Rectifying Wikipedia Racial Bias in a Russian Language Classroom

Veronika Trotter

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1. Introduction

Over the last decade, minority representation has emerged as a subject of critical self-reflection in the field of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (SEEES), prompting discussions that have centered on both the limited participation of minority populations within the community of SEEES scholars and students and the relative lack of attention that minority communities receive in SEEES teaching and research. Efforts to grapple with both issues became more urgent in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder and the massive protests for racial justice throughout the United States and beyond. Major centers for SEEES teaching and research have organized well-attended online panel discussions and lecture series that address minority and especially racial issues in the context of the discipline. The American Association for Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) has issued a statement that underscores "the need for diversity, equity, and inclusion in our profession" and has formed the Working Group on Diversity and Inclusion (AWGDI) to discuss "transforming our curricula, revisiting our teaching practices, revising our programming, and ...remaking the canon" (Banerjee and Safran, 2020). On its website, the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR) has launched a page under the title "Resources for Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in the Classroom" with links to ACTR-sponsored panel discussions and webinars that provide suggestions for inclusive instructional practices and incorporating ethnic and racial diversity of content into Russian language programs at the pre-college and post-secondary levels.

In this article, the authors discuss how a project-based learning activity can contribute to diversification of content in Russian language instruction at the advanced level in a large university setting. As Anya and Randolph (2019) have recently observed, a "diverse and meaningfully representative curriculum" can only result from conscious and persistent

efforts on the part of foreign language teachers, who "must be intentional about finding and incorporating authentic resources that represent non-dominant target language and learner communities and cultural narratives (e.g., non-white, non-heterosexual, non-cisgender, non-male, non-middle/upper class, non-Eurocentric, non-English) so that these voices may be amplified in our courses and, more importantly, so that our world and social realities can be more accurately and more completely represented" (2019, p. 26).

In the community of Russian language teachers, attempts to diversify content have chiefly centered on the presentation of minority groups and communities in the Russian Federation or Russophone citizens of other countries, in particular the so-called Near Abroad. This admirable and worthy enterprise parallels more longstanding efforts in the French, Spanish, and English (as a second or world language) teaching professions to familiarize their students with the culture and perspectives of underrepresented groups within their respective larger speech communities. The project discussed in this article, however, foregrounds aspects of African American history, namely its intertwining with Russian and Soviet history—a subject with a relatively modest body of research in English (e.g., Blakely 1986; Baldwin 2002; Matusevich 2007; Carew 2008) and even less representation in Russian language scholarship, academic or public. As part of Russian for the Social Sciences, a content-based advanced Russian language class, students contributed to public Russian language scholarship on African American history by researching, writing, and publishing Russian language Wikipedia articles about African Americans whose lives were distinguished by significant engagement with Russia/USSR.

2. Project-based language learning
The project was designed by language instructor Svitlana Melnyk and university librarian Veronika Trotter (a former language instructor herself) and conducted in 2018 and 2020 at Indiana University. The project drew upon the project-based learning (PBL) approach, which incorporates the educational theory of learning by doing, expounded by American philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey. PBL, which has made its way into the practice of a broad spectrum of educators, is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an

extended period to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge.[1] The end result of PBL is a socially meaningful and publicly available product.

In the field of language education and acquisition, the PBL approach has been recognized as project-based language learning (PBLL). As can be seen from the titles of recent publications cited in the next paragraph, the terms "project-based learning" and "project-based language learning" can be used interchangeably. However, Beckett, Slater, and Mohan (2019) point out the unique characteristics of this approach, in which language is both a target and a tool, and students are engaged in language learning through content-based activities: "As such, PBL can become project-based language learning with content-based activities composed of a series of tasks for solving problems, thinking critically, making decisions, producing products, and articulating the process and products" (2019, p.6).

The implementation of this approach into foreign language pedagogy is relatively new and needs to be studied more widely (Beckett, Slater, and Mohan 2019). Among the recent publications that address this need are *Global Perspectives on Project-Based Language Learning, Teaching, and Assessment: Key Approaches, Technology Tools, and Frameworks* edited by Gulbahar H. Beckett and Tammy Slater (2019) and *Project-Based Learning in Second Language Acquisition: Building Communities of Practice in Higher Education* edited by Adrián Gras-Velázquez (2020). Besides discussing the theoretical framework and philosophical models of PBLL (Beckett and Miller (eds) 2006; Beckett et al. 2019; Skalet 2019), recent publications also address the implementation of the PBL approach in language classrooms, reviews of case studies, immersion and community engagement (Beckett et al. 2019), and professional development in PBLL (Hixon, Ravitz, and Whisman 2012).

One of the most important topics discussed in the literature is the advantages of the PBL approach in a language classroom. Summarizing the benefits of implementing project-based learning, Stoller and Myers (2020) point out its adaptability to bilingual, multilingual, and multicultural classrooms. They emphasize the authenticity of experience and linguistic environment and the positive impact of PBLL on language skills. In addition, the authors underscore enhanced student confidence

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[1] See PBL works https://www.pblworks.org/what-is-pbl

and self-esteem, as well as an improved attitude toward learning and using the target language. Stoller and Myers also point out repeated opportunities for interaction (output), modified input, and negotiated meaning, as well as for purposeful attention to form and other aspects of language. Furthermore, Stoller and Myers underline improved abilities in critical thinking and collaborative work. They also state that participation in project-based learning increases motivation, engagement, and creativity.

