From many one: Novel approaches to translation quality in a social network era

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For decades, the fuzzy notion of translation quality has evolved parallel to the theorizations of translation and localization. This paper focuses on a novel approach to quality evaluation in the localization industry: how Facebook crowdsourced quality evaluation to an active community of users that votes on proposed translations. This approach, unthinkable a decade ago, seems to combine and distill some of the best aspects of several previous Translation Studies evaluation proposals, such as user-based approaches (Nida, 1964), functionalist approaches (Nord, 1997; Reiss and Vermeer, 1984) or corpus-assisted approaches (Bowker, 2001). These models were largely criticized at the time because they did not explicitly indicate how they could be professionally implemented. The current paper critically reviews the emerging crowdsourcing model in light of these approaches to quality evaluation and describes how mechanisms suggested in these earlier theoretical proposals are actually implemented in the Facebook model.

1. Introduction

Over the past twenty years, the production of digital content such as websites, software or videogames has increased exponentially. This digital revolution has led to a demand for the localization of digital texts into an ever-increasing number of languages (Cronin, 2003). Parallel to the development of the digital society, a new industry emerged in the 90s, the so-called "localization industry". This sector developed in order to cope with an increasing demand for localized products globally and has been constantly changing and adapting to the new technological challenges. One of the latest and most exciting developments is the crowdsourcing of both translation and quality evaluation to an active community of users. Crowdsourcing has recently drawn the attention of translation scholars (e.g., O´Hagan, 2009), but to date, the evaluation of quality through an active community of users has not been discussed in Translation Studies (TS). And yet, the development could be of interest to TS scholars as, it is often argued that localization practices have been established without fully making use of the body of knowledge of TS (Dunne, 2006a; Jiménez-Crespo; 2011, 2010b; Pym, 2003). The implications for industry quality evaluation practices are that they might lack the necessary theoretical bases to provide objective, valid and reliable results (Angelelli, 2009). However, quality evaluation is still a much debated issue even within TS; and

localization continues to prove that, as Larose mentioned, the evaluation of translations "entails problems that are of cosmic proportions" (1998, p. 163).

From the early discussions on linguistic equivalence approaches (Carroll, 1966; Nida and Taber, 1969) to the functionalist (Nord, 1991, 1997) or discourse-based proposals (House, 1997; Reiss, 1971), models to assess translations have been firmly grounded in scholars' theoretical backgrounds. Nevertheless, it is agreed that the complexity and time consuming nature of these models often mean that they have not been fully implemented in professional or didactic contexts (Wright, 2006). For their part, the translation and localization industries have developed and implemented their own models (e.g., Sical, LISA, CTIC, ATA).[1] These have been classified from a TS perspective as experience-based or anecdotal (Colina, 2008), and are thought to lack the necessary empirical and theoretical bases to separate the subjective component inevitably present in any translation evaluation process (Hönig, 1998).

These different approaches and goals have led to a wide gap between TS scholars and the Localization and Translation Industries (Dunne, 2006a; Pym, 2003). The divide can also be witnessed in the emergence of a revolutionizing approach in social networking sites: the crowdsourcing of quality evaluation to a non-professional community of active users who vote on proposed translations. The goal of this paper is to explore what Facebook, the first model using a crowdsourcing approach to translation quality evaluation, can add to current TS research approaches. One of the motivations for investigating this topic is that it contradicts the most repeated mantra in the discipline: only translation evaluation built around explicit TS theoretical models can provide reliable and objective results (Angelelli, 2009; Colina, 2009; House 2001, 1997; Williams 2003). However, some scholars (e.g., Williams, 2003) have pointed out that current evaluation models are developed with certain translation types in mind and that, therefore, many of their underlying principles might not necessarily apply to other types of translations than the ones for which they were developed. This is the case for web localization on networking sites, and it could be argued that this is why established QA models might, so far, be unable to guarantee that final products are accepted by users of such sites as non-translated natural texts in the target language. The development of the novel Facebook evaluation model could also be due to localization being a relatively recent activity, and therefore, "there is no such classic set of canonized criteria for evaluating localization" (Wright, 2006, p. 257). In this sense, the development of the crowdsourcing model clearly responds to the faster pace at which industry practices develop as compared to TS research.

This paper is organized in the following fashion; after a brief theoretical review of research into translation quality evaluation, the novel

approach used by Facebook will be explored, focusing on how it is related to quality evaluation proposals in TS. Next, the implications of this model for the discipline will be analyzed, and the ways in which it seems to distill aspects from several proposals that were difficult to implement professionally before the Internet era. These include the reader-based approached advocated by Nida and Taber (1964), or the identification of the subconscious set of cultural, linguistic and pragmatic conventions expected by end-users discussed in functionalist approaches (Colina, 2008; Nobs, 2006; Nord, 1997; Reiss & Vermeer, 1984). Moreover, this model resembles corpus-assisted approaches to quality evaluation since both help bring to the surface the framework of expected collocations and colligations in the minds of a large number of users of a specific discourse community (Bowker, 2001), thereby producing more naturally sounding translations (Zanettin, 1999).

