

Expert interview

Case: Wikipedia
Interviewee (IE): Amir Aharoni
Interviewer (IR): Anja Ebersbach
Date: 2020-07-23, 11:00am
Location: Skype

[Welcoming]

1 IR: How do the rules or the processes differ in the different language versions concerning the languages. Can you think of anything? #00:01:28#

2 IE: Well, so when you say language, do you mean writing style? #00:01:51#

3 IR: Yes, as well. I haven't specified it. #00:02:02#

4 IE: I don't think there is any one single person in the world who can give you a full answer to this question because there are more than three hundred Wikipedias. I only know English and Hebrew well, I know Russian a little bit, even though it's my native language, I don't actually write there very often. If you have particular questions about the Russian Wikipedia, I am happy to find an answer for you, but that's not something that I can immediately tell you in the meeting. #00:02:08#

5 IE: So, the big difference between English and Hebrew, and that is probably true for the difference between English and most other languages, is that English actually has written and very detailed policies about a lot of things. Both the language writing style, notability, verifiability and references and all those other things. Whether they are difficult, that's a separate question, some people complain that they are difficult, I think they are mostly good policies. I don't expect them to be easy. #00:03:22#

6 IR: Yeah, they are too many maybe, to read them through. #00:04:14#

7 IE: I don't think they are too many. People sometimes complain that you cannot even start doing anything before you read the policies, which is not quite true, because you can. There are lots of things you can do without reading the policies. I did lots of things without knowing the policies about them, so this is not the problem. Hebrew Wikipedia also has policies about some things but there are lots of things for which there is no written policy, as strange as it may sound. I know both English and Hebrew. And in English verifiability and notability are really basic cornerstone policies without which nothing can happen at all. But in the Hebrew Wikipedia there are no written policies about this and as a result people often argue about this. Every now and then I try to suggest that we just write policies, not necessarily the same as in English but something, and in the Hebrew Wikipedia lots of people say, "No, no, we must not write policies, it's bad, the English Wikipedia is awful because they have policies", and I just don't agree with this because I think that this makes English Wikipedia mostly good. But whatever, I don't like arguing much about that. #00:04:19#

8 IR: But if you say the rules are not written, does this mean that they are not there, or they are just not written down, but everyone knows about them? #00:05:49#

9 IE: You can't really say this, because if they are not written down, then you can't really know about them, and they don't really exist. You see that different people practice different things and different administrators practice different things, when they decide who to block and what pages to protect and it kind of ends up working but it's not really good. You can't even call this "rules" because in some cases these are just practices and not rules. There are some written rules which I really dislike, especially in Hebrew there are some rules about voting, which in English Wikipedia and a lot of Wikipedias this is a "total no, no". You don't make decisions by voting, you make decisions by discussion and common sense and consensus and stuff like that, not by counting votes. But in Hebrew Wikipedia there are rules about votes, which I absolutely hate and try to just not ever touch this, and I never participate in these votes. You can safely say that I boycott them, but that's me, lots of other people do participate in them. So that's a thing I don't like. The English Wikipedia also used to vote many other years ago but the English Wikipedia stopped doing this and that's very good. Also, because the Hebrew Wikipedia is much smaller in terms of community size, people kind of know each other more and you keep seeing the same names all the time on all the discussion pages, so some people call the Hebrew Wikipedia jokingly - and it's a bit of a sad joke - the community website of the Hebrew Wikipedia writing community. It's like a recursive joke, and it's kind of true because very often you can get the feeling that the people don't care so much about the final product of what is written in the article as they care about who wrote it, which is not really how it is supposed to work. In English Wikipedia I usually don't care who wrote this part or that part. I care whether this is correct and I also wish I could do the same in Hebrew Wikipedia but I have to check if this was added by this user, then I better not touch it because I don't have the mental energy to argue with them, so I find something else to do, which is not great and I know that I'm really not the only one who thinks like that. Please don't understand from this that I don't like the Hebrew Wikipedia, I love it. Most of my editing is there but when I get into areas where I don't want to argue I unfortunately just don't touch it and I find something else to do. Luckily there is always lots of other things to do. This is very much my personal opinion and other people would tell you something else. If you would ask a lot of other people from Wikipedia, they would just start explaining you about the voting rules and how they are just there and that's how things work. I hate these rules and I think they shouldn't exist and they should be deleted and never practiced again. People are different from each other.
#00:06:07#