In addition to publications about this approach, a number of institutions, among them the Buck Institute for Education[2] and the National Foreign Language Resourse Center at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa,[3] have developed instructional materials and criteria for PBLL. The attractiveness of the approach has increased recently due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the prevalence of online teaching. For example, the website PBLMatters[4] offers a series of synchronous and asynchronous workshops for educators.

The Buck Institute has created a comprehensive model for project-based learning—a gold standard. The Gold Standard Project is focused on student learning outcomes and includes the following essential project design elements: a challenging problem or question, sustained inquiry, authenticity, the students' voice and choice, reflection, critique and revision, and a public product. This universal framework can be implemented in a language classroom.

Our project was designed with all of these elements and meets the gold standard. (1) Both the topic and the task were challenging. Writing a Wikipedia article requires that students increase their reading proficiency in Russian and improve their research and writing skills. (2) While working on a Wikipedia page, students undertook a sustained inquiry using the target language as they conducted their own research, regularly consulted with the instructors and their peers and used research skills from the very beginning (information search) to the end (formatting sources in Russian)—all in the target language. (3) The students were required to work with authentic texts for the project. (4) Students chose a person for whom they would create a Wikipedia page biography and were

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[2] See the materials developed by the Buck Institute for Education: https://www.pblworks.org/

[3] See more PBLL resources and projects: http://www.nflrc.hawaii.edu/

[4] A series of synchronous and asynchronous workshops for educators: https://www.pblmatters.org/upcoming-pbl-events.html

able to make decisions about which sources of information to include in the page. (5) Students had the opportunity to provide their reflections regarding the specific knowledge they acquired about the topic and the target language skills they gained in a questionnaire and during the final mini-conference. (6) The students' work was critiqued and evaluated by the instructor and the librarian, by the students' peers, and through self-assessment. Such revision was an ongoing process. Students were able to edit their articles after the end of the class and the project. (7) Students created Wikipedia pages, which are public products.

3. Wikipedia and its educational value

The idea for this project occurred to Trotter after she attended a roundtable entitled "School-University Partnerships in Russian Language: How Collaborations Can Serve Students, Communities, Programs, and the Field" at the ASEEES convention in 2017. One of the participants mentioned that minority high school students do not engage with Russia or other parts of Eastern Europe because of the lack of diversity in Slavic studies. It is not a secret that Slavic studies in the United States is a rather White profession and a field that is not always welcoming to minority populations.[5] The roundtable conversation on these issues inspired the librarian to look for ways to contribute to the diversification of Slavic studies. To start, she compiled a LibGuide[6] on African Americans in Russia.[7] The LibGuide is organized chronologically and presents resources about African Americans whose lives were distinguished by significant engagement with Russia and the Soviet Union. By no means exhaustive, the LibGuide serves as a good starting point for anyone who wants to explore the topic. Work on the LibGuide led the librarian to the discovery that Russian

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[5] This can be observed in heated public disputes on SEELANGS (an email-based forum for scholars of Slavic and Eastern European languages and literatures), such as one described by Jennifer Wilson (https://jordanrussiacenter.org/news/slavic-studies-racially-tone-deaf/#.YLeN6PlKjIW) and Philip Gleissner (http://philipgleissner.com/quitseelangs/). This issue was also discussed in a recent "AATSEEL statement concerning inclusive language in the Slavic language classroom and a monitored professional announcement list": https://www.aatseel.org/about/presidents-message/messages/

[6] From "Library Guide," a popular Web publishing and content curation platform designed for libraries and used among others for organizing class- and subject-specific resources.

[7] "Library Research Guides: African Americans in Russia: Home," Home – African Americans in Russia – Library Research Guides at Indiana University, accessed March 23, 2021, http://guides.libraries.indiana.edu/c.php?g=792963.

language Wikipedia contains some articles about African Americans who are especially well-known in Russia, such as Angela Davis, Paul Robeson, and Yelena Khanga, but many other African Americans whose biographies were distinguished by significant professional, political, or personal engagement with Russia or the Soviet Union have no entries. Rather than creating all those articles herself, the librarian approached the instructor of the Russian for Social Sciences course with a proposal to involve advanced Russian students in that effort.

Wikipedia is the world's largest free source of information. The online encyclopedia is ranked as one of the 10 most used websites in the world[8], and it is the only nonprofit organization among them. Of course, Wikipedia can be controversial tool and resource, and it is often frowned upon in academia. Most scholars agree that Wikipedia should not be cited or used as a source for academic papers. The sociologist Piotr Konieczny has identified a number of factors at play in the academic resistance to Wikipedia, including "common misconceptions about Wikipedia; doubts about its quality; uneasiness with the challenge that it poses to the traditional peer-review system; and the lack of career-enhancing motivations related to using Wikipedia" (Konieczny 2016). Nonetheless, Wikipedia is widely used as a reference source not only by students but by academics and educators as well. In fact, attitudes toward Wikipedia in academia have slowly shifted from more negative views in the 2000s to more favorable ones in the last few years. More educators use Wikipedia in teaching, and a significant number of academic publications address various pedagogical applications of Wikipedia.[9]

