

A task-based approach to translation in two Japanese tertiary EFL contexts

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In this paper we describe a semester-long classroom research project involving computer-assisted translations of Wikipedia articles from Japanese into English. After introducing some basic translation concepts and resources, 65 students were asked to select one untranslated Japanese Wikipedia article that highlights some aspects of Japanese culture and then engage in a twelve-step process of rendering it into English. Subsequent feedback by those students and in-depth interviews with nine of them suggest that although many did learn new things about extended interlingual texts, problematic issues concerning group work distribution, text nuance, and translation fidelity remained. This project highlights some of the merits and demerits of working with interlingual texts in EFL contexts. The article concludes with some practical advice for task-based translation activities.

Keywords: Translation and Interpreting in Language Teaching (TILT), collaborative translation, task-based language learning, project-based portfolios, computer aided translation instruction, crowd-based translations

One of the goals of Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) EDU-Port Japan Initiative is to make Japan a disseminator of knowledge, not merely a recipient (MEXT, 2021). One important vehicle for disseminating knowledge around the world is Wikipedia, which currently receives about 1.7 billion

visitors a month, making it the 13th most used site on the Internet (Hern, 2021, par. 4). About half of Wikipedia's 55 million articles are in English, but 7% are in Japanese despite the fact Japan has only about 2% of Earth's population (Wikipedia, 2022; Zachte, 2018). Many—though by no means all—of the 1.3 million Japanese language Wikipedia articles highlight various persons, places, or Japanese cultural practices (ウィキペディア日本語版、2022 ; IT用語辞典、2018). A large number of these articles are as yet untranslated. Hence disseminating knowledge about Japan to readers of English and other languages is a goal congruent with current MEXT objectives and also a potentially engaging task-based learning project. Instead of having a translation project read by merely a handful of students and perhaps one or two teachers, the potential to reach a global audience can provide an element of agency and extended audience to help more students engage in the translation task (Szymczak, 2013; Al-Shehari, 2017).

As more and more Japanese companies expand overseas and non-Japanese people work in Japan, the need for interlingual translations has increased (Vigani, 2020; OCiETe, 2021). However, most Japanese EFL students have limited experience translating passages longer than a few sentences (神奈川県立国際言語文化アカデミア、2018, p.27). Although the ability to produce coherent multi-paragraph content is essential in many workplaces, our experience is that most students struggle to create cohesive extended texts even in their native

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languages. Translating multi-paragraph documents into foreign languages in ways that are cohesive and authentic is a daunting challenge for most. Moreover, increasingly students rely on computer-aided translation tools without critically evaluating the resulting content and social context that the translation was intended to serve (Niño, 2009; Chompurach, 2021; Newfields & Botev, 2021).

This project-based research describes a 15-week collaborative computer aided learning activity in which students were introduced to some basic translation concepts. After that, they were asked to render into English a previously untranslated Japanese Wikipedia article about a topic of interest. Working in groups of two to seven for twenty to thirty minutes per class over the course of a semester, most students indicated that they became more keenly aware of the difficulties involved in rendering texts from one language to another. They also gained more familiarity with a one 12-step computer-aided crowd-based translation model and with some resources that may be useful for novice translators. However, many confessed a lack of certainty about whether or not their translations were "good" and a number of questions about this time-consuming project remain. This study can be framed as an action research project that is not without flaws, but one that offers valuable insights on what role, if any, translation should have in L2 classes.

In this paper we first outline some previous research on task-based translation activities in EFL contexts. We then raise four basic research questions and specify how each question is addressed. Finally, we consider the relevance of the findings to foreign language education contexts.

Literature Review

Project-based translation has a rich history dating back to at least the the third century BC. At that time

seventy Jewish scholars worked collectively to decipher the Torah from Hebrew into Greek (Lebert, 2021). About a thousand years later, Aelfric of Eynsham led another group of scholars to produce the first English version of the Old Testament, using a Latin vulgate version as source material (Sawant, 2013). Although translation is often a solitary affair, many translators work collectively in groups. However, as Roskosa and Rupniece (2016) point out, group work has both advantages and drawbacks. It often provides opportunities to share ideas and gain valuable input, yet group dynamics are complex and the literature suggests groups can become dysfunctional (Aggarwal, 2016; Alfares, 2017).

In EFL contexts, task-based translation activities have been used sporadically for centuries. As Marqués-Aguado and Solís-Becerra recount, depending on the instructional philosophy prevalent in a given historical period, translation has been flatly rejected or highly revered (2013). Although translation was a key feature of many Latin and Greek classes, in most modern foreign language classrooms it has been eschewed. However, more recently a debate about the use of "pedagogical translation" (a process involving grammatical and lexical instruction in contrast with translation for publication) has become prevalent (Malmkjaer, 1998; Dagilien, 2012). Cook's 2010 publication of *Translation in Language Teaching* was a watershed that has inspired much scholarship about the role of translation in foreign language classroom contexts (Someya, Kawahara, Yamamoto, 2013; Yamada, 2015; Hori, 2018) Moreover, translation studies have arisen as an emergent discipline in many countries (Riccardi, 2002; Takeda, 2017). At this time translation is a feature of many EFL classes around the world, although in high school classes the focus is often on sentence-level or paragraph-level texts (Ogura, 2019; Kasmer, 1999; Hino, 1988).

Both Hall and Cook (2012) and Newfields and Botev

(2021) have summarized a number of previous studies involving the use of translation in EFL contexts. In addition to the studies they cite, three additional examples are noteworthy.