10 IR: Do you think this is quite special for the Hebrew Wikipedia, or is it the difference to the English one? I think that the smaller Wikipedias function like the Hebrew Wikipedia, probably more than like the English one. #00:10:09#

11 IE: In some ways they probably do, like the fact that fewer people know each other more, that is definitely true for some languages. About voting, it's really not just me. I heard other people from other languages noticing how the Hebrew Wikipedia is really obsessed with voting about everything. I think when it comes to votes Hebrew is special. Maybe there are some votes about some things in

some languages and I never did a very thorough comparison of voting practices or non-voting practices in different languages. I know about English, that in English this is a “total no, no”, not to vote about anything. I saw some things like that in other languages but I’m pretty sure that Hebrew is special in this regard. For example, we have a page called “Parliament”. Just from the name of the page you can see that it’s about voting, and this page doesn’t have interlanguage links, like there are no such pages, as far as I know, there are no such pages in other languages. Because this is specifically for voting about things, not for discussing but for voting. This page is for very important decisions about policy, not about every editing dispute, but nevertheless, votes there happen several times a year. I wish that it was just archived and closed forever and not used ever again, but nevertheless it exists. I really wish that you or maybe somebody else would ask such questions about a lot of Wikipedias and talk to a lot of people, to at least 50 or 100 people from different languages and make a big comparison of that. #00:10:31#

12 IR: There is so much research to do about that, probably going on. I don’t know, maybe there are people who are concerned with that already. #00:12:45#

13 IE: For at least 50 languages, that would be great. #00:13:03#

14 IR: Yes, for example. #00:13:07#

15 IR: Do you know special rules dealing with multilingual content, maybe concerning translation? For example, how do you deal with content in a different language which is added to an article. Are there rules you know? Can you mix languages within an article? #00:13:10#

16 IE: So, the article content itself is supposed to be in the language of that Wikipedia. I guess that in pretty much all Wikipedias you can write some short quotations in a different language when it makes sense. I know that particularly in Russian Wikipedia, you can very frequently see whole passages when you write an article about some important historical event and then you quote what some president or general said about this event. Then in the Russian Wikipedia there is a template, which shows the quotation, like the sentence or several sentences and it’s written in Russian, but if it was originally said in another language, then very frequently they also show the original text in the original language. Russian is above in larger letters and then the original text is in smaller letters or its hidden and you have to push a button to expand it, but it’s there. #00:13:45#

17 IR: It’s a good idea. #00:15:02#

18 IE: Yeah, but you have this, and I think that in English they would usually do it just in English. For example, just literally yesterday I stumbled upon an article about a famous Persian poem and that article had the whole poem in Persian and two translations in English by different translators. It’s useful for me to see the original text and the translation. But whatever, I don’t think that anybody is strongly opposed to adding quotation in a different language wherever it’s useful. #00:15:03#

19 IR: And what about the sources? Do there have to be sources in the same language? #00:15:05#

20 IE: This is a curious point. Again, I guess that the policy is different in different languages. I know about the English Wikipedia, and I can find the precise policy page quite easily. It is allowed to have sources in different language, it's more important that the source is reliable than to have the source in English, so the policy says quite clearly that the sources in the same language are preferred but I can't find the precise wording, but sources in other languages are allowed as long as somebody can verify them and the source itself is reliable, which makes perfect sense for this to be the policy. For the English Wikipedia it's kind of funny because probably the majority of the sources in the world are in English. For a lot of topics, it's much easier to find sources in English. Nevertheless, this policy is not practiced as it is written. I keep hearing about people rejecting sources or deleting sources because they are not in English, which is just against the policy, but people do it anyway, and this is really bad. But people do it and it's one of the most frequent complaints by people who want to write in the English Wikipedia, that they want to write about things from their country, their culture and they don't have English sources about this, and this is rejected because somebody says there is no English source about this and you have to add sources in English, which is just wrong. According to the written policy it's wrong, but people keep saying this anyway. #00:16:00#