Wikipedia positions itself as a teaching tool and offers a variety of resources for educators.[10] On its Education Portal, Wikimedia Outreach emphasizes its role in education: by contributing to Wikimedia projects, students of all ages acquire significant twenty-first century skills and help to attain the goal of making all knowledge freely accessible to everyone in the world.[11] The benefits of teaching with Wikipedia go beyond improving reading and writing skills: "We can increase students' motivation (they

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[8] See, for example: https://www.statista.com/statistics/1201880/most-visited-websites-worldwide/
[9] See a review in Konieczny 2016.
[10] See resources for instructors here: https://wikiedu.org/for-instructors/
[11] See the full mission and additional resources here: https://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Education

appreciate sharing their work with the wider world rather than with a wastebasket); teach them digital literacy, collaboration, and critical thinking skills; and enable them to engage in socially responsible activity (as student contributions enhance what is, in essence, a nonprofit, universally accessible reference work), as conceptualized in the service-learning paradigm" (Konieczny 2016, p. 1524). Bridges and Dowell (2020) enumerate and illustrate with real-life examples several approaches to the use of Wikipedia in education. These include shorter activities, such as one-shot classroom sessions and edit-a-thons, as well as long-term projects, such as running a Wikipedia club or incorporating Wikipedia assignments that require students to create or edit articles into course syllabi.

There is another line of criticism of Wikipedia that is more relevant to our discussion, namely its racial and gender bias. Gender imbalance in Wikipedia has already captured the attention of academic researchers.[12] According to Reagle and Rhue (2011), female subjects account for only 16% of biographies on Wikipedia. Konieczny and Klein (2018), who analyze data from different languages, countries, and cultures, find about 12% to 27% female biography representation over time. One possible source of bias is the lack of diversity in the Wikipedia contributor community: the average Wikipedian is a 30-year-old White male who is computer-savvy and lives in the U.S. or Europe. At the same time, the active editor community is only 8.5% female, which can be partially explained by unwelcoming practices in the editor community (Field et al. 2020). Information sources used for Wikipedia editing also might contribute to its gender and racial bias, since the online encyclopedia must be primarily based on secondary sources. It is also possible that Wikipedia simply reflects the broader gender and racial-ethnic biases in society (Adams et al. 2019; Field et al. 2020). This data is particularly worrisome since after 20 years of existence, Wikipedia has become ubiquitous. It is always readily available and is commonly the first result in online searches, factors that make it a preferred source of information, especially for young people. Gender and racial biases on Wikipedia have the potential to greatly influence public opinion. Writing for the *New York Times*, Jada F. Smith has remarked that Wikipedia "suffers

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[12] Racial bias on Wikipedia is also well known, but it has not been systematically researched yet, likely because of technical challenges of data collection. The only article that researches both gender and racial gaps is focused on sociologists: "Who Counts as a Notable Sociologist on Wikipedia? Gender, Race, and the "Professor Test" Adams et al, 2019.

from a dearth of information about black history.... In the Internet age, this is no trivial matter: To many people, a topic does not exist if it does not have a Wikipedia page" (Smith 2015).

Wikipedia and other organizations make efforts to address the racial and gender imbalance through edit-a-thons, organized at various institutions, especially during Black History Month and Women's History Month, or through the UNESCO initiative "#WIKI4WOMEN World Contributory Movement" in six official UNESCO languages, including Russian.[13] The Black WikiHistory Month program also coordinates numerous annual events in the U.S. and worldwide.[14] The participants in these events improve previously published articles devoted to minorities by adding information and citations or compose new articles. Another goal of these events is to attract new, potentially more diverse editors.[15] Thus, the authors view the PBLL project in Russian for the Social Sciences as a modest contribution to the rectification of the existing imbalance in Wikipedia.

4. Project

4.1 Participants and format

The project was incorporated into the syllabus of an advanced content-based Russian for the Social Sciences course, conducted entirely in Russian, and it constituted 25% of the final grade. The project was conducted twice, in 2018 in a face-to-face environment (nine students: four undergraduate, four graduate, and one high school; two of the students were heritage speakers) and in 2020 in an online format using the Zoom platform (eleven students: six undergraduate and five graduate, all non-native speakers of Russian).

4.2 Project stages

In designing the project, we followed Stoller and Myers (2020), who have formulated a five-stage framework comprising various cycles of student–instructor engagement in a project: preparation cycle, information gathering cycle, information processing cycle, information display cycle,

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[13] Details of the #WIKI4WOMEN initiative: https://en.unesco.org/feedback/wiki4women-world-contributory-movement

[14] Examples of the events and resources for organizers: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Black_WikiHistory_Month

[15] A case study of one such event at Oregon State University is described in Bridges et al. 2019.

and reflections cycle. Students worked on the project throughout the semester, completing a series of assignments: list of sources and outline of the article, first draft, peer review of another student's first draft, final version of the article, publication of the article on Wikipedia, and final oral presentation.