Chon, Shin, and Kim (2021) examined the impact of writing mode on 66 Korean EFL university students. Using picture scripts prompts similar to those in the STEP-EIKEN Grade Pre-1 exam, students were given three 50-minute in-class sessions to describe each visual prompt in the following ways: (1) by directly writing in English, (2) by writing in Korean, then using an online translation engine and post-editing the output, and finally (3) by writing in Korean, then self-translating without the aid of any online resources. The data was analyzed in light of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics according to Jacob's et al.'s ESL Composition Profile (1981). The data suggests that machine translations tended to help EFL learners write more syntactically complex sentences with a wider vocabulary repertoire. Less proficient EFL writers in particular were able to emulate more adept writers and make fewer grammatical errors. However, the authors also noted that mistranslations and poor word choices were more prevalent in the machine translations. Chon, Shin, and Kim suggest that machine translation:

. . . should be utilized to provide a scaffold for L2 writing, through which the learners can use their working memory to refine their text for accurately expressing themselves. MT will free the learners from having to pay attention to grammar rules or literal translations so that they can be more involved in improving the content or rhetorical features of the text. (p. 10)

Unfortunately, Chon, Shin, and Kim's study does not tell us is how the students actually felt about using online translations. This study examines that issue through the use of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

In another study, 73 students in three translation courses at the University of Warsaw were asked to translate Wikipedia articles of their choice from English into Polish or from Polish into English. At the end of the semester-long translation project, 55 participants completed an online survey about their experiences. Most were positive, although the fact that 25% of the participants offered no feedback suggests a degree of apathy or dissatisfaction. The author did concede that this project created a heavy instructor workload: many students had problems producing publishable-quality texts. Extensive editing was often needed and the overall process was very time-consuming. The instructor initially thought that students could upload their own Wikipedia articles. However, it became clear that the technical skills required to learn Wikipedia's idiosyncratic coding syntax was too daunting for many students. As a result, Szymczak (2013) noted "only a handful articles actually made it into Wikipedia despite the fact that practically all of the respondents completed their Sandbox (rough draft) versions" (p. 68). Szymczak noted that this type of project could be improved by having students work in small groups instead of pairs to reduce the teacher workload. Also, teachers should provide detailed guidance about what articles are well-suited for translation.

The current study differs from the previous work by Szymczak (2013) in five ways: (1) a systematic twelve-step translation procedure was introduced to guide students move through the translation process, (2) students worked in groups of 3-4 instead of pairs to reduce teacher workloads, (3) all translations were from Japanese (the L1 of nearly all students) to English, and (4) students did not need to worry about Wikipedia coding—that was handled by an instructor, and (5) to ensure that informed consent guidelines were honored, all students were given the option of not having any of their material published online.

Research Rationale and Questions

The project attempts to address the following research questions:

- (1) How did the respondents in this sample approach translation tasks prior to the training sessions?
- (2) What difficulties did the informants have when working in groups on this project?
- (3) What procedures did the students in this sample use to ascertain the veracity of their translations?
- (4) To what degree, if any, did the respondent's approach to translation change by the end of this semester?
- (5) Did Japanese and non-Japanese respondents tend to respond differently to any of the translation tasks?

Method

Sample

Sixty-five students from two EFL classes at two tertiary institutions in Tokyo participated in the activities described in this paper during the 2020 and 2021 autumn semesters. Twenty-nine of the respondents were first year economics majors at a private university and the remaining 36 were second year students majoring in "international communication and culture" at a women's college. The demographic characteristics of these respondents is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents Participating in this Study*

Gender	Male	21	Female	44
Nationality	Japanese	58	Non-Japanese	7
Academic Year	1 st Year	29	2 nd Year	36

Respondents ranged from 18 to 22 years in age with CEFR levels varying from B1 to A1, with most at a A2 level. Four respondents were ethnic Chinese whose native language was Mandarin. Two students

had dual Tagalog-Japanese linguistic backgrounds and one was Korean.

In addition, a smaller convenience sample of nine student volunteers participated in semi-structured interviews soon after the semester was finished. The demographic characteristics of those informants is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. *Demographic Characteristics of the Semi-Structured Interview Participants.*

Pseudonym	Group Number	Gender	Age	L1 / Nationality	Other Languages	TOEIC Score
Daiki	#8	M	20	Japanese / Japanese	English, some Chinese	*
Miku	#5	F	19	Japanese / Japanese	English, some French	*
Tomo	#4	F	19	Japanese / Japanese	English, some German	~500
Tō	#1	M	21	Chinese / Chinese	English and Japanese	780
Leo	#16	F	20	Japanese / Japanese	English, some Italian	400-500
Hina	#13	F	20	Japanese / Japanese	English	500
Nana	#11	F	20	Japanese / Japanese	English	770
Saya	#9	F	20	Japanese / Japanese	English	415
Chiru	#10	F	20	Japanese / Japanese	English	430

* Preferred not to mention their most recent TOEIC scores

Ethics

Informed consent statements were included at the beginning of the semi-structured interviews (Appendix E) and none of the participants opted out. Moreover, at the end of the semester participants were given a choice of whether or not to have their translations uploaded to Wikipedia. In this case, three groups opted out. To protect confidentiality, all interviewees used pseudonyms.

One ethical concern was grading. Seventeen percent of student's final grades were based on activities associated this translation project. Because it was difficult to ascertain precisely how much each student in every group participated in all of the activities, groups were collectively graded. In some cases, this resulted in a "free rider" problem in which some students did less work while others did more. Future iterations of this activity should seek to address this problem, fine-tuning the grading system. Having the entire activity non-graded is an option. However, echoing a concern raised by Docan (2006), the

researchers felt some students would invest less time and energy in the project if no grading incentives existed.

Instruments

There were two types of instruments in this study: instructional materials and assessment resources. Details about both instruments are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. *Instruments Used in This Study*

Instructional Materials

- (1) Two sample Wikipedia translations by the authors
- (2) A recommended course schedule (Appendix A)
- (3) A suggested translation framework (Appendix B)
- (4) A list of some common translation errors and false cognates (Appendix C)
- (5) Some Key Editing Points and a Translation Checklist (Appendix D)
- (6) Information about basic translation types (see Newfields & Botev, 2021, Appendix B)
- (7) A list of translator resources (see Newfields & Botev, 2021, Appendix C)

Assessment Resources

- (1) a 16-item online translation survey (online at <https://forms.gle/pPrZufh2ZA2dgyB9>)
- (2) records of each group's translations (in each group's cloud documents)
- (3) Student video recordings of their final group presentations summarizing what they learned
- (4) A set of semi-structured interview questions (Appendix E)

Procedure

In the first lesson, the overall course objectives and time frames were introduced. Copies of the suggested course schedule in Appendix A and of the recommended translation framework in Appendix B were distributed. At this point, specialized vocabulary such as postediting, back-translating, and parsing were

introduced. The teachers also shared two draft Wikipedia Japanese-English translations with students during the first lesson. Those articles are now online at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakone_Onsen and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shimizu_Jirocho. Students were asked to divide into small groups of 3-4 persons. Each group was then requested to select an untranslated Japanese Wikipedia article that they found interesting which was at least one thousand characters long before the next lesson. To facilitate student's decisions, the teachers gave some examples of possible articles. In Lesson 2 the selected the topics listed in Table 4 were chosen.

