

WikiProverbs – Online Encyclopedia of Proverbs

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The WikiProverbs project was envisioned as a free online multilingual dictionary of proverbs, edited by the community. The idea behind the project was to address the difficulty of translating proverbs across the languages and to create a public repository of multilingual equivalents of proverbs that will serve language professionals, such as: writers, translators, journalists, as well as language enthusiasts. From its inception the project was conceived as a non-profit humanitarian enterprise for the sake of Internet users.

The original implementation of the project is straightforward. WikiProverbs site (www.wikiproverbs.com) is using the dictionary structure, where the community can add and edit existing values. Currently, WikiProverbs hosts more than 5000 proverbs in more than 15 languages, when majority of the proverbs are in seven European languages: English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Russian and Latin.

A number of fruitful activities have followed the foundation of the project. They mainly fall into two categories: popular and academic. In the popular realm we are happy to witness active involvement of the community: the users add new proverbs and equivalents to the existing proverbs. This activity is limited only by our budget restrictions and the limited time that the founding team can devote to the project. In the academic realm, a number of scholars have expressed vivid interest to the idea of creating a global repository of proverbs and proverbial knowledge for the sake of the proverb and folklore researchers (paremiologists) across the world. Our practical activities in this realm include joint work on the digitization of proverbial collections and hosting them on the site. We have also authored three papers on the theory and practice of the digitization process and presented the project at several important events dedicated to the folklore research in general and proverb research in particular.

Effective translation of collocations of different kinds: idioms, phrasal verbs, phraseological units and proverbs is probably one of the biggest challenges of both machine and human translation efforts. No translation process can be considered complete without felicitous translation of proverbs. Our future plans are to continue the development of WikiProverbs as an important multilingual aid for effective translation. Specifically, we plan to enhance the project by adding sophisticated search function, taxonomy of proverbs, reference to other dictionaries and linguistic resources, automatic translation features and other means.

WikiProverbs is an active project that is constantly developing. Please go to www.wikiproverbs.com for the latest developments.