21 IR: I can imagine that it also depends on the language, I've never seen something like Chinese sources in the German Wikipedia, but English and French sources. If it's a language which is culturally far away, then probably it's not allowed. Can you imagine something like that? #00:17:56#

22 IE: So, you'll have to find the policy page in the German Wikipedia that says it, I just don't know. I think that the policy, as it is written in the English Wikipedia makes sense, the sources should be in the language of this Wiki, which, for the English Wikipedia, is English but if there is no source in this language, then at least it should be reliable. I mean, so what? There are sources in Chinese about this and there is no source in English about this. So, find somebody who also knows Chinese, it is no big deal. It's Wikipedia, it's the most multilingual community on the planet. It's not that difficult to find somebody who knows Chinese. Go to Chinese Wikipedia and find somebody who knows English there and ask them. I wish this was easier, I wish there was some kind of structured, organized way to find people who know other languages. It's totally possible but you have to do lots of manual steps to actually do this. Like you have to go to that other language and find an appropriate talk page there where you can write in English, and somebody will understand you. I wish there was some kind of a, I don't know, a social network for Wikipedians, where they would find other Wikipedians conveniently by language or by interest or something like that. In theory, the user pages could function as such a social network, in practice it's a huge mess. It's not like you cannot find somebody who can translate something for you. #00:18:43#

23 IR: Yes, sure you can find someone, but don't you think that some authors also think about the audience in a way that they say, okay it's an Italian article and most Italians can also get the meaning from Spanish texts. So, it's easy to fill in something that is Spanish originally because everyone knows that. For example, if I write my articles in German, then I can mix it with English because everyone in

Germany is supposed to know English. But if I mixed it with an Asian language, I would have to translate it or give a comment or something like that. #00:20:41#

24 IE: Again, I don't know about the policies in the German Wikipedia but I kind of guess that you cannot just write a sentence in English in the German Wikipedia article. Maybe you can write it as a quotation or like a title of a book or something, that's probably acceptable. But just a sentence in English, that's probably not acceptable, I would guess. Correct me if I'm wrong. A good comprehensive encyclopedia is supposed to have articles about things that happened in China and for some of these things there are only sources in Chinese, so there is no choice. You should feel lucky that there are people who know Chinese and who write in your Wikipedia, you should thank them, not reject what they do. #00:21:42#

25 IR: Okay. Are there quality assurance measures concerning translated articles? I don't think so. Do you remember? We talked about that. #00:22:51#

26 IE: Not something special, it's pretty much the same quality assurance mechanism as for anything in general. You just check if it's correct. Ideally, you shouldn't check this as a translation, because it's more important that it's correct and reliable than to have it correctly translated. Because the source article could be wrong, so if the source article is wrong, it's more important to correct the mistake than to translate the mistake. Translating the mistake would be a pretty bad thing. When I actually teach people to translate the articles, I often tell people, if you know the source language well enough to write in it, and you see a mistake in the source article, you should invest a few minutes and correct the mistake in the source article before you start translating. If you have the time and the skill. And if you don't, then at least understand that this is a mistake and skip the mistake and don't translate the mistake. #00:23:10#

27 IR: I talked about it lately with a colleague that it would be nice to have a mechanism that there's a kind of ping pong translation. That you correct it in one version and then you go to the original and you correct it there and there's an interaction between the texts in the languages. #00:24:31#

28 IE: So, when I translate, I actually do this. When I translate and I see something that could be improved in the source article, I improve this. I know that there are some other Wikipedians who do this, and then there are also people who don't do this and I can't pay them because they are volunteers, and they invest their time as they wish. The Abstract Wikipedia project which you may have heard about, which was recently approved, will be kind of something what you say "on steroids", if it actually ever happens because it's a huge and complicated project. But if it happens, then it will be something like this and with a very complicated technical structure underneath it, that I hope won't be too complicated for usual editors, but maybe this will happen. But it will be years until it actually works. #00:25:04#

29 IR: Does knowledge transfer take place between the Wikipedias and if so, how? Do you know about communities, spaces, places where people work together concerning the content and then they translate it or they write it down in their language? Let's think of an event which is international, Olympics for example.