2. Quality evaluation in Translation Studies and Localization

Quality evaluation is a central issue in TS. Most research focuses on two distinctive but related evaluation perspectives: the professional (e. g., Nobs, 2006; Sager, 1989) and the didactic (e. g., Nord, 1991, 1997; Waddington, 2001). Recently, the evaluation of quality in localization has attracted the attention of an increasing number of scholars (Bass, 2006; Böejel, 2007; Dunne, 2009, 2006; Jiangbo & Jing, 2010; Jiménez-Crespo, forthcoming, 2010a, 2008; Pierini, 2007). These studies indicate the need for further research into localization quality evaluation, given that the same set of criteria cannot be applied uniformly to all translation activity (i.e., Larose, 1998; Martínez Mélis & Hurtado Albir, 2001).

In general, one of the most discussed issues is the need to adopt models in order to control the subjectivity of evaluators (Angelelli, 2009; Colina, 2009; House, 2001; Martínez Mélis & Hurtado Albir, 2001). In one of the first attempts to study translation evaluation, Nida already (1964) believed that no translator or evaluator can avoid some degree of subjectivity and personal involvement in the interpretation of the ST. It is therefore widely accepted that the subjective component of the evaluation process will remain and has to be admitted (Hönig, 1998). As such, there are no means to prevent professional or non-professional evaluators from assessing translations by comparing them to an ideal text that they would have produced themselves, thus projecting individual standards onto the actual text. In this sense, it is understood that a single evaluator might not provide an objective measure of quality in translation (Rothe-Neves, 2002).

Another pivotal issue is the relative nature of translation quality, that is, quality should be understood as a prototypical concept that varies from context to context depending on the project, modality, goals, etc. In

professional situations, it also needs to be understood as an industrial activity subject to specific time and money constraints that need to be accounted for (Wright, 2006). In the industry's literature, most international standards define quality as the capacity to comply with a set of parameters pre-defined by the customer. For example, the ISO 9000 defines quality as: "the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs" (Ørsted, 2001, p. 443). Along the same lines, the definition laid out by the translation ASTM International standard defines quality as "the degree of conformance to an agreed upon set of specifications" (ASTM, 2006). Nevertheless and as previously mentioned, it is theoretically and methodologically impossible to predefine the notion of "quality" in all translated texts: For this reason, common definitions of quality usually focus on procedural aspects, as opposed to establishing what could be considered a "quality" translated text. Basically, such definitions govern procedures for achieving quality, rather than providing normative statements about what constitutes quality (Martínez Mélis & Hurtado Albir, 2001). They are generically process-oriented instead of product-oriented (Corpas, 2006; Wright, 2006). As a result, the final decision about quality resides in a time-constrained evaluation process carried out by one or more evaluators that might lack the necessary theoretical framework in order to separate out their own subjective judgment (House, 2001).

However, despite the criticism leveled at industry approaches, some of the solutions proposed by TS scholars to overcome the subjective bias have yet to have an impact on industrial practices. The most common solution proposed is to promote the adoption of models based on sound theoretical bases (Colina, 2008; House, 2001; Williams, 2003). At the dawn of TS as a discipline, Julianne House indicated that: "Evaluating the quality of a translation presupposes a theory of translation. Thus different views of translation lead to different concepts of translational quality, and hence different ways of assessing it" (1977, p. 7). This implies that the notion of quality evaluation in localization or in crowdsourcing models will be somewhat different from the analogous notion in T S, even though a consensus has not yet been reached in the discipline. In TS, theory is widely viewed as a prerequisite, and in this sense, the development of the Facebook model definitely goes against a basic principle in the eyes of translation scholars. Another common solution in TS has been to advocate for an empirical approach to quality evaluation, given that it certainly provides a more valid and reliable foundation (Angelelli & Jacobson, 2009; Colina, 2009; Rothe & Neves, 2002). All the same, it is generally understood that industry and TS models still need to be "validated by means of empirical research" (Martínez Mélis & Hurtado Albir, 2001, p. 274), that is, a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches based on clearly established theoretical principles. This is the focus of the recently

edited volume by Angelelli and Jacobson (2009). Other scholars have advocated for a combination of corpus based quantitative analysis in order to assist evaluators with more objective data during their evaluation processes (Bowker, 2001; House, 2001; Jiménez-Crespo, 2010a).

Against this backdrop of TS research, the crowdsourced quality evaluation model implemented by Facebook relies on two basic components: (1) the votes of a community of users on translations proposed by the members of that same community, and (2) an overview of the entire cycle by professional translators. The latter focuses mainly on the global process and the general macrostructural coherence and cohesion of the translation. This model has not been empirically verified nor is it based on a TS theoretical model. Nevertheless, it is clearly in line with the goals set forth by the ISO 900 quality standard, as it seems to satisfy "stated or implied needs". In order to fully understand the implications of this industry driven development, a description of this model is required.