In our preparation cycle, the instructor and the librarian discussed the project's topic and outcomes with the students. Students received a list of potential subjects for their articles and each student chose one person to write about; students were allowed to suggest their own subject as well. The list was compiled by the librarian based on her research and met Wikipedia's country-specific notability criteria[16] (e.g., a person notable in the United States who has a Wikipedia page in English is not necessarily worthy of notice in Russia and vice versa). English-language Wikipedia articles already existed for most of the subjects, but we emphasized from the very beginning that students are expected to do their own research and write original articles rather than simply translate already published ones. The librarian suggested general sources on the topic (such as books listed in the LibGuide), but students were expected to find additional resources about their chosen subject. The librarian also provided links to various instructional resources (how to create an account, how to format references, etc.) and basic information on Wikipedia editing. Examining model articles, we reviewed the typical structure of a Wikipedia biography, including important elements of the introduction. Reading good-quality Wikipedia biographies in Russian helped students not only to familiarize themselves with the sections traditionally included in such articles, but also to internalize the writing style and some lexical chunks that frequently appear in biographies and could be used in their own articles. Throughout the semester, both the instructor and the librarian were available to the students for consultations on the project. In 2020, we were fortunate to include a Wikipedia editor from Russia as a member of our team: during one class session she discussed rules for Wikipedia editing in Russian, and later she helped to resolve occasional technical issues, such as formatting notes and references.

In the next stage—information gathering—students collected

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[16] "For people, the person who is the topic of a biographical article should be 'worthy of notice' or 'note'—that is, 'remarkable' or 'significant, interesting, or unusual enough to deserve attention or to be recorded' within Wikipedia as a written account of that person's life." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Notability_(people)

various types of sources in both English and Russian, adhering to Wikipedia guidelines that rank resources according to their reliability and suitability for Wikipedia (books, articles, online resources). The librarian helped students evaluate the quality of their sources to make sure that they met the reliability criteria and expressed a neutral point of view. Each student then submitted a list of sources and an outline of the future article. In this and subsequent stages, most of the work happened outside of the classroom since each student worked on an individual topic.

The third stage—the processing of information—took up the greater part of the semester and was probably the most laborious. The participants were expected to write a first draft of their article; complete a peer review assignment (each student read and provided written comments on the article of one other student); make corrections to their drafts as suggested by the instructor, the librarian, and a fellow student; and polish the final version of the article. The instructor and the librarian monitored the students' progress, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the students' drafts and suggesting improvements with respect to Wikipedia criteria and proper use of Russian language.

The information display cycle was a twofold stage. First, all but one of the students uploaded the finished articles on Russian Wikipedia and thus made them available to anyone with internet access. Second, at the end of the semester, students presented their projects in class. They discussed the life of their chosen person and their connections to Russia. In addition, students reflected on their work with Wikipedia.

The self-reflections that concluded the presentations are part of the final stage, the reflection cycle, in which students evaluate their own work, the progress they have made, and the skills and knowledge they have gained. In addition to these brief oral comments, the instructor and the librarian solicited informal anonymous written feedback to gather students' impressions of the project in more detail. The combined quantitative and qualitative results from 2018 (nine responses) and 2020 (eight responses, three students did not respond) are presented in the Appendix B.

The overall feedback was favorable: most students found the project useful and engaging and recommended implementing similar projects in other classes. Students felt that their language skills had improved, especially in writing and translating. Somewhat lower improvement in reading can be

explained by the fact that a few students could not find reliable sources in Russian and based their articles mostly on sources in English. While working on their projects, students gained a better understanding of how Wikipedia works and acquired Wikipedia editing skills; as a result, most participants are now open to contributing to Wikipedia in the future, even though this was not the primary goal of the project.

5. Challenges and possible solutions

It is expected that such a complex project would involve some challenges. Difficulties might arise at various stages, but most of them can be successfully resolved.

The selection of subjects requires some preliminary research. As previously mentioned, potential subjects need to meet Wikipedia's notability criteria, and of course, the list of notable African Americans whose lives were connected to Russia and the Soviet Union is somewhat limited. However, other underrepresented groups can serve as a basis for similar projects (women, other minority groups).

Some students found it difficult to identify sources and properly evaluate them. The quantity and quality of available sources differed significantly from subject to subject (naturally, more information is available about better-known people). One of the tasks of the librarian was to help students locate sources in English and Russian and to teach students how to assess those sources in terms of their quality and suitability for Wikipedia. We would recommend approaching an information literacy specialist at your institution's library (start with your Slavic librarian, if there is one). Even if the specialist lacks Russian language skills, she/he/they can instruct students on general source evaluation—an indispensable skill. Also, the staffs of both academic and public libraries almost always include a person experienced in Wikipedia editing who can assist students with technical challenges, such as formatting the article. However, providing instruction in English might not be ideal if the class is taught entirely in the target language. In that case the instructor can provide published instructional materials that are easily available online in multiple languages.[17]

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[17] For Russian, one can start with the following article from Russian Wikibooks: https://ru.wikibooks.org/wiki/Как_написать_статью_в_Википедии

Needless to say, writing a Wikipedia article in the target language is a time-consuming project that creates a significant workload for both students and instructors. It is therefore crucial to divide the project into various stages and carefully plan out not just the project but the rest of the course work. Despite the workload, however, our students truly embraced the project, preferring to invest their time and effort into something memorable and socially meaningful rather than just writing another paper.

6. Conclusions

To date, this project has resulted in the publication of 19 new Wikipedia articles in Russian (see the list in Appendix A). Several are longer and of better quality than English articles on the same subject, and in some cases, articles authored by our students do not even have an English-language counterpart. Thanks to this project, the presence of African Americans in Russian cultural history is more visible, not only to our students but, as a result of their efforts, to any user of Russian language Wikipedia.