People meet there, they get to content in a kind of “master language”, and then they write it down in their language. So, the process doesn’t start with a single editor, who sits there and tries to find out what is going on, maybe about a person, maybe about a sportsman, but everything is clear and then you just have to put it in different languages. #00:26:12#

30 IE: Occasionally things like this are done. I definitely know that this is done in some projects for medical topics. For many years there has been medical translation project, the person most identified with this is Dr. James Heilman. What he was doing, he and his collaborators, they made a list of important medical articles. #00:27:38#

31 IR: In English? #00:28:23#

32 IE: Yeah, in English, usually in English, I think they can also work in some other source languages but it’s mostly in English. For some of them, they just tell people to translate this article and they have a big spreadsheet where they track to which languages is this already translated or not. And for some articles, they decided that the English Wikipedia article is too long and complicated, so they made shorter and easier to translate master articles and they put them in their user space as a separate copy and they recommended that people translate this simplified version to their languages. They have been doing something like this on a pretty large scale for years. They translated lots and lots of articles to lots and lots of languages. They got lots of volunteers. Also, this year, because of the huge global pandemic, something like this was done particularly for articles about COVID and they did something very similar and the person most identified with this is Netha Hussain, you may have heard about her. She’s a pretty well-known editor from India. I think that she herself speaks Malay, but she writes in English and also in Malay. Recently there was lots of buzz around how she organized people to write about COVID-19. There is at least one video where she is interviewed about this, if you want, I can find the video for you. #00:28:23#

33 IR: I follow her on Facebook, I’ve seen that. It’s strange that it’s only in the medical area. Can you guess why? #00:30:15#

34 IE: I don’t know. Maybe because it’s useful and important and people who write about this think that it’s useful and important. I can’t think of anything more detailed than that. It could be a lot of other things, it could be articles about sports as you said, it could be articles about physics, but I don’t know, it did happen with medical topics. #00:30:37#

35 IR: Maybe because there is some kind of urgency behind that, at least if we talk about COVID then you have to say, well we have to translate it very, very fast because it doesn’t make sense to wait three years or more. #00:31:07#

36 IE: It’s like with anything else in Wikipedia, it’s because somebody decides to bother to do it. It just happened with medical topics, but in theory it could be something else. I’ll give you an example. Maybe I gave you this example already but it’s becoming relevant again. If you used the visual editor in any Wikipedia, in any language and on any Wikimedia, on any Wiki, not just Wikipedia but in any Wiki. If you used the visual editor, there is a button, in the tool bar that inserts Egyptian hieroglyphics, which is useful in Wikipedia articles about ancient Egypt

and there are several hundreds of such articles, several thousands of such articles but it's not used anywhere else. Why is this button there? Because sometime around 2005 or so, there was a certain volunteer who probably was very curious about ancient Egypt, and he wrote a MediaWiki extension in PHP that allows people to add Egyptian hieroglyphics and this extension used a special tag that looks like a HTML tag. And the content of this tag is translated into images that show as Egyptian hieroglyphics, and when the visual editor was developed in 2012, 2013, they made buttons in the tool bar for all the special tags that were there. And that's why you have an Egyptian hieroglyphics button. Because it's a tag inserted by an extension. And this volunteer happened to be very interested in ancient Egypt, and he knew PHP so he did it in PHP. If he didn't do it in PHP, then maybe it wouldn't happen at all. Maybe there would be no convenient way to insert Egyptian hieroglyphics, or much more likely, somebody sooner or later did something like this as a template and not as a PHP extension. However, if this was not done as a template, then there wouldn't be a button for this visual editor, just like there is no button to insert infoboxes, even though infoboxes are much more common than Egyptian hieroglyphics. But it's just a weird historical accident, that somebody was interested in this, and he did this, and it happened. And it's probably the same with medical translations. People were probably interested in medical topics and they decided that it is important to get these things translated and they invest some effort in doing this and that's just it. It's just work and effort and it's wonderful that it happens. Why doesn't it happen in other topics? I don't know. #00:31:36#