Table 4. *Translation Topics by the Small Groups in this Project*

Groups with completed Wikipedia translations that were uploaded						
Group	Size	Japanese Article Title	Length	English Article Title	Length	Content Type
1	4	飯食堂	9,822 字	Aisiki_Shokudō	323 words	a Japanese comic duo
2	3	マザー牧場	5,112 字	Mother Farm	262 words	a Japanese recreational spot
3	4	団度	1,766 字	sonaku	756 words	a Japanese concept
3	4	フワちゃん	5,809 字	Fuwa-chan	503 words	a Japanese entertainer
5	5	チョコレートプラネット	7,182 字	Chocolate_Planet	761 words	a Japanese comic duo
6	5	清水公園	6,956 字	Shimizu_Park	244 words	a Japanese recreational spot
7	4	かまいたち、(仮)笑いマンボ	9,325 字	Kamaitachi	773 words	a Japanese comic duo
8	5	じゃがりこ	2,732 字	Jagarico	467 words	a Japanese snack food
9	7	かまくら	2,963 字	Kamakura_(snow_dome)	854 words	a Japanese cultural practice
10	4	焼きそばパン	1,325 字	Yakiそば-pan	264 words	a Japanese food
11	2	ずんだ餅	1,341 字	Zunda-mochi	444 words	a regional Japanese food
12	4	手洗いも	5,192 字	Hoshi-imo	632 words	a Japanese cultural tradition

Groups with translations that were either incomplete or not uploaded						
Group	Size	Japanese Article Title	Length	English Article Title	Length	Content Type
13	4	無人駅	4,604 字	(Unstaffed stations)	1,216 words	a global concept
14	6	水炊き	2,497 字	(Japanese style hot pot)	1,256 words	a Japanese regional food
15	5	馬刺し	1,766 字	(Raw horse meat)	1,591 words	a Japanese food

In the second lesson, the basic translation types outlined in Appendix B from Newfields and Botev (2021) were described. We also introduced the translation resources mentioned in Appendix C of the same paper and highlighted some common translation errors. After selecting their texts, students parsed them into smaller sections.

In Lesson 3 students compared at least three different parallel translations of each source text segment. Perhaps not surprisingly, most of the parallel translations were from online computer sources. However, some were manual translations. After each group finished the first draft of their translations in their Google Documents, we introduced Step 7 of Appendix B. Our initial hope was that students might critically evaluate their own translations. However, it soon became clear that this task was too challenging. As a result, the teachers added some color-coded comments to their first drafts. As Appendices A and B make clear, three colors were used. A sample text passage edited according to this system with some subsequent revisions appears in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Sequential revisions of a Wikipedia text snippet using the translation framework recommended in this paper.

(1) Original Text

(from the Japanese Wikipedia article on Fuwa Chan, par. 5)
 2020年8月3日より、自身初のMC番組『視聴者様に飼われたい!』がテレビ東京にて放送開始^[22]。
 2020年度の新語・流行語大賞のトップテンに「フワちゃん」が入賞した。

(2) Preliminary Parallel Translations

- * From August 3, 2020, his first MC program, "I want to be kept by viewers!" will be broadcast on TV Tokyo. "Fuwa-chan" won the top ten of the 2020 New Word and Popular Word Awards. [Papago Translate]
- * From August 3, 2020, her first MC program "I want to be kept by viewers!" will start broadcasting on TV TOKYO. "Fuwa-chan" won the top ten of the 2020 New Words and Popular Words Awards. [GoogleTranslate]
- * From August 3, 2020, her first MC program, "I want to be kept by my audience! will start airing on TV Tokyo on August 3, 2020. "Fuwa-chan" won a prize in the top ten of the 2020 New Words and Popular Words Awards. [DeepL Translation]

(3) Composite First Draft

From August 3, 2020, her first MC program "I want to be kept by viewers!" started broadcasting on TV Tokyo. "Fuwa-chan" won a prize among the Top Ten Category for the 2020 New Words and Popular Words Awards.

(4) Critical Evaluation of First Draft (with Color-Coded Comments)

From August 3, 2020, her first MC program "I want to be kept by viewers!" started broadcasting on TV Tokyo. "Fuwa-chan" won a prize among the Top Ten of the 2020 New Words and Popular Words Awards.

(4) Revised Second Draft

From August 2020, her first MC program started broadcasting on TV Tokyo. Fuwa-chan was recognized among the top ten "New and Popular Words" of 2020.

(5) Back-Translation of the Second Draft

2020年8月から、彼女の最初のMC番組がテレビ東京で放送を開始しました。
 「フワちゃん」は、2020年の「新作・人気語」トップ10に選ばれました。

(6) Third Draft

From August 2020 her first MC program began broadcasting on TV Tokyo. "Fuwa-chan" was among one of the "Most Popular New Words" of 2020.

(7) Detailed Feedback/Questions

- * The phrase "her first MC program" is a direct translation from Japanese and sounds a bit unnatural in English; perhaps "she hosted/emceed her first program" is more natural.
- * Some readers outside of Japan might not know what "TV Tokyo" actually is; it might be good to explain.
- * Careful readers will want to know who decided that Fuwa Chan was recognized as an important buzzword in 2020.

The name of the agency or organization that made the decision that needs to be mentioned.

(8) Final Version

From August 2020 she hosted her first entertainment program, which was aired on TV Tokyo - a major private television network. "Fuwa-chan" became a buzzword in 2020 according to Jiyu Kokuminsha, a noted Japanese publishing company.

In the next several lessons students attempted to revise the first drafts of their translations. Some groups progressed quickly, while others plodded slowly. A major problem at this point was that the translation task workload varied greatly from group to group. We noticed that groups attempted to translate long articles got bogged down. Conversely, the groups translating very short articles got bored because the workload was too light.

