

## Quality Concerns and Ethical Implications in the Context of Voluntary, Crowdsourced Wikipedia Translation Projects

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### Abstract

This paper investigates the issue of voluntary, crowdsourced translation of Wikipedia articles which is one of the major subtypes of online collaborative translation. In particular, it seeks to tackle relevant issues and dimensions including the quality of translation produced by people who are not trained as translators as well as concerns relevant to the idea of exploitation that surround translation crowdsourcing for both for-profit and not-for-profit activities. This investigation takes place within the framework of DADD initiative voluntary project in which the untrained crowd collaborate to translate Wikipedia articles for the purpose of enriching Arabic digital content and enhancing knowledge sharing. Semi-structured interviews with initiative team are conducted to explore quality control measures adopted by DADD and the ethical issues raised in the context of voluntary work. Results show that despite concerns over the quality of end-product, such voluntary projects serve to provide 'good' translations of large volumes of materials and ensure easy access to knowledge by native Arabs. Moreover, volunteers who choose to participate in a non-profit, cause-driven crowdsourced initiative are greatly encouraged when initiative mission, agenda and organization are clearly presented and exerted efforts are non-financially rewarded.

**Keywords:** translation crowdsourcing – quality– ethics – volunteer translators- Wikipedia - DADD initiative

## 1. Introduction

In the past few decades, technology has significantly changed how translation is carried out and has given way to dynamic shifts and innovations. Traditional ways of translation have ceded ground to new digital methods influenced by globalization. One major change is the adoption of crowdsourced and online collaborative translation approaches which has caught the attention of scholars and experts.

Following the advent of participatory Web 2.0, and the continuous increase of generated digital material, the amount of spatial content to be translated into different world languages has been growing at an astounding rate. This has, in turn, increased the demand for professional translators (Kelly, 2009). However, budgets to fund this demand for translation do not exist (European Commission, 2012). In such contexts, where there is a need for rapid, cost-effective translations of large volume of materials, new technology-driven translation phenomena have emerged including a wide range of un/solicited forms of translation such as translation crowdsourcing. Crowdsourced translation is relatively a new translation practice that makes use of the interactive opportunities provided by Web 2.0, which turns users into content generators. Crowdsourcing is used by for-profit companies like Facebook and X, and non-profit organizations like TED also recruit unpaid crowdsourcing translators. These relatively new forms of translation also include a wide range of unsolicited and self-managed types of translation such as interlingual knowledge-sharing through Wikipedia (McDonough Dolmaya, 2017). Those who are now part of translation scene are not only professional translators. The second-generation internet gave rise to new types of translators including amateurs, natural translators, volunteers and fan-sub/dubs.

As it is always the case with new technology, while it provides new niches and solutions, it creates problems and challenges. Research on online collaborative crowdsourced translation, which is relatively recent, addresses the vast possibilities offered by the second generation of the internet that is user-generated as well as the challenges involved (Zwischenberger, 2021). The main issues that attract translation scholars are related to epistemological/conceptual issues, motivation, ethics and professional standards, translator visibility and the description of existing initiatives in different settings (Jiménez-Crespo, 2022; Jiménez-Crespo & Ramírez-Polo, 2021). Furthermore, research draws on the positive role of crowdsourced translation in language industry and the changes this phenomenon brings to translation practice. Baer (2010) argues that well-organized crowdsourcing projects can promote collaboration between amateur and professional translators, provide training environments for novice translators, expand the

material that gets translated, broaden access to information, enhance the visibility of translation and familiarize more people with the complexity of the translation process. From another perspective, crowdsourced translation projects rely on volunteer labor of the crowd to support both for-profit service and not-for-profit cause, and this raises many concerns including questions regarding the quality of translation performed by people who are not necessarily paid for their work nor trained as translators (Basalamah, 2020; Zwischenberger, 2021). Soliciting translations from anonymous non-professionals carries a significant risk of poor translation quality and resorting more to MT. The quality of crowdsourced translations could be compromised due to amateurs carrying out the work coupled with the low payment or free model used (Flanagan, 2016; Zaidan & Callison-Burch, 2011). By the same token, there are many ethical concerns that surround crowdsourcing practices, mainly the exploitation of free labor and the negative effect this voluntary practice could have on public perception of translation, which in turn lowers the occupational status of professional translators.