3. The Facebook approach to quality evaluation

Facebook implemented a crowdsourcing model in order to translate their website initially in 2007. The motivation was reportedly not economic but rather participatory. It was observed that due to the novel and changing nature of digital genres, users' knowledge of the social networking sites could somehow be utilized to produce localized websites that better fulfill user expectations than those produced by professional translators. In fact, an exploratory study discussed in O'Hagan (2009) reported that the user group outperformed professional translators in certain translation tasks due to the former's familiarity with the inner workings of Facebook. Spanish was the first language into which Facebook was successfully translated, and the strategy was later implemented for French and German as well. Initially, the crowdsourcing translation application was advertised to foreign students at Stanford University, but soon enough it was advertised in technology blogs and the word got out fast. The first site was translated in one week, with the French translation being completed in a single day. Meanwhile, as of October 20011 the model has been implemented in 75 languages. Some of the language versions were initiated at the request of language communities around the world, such as the case of Basque.

The approach taken can be described as crowdsourced translations in which a company or collective (such as a non-profit) requests users to translate certain content, producing "solicited translations" (O'Hagan, 2009). The other possible non-professional approach is fan translation in which a group of users organizes itself to make content available in whichever desired language(s). This would be the case of fansubs translations of American TV series in China (Wu, 2010) or the fansubbing

and scanlation of Japanese anime and manga respectively (O´Hagan, 2006). However, it should also be mentioned that the Facebook approach is a hybrid one, with users producing and voting on translations, while professional translators are hired to supervise and address potential issues for supported languages. In this sense, it can be argued that this hybrid model intends to extract the subconscious framework of expectations of users, while at the same time maintaining a professional overview of the entire cycle. Therefore, despite its many novel components, it cannot be considered a fully crowdsourced model such as the Wikipedia one. Generally, the model operates at the segmental or microtextual level, while the macrotextual level is mostly controlled by experts. This is of great importance according to Translation Studies literature, given that errors or inadequacies at the macrotextual level, such as terminological inconsistencies in a text or website, are considered more important than errors at the microtextual level (Larose, 1998; Nord, 1997; Williams, 2003). An example of this would be a typographical error in a single segment. Thus, the potentially more serious errors or inadequacies are controlled by experts rather than the translation community.

The following stages typify the process of crowdsourcing translations and quality evaluation in Facebook:[2]

(1)   First of all, a novel translation application is created and programmers extract all translatable strings from the initial English version, such as "upload photo", "log in" or "XX is now friends with XX". This is an ongoing process as Facebook continues to add new textual material to their website. Figure 1 shows some of the new textual strings for Spanish-Spain in October 2011. The entire experience is organized around a translation community in which users can see how many of their translations get published or voted for, in order to motivate them. They have to be Facebook members and they have to actively enable and open the translation application within the website in order to participate.
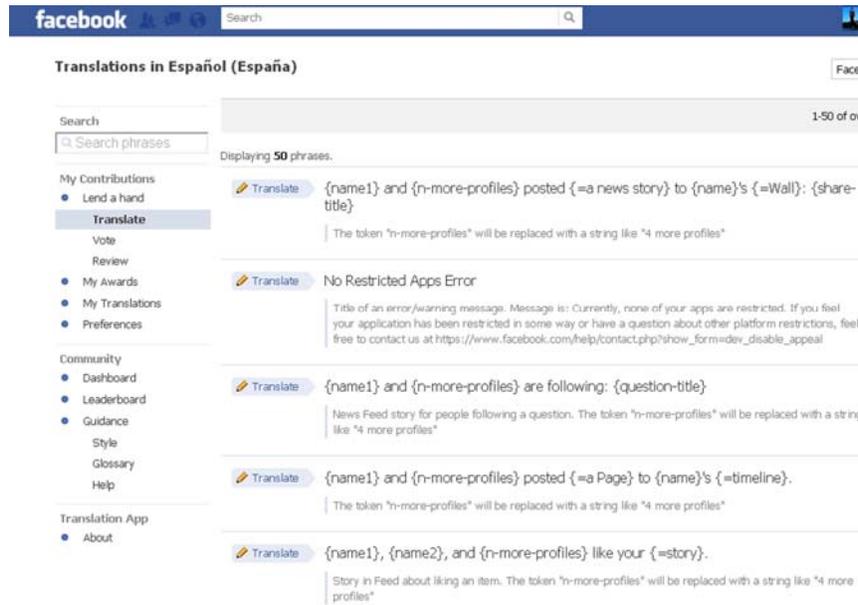
Figure 1: Extract of new textual strings in Facebook to be translated by users in October 2011.