Moreover, initially we had hoped that students would be able to give constructive feedback to each other on their translated output. Although some students did comment on peer translations, interviews later revealed that most students were reluctant to judge the translations of their own classmates either out of modesty or inability. This increased the teacher workloads, and a key goal at this point was getting students to notice why some translation choices were better than others. Although most students accepted teacher revisions, the interviews revealed that they seldom understood why those changes were made.

After finishing their third draft, we had students complete the checklist in Appendix D and then solicit feedback on their translations from other proficient English speakers. Here we were perhaps too optimistic: many students complained that they did not know any proficient English speakers. As a consequence, the teachers offered some additional feedback on the final drafts. A final assignment was

for students to prepare short presentations about their translations and what they learned from their experiences. Those presentations revealed that most students focused on sentence-level translations through a "bottom-up" process and they had difficulty in thinking "top-down" about what was important and what was not.

After the final presentations, calls for volunteer interviewees were made and informed consent for permission to upload their translations was requested.

Results and Discussion

RQ1: How did the respondents in this sample approach translation tasks prior to the training sessions?

The 65 informants in this study echoed many findings by Lee (2020), Alhaisoni & Alhaysony (2017), and Marito & Ashari (2017) which suggest that most informants regarded computer-aided translations as a quick, convenient way to obtain an article's general gist. For short passages with familiar vocabulary, many informants said computer aided translations were unnecessary. However, most regarded computer translations as expedient aids when deciphering longer passages. Prior to the training sessions, nearly all of the students used Google Translate or a few other translation engines such as Papago-Naver or Bing. However, almost none used multiple sources for one project. Nor were they familiar with less popular translation engines such as Deep-L, Yandex, or Baidu. Moreover, none of the students knew about multilingual concordances such as Linguee, Tatoeba, or Reverso Context. It also appears that none used back-translations to ascertain their translation output. Only a few had access to fluent L2 users who could provide feedback on their output and none seemed aware of online resources such as HiNative, OnlyLangs, or Lang-8. The interviews suggest that most students wanted to complete their translation

tasks (which tended to be school assignments) as quickly as possible with minimal effort. Focusing of expedience rather than accuracy, they used one (or occasionally two) translation engines, sometimes checking their favorite dictionaries. Chiru highlighted this attitude by stating, "I need . . . [machine translation] because of [a] lack of knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary." Saya echoed her and stated, "Most Japanese students don't have the necessary translation skills, so they need to use machine translation." Hina concurred and added, "Low-level language learners should use [machine translations] . . . but advanced students might not need them."

RQ2: What difficulties did the informants have when working in groups on their chosen translation tasks?

Three problems were identified: (1) free riding, (2) a tendency towards segmental responsibilities in which each student only focused on their section of the translation, resulting in uneven quality, and (3) varied comprehension of the Japanese source texts. Each will be briefly explained.

Our translation groups ranged in size from two to seven students, with an average size of 4.5 students. With some of the larger groups, there was a tendency for one or two of the students to do far less work than others. Although none of the students in any group were entirely free riders, it is clear that some students were minimally engaged.

Regarding the second problem, it was clear many students engaged in a strategy of dividing the translation projects into smaller segments, with each student responsible for their own small portion and rarely working with others to consider the article as a whole. This "turfist" approach to translation had two merits and two demerits. It did minimize potential conflicts among group members and the workload of

each individual student was significantly reduced. However, often it resulted in uneven quality and many group members ignored other parts of the report they were not directly responsible for. Indeed, in some cases vocabulary items were spelled differently by various group members and/or some information was needlessly repeated.

A third problem was that some of the non-Japanese students did not understand the Japanese text sufficiently well. For example, Group 13 consisted of three Chinese students and only one Japanese student. The Chinese students complained that they could not understand the Japanese text well, and the Japanese student did not feel able explain it to them in English. As a result, they failed to produce a coherent translation. On hindsight, the problem could have been solved by allowing the Chinese students in class to form their own group and focus on translating one Chinese Wikipedia text article. In classes with only one or two linguistic minority students, however, that option may not be feasible.

RQ3: What procedures did the students in this sample use to ascertain the veracity of their translations?

Before addressing the third question, one point needs to be clarified: the Japanese and English Wikipedia versions have frequently different styles as well as different audiences. The Japanese Wikipedia differs from the English version in at least six ways:

- (i) There is a greater percentage of articles on popular culture (Cohen, 2009).
- (ii) Bullet lists appear more frequently.
- (iii) Japanese articles often have more peripheral details and trivia.
- (iv) There is more tolerance of circular reporting and in-house references in Japanese articles.
- (v) Whereas English Wikipedia articles tend to follow a traditional paragraph structure, Japanese

articles tend to adhere to a more fluid *danraku* (段落) style.

- (vi) Some Japanese language articles have been accused of a degree of historical revisionism (Sato, 2021). With many vigilant English language editors, this appears to be less common in the English language corpus.

With varied target audiences and sometimes markedly different content, most English and Japanese Wikipedia articles should probably be regarded as "adaptations" rather than "translations" of each other. However, this reflects an ongoing issue in translation: the extent that the source text and the target text need to mirror each other. The authors view each Wikipedia as a co-constructed, socially constrained, evolving community translation project that has many unique features from other Wikipedia versions. Dwaipayan, Bhatia, and Jain (2020) concur by pointing out that "articles in English Wikipedia often miss out on many important details that are present in other Wikipedia editions" (p. 238).

Discussing large-scale collaborative translation projects that involve computer-aided resources, Pym reflects this position by adding, "there is no longer a binary organization around a 'source' and a target': we now have a 'start text' (ST) complemented by source materials that take the shape of authorized translation memories, glossaries, terminology bases, and machine-translation feeds" (p. 487). These in turn are used to produce an "output text" that, in the case of Wikipedia at least, is never really finished: revisions continue months or even years after articles have been uploaded.

What this means for Wikipedia translators is that a knowledge of the respective idiosyncrasies of both language editions of Wikipedia is a requisite to effectively translate from one text to another. Unfortunately, few of the students in this project were

previously aware of how the English and Japanese Wikipedias differed, other than the fact that the English version featured more articles. Hence, any question of ascertaining the veracity of a Wikipedia translation must be considered in light of the fact that both versions of Wikipedia differ in many ways.