The cycles of PBLL-based activities that comprised the use of Wikipedia in the Russian language course, as described above, yielded highly desirable educational benefits. Students improved their proficiency in Russian and acquired new and specific knowledge through the medium of the target language. They also developed their information literacy and enhanced their research skills. Moreover, the topic and the opportunity to create a public product proved highly motivating to our students. We invite teachers of Russian and of other languages to adapt the design of our project for other topics that will advance the mission of curricular diversification.

Appendix A. List of Russian language Wikipedia articles created by students

2018:

Ричард Теодор Гринер (Richard Theodore Greener)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Гринер,_Ричард_Теодор

Фредерик Брюс Томас (Frederick Bruce Thomas)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Томас,_Фредерик_Брюс

Джеймс «Джимми» Винкфилд (James "Jimmy" Winkfield)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Винкфилд,_Джеймс

Гомер Смит-младший (Homer Smith Jr.)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Смит,_Гомер_(младший)

Ллойд Уолтон Паттерсон (Lloyd Walton Patterson)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Паттерсон,_Ллойд

Оливер Джон Голден (Oliver John Golden)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Голден,_Оливер

Луиза Томпсон Паттерсон (Louise Thompson Patterson)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Томпсон_Паттерсон,_Луиза

Андреа Ли (Andrea Lee)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ли,_Андреа

2020:
Нэнси Гарднер Принс (Nancy Gardner Prince)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Принс,_Нэнси_Гарднер

Эмма Харрис (Emma Harris)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Харрис,_Эмма

Виллиана Берроуз (Williana Burroughs)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Берроуз,_Виллиана

Айда Форсайн (Ida Forsyne)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Форсайн,_Айда

Ловетт Форт-Уайтмен (Lovett Fort-Whiteman)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Форт-Уайтмен,_Ловетт

Ширли Грэм Дюбуа (Shirley Graham Du Bois)
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Грэм_Дюбуа,_Ширли

Гарри Хейвуд (Harry Haywood)
> https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Хейвуд,_Гарри

Генри Ли Мун (Henry Lee Moon)
> https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Мун,_Генри_Ли

Дороти Уэст (Dorothy West)
> https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Уэст,_Дороти

Дадли Рэндалл (Dudley Randall)
> https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Рэндалл,_Дадли

Памела Спратлен (Pamela Spratlen)
> https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Спратлен,_Памела

Appendix B. Students' project evaluations results (2018 and 2020 combined)

Quantitative questions:

1. Overall, working on this project was useful for me.
2. I learned a lot about an important and/or interesting topic.
3. I feel that I made a valuable contribution to the Russian language Wikipedia and hence the community in general.
4. Thanks to the project my Russian language skills in reading improved.
5. Thanks to the project my Russian language skills in writing improved.
6. Thanks to the project my Russian language skills in translating improved.
7. Work on the project was too time-consuming.
8. It was easy to find resources for the project.
9. I enjoyed uploading and formatting my article in Wikipedia.
10. I plan to contribute to Wikipedia in future.
11. I received valuable feedback on this project from instructors.
12. I would recommend implementing similar projects based on Wikipedia in other language classes.
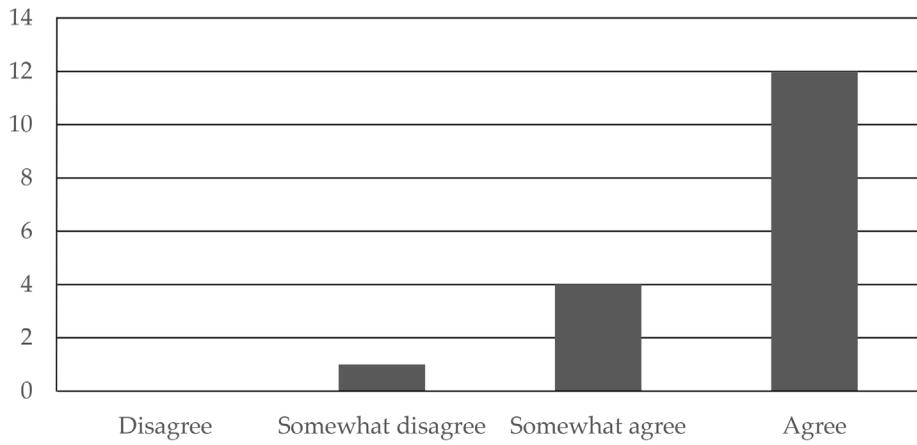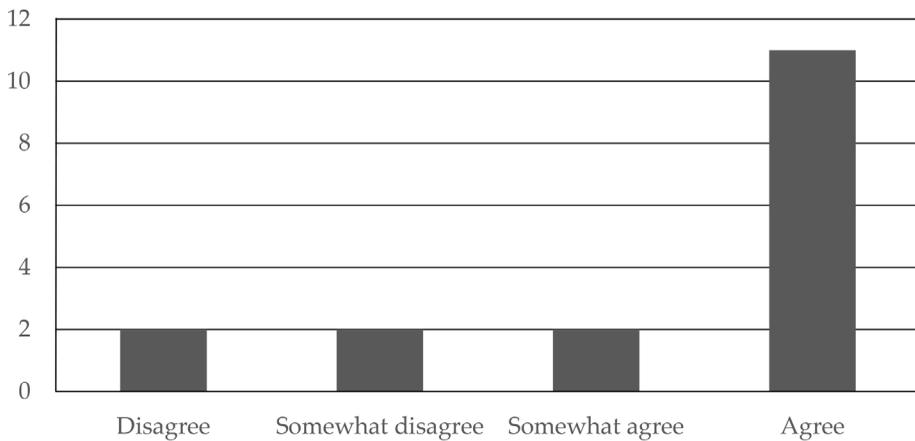
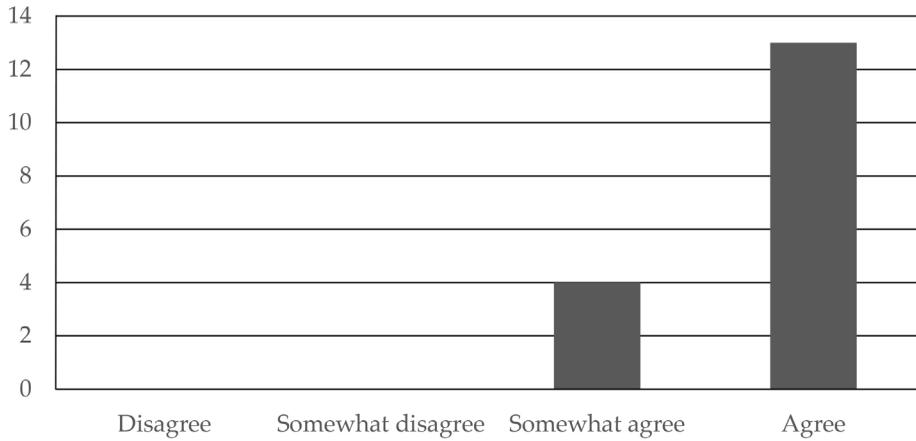1. Overall, working on this project was useful for me
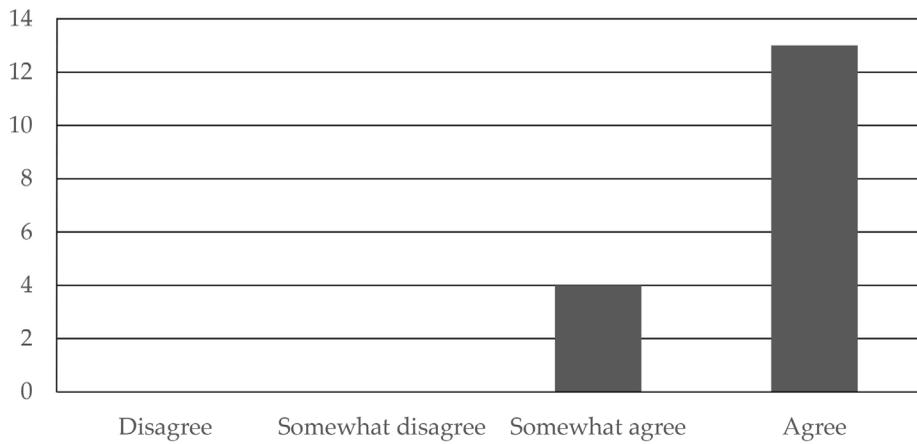
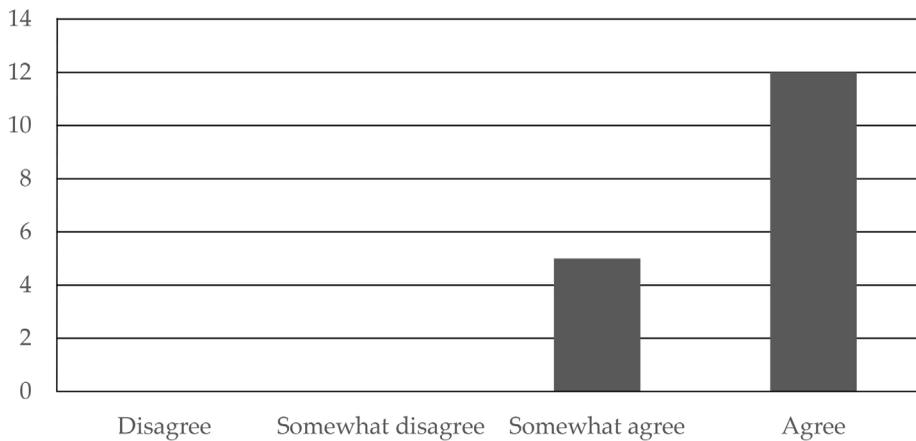2. I learned a lot about an important and/or interesting topic
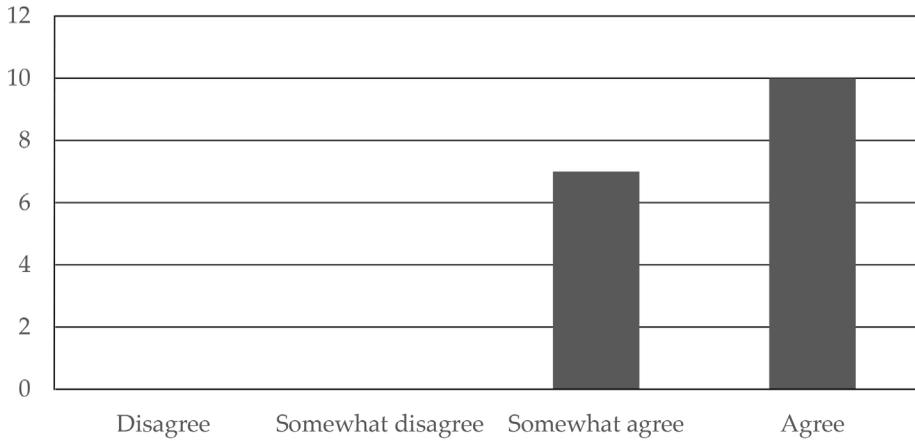
3. I feel that I made a valuable contribution to the Russian language Wikipedia and hence the community in general
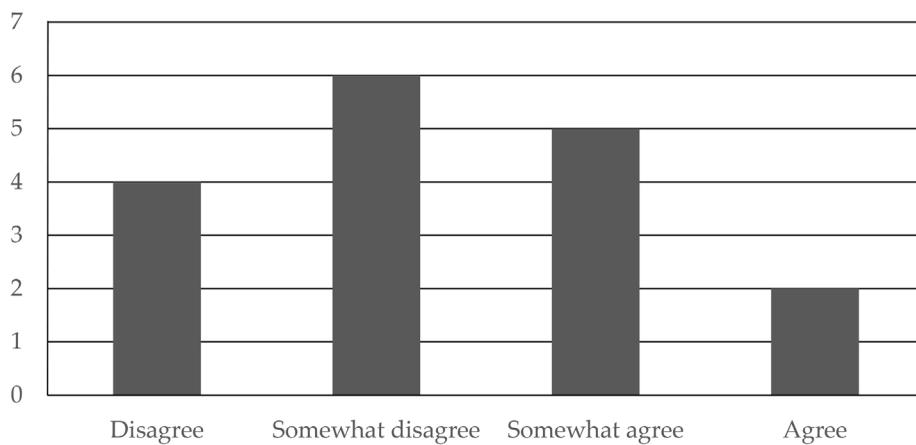