37 IR: The next question fits very well. What motivation drives Wikipedians to work translingually? Why have you chosen to write in three Wikipedias? Is it just because you can? #00:35:30#

38 IE: Yeah, more or less. I sometimes see an interesting topic. I kind of belong to several cultures. I can safely say I belong to several cultures. I belong to the Israeli culture, I belong to the Russian culture, and I belong to, I don't know, international English-speaking culture in some way. Occasionally I see a topic that I think that Hebrew speakers should know about and there is no article about this in Hebrew Wikipedia, so I translate it. Or the other way around. Some topics about Israel that doesn't appear on English Wikipedia or Russian Wikipedia, so I translate it. That's really it. #00:35:51#

39 IR: And it's also the way you work? You just look around the different Wikipedias and you find a gap and decide to fill it? #00:36:40#

40 IE: Something like that. I wish I had like two hundred hours per day. There are so many more articles that I want to translate between languages. #00:36:54#

41 IR: And you don't do it in an organized way so that you have kind of a higher target? Let's say, in this category every article has to be translated? #00:37:16#

42 IE: I wish I did do something like that. In practice I don't. I know that there are a lot of people who do something like this. I don't, I just don't have the time. I wish I had the time, the closest I ever got was not really with translating articles, like I did do something similar to this about a year ago or so. It's a kind of a very nerdy thing. The government of Russia made a law that gave names to airports around

Russia, something like that. All the biggest airports, Russia is a big country, so there are quite a lot of these, something like 60 or 70 airports. So, each of these airports got a new name. They were usually named after some famous people who lived in that city, like writers, scientists and soldiers and so on. So, a law was published with a list of airports and the name of each person. So I went to Wikidata... I went airport after airport. There is a property in Wikidata “named after” and I checked if there was a Wiki article after this person and corrected the Wikidata item and so on. I found a few that didn’t have a Wikipedia article so I created the Wikipedia articles. This was probably the most systematic thing that I have done. But I didn’t do any big translations, it’s more just making sure that Wikidata items are correct. I would say that all of these people have an article in the Russian Wikipedia, not all of them have an article in the English Wikipedia. All of them are notable enough to have an article in the English Wikipedia, but I didn’t have the time to create these articles. There was actually one person about whom there was no article in the Russian Wikipedia. That’s a really cute one because I was wondering like there is a whole airport named after this person but there is no article about him in the Russian Wikipedia. It’s an airport in Russia, how could this be? And then I found, it’s an airport in Syktyvkar, which is the capital of the Komi Republic, which is an ethnic region in the north and there is a different ethnic group living there, which has a different language, and in that language, there is an article about that guy. And there is no article about him in the Russian Wikipedia, and I can’t even write this article because I cannot translate this language. I don’t know this language. Somebody who knows this language can translate this article, maybe somebody has already since then.
#00:37:29#

43 IR: Okay. If you translate an article, can you think of special tasks regarding multilingualism? Not only translation but as well maybe if you write an original article and you don’t want to translate but you just want to have a look at other versions? #00:40:59#

44 IE: I definitely do this, and lots of other Wikipedians do this even if they don’t actually know the other languages, they can just guess things. Very frequently I hear from people that they look at versions of the same article in other languages to search for images. This definitely happens. And they try to search for useful references. Again, even if you don’t know the language, you can look at the page and it’s quite easy to find where the footnotes are because the footnotes look the same everywhere, more or less. So, lots of people from lots of wikis said that they do this, and I do this as well. Actually, transferring this from one Wikipedia to another is sometimes hard, images are fairly easy to transfer if they are on Commons but then you have to change the captions and so on to translate it to your language. About footnotes, footnotes are often formatted differently in different languages, which really sucks because it really shouldn’t be like that. The appearance of the footnotes, it does make sense that it would be different in different languages because different languages have different styles for displaying, like even in books, not just on computers, do you put the author name first or do you put the title first or the year or whatever or whether you use italic font or bold font and so on. So, these things are different in different languages and that’s fine. But the structure, the basic information about the footnote, about the situation, these are supposed to be the same in all languages. Nevertheless,

they are not actually the same and you have different templates for situations in different languages, and this really sucks and I wish this was more structured and reusable across languages but currently, what you have to do for each footnote, you often have to rewrite the whole footnote completely and this wastes a lot of time that could be used more efficiently for other things. #00:41:24#