In short, translation crowdsourcing is one of the most innovative and practical approaches in the language industry. However, it raises significant concerns regarding the quality of the end product generated by amateur, untrained crowd and potential ethical violations. While these concerns and challenges do exist, no one can deny the positive impact of crowdsourcing. For the past 15 years, this innovative practice has led to the rapid and cost-effective generation of large volumes of translated content and easy access to multilingual resources for organizations and communities. Numerous successful initiatives and models - like TED's Open Translation Project, NGO Translation Without Borders (TWB) and Wikipedia's multilingual collaboration - demonstrate the potential of crowdsourced translation. By exploring and understanding these models, it is possible to gain insights into best practices including how to control quality, engage the community and set ethical frameworks so as to provide a roadmap for future similar projects. One of these projects is DADD initiative that adopts crowdsourcing to enhance Arabic Wikipedia. This voluntary initiative is introduced and assessed in the following sections. Shedding light on measures taken to ensure the quality of translations produced by the untrained crowd is hoped to set a framework for similar projects. Furthermore, research on online collaborative translation is relatively in its infancy and there are many issues that need to be investigated particularly in the Arabic context. The aim of this paper is to fill in a gap in literature by describing one of the crowdsourcing translation projects in the Arab world, DADD initiative. It seeks to describe the quality control procedures adopted to ensure quality of end-product, and the measures taken to tackle relevant ethical concerns.

DADD initiative was selected because it was thought that it was successful and exhibited some of the most important characteristics and challenges of crowdsourcing projects. It is assumed that other projects that offer similar services would inherit many of the same challenges; thus, factors that contributed to the temporary success or failure of DADD initiative might also be relevant to other firms in the same area.

## 2. Background

Jeff Howe, a contributing American journalist at Wired Magazine coined the term ‘crowdsourcing’ in 2006 as a portmanteau of ‘crowd’ and ‘outsourcing’, and introduced it in his article “The Rise of Crowdsourcing”. Howe described crowdsourcing as the practice of outsourcing tasks traditionally performed by in-house employees or professionals to a large, often virtual, and undefined group of individuals, i.e. the crowd. The crowd can encompass amateurs, volunteers, experts, companies and any entity connected to the Web (Howe, 2009). Howe explained how technological advancements narrowed the gap between amateurs and professionals, providing amateurs with opportunities to showcase their skills, which companies can leverage to their advantage by accomplishing tasks at significantly lower costs compared to hiring a professional workforce.

According to Estellés et al (2015), scholars have recognized eight main components that form the structural framework of any crowdsourcing initiative. These foundational elements encompass: **(E1)** a precisely defined target crowd, **(E2)** a well-articulated task with clear objectives, **(E3)** a transparent incentive for participants, **(E4)** an identified crowdsourcing community, **(E5)** a form of compensation for the crowdsourcer, **(E6)** a participative workflow in digital platforms, **(E7)** an open, reachable recruitment process, and **(E8)** an online medium enabling participants’ collaboration.

In the context of translation, crowdsourcing refers to the practice of assigning translation tasks to the public through an open invitation. In simple terms, crowdsourced translation involves employing technology to facilitate numerous contributors collaborating remotely and simultaneously on a translation assignment or project (Krimat, 2021). By the same token, O’Hagan (2011) defines translation crowdsourcing as a translation model that calls upon a large virtual crowd on the web to accomplish given translation tasks. It serves as a broad category covering diverse web-based translation methods such as collaborative translation and volunteer translation. Various translation scenarios involve collaboration between different parties including authors, publishers, translation agencies and translators alike. Collaboration also permeates translation practice in the context of web-based work settings, i.e. crowdsourcing. It is

possible to establish the link between crowdsourcing and collaborative translation by saying that collaborative translation is one of the manifestations of crowdsourced translation that relies on internet connectivity, and has thrived due to collaborative technology and social networking (Désilets & Van De Meer, 2011). Krinat (2021) sets that a translation practice can be both crowdsourced and collaborative as “both rely on the internet to exist as they have been boosted by the collaborative and social networking technologies that have emerged in the wake of the Web 2.0 advent” (p.2).