4. Thanks to the project my Russian language skills improved in **reading**
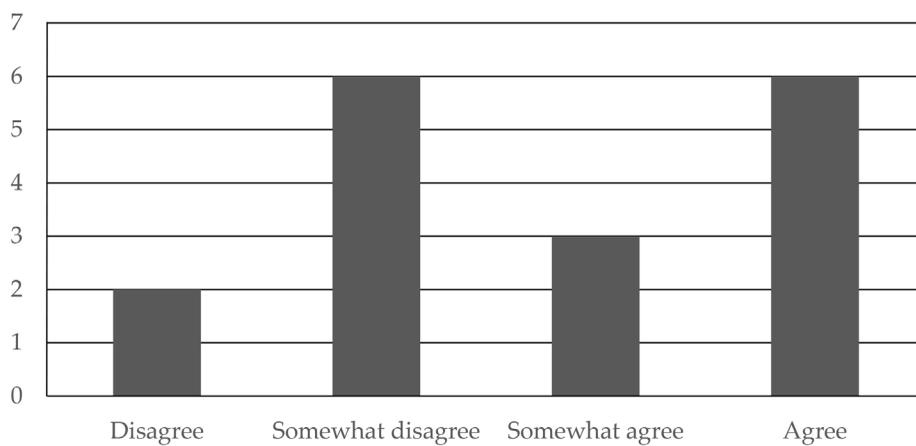
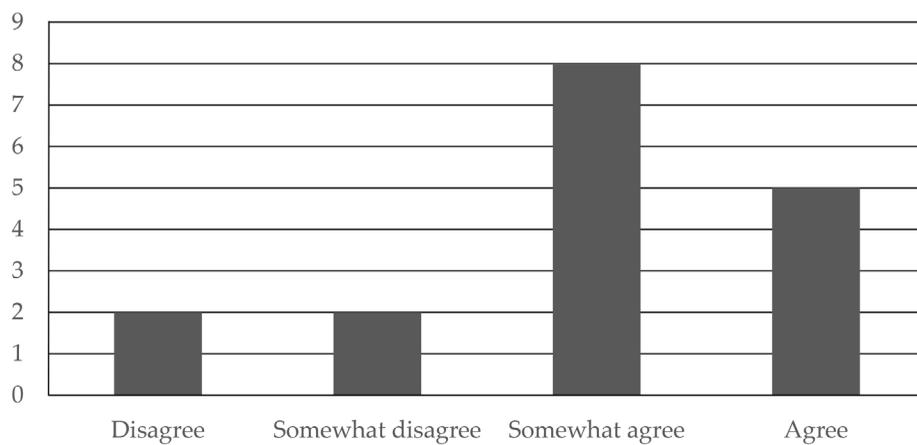5. Thanks to the project my Russian language skills improved in **writing**

