 2. The History of Relationship Development Between Imperial China and Tibetan Regime In Tang and Song Dynasty |
| 19 | Anarchism in Chile | Spanish | English | Anarchism in Chile |
| 20 | 1. Ichabod Crane 2. Charlie Chaplin filmography | English | Chinese | 1. 伊卡博德·克兰 2. 查理·卓别林影片辑 |
| 21 | Ada Lovelace | English | Greek | Άντα Λάβλεις |
| 22 | Cultural studies | English | Turkish | Kültürel Çalışmalar |
| 23 | Anarchism in Chile | Spanish | English | Anarchism in Chile |
| 24 | Dick Turpin | English | Japanese | ディック・ターピン |
| 25 | 1. Kray Twins 2. 1994年北一女中學生自殺事件 | 1. English 2. Chinese | 1. Chinese 2. English | 1. 科雷兄弟 2. Suicides of Two Girls of Taipei First Girls' High School in 1994 |
| 26 | Self-efficacy | English | Chinese | #自我效能 |
| 27 | 1. Credentialism and educational inflation 2. More popular than Jesus | English | Chinese | 1. 文凭主义及教育通胀 2. 比耶稣更受欢迎 |
| 28 | 1. The Wizarding World of Harry Potter (Universal Orlando Resort) 2. Christianity in Morocco | English | Chinese | 1. 哈利波特的魔法世界(奥兰多环球影城) 2. 摩洛哥基督教 |
| 29 | 1. Gypsy Jazz | English | Chinese | 1. 吉普赛爵士 |

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|-----------|--|---------|---------|----------------------------|
| | 2. Chuck Schuldiner | | | 2. 查克·舒爾迪那 |
| 30 | Reactive attachment disorder | English | Chinese | Not yet published. |