45 IR: Do you do a quality check before you translate? How do you make sure that the article you choose is correct? #00:43:56#

46 IE: I do. I always read the article before I translate it. And then I wrote several times all kinds of guides for translation articles and I always make sure that one of the first points there is to read the source article and understand the source article and make sure that the source article is correct. Not everybody follows this advice, which is not so good, but you cannot really force people to do this, but everybody should do this. There is no magic here, you just really should bother to read the article and check the footnotes and not just trust it blindly. #00:44:06#

47 IR: And do you have contact to the author of the article sometimes? #00:44:57#

48 IE: Yeah, that definitely happened. If I found something without a reference or if I found something weird or something that's inconsistent, or something that doesn't look right, I often send a message to the talk page or the author and I ask them to clarify this. And sometimes they just explain that I didn't understand something and then I understand this and everything is fine. Sometimes they make a correction and sometimes they don't reply. If some time passes and they don't reply maybe I will just change the source article because maybe it's just wrong. Or maybe I just don't touch it but I will skip it when I'm translating because maybe it's right, maybe it's wrong, but in the language into which I'm translating, I decide not to translate it because it's better to skip it, to show nothing then to show something that I'm not sure about. #00:45:03#

49 IR: What happens if you have a lemma in your language and you cannot map it exactly in another version? Maybe there is a different structure, maybe there are three articles for one, something like that. Does this happen often? #00:46:01#

50 IE: I see it a lot in existing articles, that the structure of the article is different in different languages. This is an enormous problem in articles about biology, like species. The links between them are a total mess. I don't write much about biology; I just don't know anything about this. But it also happens sometimes in articles about other things. In the Russian Wikipedia I once found something like 20 or 30 articles about tanks and in the English Wikipedia it's only just one article because there are like different models of more or less the same tank, but it's a Soviet tank, so in Russian Wikipedia there are lots of articles about this, even though they are all similar but in English Wikipedia it's just the same article with the list of different sub models. Again, I don't write about tanks, it's not the topic that just interests me. I cannot recall a particular example but it's quite possible that if I really wanted to write something and encounter such a problem, I would be bold and I would just try to think what a good structure for these articles would be, because a good structure is not supposed to be dependent on language. A good structure is supposed to be good for all the languages and it's quite possible that I did something like this, I just can't recall a particular example. #00:46:27#

- 51 IR: But you are not going to change the original structure? #00:48:35#
- 52 IE: Oh, it's quite possible that I will change the original structure, it's possible. That's why I'm saying that if I have to do this, I will be bold and I will change the original structure or I will at least, if it's a language in which I can write well, if it's between English and Hebrew, I will definitely try to change the original article because I can write well in English and in Hebrew. If it's in a language that I don't know, like French, I can read French, but I don't write French very well, at least I would try to suggest to the source Wikipedia, "maybe you should consider changing this", and that's what I call being bold. I would definitely do this; I wouldn't be afraid at least making a suggestion or maybe even doing it myself if I can. There are other Wikipedians who would say, oh that's not my wiki and I am not touching that, even if they actually can write in there but they just think that... I don't know, there are different attitudes to this, with different people. I'm on the bolder side. #00:48:39#
- 53 IR: There are so many topics coming up in this area, are there meetings or something like that for multilingual people to talk about those problems? #00:49:56#
- 54 IE: Not really, and it's bad. Every now and then I am thinking that there should be something like that but there isn't. It's what I mentioned a few minutes ago, that there should be something like a social network, for people where Wikipedians can conveniently find each other by language. "Conveniently" is the key word because you can find Wikipedians by language but it's very far from being convenient. I wish there was something like that, both as an online place, a website or maybe an extension to MediaWiki or something, I don't know exactly, where this could be done. And maybe also some real-life meetings which are specifically around language. There is the Celtic knot conference that took place a couple of weeks ago, which is about Wikipedia and language but it's not really that. And there is Wikimania, but Wikimania is way too big. I wish there was something like that, I frequently wish there was something like that but currently there isn't. #00:50:15#
- 55 IR: The Celtic knot is especially about minority languages, isn't it? #00:51:35#
- 56 IE: Kind of but not necessarily, despite the name they try not to be just about Celtic languages, they just say that it's about languages in general and I think they are kind of okay with doing this, but I can think of a forum, a space, where people can really talk about content and collaborate on content in a fully structured way, across languages. Obviously, you can find some talk pages somewhere, but it's really disorganized and I wish there was something organized. Maybe Abstract Wikipedia will become such a place, but it's just beginning. #00:51:41#
- 57 IR: There are some topics which are globally interesting for all Wikipedias, but there should be also meetings with two cultures, in Germany we say "Sprachpaare", because if you take the Hebrew/English Wikipedia, then there are special problems concerning this language pair. #00:52:36#
- 58 IE: Yeah, definitely. So, in the English Wikipedia you have, I guess, you have the wiki projects, but they are not necessarily active and they are not really structured, they are basically just wiki pages, where people can discuss things but it's not