In class we emphasized the importance of using back-translations and getting feedback from multiple sources to verify translations. Most students acknowledged that this was time-consuming and lamented their lack of access to bilingual speakers who could effectively verify their translations. There is no evidence that any of the students used any of the online translation communities we recommended during this project. "I am busy enough at school," Daiki conceded. None of the students were interested in becoming professional translators, although some did recognize that they might need to translate documents at work in the future.

The interviews made it clear that the majority of students were perplexed about how accurate or natural their translations were. Saya expressed this view by stating, "If the text is an English to Japanese translation, I can tell if it feels unnatural. However, it is a Japanese to English translation then it is difficult to tell." Leo echoed her thoughts by adding, "My English level is not high enough to recognize the difference [between a correct and incorrect translation.]"

In short, most students had problems critically evaluating parallel texts. As a consequence, the teachers had to devote extensive time with each student team to produce coherent texts. In particular, many students did not understand why much of the information in the Japanese text was deleted in the English version. Since they were not really familiar with the standards for English Wikipedia articles or for inclusion the English version demands, this was

not surprising. Although Ortega, Gonzalez-Barahona, Robles (2008, p.304) have blithely claimed that Wikipedia has a "low entry barrier for new authors," in our view this is not quite true. Both in terms of permitted content and in terms of accepted coding, Wikipedia has plenty of quirks that take a long time to learn before becoming a facile contributor.

RQ4: To what degree, if any, did the respondent's approach to translation change by the end of this semester?

Six of the nine interview informants indicated that no significant change in their approach to translation occurred because of this project. Miku reflected this idea by stating, "[Before class] my friends said that machine translation is bad, then in class I felt so." With little background in translation theory, it is noteworthy how most students used simplistic terms such as "good" or "bad" to judge translations.

Many of the students said that translating a Wikipedia article did make them more keenly aware of the difficulties involved in translation and of the dangers of relying solely on machine translations. Daiki echoed this idea by commenting, "I learned how difficult it is to make foreigners understand [Japanese Wikipedia content] . . . particularly [words like] tameguchi (タメグチ) that don't exist in English." In a similar vein, Miku added, "I learned it is not good to translate literally. To convey the true meaning, we need to think. Japanese original words are difficult to convey in English. And I found that what foreigners want to know is different from what Japanese want to know. So we should sometimes give additional information."

A few students also mentioned becoming more aware of various translation engines and resources, but overall, the data from this project suggests that this research project had a very limited impact on the long-term behaviors of the majority of students. Saya

offered a typical comment by adding, "I felt need to improve translation skills, but am not sure I will." Since English study is mandated for only two years for most Japanese students and over half of the informants were second year students, it is appropriate to question how much the English proficiency of this student sample will improve.

The following comment by Leo summarizes the opinion of many informants: "I think computer translations are getting better. What I learned from this class is it is important to check those translations because some Japanese ideas do are hard to express in English."

RQ5: Did the Japanese and non-Japanese respondents tend to respond differently to the translation tasks?

Some non-Japanese students struggled with the Japanese language texts. For them, interpreting subtle Japanese nuances represented an added cognitive burden. A strategy used by some was to decipher the Japanese text into their native languages before attempting to render it into English. This was a challenging task. One of the fifteen groups engaged in this project had a majority of Mandarin speakers in their group. Consequently, they frequently spoke in Mandarin without using English, highlighting that not all students were committed to sharpening their English proficiency. In another group, there was one Chinese and three Japanese. He expressed frustration with the translation project because the three Japanese had chosen to translate an article about a Japanese comedy duo that he had little interest in or background knowledge about. During the interview that informant added, "I think this was a test for my Japanese rather than my English . . . I think it improved my Japanese, but not my English."

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted a semester-long translation project in which 15 groups of students attempted to translate a previously untranslated Japanese Wikipedia article into English. Twelve of those groups managed to produce articles that were uploaded to Wikipedia. Two other groups also completed the project, but chose not to have their work uploaded. One group with three native Mandarin speakers never completed the project, perhaps because of the difficulty in understanding the Japanese text.

Although our initial hope was the students would develop a "community of practice" (Wenger, 1998) and assist each other in revising their successive translations, our experience is that most students either lacked the confidence needed to offer extensive feedback, or they were reluctant to invest the time required to do so consciously. As a result, both instructors labored more than they expected with the student translations. Moreover, though a few of the students understood why the specific revisions were being made, many were baffled. This encouraged us to reflect on a basic question: Is an activity like this appropriate for typical Japanese university EFL students? In our view, the answer is a tentative "yes" if these following six conditions are met:

(1) The instructors need a high degree of proficiency in languages of the initial start text and the resultant output language as well as an awareness of common translation errors.

(2) Students need enough time to notice how Japanese and English Wikipedia articles often differ. Before translating a new article into English, it might be useful to have student groups describe how the Japanese and English versions of one article that they are interested are dissimilar. Besides obvious differences such as article length, they should be encouraged to notice how references, bullet lists, and

cultural details also tend to be disparate.

(3) Many Japanese universities have non-Japanese exchange students whose proficiency in Japanese varies widely. Often, such students tend to clump together and not socialize much with the Japanese (Hayashi, 2008). However, for this activity to work well we believe that non-Japanese students should be integrated fully with other students. This will make it easier for other Japanese to explain the source language text to them. (Having foreign students with the same L1 work together in one group on an untranslated Wikipedia article in their native language is possible, but unless teachers are also adept in those languages, they can offer little guidance.)

(4) Although group sizes ranged from two to seven in our pilot project, on hindsight we believe groups of three to four are ideal. Groups with five or more members might have "free rider" problems and those smaller than three could likely face heavy workloads.

(5) The English proficiency levels of students in Japanese universities range widely from pre-A1 to B2 levels (Pennington, Torigoe, Setsumaru, 2011; Usami, 2019). For the type of activity described in this paper, we believe that students need at least an A2+ CEFR level. Those with lower levels may be apt to rely more extensively on computer translations (Chia & Chia, 2001; Al-Musawi, 2014). Moreover, they often cannot understand the L2 comments and corrections by teachers (Mahfoodh & Pandian, 2011; Chen, Nassaji, & Liu, 2016). Hence the activities described herein are probably best suited to only those in the upper EFL proficiency range in most Japanese universities. However, if accommodations are made this activity might work with lower levels (Lee, 2021).