(2)   The first actual translation step entails offering the Facebook glossary terms and the interface text strings to be translated by users. They are given an easy-to-use application, a brief style guide and a discussion forum where they can discuss terms, translation problems, etc. For example, in the Chilean Spanish forum, an entry discussed what type of Spanish users wanted for their Chilean site, mostly focused on what type of slang or idioms would be appropriate to appear on a website such as Facebook. In some cases, as with all localized textual strings, users are offered the context and the choice to annotate whether the gender or the prospective viewing user of the translation would pose a problem in the target language. For instance, the segment "memorize profile" includes the following contextual comment: "option for selecting a label on a contact form". An example of the case of gender problems in Spanish would be the case of the translation of the string "X is single", as the adjective "single" would need to agree with the gender of the person, either masculine "soltero" or femenine "soltera". During this stage, any translated term or string can be immediately voted positively or negatively by other users, and this approach is advertised to guarantee that the final published translations are those with the

highest quality. That is, translation quality is directly associated, at least in the eyes of the users, with the democratic will of the Facebook community.
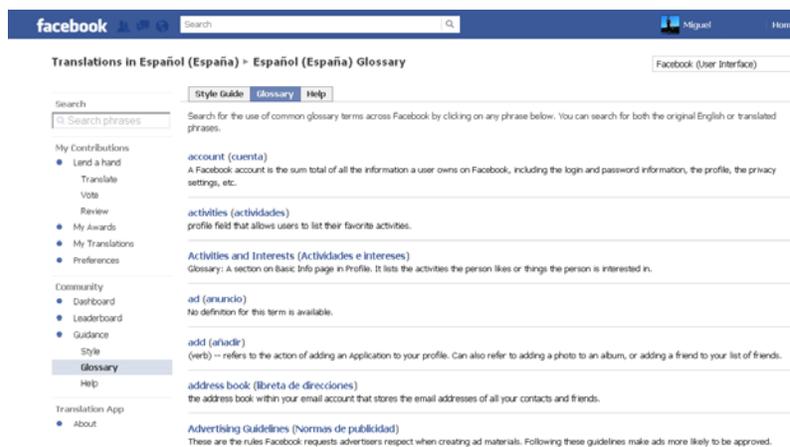

Figure 2: Facebook glossary for Peninsular Spanish that includes the source English term, its translation and a brief definition.

(3)   In the next stage, the translations proposed are voted on by the active community of users. In order to limit the potential choices, only three translations are normally presented with the source segment, although it is indicated how many total translations have been suggested. These are accompanied by up and down arrows representing the two possible options as seen in Figure 3: to like or dislike the translation. No option is offered to comment on the translation, although the forum offers the possibility of discussing any entry if users deem it appropriate. This voting stage would be the initial step in the quality evaluation process, followed by a complete evaluation by professional translators. During this stage, users are also encouraged to verify not just glossary items or strings, but also entire pages or messages in order to guarantee that they are consistent and accurate. However, it has been indicated by Facebook that the crowdsourcing model has been successful with small strings of text, but not with entire paragraphs or pages such as "Help" pages, etc. This sheds some light on the potential limitations of any crowdsourced quality evaluation model, with a microtextual or segmental focus, while the macrotextual aspects need to be dealt with by professionals**.**
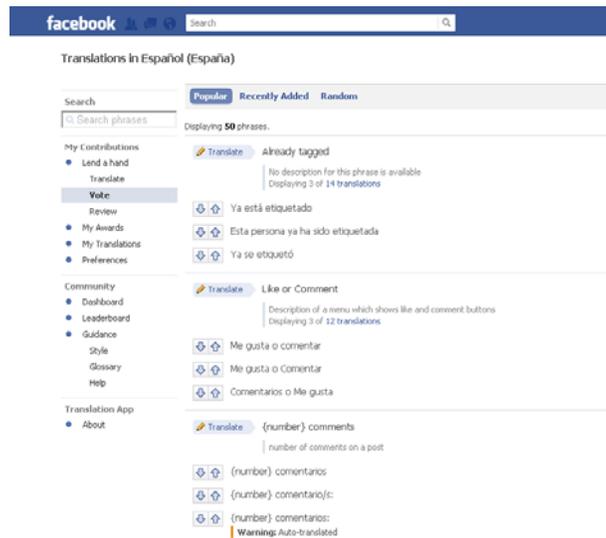
Figure 3: Voting of proposed translations in the Facebook crowdsourced translation application.

(4)   During the last stage, a group of professional translators hired by Facebook checks and verifies all the translations, making sure that they are globally coherent and consistent. This allows the correction of any potential shortcomings: It has been indicated that the quality in fans translations is generally inconsistent (Diaz Cintas & Muñoz, 2006), even when, as previously mentioned, fans' apparent lack of formal translator training may be compensated for by their genre-knowledge (O'Hagan, 2009).

The translation application shown in Figures 1 and 3 includes eight options in its navigation menu: (1) Translate, (2) Vote, (3) Review, (4) My Awards, (5) My translations, (6) Preferences, (7) Dashboard (8) Leaderboard, (9) Guidance: style, glossary, help. Out of all the possible sections, one option involves guidelines for translation (9), five options (1, 2, 3, 5, 6) require the active involvement of the user, and two others (4, 8) focus on the translation community and on motivational issues, such as the option of viewing the translations proposed, voting on them, as well as the overall ranking of translators. Once users propose the translation for a segment or a glossary term, others can directly vote on these proposals through a thumbs up or thumbs down option. Options 2 and 3, voting and revision, are directly related to the quality evaluation process.

