

Nagel, Alison (Englisches Seminar)
Woodfin, Kai (Englisches Seminar)

Translating Wikipedia

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



UNI
FREIBURG

The International Autonomous Online Classroom

Each group chooses a Wikipedia entry that does not exist in the target language, translates the text into the foreign language, and receives feedback from native speakers. The revised text is then published and appears as a genuinely new entry in Wikipedia. Students studying English B.A at Freiburg University linked up with a group of students from a Senior Honours German translation class at Aberdeen University. Even if no university collaboration is possible, students still receive feedback from peers and other Wikipedians.

Feedback from students

- I like this class, especially the fact that our work does not just end up in a folder, but is actually published on Wikipedia. I am also not very good with anything computer related, so this is very good practice, not only for translation but also for my computer skills. - *Nicola*
- There's little I could add to the general praise of this project without repeating what has been said before, but I want to stress how much I like the idea. Wikipedia seems to be such a perfect field to practice translation while creating actual, real-world content. It's one of those obviously good ideas you can't believe you didn't think of yourself. I was really perplexed when I found out it was actually hard to get this project going. - *Elmar*

Tips, and lessons learnt

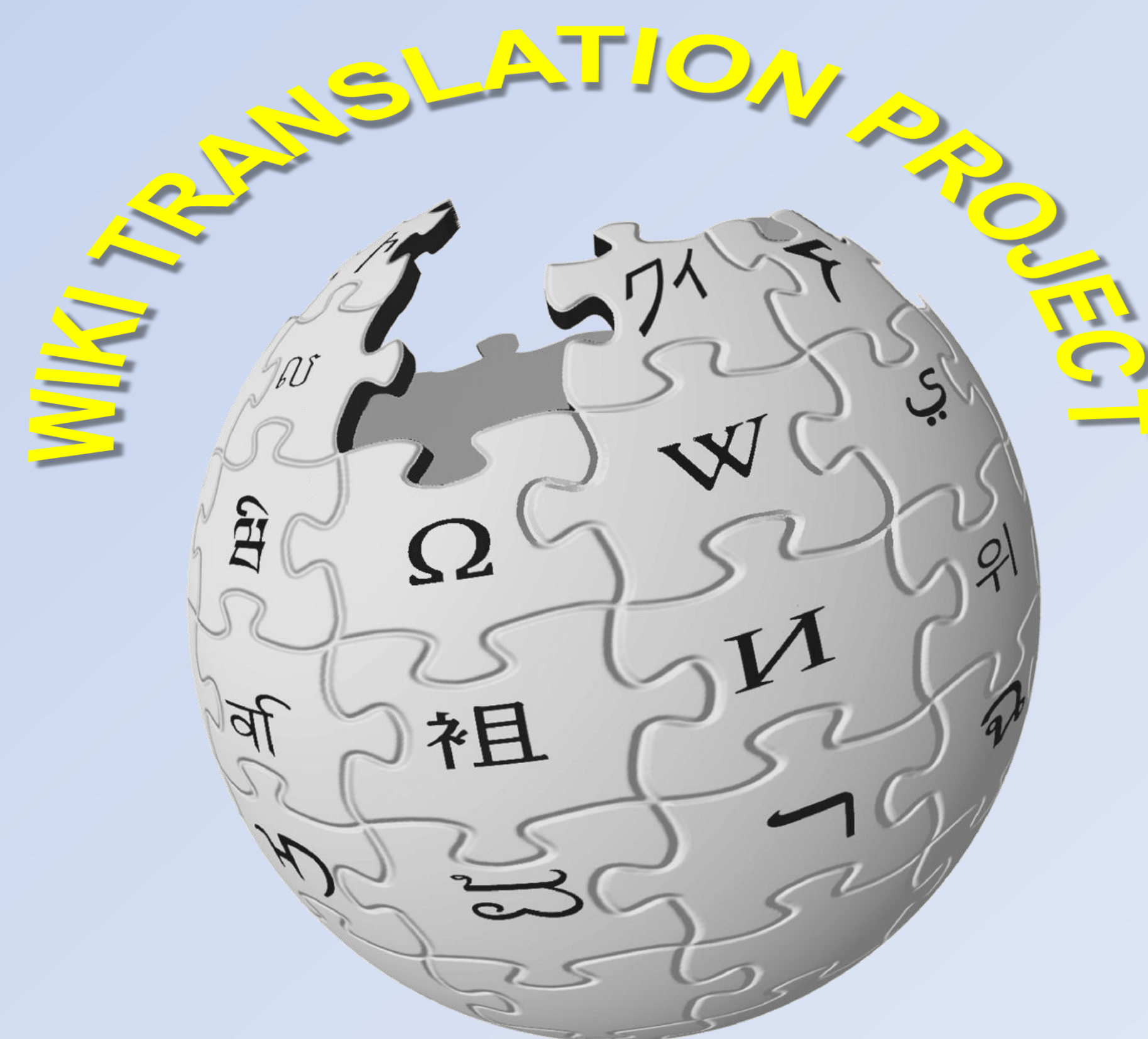
- Quite time consuming from a teaching point of view. Students need to be introduced to, and get to grips with Wiki applications.
- A lot of initiative depends on the students. It is important to design the project in such a way that the whole cohort is not delayed should individual groups fall behind with the work.
- Don't be too ambitious!
- This project is ideally placed to provide *peer feedback*. It should not be used for *peer assessment* purposes. Neither the tutors, nor the students have sufficient knowledge of the learning environment abroad to be able to apply objective and appropriate criteria.

Tangible outcomes

- High student **motivation** – translation is no longer a classroom exercise, but becomes an end in itself.
- International **collaboration** – encourages a growing awareness of cultural differences and nuances.
- **Peer reviewed learning** – providing feedback encourages students to take greater care with their own work.
- Improved and refined **foreign language and translation skills**.
- **Reflection** on the finer points of the construction and semantics of native language, and Wikipedia technology, provided by students in the form of a final presentation.
- Improved **IT skills** – communication with students at the partner university was quite complex. This involved good planning and time management using a range of various electronic communication devices, including Wiki applications, use of reviewing tools, etc.

Areas of further application

- Any country, any languages!
- Uni Freiburg has offered outreach training for teachers to use Wikipedia translations in secondary schools



■ Institution: Anglistik/Englisches Seminar

■ Kontakt: Alison Nagel, M.A. and Kai Woodfin, M.A.

alison.nagel@anglistik.uni-freiburg.de, kai.woodfin@anglistik.uni-freiburg.de