(6) Although it is unrealistic to expect students to learn how to code Wikipedia articles, we believe that

at least one of the co-instructors should master that skill. Ideally, any teacher thinking of undertaking this project should have at least a few months previous experience creating Wikipedia articles. Even though Wikipedia's Visual Editor offers many useful WYSIWYG features, it also has a number of quirks that take time to get used to.

It is worth pointing out not all of the above conditions were fully realized when we initially undertook this project, so the results were decisively mixed. However, learning from our success as well as our failures, both of us now feel more qualified to undertake similar translation projects in the future. We offer these three additional recommendations for those considering using Wikipedia translations in EFL contexts:

(1) Since external references are an important feature of English Wikipedia articles, student groups should try to find as many links on a topic of interest as possible and then try to evaluate which of those links might be considered "reputable" and which are not. This adds an element of media literacy (Suzuki, 2008; Burnman, 2020) to the project and most students will likely need extensive guidance. Instead of relying solely on the top Google search engines results, students need to learn how to use other bibliographic resources, such as the National Archives of Japan, the National Diet Library, and J-STAGE, as well as the CiNii and Webcat Plus resources of the National Institute of Informatics. (Uda, Egusa, Takaku, & Ishizuka, 1999; National Diet Library, 2012).

(2) Many Wikipedia articles include photos that are in the public domain. That fact can provide a springboard for students to learn a bit more about copyright laws and public domain resources, skills useful in our digital age (Palfrey, Gasser, Simun, & Barnes, 2009). Moreover, instead of having teachers

track down photos, student groups should be encouraged to find public domain photos through resources such as Flickr, Pixabay, Publicdomainq, or Wikimedia Commons. For some articles, students might take their own photos and then upload them into the Wikimedia Commons. Teachers will likely need to guide them about which photos can be used since many different public domain licenses exist.

(3) Rather than have drafts of student group translations preserved in a Google Docs format that might expire when the class is over, we believe it is better to have them kept in a Wikipedia Sandbox. In that way, students can gradually learn about Wikipedia's visual editing system. They will also gain access to a wider number of Wikipedia volunteers can, if invited, assist them. This will likely reduce the instructor workload and facilitate more collaboration.

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Appendix A. Suggested Translation Schedule

NOTE: Generally speaking, the final twenty to thirty minutes of each ninety-minute lesson will be devoted to sharpening your translation skills. The schedule below is tentative and might change depending on your feedback. To produce a good translation and improve your skills, most students will also need to spend 30-60 minutes outside of class on activities related to this project each week. If anything is unclear about this schedule or the project goals, please contact your instructor.

Week 1 - Article Selection: Please select a Japanese Wikipedia article about a topic you are interested in that has not been translated into English that is at least a thousand characters in length. This article could be about a person from Japan, a place in Japan, or something related to Japan.

Week 2 - Critical Source Text Evaluation & Text Parsing: Look at the Japanese text closely, then ask, "Which parts can be deleted in the English version? Which parts need more detail to be understood clearly by English readers? Are there any parts in the Japanese version that seem to need more supporting references?" After discussing these issues in depth,

decide which source material you will translate (and possibly expand). Break the text you have chosen into smaller parts, then decide which persons in your group will be mainly responsible for which parts. Be sure the workload is fairly distributed among group members. Each group is free to decide the size of their parts. Also, at this point you should take some time to examine how other Wikipedia articles have been translated from Japanese to English.

Week 3 - Parallel Translation Comparisons: You need to generate at least three different preliminary translations of the source text. One way to do this is to use three different translation engines such as Google Translate, DeepL, Bing, Baidu, or Papago Naver. Another way is to have three different persons translate the source text independently themselves. After obtaining 3 or 4 different preliminary translations, please compare them sentence-by-sentence. At this stage you will notice that some concepts that do not translate smoothly. You may also find other concepts that need more background information to be clear to most overseas readers. Moreover, it is likely that some of the information in the original Japanese text can be deleted in your translation for English readers. At this stage, we recommend color-shading the unclear sections in **yellow**. The parts that you think can be deleted should be shaded in **red**. Information not in the Japanese text that you think should be added should be shaded in **green**.

Week 4 - 1st Draft Translations: After discussing the color-coded sections of your chosen article with other team members, please upload the entire text into a Google Document (or Wikipedia Sandbox). Make sure the entire class and also your and teacher have permission to edit this document. Also, please be sure to comment on the parts of the text produced by other members of your group. At this point your teacher will add some comments on the first drafts.

Please note that most first draft texts generally contain many rough spots. Those often provide a rich chance to better understand how Japanese and English differ, so do not worry your first draft needs lots of revision.

Weeks 5 & 6 - Critical Revisions of the 1st Draft:

At this stage, people from other groups will be asked to comment on your translations. You will also be asked to comment on the translations of another group. When comparing the first drafts and the original source texts, these questions need to be asked: (i) How trustworthy is the original information? Do any claims need better supporting references? (ii) Will this information be relevant and understandable to most overseas readers? (iii) What Japanese content, if any, should be deleted to make the article more succinct? (iv) What English content needs to be added to make the article clearer to readers outside of Japan?

Week 7 - Completing a 2nd Draft: Based on feedback from other students and your teacher, the 2nd draft should be uploaded into Google Documents (or Wikipedia Sandbox) by Lesson 7. Please make sure that draft has complete supporting references. Although some of the references can be in Japanese, the English version should attempt to include as many English language supporting references as possible. External references are preferred to internal references. Your teacher will introduce some resources to find external resources.

Week 9 & 10 - Feedback on the 2nd Draft: This time, one or two new students from other groups (or, if you invite them, members of the Wiki community) will comment on each article along with the teacher. The focus will be on the overall logic of the paper and the use of supporting references. Surface-level mechanical errors in spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation will also be addressed. Please take

the time to look at other articles carefully: attentive post-editing is needed to produce well-written articles.

Week 11 - Completing a Final Draft: Based on feedback from others, the final draft should be uploaded onto Google Documents (or your Wikipedia Sandbox) by Lesson 11.