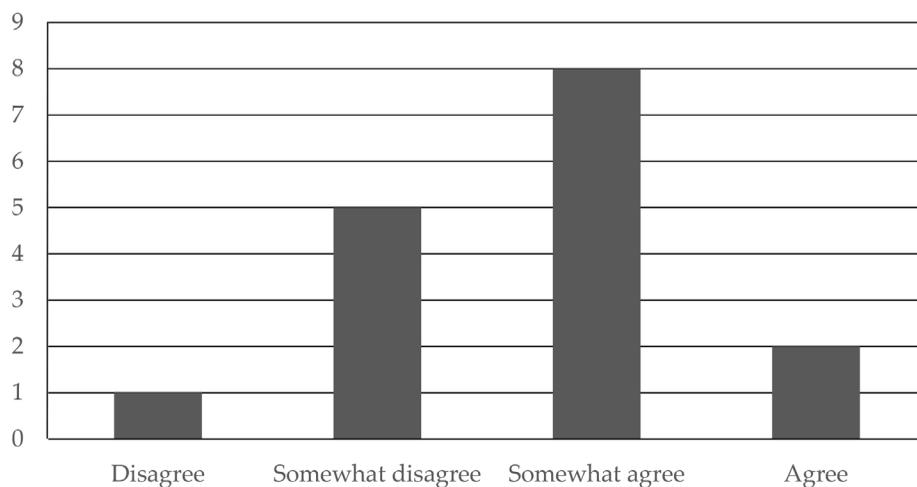6. Thanks to the project my Russian language skills improved in **translating**

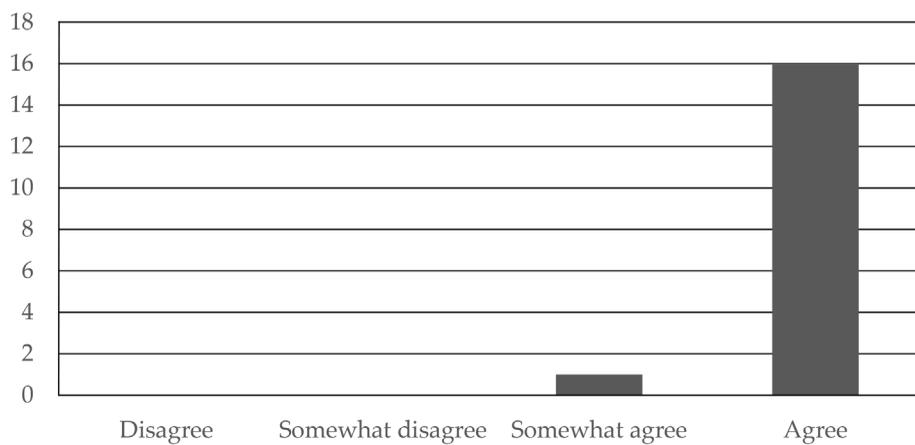7. Work on the project was too time-consuming

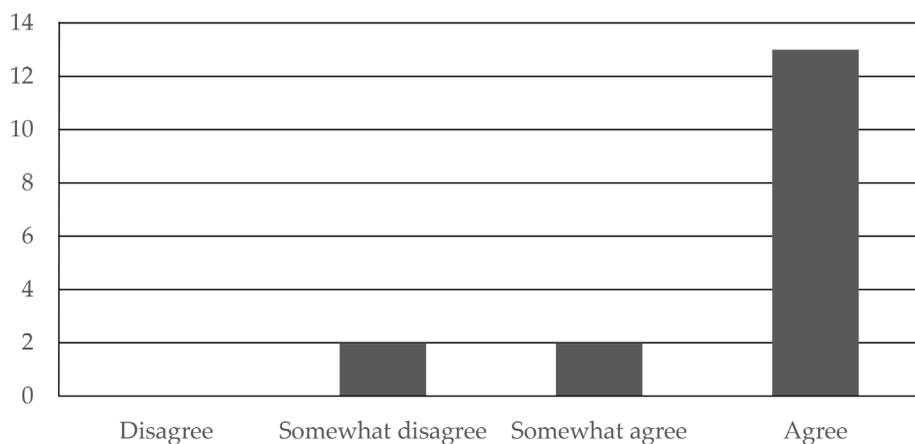8. It was easy to find resources for the project

9. I enjoyed uploading and formatting my article in Wikipedia

10. I plan to contribute to Wikipedia in future

11. I received valuable feedback on this project from instructors

12. I would recommend implementing similar projects based on Wikipedia in other language classes

Qualitative feedback:

The survey included two open-ended questions:

1. "What I like the most about the project." Many students named conducting the research about an interesting figure, learning how Wikipedia works, and being satisfied with their contribution to the online encyclopedia. Here are some comments:

> *"I think it was very useful <u>in synthesizing</u> all the aspects of language learning (presenting, writing, translating, finding sources, adjusting to a new style, etc.)."*

> *"The collaborative aspect, it very much helped me to identify areas for improvement in my Russian language writing and composition. It had the flexibility for me to incorporate and leverage my academic interests and experiences while improving my language skills and it gave me the push into the world of wiki editing."*

> *"I think this was a fantastic project, I think it developed not only my language skills but good concepts for 21st century collaborative scholarship."*

2. "What was the most difficult for me in the project." Predictably, many students identified finding reliable sources, especially in Russian language, and editing Wikipedia among the most challenging tasks. When the project ran for the second time, some students complained that the project was excessively time-consuming:

> *"Was simply too much work in combination with other work. More class time, and nights free of other homework would have led to a better product- which is getting published and therefore pressure is high. Very clear step by step instructions for technical procedures in English would save students a lot of time."*

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