Now that the Facebook approach to quality evaluation has been briefly described, the next section turns to a review of the Facebook model in light of similarities and dissimilarities with proposals in TS since the 60s.

4. A critical review of the Facebook model in the light of Translation Studies

Even though there are several publications on the crowdsourcing of localization (Cronin, 2010; Muñoz Sánchez, 2009; O'Hagan, 2009), the outsourcing of translation quality to a community of users entails a brand new approach, and one that has not been discussed thus far in TS. Nevertheless and as previously indicated, it implicitly recognizes the role of the expectations of the end user or reader in the evaluation of quality, an idea that was first introduced by Nida and Taber (1964). This is also a central component in pragmatic and functionalist evaluation proposals (Colina, 2008, 2009; Nobs, 2006; Nord, 1997; Reiss, 1977; Reiss & Vermeer, 1984), and departs from much criticized models that focus exclusively on error detection (Nord, 1997). In general, this paper supports the functionalist view according to which it is "the text as a whole whose function(s) and effect(s) must be regarded as the crucial criteria for translation criticism" (Nord, 1991, p. 166). It also represents a combination of a mostly quantitative rather than qualitative processes, an approach advocated by House (2001), and also by Bowker (2001) in her proposal for a corpus-assisted approach to translation evaluation.

It should be mentioned that most TS proposals have been criticized at one point or another because they contain insufficient information about how one should proceed with the actual evaluation process (Angelelli & Jacobson, 2009). The Facebook model, despite not being grounded in TS theory, seems to represent an actual implementation of the reader-response approach advocated by Nida, and a novel, exciting gateway into the subconscious set of norms, conventions and expectations of users in fast evolving digital genres. The following section reviews the reader response approach and whether the Facebook model might represent an actual implementation of Nida and Taber's proposal.

4.1. The Facebook model and reader-response approaches to translation quality

The works of Nida (1964) and Nida and Taber (1969) are recognized as the first approach to translation quality that included reader responses as a basic component.[3] This can be described as a response-oriented or behavioral approach to translation evaluation and is based on Nida´s notion of

"dynamic equivalence", that is, that the manner in which the receptors of the translated texts respond to the translation must be equivalent to the manner in which the receptors of the source text respond to the source text (Nida, 1964). In general, the overall criteria suggested by Nida and Taber (1969, p. 173) in order to evaluate translations are (1) the correctness with which the receivers understand the message, (2) the ease of comprehension and (3) the involvement a person experiences as a result of the adequacy of the form of the translation. In order to achieve this goal, the authors suggest so-called "practical tests" to measure this apparently similar response: (1) the cloze technique, related to the degree of predictability of the translation, which is achieved by providing a translated text with certain blank spaces and asking that these be filled in with the word that would best fit. (2) The elicitation of the receiver reaction to several translation alternatives. (3) Reading the translation aloud to another person and asking them to explain the contents of the text to other people who are not present during the original reading of the text. And finally, (4) reading aloud the translation to several individuals before an audience. The second "practical test", even when the author's proposal does not implicitly include the source texts, would be the one closest to current Facebook practices.

These reader-response approaches to translation quality have been extensively criticized, mainly for the lack of an explicit theoretical model of quality that might guide readers in their criticism, for not using the source text in the evaluation process (House, 1997), or for not controlling the inherent speculative and subjective component. However, Nida and Taber (1969) already indicated that the subjective bias can be overcome by sampling techniques, such as the ones used in Facebook. This proposal has also been criticized because it is normally assumed that translation evaluation is carried out only by experts such as professional translators, researchers, as well as translation or language teachers (Rothe-Neves, 2002), but not by non-professionals. Another point that has been criticized is that the method is based on the assumption that greater ease of comprehension might equal a better translation, or that reader response might not be equally important in all types of translation, such as in legal texts (Colina, 2008).

It is interesting to note that in the review of Nida's approach by Colina (2008), all of the objections against this model are, in fact, beneficial for the crowdsourced Facebook model in the specific contexts of web localization. First of all, web localization is a clear case of instrumental (Nord, 1997) or covert (House, 2001) translations, and therefore, the ease with which readers can interact with the translated material is of utmost importance (Jiménez-Crespo, 2009). In fact, localized websites are not called on to represent any previous source text, but rather a functional text in the target language (Pym, 2004). Secondly, Colina argues that "[t]he evaluation of the quality of a translation on the basis of reader response is