Week 12 & 13 - Feedback on the Final Draft:

Each group should invite at least two other proficient English speakers from outside of our class comment on that article. It is good to get extensive feedback from diverse audiences. You might wish to invite another English teacher, a SNS friend, or active Wikipedia editor for feedback. Questions to ask at this point should include: (1) Is the article interesting, informative, and balanced? (2) Is the article free of gender bias? and (3) are the hyperlinks within the article well-connected to other Wikipedia content? Most groups will need to make minor post-editing changes based on the feedback they receive.

Weeks 14 & 15 - Oral Presentations About Your Learning Experience:

In the final two classes of this semester, each group will give a 5-minute presentation about their Wikipedia translation project and what they learned. Each group should also be able to answer questions about their translations and to offer some advice for novice translators.

Appendix B. A Suggested Translation Framework for Students

NOTE: The framework listed below is merely one possible way to approach translation. We have found this framework generally works well for novice translators working with Wikipedia articles. However, those wishing to translate legal documents or other high-stakes material should use professional translators following ISO 20771:2020 guidelines. On the other

hand, if you merely wish to understand the gist of low-stakes documents, the steps below are probably unnecessary.

Step 1: LOCATE SOURCE TEXT - *In this project you need to identify a Japanese Wikipedia article about a topic of interest that has not been translated into English.*

Step 2: CONSIDER TRANSLATION GOALS - *Identify who the source text is for, what its purpose is, and when it is needed. In this project, the target audience is general English Wikipedia users and the goal is to "objectively" describe a topic by the end of this semester. Particularly important at this point is considering what parts of the source text not to translate. Japanese Wikipedia articles tend to contain more peripheral details than English articles.*

Step 3: BREAK LONG TEXT INTO SHORT SEGMENTS - *Depending on the material, it might be good parse the source text into paragraphs. Some people prefer to work with longer sections. For detailed micro-comparisons, one sentence at a time is usually best. Make sure the work is evenly divided among group members and the part of the text you are focusing on is a size that you can manage.*

Step 4: GENERATE SEVERAL DIFFERENT PRELIMINARY PARALLEL TRANSLATIONS OF EACH SEGMENT - *This can be done by either different group members or by else by using different online translation engines.*

Step 5: COMPARE PRELIMINARY TRANSLATIONS - *How do the various*

versions differ? What parts did not appear to translate well? What parts, if any, were unclear?

Step 6: GENERATE 1st DRAFT - *Work collaboratively to produce a rough version of the translated text. That draft should be publicly accessible to all class members, the teacher, and if you want rich feedback, to other Wikipedia editors. (Sandbox articles are not usually seen by the public.)*

Step 7: CRITICALLY EVALUATE 1st DRAFT - *color code all **ambiguities** (in yellow), **suggested additions**, (in green) and **recommended deletions** (in red). The teacher will help you with this step.*

Step 8: GENERATE 2nd DRAFT - *Work collaboratively to produce a smoother version of the original text. You may need to rearrange the order of the sentences to produce more naturally-flowing paragraphs. Supporting references are especially important at this stage.*

Step 9: BACK-TRANSLATE 2nd DRAFT & COMPARE IT WITH THE SOURCE TEXT - *See how your English translation looks in Japanese, comparing it with the original source text. Idiomatic expressions in particular are often mistranslated, so you might need to paraphrase the source text to produce a clearer translation.*

Step10: GENERATE 3rd DRAFT - *Make sure all group members have input in producing this. While writing, focus on macro features of cohesion, logic, and genre as well as the micro features of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.*

Step11: GET MULTIPLE FEEDBACK ON 3rd

DRAFT - Get as much feedback as possible on your third draft from readers who are similar to your target audience. Invite fluent friends or acquaintances to comment on the text. Feedback by other teachers of English is sometimes helpful too. What problems do others identify in your article? What parts of your article appear to be especially strong?

Step12: REVISE FINAL DRAFT AS NECESSARY, THEN SUBMIT IT FOR PUBLICATION

- Each group will be offered a choice whether or not they wish to have their article appear in Wikipedia. With your permission, a teacher will upload the article to Wikipedia, and revisions tend to be ongoing. The Wiki community has evolving standards for article quality, so in one sense most online articles are never "finished" because anyone is able to add or delete details.

*"Tall" is for average-sized things such as people or buildings;
"high" is for huge-sized things such as mountains or walls.
"Expensive" is usually about price.
○1 The Himalayas are high. ○2 Tokyo Tower is tall. ○3 Diamonds are usually expensive.*

ANSWERS: ○1 soon, quickly ○2 a lot ○3 have heard about ○4 don't

1. 早く	can mean either "early" or "_____" ^{○1*}
2. よく	can mean either "well" or "_____" ^{○2*}
3. 知りました	can mean "know personally" or "_____" ^{○3*}
4. 行きません	can mean either "won't" or "_____" ^{○4*}
5. 見る	can mean either "watch", "see", or "_____" ^{5*}
6. たくさん	can mean either "many" or "much"
7. 狭い	can mean either "narrow", "cramped", or "small"
8. 一緒に	can mean either "together", "with me", or "with us"
9. 願う	can mean either "wish" or "hope"

Appendix C: Some Common Translation Errors and False Cognates

Part 1 Instructions: In small groups, explain how each of the Japanese words below have multiple meanings that are often mistranslated. To make sure you understand the various words clearly, make a sentence with each word.

Example: 高い - can mean "high", "tall", or "expensive"

Part 2 Instructions: Examine the chart below, then discuss the questions in small groups.

Japanese	J-Meaning	English	E-Meaning
ダイエット	あらゆる種類の減量療法	diet	常食、または議会や議院
ハンドル	車のハンドル	handle	扱う 取り扱う、手掛ける
マンション	コンドミニアム	mansion	邸宅 屋敷 館
テンション	気分が盛り上がっている	tension	精神的な緊張、ストレス
リフォーム	家の改装、改修	reform	改革 変革 改良
トレーナー	スウェットシャツ	trainer	訓練者、仕込み手、調教師、調馬師
サイダー	フルーツビール	cider	ノンアルコールの林檎ジュース
クレーム	苦情や金請求	claim	主張や申出や要請

1. Can you think of any other Japanese-English "false friends" (妙な和製英語)?

2. How would you express these Japanese ideas in English?

(a) 「付度」という表現は、患者の生前の意思を推量するという元々の意味で使用されていた。

- (b) JR 東海では「さわやかウォーキング」を開催する際、開催駅が無人駅だった場合、臨時改札を設ける。
- (c) JR 東海では「さわやかウォーキング」を開催する際、開催駅が無人駅だった場合、臨時改札を設ける。

3. How would you express these English ideas in Japanese?

- (a) Dried sweet potatoes can be served as a snack or a side dish and are usually sweet, soft, and a little bit chewy.
- (b) With its catchphrase of "Always friends with nature," Shimizu Park is a free-to-enter park where visitors can experience the great outdoors.
- (c) Goldfish® are fish-shaped cheese crackers manufactured by Pepperidge Farm, which is a division of the Campbell Soup Company.