While it is difficult to draw dividing lines between various types of translation crowdsourcing practices, it is useful to highlight the elements involved as synthesized by Flanagan (2016). Flanagan makes a distinction between translation crowdsourcing done for non-profit and for-profit purposes, and identifies three factors present in both cases.

**Table 1. Flanagan’s overview of translation crowdsourcing elements**

	<b>Non-profit</b>		<b>For-profit</b>	
<b>Payment</b>	Non-payment		No payment: Material incentives Virtual incentives Organized events Payment: Paid crowdsourcing	
<b>Crowd</b>	Open community	Amateur professional	Open community	Amateur professional
	Closed community	Amateur professional	Closed community	Amateur professional
<b>Call for participation</b>	Content-owner initiated call User-initiated call		Content-owner initiated call LSP makes call Cloud marketplaces make call	

In the present paper, Flanagan’s elements represent a framework for systematically evaluating DADD initiative crowdsourcing model and explaining its features, components and processes.

A relevant point to mention is the issue of volunteering in translation practice. According to Olohan (2014), volunteer translation, or “community translation” that benefits from “wisdom of the crowd”, is the one “conducted by people exercising their free will to perform translation work which is not remunerated, which is formally organized and for the benefit of others” (p.4).

New translation models that emerged with Web 2.0 technologies, provided web-expert volunteers the opportunity to exert efforts to support a cause and enhance knowledge sharing (Dombek, 2014). Hence, NGOs and non-profit organizations usually adopt, via an open call, these unpaid crowdsourcing models as frameworks for volunteer translation to accomplish translation tasks. Nevertheless, translation crowdsourcing is not confined only to humanitarian entities, but also to free open-source software projects (FOSS) in which users can access software for free in their native language (Flanagan, 2016). However, volunteering may not be a common and consolidated notion in the Arabic culture the way it is in the west. Hence, it is useful to study existing voluntary projects in the Arab region, and address the issue of attracting volunteers and motivating them to make a contribution. Useful insights could be gained to promote voluntary practice which means the will to participate and action sustainability.

### **3. The quality of crowdsourced translation**

In contemporary translation studies, the quality of crowdsourced translation is a central yet controversial issue that weighs efficiency gains against output reliability. Crowdsourced translation serves to produce multilingual content rapidly at low cost (e.g., Wikipedia, TED Talks). However, unlike traditional translation practice, it often raises concerns about quality in terms of consistency, accuracy and adherence to professional standards. In conventional translation models, quality is maintained by professional translators and rigorous workflows. Conversely, crowdsourced production depends on the work of untrained contributors, and output quality varies according a number of factors. Volunteers level of expertise ranges from bilingual crowd to professionals. Those who are part of unpaid initiatives like TWB show greater commitment than paid volunteers, but produce varied quality. Some participants possess bilingual performance along with their background which makes their translations outperform professional translators (Kelly et al, 2011). It is also possible that small payments incentivize speedy production over quality. Additionally, some platforms rely on technical infrastructure that enables peer-review mechanisms or post-editing workflows (hybrid models) that combine both crowd and expert input.

As the context of translation practice is changing in terms of technologies, processes and workspace, new concepts of translation quality have emerged. According to O'Brien (2012) and Jiménez-Crespo (2022) "dynamicity" has become the dominant characteristic shaping the way we perceive and assess translation quality. The change in translation landscape and the move towards new industry models and open workflows have led to "variation in quality metrics" that become tight to context constraints including budgetary limitations, tight deadlines, situational

factors, communicative purposes and on top of all end-user expectations. Traditional quality features are redefined and a new dynamic framework for quality assessment is introduced.

The new technology-driven quality perspective mirrors skopos theory as it reflects a tendency for functionalist reassessment of quality, and in such cases “good enough” translations are sufficient for specific purposes. Priority is given for user benefits over fidelity to source texts, “fitness for purpose” over “absolute equivalence”. “Traditional holistic approaches to translation quality no longer apply to the fast moving and drastically changing translation landscape where work environments are web-based and have more customizable and volatile quality standards” (Krimat, 2021, p. 10).