time consuming and difficult to apply" (2008, p. 101). This might be the case in most QA settings, but the novel approach taken by Facebook might precisely prove that quality and translation evaluation is context-dependent and, in some cases, the inherent difficulty in crowdsourcing quality evaluation might be overcome by an active community of users. Additionally, Colina argues that "careful selection of readers is also necessary to make sure that they belong to the intended audience of translation" (2008, p. 101). Again, fans' knowledge of these newly emerging digital genres can definitely match the exact profile of the target user. Finally, it has also been suggested that the intended users of a translation might be different from the original ones, both culturally and temporally, and that the purpose of the translation might be different, so therefore, measuring an "equivalent response" might be impossible. Again, the readers or users recruited to participate in the Facebook quality model are basically those to whom the translation is addressed. Despite the fact that the Facebook model is not necessarily grounded in TS theory, research using Facebook data could provide data that is valuable in empirically revisiting reader response approaches, not from a linguistic equivalence paradigm (Nida, 1964), but rather from a functionalist approach such as in the empirical work of Nobs (2006). Additionally, Hönig mentioned, while discussing the subjective bias in evaluation, that: "the speculative element will remain – at least as long as there are no hard and fast empirical data which serve to prove what a 'typical' reader´s responses are like" (1998, p. 32). Given that Facebook evaluators are typical readers of the site, empirical research using Facebook data could help move the quality evaluation in translation within the discipline further along. It therefore seems, at least in principle, that all the potential shortcomings of reader-response approaches in most evaluation settings are in fact beneficial to a crowdsourced model.

This review has shown that, even when QA crowdsourcing seems like a completely novel process, at the dawn of TS some proposals had already pointed to a few of the novel aspects of the Facebook model that could not be implemented prior to the unexpected explosion of Internet users around the world. In the evolution of quality evaluation research in the discipline, the next revolutionary development was the application of functionalism to quality assessment. The next section reviews how the shift towards the target context and the repudiation of any type of equivalence between source and target texts in the evaluation process (Nord, 1997) can find a parallel in the Facebook approach.

4.2. The Facebook model and functionalist approaches to translation quality

The development of functionalist theoretical approaches to translation in the '70s and '80s was instrumental in moving the focus of the evaluation process away from the highlighting of some sort of equivalence with the source text (Reiss, 1971) and towards the purpose or "skopos" of each translation assignment (Nord, 1997; Reiss & Vermeer, 1984). This entailed a shift in the definition of a quality translation from one that was somewhat "equivalent" to a source text to one that had the ability to fulfill the communicative purpose for which it was intended. This also introduced in mainstream TS the notion of "adequacy" in the evaluation process. In this switch, the receivers, together with their sociocultural context, play an essential role. Their frameworks of expectations also become essential during the translation and evaluation processes. Within this context, functionalists highlighted the importance that conventions play both in the production and reception of translations, since they can potentially differ between the same genres in different cultures (Nord, 1997, p. 54). During localization, and more importantly, during quality evaluation processes, it is key to guarantee that target texts contain whichever conventions users expect in whichever genre is translated or localized, as non-compliance with different genre conventions might have a detrimental effect on the reception of the text (Jiménez-Crespo, 2009; Vaughan and Dillon, 2006). Within the functionalist paradigm, conventions are defined as: "Implicit or tacit non-binding regulation of behavior, based on common knowledge and the expectations of what others expect you to expect from them (etc.) to do in a certain situation" (Nord, 1991, p. 96). These regulations of behavior are normally associated with different levels, such as "genre conventions" (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984), "style conventions", "conventions of non-verbal conduct" or "translation conventions" (Nord, 1997). Genre conventions play an important role in the identification and translation of most localized genres (Nord, 1997, p. 53). First of all, they function as signs that facilitate the recognition of a given genre. Secondly, they activate the expectations of the reader. And finally, they are signs that coordinate the text comprehension process (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984). Therefore, given that translation entails both a textual comprehension and a textual production process, conventions also play a crucial role in it (Göpferich, 1995; Nord, 1997).

However, it has been shown that localized websites tend not to comply with the conventions found in similar genres in target cultures (Jiménez-Crespo, 2010b, 2009). Normally, these websites show direct transfer of many source text conventions. As an example, Jiménez-Crespo (2009) demonstrated that US websites localized into Spanish show source-culture conventions such as the more prominent use of direct imperative

forms of the verbs in navigation menus, while Spanish websites prefer infinitives or other non-personal forms. As previously mentioned, fans' knowledge of certain genres can lead to texts with higher levels of quality than those produced by professional translators (O´Hagan, 2009) and in part, this can be due to the fact that intensive users might possess what is known as "active competence" (Gläser, 1990, p. 72) in the knowledge of genre conventions. Normally, users and translators can possess active or passive knowledge of digital genre conventions (Jiménez-Crespo, 2009). Active competence can be defined as the ability of speakers of a language to recognize and produce the conventional features of textual genres, such as writing a résumé or an email. Nevertheless, most speakers might not be able to produce certain textual genres, such as a patent, a purchase contract or a privacy policy on a website, even though they might recognize prototypical instances of the genres and be able to identify the possible range of variation. This is referred to as passive competence (Gamero, 2001). In the ever-changing nature of digital genres, it is possible that translators and quality evaluators might not possess an active competence in any given textual genre, a problem that is referred to as "genre deficit" or "text type deficit" (Hatim & Mason, 1997, p. 133). This text type deficit might lead to the production of digital genres that to some extent lack the conventions expected by users. Thus, enlisting large numbers of users in the quality evaluation process is not only adequate, but also essential in order to identify by consensus what the specific conventions expected by the discourse community of users might be in each locale.