4. What words or sentences from your Japanese Wikipedia passage have been especially hard to translate into English?

Appendix D: Some Key Editing Points and a Translation Checklist

Part 1 Instructions: Answer the following questions in small groups.

1. What is the difference between an English *paragraph* and a Japanese *danraku* (段落)?
2. What is the difference between a *footnote* and a reference?
3. What punctuation symbols exist in *Japanese*, but not in English?
4. What punctuation symbols exist in *English*, but not in Japanese?
5. How should the title of this Japanese article be Romanized in a Wikipedia article?
「フワちゃん、私服姿の深夜の笑顔 超売れっ子でも「意外と低姿勢」にスタッフ驚き」
6. How do the following *footnotes* need to be cited

for an English Wikipedia article?

- (i) (Chiba Museum of Science and Technology(千葉県立現代産業科学館)
<http://www.chiba-muse.or.jp/SCIENCE/sanko/pages/045.html>
- (ii) This is written on the homepage of Noda City.
<https://www.city.noda.chiba.jp/shisei/profile/bunkazai/kouen/1000808.html>
- (iii) フワちゃん TV /FUWACHAN TV - YouTube チャンネル
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1B51m7HSWGpm_qDDgoIeqA
- (iv) フワちゃん FLIX - YouTube チャンネル
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX2uO4JT1uE0WOJBLBX0IpQ>

Part 2 Instructions: Working with your group members, carefully check the Third Draft of your translation according to the following criteria.

1. ___ The *spelling* and *grammar* is correct according to standard American English.
2. ___ The *punctuation* is correct according to Wikipedia standards.
3. ___ The *headings* and *sub-sections* of this article are formatted correctly according to Wikipedia standards.
4. ___ The *paragraphs* are structured appropriately and bullet text is not over-used.
5. ___ The *social register* (level of politeness) of the translation is consistent and appropriate for Wikipedia articles.
6. ___ The statements in the translation have adequate *supporting references* (not necessarily the same references as the original Japanese article).
7. ___ The translation is *culturally appropriate* for the target audience (non-Japanese Wikipedia readers around the world).
8. ___ The *omissions* and *additions* that make the translation differ from the source text are appropriate and justified.

Appendix E: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were recorded on Zoom. Before those interviews began, students were given the following Informed Consent Statement and verbal consent was

obtained before each interview. (No printed papers were exchanged because of the pandemic.)

私たちは、大学生がどのように翻訳するかについての研究を行っています。翻訳についてお聞きしたいことがあります。このインタビューは30分以内で終わります。このアクティビティは、皆さんが履修するコースの成績に影響を与えることは一切ありません。ペナルティなしで参加を拒否する権利があります。このインタビューのデータは匿名化され、この研究論文が発表されるまでの間だけ保存され、その後は消去されます。最終的な研究論文のコピーをご希望の方は、このインタビューの最後にお知らせください。さらに質問がある場合は、以下の研究者に連絡してください。

Tim Newfields (timothy@toyo.jp)

Ivan Botev (botev@toita.ac.jp)

Part I. General Demographic Questions

1. To protect your privacy no real names will be used in this research. Can you choose a nickname that we should use? (Only first names such as "Taro" or "Hanako" are needed.)
2. What languages do you speak?
3. How old are you now?
4. What was your most recent TOEIC score?
5. Can you briefly summarize your English language learning history?
6. What foreign countries have you visited so far? (And for how long?)
7. What electronic dictionaries, if any, do you use on your cellphone?
8. On your cellphone, do you have any translation apps? (If so, which ones?) If respondents answered "yes" then ask -
 - (a) When did you last use that (those) cellphone translation app (apps)?
 - (b) How often do you use that (those) cellphone translation app (apps)?

9. Which online translation sites do you use, and how often? (_ Baidu _ Bing _ Excite _ Google _ Reverso _ DeepL _ Sogou _ Tradukka _ Yandex _ Other: _____)
10. What materials have you translated from Japanese into English?
11. What materials have you translated from English into Japanese?
12. Generally, how often do you use Wikipedia in Japanese?
13. Generally, how often do you use Wikipedia in English?
14. In your view, how important is it to be able to translate between two or more foreign languages?
15. Generally speaking, do you enjoy translating?

Part II. Questions about the Wikipedia translations

1. How many people were in your Wikipedia translation group?
2. How did your group translate your Wikipedia article?
3. Who did the most translation work in that group?
4. Were there any "free riders" in your group - students who did little or no work?
5. How did the members in your Wikipedia translation group communicate with each other?
6. About how long did it take you personally to translate the Wikipedia passage?
7. Did you use any apps to check your translation? (If so, which ones?)
8. Were there any words or phrases you felt unsure how to translate? (If so, which ones?)
9. How did you generally feel when doing the Wikipedia translation exercise?
10. How closely do you believe the Japanese and English versions of the Wikipedia article match?
11. How would you recommend changing this activity?
12. What do you think the goal of this activity was?
13. How do you feel after completing this project?

(Did you learn anything? If so, what?)

Part III. Agree or Disagree

Now I would like you to either agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Please feel free to comment as much as possible on each statement.

1. The Wikipedia passages we translated were too long;
I would have preferred to work on a shorter passage.
2. I don't feel that my English is "good enough" to be doing long translations.
3. The ability to translate between English and Japanese is not that useful.
4. Today most English-Japanese computer translations are basically accurate.
5. It is better not to use machine translation services.
6. The classroom activities didn't really change my ideas about machine translation.
7. When I read a document, I can usually tell whether it is the result of a machine translation or a human translation.