#### **4. Ethical challenges**

Ethical aspects of translation crowdsourcing are critical and have attracted the attention of many scholars (e.g., Basalamah, 2020; Flanagan, 2016; McDonough Dolmaya, 2011; Zwischenberger, 2021). Schlagwein et al (2019) identified five relevant ethical issues, namely, payment fairness, openness, transparency, social feedback, meritocracy, autonomy, boundaries and scope of crowdsourcing. Volunteers are not expected to be aware of professional standards which raises questions on the accountability of crowd output. Dombek (2014) highlighted that unprofessional practice may lead to negative consequences. He explained a case where Facebook’s crowdsourced community translations reportedly spread misinformation. Chesterman (2001, p. 146) distinguishes “between someone “who is a translator” and someone “who does translations (sometimes)” which underscores the usefulness of hybrid models as they integrate crowd production with experts’ review.

One of the issues of high concern is labor exploitation in volunteer projects like Wikipedia and TED in which participants lack recognition or are underpaid. Moreover, low payments can devalue the work of professional translators and pose a threat for profession status (McDonough-Dolmaya, 2012, Zwischenberger, 2021). Labor exploitation extends beyond direct payments. Piróth and Baker (2020) argue that NGO volunteer translation has the potential of causing unethical consequences. Crowdsourced output can be used for training MT systems. Companies benefit from volunteer labor without compensating contributors. They get non/financial gains on the long run. O’Hagan (2011) argues that volunteers in translation crowdsourcing may gain intrinsic satisfaction from serving the community and spreading knowledge, yet scholars consider translation crowdsourcing a legal but unethical practice, and the consequences of which can be anticipated on the long run (Zwischenberger, 2021) as it normalizes unpaid labor in a profit-driven industry. Therefore, organizations and companies running translation



crowdsourcing projects need to be transparent about their goals and the organization of their activities (McDonough Dolmaya, 2011; O'Hagan, 2016).

Despite ethical concerns, volunteer translators whether unpaid, or get low remuneration, who are part of for-profit or not-for-profit projects, cultivate many benefits. They can enjoy non-financial merits including authentic translator training and greater visibility for themselves as translators. They gain work experience and build portfolios to promote their personal services. Fresh graduates get the chance to practice translation and get the experience they need to build their careers. In addition, in some projects, volunteers' contributions are acknowledged in the form of certificates, tokens, badges which promotes them professionally.

In the Arabic context, Alonayq (2021) added more gains relevant to Arabic-speaking volunteers related to religion, gender, and diglossia which are not identified in western studies. He sets free labor within cultural and ideological frameworks which adds more complication to the translation crowdsourcing ethical implications.

## 5. Methodology

To address study objectives, qualitative exploratory approach is adopted, namely content analysis of organizational materials and semi-structured interviews. This dual-method design helps in-depth analysis and enriches data validity (Bowen, 2009). The content of initiative official website and Wikipedia page are analyzed. Data are collected on a) initiative operational framework in terms of mission, the cause it serves and designed workflow, b) translation process including articles selection criteria, adopted translation approach and quality measures, c) crowd engagement in terms of language guidelines and technical instructions and d) financial support for the initiative and ways for rewarding volunteers.

To complement and validate documentary findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two DADD team leaders. Interview topics included adopted quality control measures and ways for tackling ethical concerns like exploitation of volunteer efforts and serving specific agenda. Interview sessions are recorded upon interviewees consent, transcribed and analyzed alongside website data. Data are coded thematically using deductive categories to fulfil study objectives.

## 6. Results

Results are presented in the following three key subsections: 1) An overview of DADD Initiative, 2) Translation quality management, and 3) Ethical issues. These results give a comprehensive understanding of initiative crowdsourced translation model and critical issues that require attention.