really organized. For example, if I was editing an article that has something to do with Israel, I can do this without ever seeing wiki project Israel, which exists in English Wikipedia and there are discussions on the talk page of this project, but if this was shown to me, you are editing an article about Israel, you may also want to look at recent discussions at wiki project Israel. But there is no such structure, that's why I say, it exists but I can ignore it and most people ignore it, I don't want it to be too forced either, that it is shown to you all the time and you cannot just mute it, but currently it's barely seen at all so nobody ever really found this balance. #00:53:06#

59 IR: So, then I probably know the answer of the next question, are such people specifically recruited and supported in getting started? Multilingual Wikipedians, who should translate and work in the way you do, do they find help and support somewhere? #00:54:51#

60 IE: It's possible but only if there is at least one person, or better, several people who actually bother to pursue this and for some wiki projects it definitely exists. A famous example is military history which is kind of not so surprising. There are so many articles about military history in the English Wikipedia and some of the people who write about these topics, they really bother to try to reach out to editors in general and also sometimes to multilingual editors and they specifically ask people: can you please translate this thing about this battle in the 17th century or something. But there is no software to help them do this, they manually search through page histories and search through user pages to find people who know particular languages or live in particular countries or help with particular educations, so they do this manually and it's really difficult. I guess they love doing this, so they do this, but it's hard. If they had tools to do this, basically a social network, that's what it should be, which would show you this in some kind of mechanized computer-assisted way without so much manual work, it would be much more convenient and much more effective. #00:55:17#

61 IR: And there is also not a special kind of acknowledgment for translators, for example an award like in the German Wikipedia for very good articles? #00:56:57#

62 IE: Maybe there is, there definitely is, like what is this prize? It's some kind of template or an image on your user page or something like that? #00:57:25#

63 IR: In Germany you get an owl and it's a big meeting, it's a real meeting, where you get a trophy you can take home. We also we have a template that is a special, a very good, an excellent article but probably you don't get that for a very good translation or translation work, or something like that? #00:57:41#

64 IE: Well, I don't know about the German Wikipedia but in English and in Hebrew Wikipedias there definitely are templates that can be given to good translators. Yeah, in Hebrew and in English they definitely exist and maybe in other languages maybe also in German. However, the problem is that it's just a template and it's something that people can see but it's not something that is conveniently machine readable. #00:58:24#

65 IR: And how do you get this template? #00:58:56#

- 66 IE: So, definitely one way to do this is the Wiki love button on user pages. Yeah, so there is this heart button on the top of the user page and then you can select what award you want to give and it's called Wiki love and the list of awards is different in every language, which is a part of the problem. Because if it was the same list everywhere, then you can find who are all the people in all the Wikipedias who got an award for being a good translator but it's not that easy.
#00:59:01#
-
- 67 IR: So, time is up again. Exactly one hour. Can I bother you again? #01:00:17#
-
- 68 IE: Sure. #01:00:25#
-
- 69 [Goodbye]