It should be mentioned at this point that for a convention to exist, alternative variants need to exist that fulfill the same communicative purpose (Göpferich, 1995). In the case where no alternative exists, conventions cannot exist, but rather we would be talking about norms. The Facebook evaluation model therefore, allows us to identify, within the range of possible variants that fulfill any communicative purpose, which alternatives are more frequent than others. This can naturally lead to websites that better match the framework of expectations of the community of users, and therefore, this can be associated with higher levels of quality in the eyes of the end users. All these issues should be framed within the context of rapidly evolving "imported" genres into most cultures, and therefore, enlisting the community of users in order to gauge the evolution or establishment of the features expected in these genres represents a positive addition to the process.

4.3. The Facebook model and corpus-assisted approaches to translation quality

The last evaluation proposal that has some parallels with the Facebook evaluation process is the corpus-assisted approach to quality evaluation (Bowker, 2001). For over two decades, the use of corpora during translation and evaluation has been widely promoted mostly from within TS for both didactic (i.e. Beebe et al., 2009; Bowker, 2001; Zanettin, 1998, 2001) and professional practices (i.e., Bowker & Barlow, 2008). Lynn Bowker pioneered the use of corpora during translation evaluation because this process "entails making judgments about appropriate language use, [and] it should not rely on intuition, anecdotal evidence or small samples" (2001, p. 346). In translation, the researcher also indicated that "corpus-assisted translations are of a higher quality with respect to subject field understanding, correct term choice, and idiomatic expressions" (Bowker, 1998, p. 631). Additionally, the researcher indicates that the quantitative approach provided by evaluation corpora can be better than using conventional resources such as dictionaries because these "are not always highly conducive to providing the conceptual and linguistic knowledge necessary to objectively evaluate a translation" (Bowker, 2001, p. 346).

An electronic corpus can be defined as a large principled collection of machine-readable texts that has been compiled according to a specific set of criteria in order to be representative of the targeted textual population. Among different corpus types (Laviosa, 2002), a carefully constructed evaluation corpus constitutes a source of conceptual and linguistic information that can objectively support evaluation decisions and judgments. Very few studies have focused on the use of corpora in localization (Jiménez-Crespo, forthcoming, 2010a; Shreve, 2006), and the only existing proposal for an evaluation corpus in TS is that of Bowker (2001). This evaluation corpus is intended for a didactic setting and it was presented as assistance to evaluators while making evaluation judgments. It comprises four different components: a comparable corpus, a quality corpus, a quantity corpus and an inappropriate corpus.

First of all, the comparable corpus includes both a translated and non-translated collection of texts. This corpus allows us to observe patterns in non-translated texts in the same genre and text type in order to produce more naturally sounding translations. The second component is a quality corpus, a small handpicked corpus consisting of texts that have been selected primarily for their conceptual content. The next component is a quantity corpus, an extensive collection of carefully selected texts in the same domain, genre, text type, etc. Finally, the researcher proposes a section called inappropriate corpus, a corpus that contains "inappropriate"

parallel texts, that is, texts that are very similar to the original text but that include different web genres or subgenres. The combination of the large amount of data in these corpora would "make it possible to spot patterns more easily, to make generalizations, and to provide concrete evidence to support decisions" (Bowker, 2001, p. 353). It should be mentioned that the combination of corpora suggested by Bowker does not represent a corpus-based approach, but rather a corpus-assisted approach, as these corpora merely provide the necessary information to support evaluators' judgments. This use of corpora during evaluation has been criticized mostly because the proposal for evaluation does not include a fully-fledged evaluation method, but rather, a way to support the evaluator's intuition (Colina, 2009). The use of corpora is also reduced to the microcontext, that is, it is mostly geared towards finding the most common lexical or syntactic combinations, or, collocations and colligations.[4]

The basic premise behind the use of large computerized textual corpora in translation is that it can help produce more naturally sounding translations (Zanettin, 2001), as well as minimizing to some extent the amount of "shining through" (Teich, 2003) of the source text, or in other words, that it prevents lexical, syntactic or pragmatic features of the source texts ending up in the translation. In a sense, corpora provide a tool for translators to identify attested "units of meaning", that is, conventional ways of expressing specific meanings and performing specific functions in the relevant text-type variety within the target language (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). This is due to the premise that a large body of texts that belong to the same text type and genre that have been naturally produced by speakers of any specific discourse community represents, to some extent, the subconscious set of expected features in any specific genre. This shared knowledge about specific genres and text types is accumulated by the repeated exposure of members of any discourse community to these genres and text types. From a cognitive perspective, the experience of being exposed to any common textual genre is guided by "schemata" (Rumelhart, 1980) or "frames" (Fillmore, 1976). A frame can be defined as a network of concepts related in such a way that one concept evokes an entire system. This notion underlies the idea of the "structure of expectations", or in other words, that each member of a discourse community organizes knowledge on the basis of their own experiences, and then uses this knowledge to predict interpretations regarding new information or experiences.