### 6.1 An overview of DADD initiative

DADD is a voluntary, non-profit organization that was established in Germany. The motive for this project was the lack of digital Arabic content and the weakness of available content in various fields of knowledge. This notable initiative aims at expanding the content of Arabic Wikipedia. It was launched in August, 2015 by a group of Arab student volunteers at Dortmund University, Germany. Its primary objective is to enhance Arabic Wikipedia by translating diverse articles from English into Arabic, to encourage volunteering and attract talented Arab youth. The initiative's Wikipedia page hosts approximately 300000 articles spanning various disciplines including engineering, psychology, philosophy, languages, astronomy, literature, among others. This voluntary project strives to break language barriers and facilitate knowledge access for average person, students and researchers. Participation in the initiative involves volunteers translating these articles into Arabic, contributing additional articles of interest or enhancing the quality of existing Arabic articles. The voluntary efforts of DADD initiative have yielded significant achievements resulting in enhancing Arabic spatial content (see Figure 1) (DADD, n.d.). DADD initiative plays an essential role in enriching spatial Arabic content, and promotes easy access of Arabic language speakers to different areas of knowledge. However, Arabic Wikipedia is still lagging behind in terms of the number of articles available compared to other languages like English and German. Arabic Wikipedia articles are more than 1000000, and this may seem a large number but in fact it is still relatively small compared to the number of Arabic language speakers in the world (Barakat & Al-Moqbeli, 2020). Arabic is the fourth most used language on the internet today, but unfortunately online content that is available in Arabic represents only 6% (Nabil, 2019).



Figure 1: DADD-INITIATIVE achievements published in 2019

To achieve project goals, the initiative hosts a competition for translating Wikipedia articles into Arabic on its official website, accompanied by elucidations regarding its objectives, participation regulations, translations submissions deadlines and incentives. To aid participants in article selection, a repository of articles is curated and made available on the website encompassing a broad spectrum of disciplines which enables volunteers to engage with subjects most aligned with their interests and area of expertise. Given that most participants may not possess expertise in translation or familiarity with the Wikipedia tools required for article creation and translation, the initiative furnishes a number of tutorial videos accessible to participants at their convenience. These instructional videos are designed to familiarize participants with essential workflows, such as markup syntax, citation formatting and collaborative editing protocols. Subsequently, translated articles are scrutinized by three evaluators according to meticulous evaluation criteria leading to the announcement of winners.

Submitted translated articles undergo a three-tier evaluation process. Each translation is independently assessed by a panel of three evaluators using a predefined rubric (see Fig. 2) that emphasizes a number of features including linguistic accuracy, stylistic coherence, and adherence to initiative and Wikipedia's editorial standards. Results are finalized and winners are publicly announced.

## 6.2 Translation quality management

One of the primary objectives of the initiative is to generate high-quality Arabic spatial content. However, this presents a challenge, as participants are volunteers who may lack formal training in translation. To address this challenge, the initiative implements various strategies to ensure and elevate the quality of volunteer output. First, participants are encouraged to choose articles aligned with their expertise. While participants may not possess advanced translation skills, they often exhibit proficiency as creative bilinguals and benefit from their subject matter expertise to facilitate the production of high-quality translations. For instance, during interviews, it was related that one of the volunteers made substantial contributions by translating numerous articles on airplane engines leveraging his university studies in this field. Another adopted approach involves fostering self-directed learning among volunteers through the development of tutorial videos on translating Wikipedia articles or creating new ones. These tutorials, devised by project leaders, are presented in a simplified manner and are supplemented with practical demonstrations. A critical measure taken by the project entails the rejection of machine translation and the rigorous assessment of translations utilizing a comprehensive scoring rubric by three independent assessors (see Fig. 3). Furthermore, feedback is provided to volunteers to aid in enhancing their work and to inform their future endeavors. To incentivize the production of high-quality articles, winners are given small prizes and participants are sometimes given tokens of appreciation. According to interviewees, most volunteers are motivated by intrinsic, altruism values like sharing knowledge, enriching Arabic spatial content and supporting the

community. Other motivations include the wish to gain professional experience and establish a translation career. DADD incentives, despite their modest nature, increase participants' sense of motivation, elevate the level of competition and encourage participants to strive for excellence. Moreover, these incentives help promoting long-term engagement which is a key challenge for the initiative. Although the project attracts a significant number of volunteers, not all of them stay active. Retention remains an issue, as some participants discontinue their involvement over time. The incentive system helps reduce dropout rates. Appreciating and rewarding volunteers' contributions enhance output quality and increase the likelihood of continued participation and project's stability and growth.

عنوان المقالة	الحجم (كيب)	جودة المقالة		أهمية	أفضل المقالات (عدد غير محدد)	عدد إضافي لتعليم الجح بين 20 و 100 (على جودة مقالات الج)	رصيد إضافي لمقالة مقترحة	رقم المقيم	حالة القبول (1 أو 0)	ملاحظة المقيم	رصيد المقالة النهائي
		المفهومية والشفافية 0 - 5	توافيق وتنسيق 0 - 5								
غائب	10	2	2	10	0	30	50		0		0
العلم (رواية)	20	2	1	5	0	0	0		0		0
تجريب محفوظ	30	4	2	5	0	100	20		1		0
أند روسي	40	2	3	5	10	0	40		1		0
(جرب مثلك)	10	4	4	7	0	0	0		1		0
معادلة التقييم الجديدة:											
$ه + م + ف + ز + (ج/10 \times ح) = \text{الرصيد (ر)}$											
حرجل						زرجل			حرجل		
حجم المقالة بالكيلو بايت						حجم المقالة			جودة المقالة		
مجموع عوامل الجودة (وهو عامل ضرب يؤثر بالرصيد بشكل كبير جدا) .... ويتضمن شروط القبول (المفهومية والخلو من الترجمة الآلية) وشروط الجودة من دقة ومراجع ووصلات وتنسيق وربط للمقالة						أهمية الموضوع			أهمية المقالة		
أهمية موضوع المقالة. (لاحظ أنه تم تعديل نطاق هذا العامل، كي لا يؤثر كثيرا على الرصيد مثل معامل الجودة)						مقالة مقترحة			أفضل المقالات		
زيادة نقاط المقالات المقترحة في مسابقة ض						أفضل المقالات			أفضل المقالات		
أفضل المقالات تأخذ رصيدا إضافيا (عدد غير محدد من المقالات المتميزة)						أفضل المقالات			أفضل المقالات		
زيادة عددية						أفضل المقالات			أفضل المقالات		
زيادة نوع المقالة (منشأة بمراجع خاصة، أو مطورة أو مترجمة)						أفضل المقالات			أفضل المقالات		

Fig. 2: Scoring rubric for participants translations

### 6.3 Ethical issues

Crowdsourced translation employs altruistic participation which raises a number of ethical concerns even if those voluntary efforts are exerted for not-for-profit organizations. Concerns include uncertain project governance in terms of goals, members and organization, possibility of exploiting voluntary work to make profits or serve specific agenda, lack of financial transparency and incentives mechanisms (McDonough-Dolmaya, 2012; Pérez-González, 2014). Questions on ethical issues were raised during interviews with initiative leaders. Results are presented under the following three sub-headings:

#### a. Initiative organization and transparency

Informants related that the initiative consisted of two distinct tiers: legal representatives (based in Germany) and a network of volunteers from different parts of the world. In its website, project goals are clearly stated for the public, and volunteers are invited to take part in the project. A promotional video for key members is also found in website to well-present the project establishment, motive and goals. However, there appears some critical gaps in project transparency. The organization of the project and roles of team members are not stated. The website omits information on project roles hierarchies or volunteer responsibilities.

### **b. Articles selection**

Results show that the project adopts measures to avoid agenda-driven exploitation. Volunteers are given the freedom to select articles for translation that match their expertise and interest which serves to engage a variety of interests. Lists developed by the initiative are automatically generated using two open-source algorithmic tools that volunteers themselves can use to find articles missing in Arabic Wikipedia.

1. **PetScan:** This tool generates lists of high-priority articles missing in Arabic Wikipedia based on cross-linguistic analysis (see Figure 3).
2. **GapFinder:** It Identifies content gaps by comparing topic coverage across language editions (see Figure 4).

Tutorials on how to use these tools are found in project's website giving volunteers the chance to create their own lists, and at the same time fulfilling the goal of content equity.

It is possible that participants select articles that advance a particular ideological or political content, or that project team directs efforts toward a specific agenda. To avoid such risk, project leaders highlighted that the use of PetScan and GapFinder secures algorithmic neutrality as they prioritize structural gaps over subjective editorial bias which means that articles with high interwiki links but no Arabic version are listed. Moreover, the initiative has an editorial team that reviews selections to ensure that Wikipedia's neutrality principles are maintained.