The novel nature of social networking sites means that in most languages, in a so-called "imported genre", international users might still lack the set of expected features when they interact with a localized social networking site in their own languages. They might possess a subconscious framework of what the most natural sounding site would be, and then compare it to what they would like to see in these sites. The same can be said of translators and evaluators trying to produce the best possible

localized site. Therefore, even when one or a group of evaluators might eliminate any language or cultural errors in the localization, and the sites might appear lexically and syntactically correct, the combination of lexical or syntactic items might not appear totally natural to end users. To a certain extent, this is due to the fact that the localized text does not show the collocations and colligations that users are primed to expect in specific communicative situations (Hoey, 2005). In order to adjust translated texts to the expected primed features in the user's mind, one of the current approaches in TS is to resort to comparable corpora (Bowker & Barlow, 2009; Bowker, 2001; Jiménez-Crespo, forthcoming, 2010b, 2009; Shreve, 2006). Nevertheless, the compilation of a corpus of similar texts naturally produced in the target language is nearly impossible for emerging and imported genres. The Facebook approach to evaluation bridges this gap as it extracts from a large group of active users a snapshot of what would be more "natural" or "adequate", a notion related to their lexical and syntactic primings (Hoey, 2005). The goal of the Facebook model, despite a totally different approach, is therefore to identify what a community of users is primed to expect in this social networking genre. Thus, if discourse communities around the world would produce from scratch social networking sites that could be compiled in a corpus, the results of analyzing them would be similar to what they are already expressing by voting on Facebook proposed translations.

To sum up, I have argued in this section that the Facebook evaluation model, in which a large number of users votes positively or negatively on proposed translations, can help guarantee that the resulting website complies to the expected features in a digital genre that any discourse community might have. This is quite similar to the goals of corpus-assisted approaches: To explore the most common linguistic and pragmatic features in any genre, features that are extracted through the analysis of textual corpora of texts naturally produced by the target discourse community.

5.   Conclusions

The Facebook approach to quality evaluation seems to go against many of the theoretical principles and guidelines laid out by TS scholars. Nevertheless, this paper has tried to shed some light on how it actually distills and implements some of the most revolutionary ideas in TS since the 60s. The questions that the Facebook model poses to TS scholars are: Is translation theory a prerequisite for the evaluation of translation quality, or can professional QA continue to rely on other methods in order to satisfy "intended or implied needs" (ISO 900) given the time and economic constraints (Wright, 2006)? If the objective of localization is to produce websites that look like "they have been produced in-country" (LISA, 2004,

p. 11), is it more productive to enlist large numbers of non-professional users who have a deep knowledge of the digital genre, rather than professional translators-evaluators who might not yet possess the necessary "active competence" (Gläser, 1990) in the knowledge of the specific newly established genre conventions?

One of the most interesting aspects in the review of this model, in light of previous TS research, is that approaches that were previously criticized mainly due to the difficulty of their implementation can now be carried out thanks to the emergence of the wired digital world. As previously described, reader-based, functionalist and corpus assisted approaches to evaluation quality have been harshly criticized due to the impracticality of their implementation (Colina, 2008). However, to a great extent, the Facebook model represents an actual implementation of components of these models. This case proves that the impact of technology is not only going to radically change the practice of translation in ways never before imagined, but also has the potential to change the theorizations of translations. In the words of Jeremy Munday (2008): "The emergence of new technologies has transformed translation practice and is now exerting an impact on research and, as a consequence, on the theorization of translation" (p. 179). This paper has shown that the impact does not necessarily imply transformation in the future of theorizations of translation. By contrast, it may even allow translation scholars to revisit many existing ideas and theorizations that were forgotten due to difficulties in their implementation at the time. Today new technologies can enable us to research quality evaluation in novel ways, and the amount of data which can be gathered by companies that implement crowdsourcing represents an invaluable resource for further (translation) research.

It is hoped that this paper will help spark additional theoretical and empirical research into the fast evolving intersection of translation and technology. TS research has mostly been following in the tracks of industry developments, and only the determination and ingenuity of companies such as Facebook will put TS research into the leading role that, for example, applied sciences have in their respective industries.

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[1] Système canadien d'appréciation de la qualité linguistique (Sical), Localization Industry Standard Association, (LISA), Canadian Translators,Terminologists and Interpreters Council (CTIC), American Translator Association (ATA).

[2] The following link describes the translation process for new apps developpers: https://developers.facebook.com/docs/internationalization/

[3] It should be mentioned that the authors were mostly focused on Bible translation.

[4] A collocation can be defined as is a co-occurrence of two or more words within a given span (distance from each other), while colligations are co-occurrences between specific words and grammatical classes, or interrelations of grammatical categories (Tognini Bonelli, 1996, p. 74). Collocations are therefore related to lexical or semantic relations, while colligations are co-occurrences of words and grammatical classes. Both of these features are related to the appreciation of naturalness in texts, as they point to the more frequent combinations in users' minds.