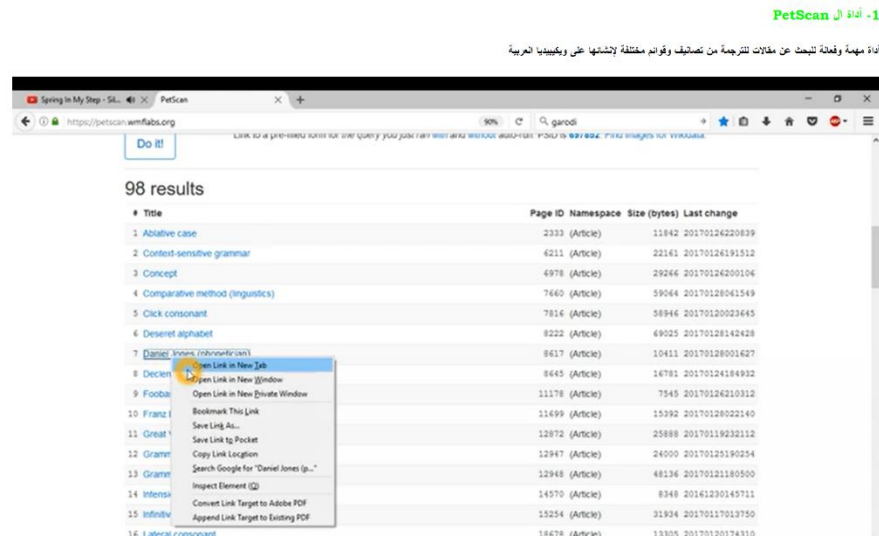


Fig. 3: PetScan tool for selecting Wikipedia articles

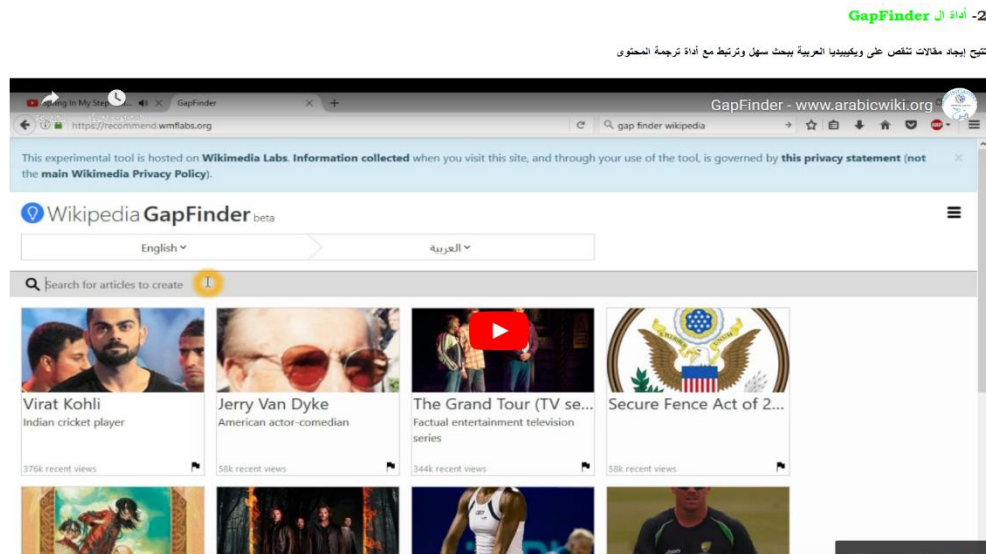


Fig. 4: GapFinder tool for selecting Wikipedia articles

### c. Project funding

In the context of voluntary projects, securing stable income and financial support is necessary to carry out project activities and maintain participants motivation. This issue was discussed with initiative leaders who acknowledged the role of financial support in maintaining project

operational capacity. Money is needed to provide monetary rewards as well as non-material benefits like certificates and tokens of appreciation. These incentives are necessary to raise motivation and ensure participants sustainability. In addition, competition prizes encourage volunteers to provide quality translations for many articles.

As for initiative funding model, interviewees emphasized that the initiative was a non-profit project and relies on donations to run activities and motivate volunteers. Donations come from team members and friends wishing to give support. Donations are publicly announced in website. However, upon reviewing project website, it was found out that the last update on received donations was made in 2021. Interviewees expressed interest in diversifying funding sources but cited challenges in scaling efforts.

## 7. Discussion

Considering Flanagan's description of crowdsourcing initiatives (2016), DADD has the features of non-profit models that prioritize community-driven goals over financial profits. However, it includes elements of a for-profit approach as participants may receive some incentives. Call for participation is initiated by Wikipedia users for an open community that consists of both professionals and amateurs which creates a collaborative workspace that is typical of digital volunteering.

By referring to Estellés-Arolas et al. (2015) taxonomy of the main components of crowdsourcing initiatives, it is concluded that DADD has most of them but still needs to do some refinements and improvements particularly with regard to optimizing the recruitment process and incentives mechanisms. The project should outreach and partner with academic institutions. Moreover, tiered rewards like small grants, badges and online workshops would sustain engagement beyond intrinsic motivation.

DADD quality measures like using assessment sheet and giving feedback for participants serve to avoid compromising quality. Besides, participants usually choose topics that belong to their expertise ensuring deeper understanding of the subject matter. Having relevant background is necessary in translations particularly when dealing with technical topics (Flanagan, 2016). In such cases the output of expert bilinguals might be more accurate than that of professional translators who lack domain-specific knowledge (Kelly et al, 2011).

The present study agrees with Krimat (2021), Jiménez-Crespo (2022) and O'Brien (2012) that the concept of quality has changed, and "good enough" translations suffice to fulfill knowledge access purposes. However, further steps could be taken by the initiative to enhance the quality of amateur translations. Project organizers can implement various strategies. Peer review systems

enable volunteers to provide feedback and collaborate on improving translations which fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility. Training initiatives, such as workshops or online courses, can equip volunteers with essential translation skills, terminology resources and cultural competence to enhance their proficiency. Moreover, the integration of translation tools, such as glossaries, style guides, and CAT (Computer-Assisted Translation) software can streamline the translation process and facilitate consistency and accuracy in the final output.

As for the associated ethical implications, the project enjoys a good level of transparency in terms of publicizing its goals and activities. In addition, the adopted model for selecting articles to be translated which combines algorithmic filtering and editorial checks is considered the ideal practice in participation translation projects. However more should be done in what regards announcing the structure of the initiative and workflow. On the financial side, project leaders are advised to ensure financial transparency and follow the ethical crowdsourcing models of other projects like of Translators Without Borders TWB (see Zetzsche, 2017) and declare sources of funding and issue annual reports showing governance, income and how donations are allocated. Lack of transparency might negatively affect donors and volunteers trust in the project (Dombek, 2014). These measures would enhance volunteers trust and avoid the unequal power structures found in crowdsourcing projects.

A major challenge faced is project sustainability in terms of maintaining sources of income and volunteers' participation. The initiative should give more attention to balancing intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors to maintain long-term engagement (Estellés-Arolas et al., 2015). It is possible to adopt micro incentives for top contributors and digital badges or LinkedIn-endorsed certifications to enhance volunteers' professional profiles. Adopting this approach not only reduces dropout rates but also fosters a sense of ownership and professional growth among contributors which ensures project sustainability and enhanced quality.

## 8. Conclusion

DADD initiative represents a model worthy of both praise and refinement. The project was founded to expand Arabic digital content and encourage volunteering among Arab youth. Overtime, this voluntary project has successfully achieved these goals and made significant contributions. By refining its transparency measures, expanding incentives structures and partnering with academic institutes, DADD can consolidate its role as a leader in ethical crowdsourcing that empowers volunteers while advancing equity in knowledge access.

Despite its limitations, the DADD initiative represents a significant contribution to crowdsourced translation by fostering a collaborative space where professionals and amateurs work together to advance knowledge accessibility. It represents a model for similar non-profit projects that benefit from the efforts of amateur translators who generously offer their time and skills to support a humanitarian cause. It is a hybrid model that combines open participation with controlled



oversight, and provides useful blueprint for similar initiatives seeking to balance inclusivity with rigor.

Jiménez-Crespo (2022) observes that “online collaborative translation is here to stay, and advances in AI and MT will continue to impact the developments of new initiatives and models of participation, as well as research in this area” (p.18). To ensure long-term success of these new models, further research is needed to explore relevant key factors including Arab volunteers’ motivations and needs, and the ethical frameworks that protect the crowd and maximize the impact. It is a must for translation studies to absorb changes in translation landscape and players, and address issues relevant to the new translation reality and the dynamicity of the practice.

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