Engaging Citizen Translators in Disasters: Exploring Ethical Challenges

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Abstract:

Crisis situations, including disasters, require making urgent decisions often without sufficient resources. These include decisions about translation and interpretation. We argue that using citizens in such contexts can be ethically justified despite their lack of professional translator training (we term them citizen translators). Translation potentially improves people's access to crucial information for their safety, and therefore delivering such information is critical. We also acknowledge several ethical challenges with citizen translation based on our experience translating in humanitarian contexts, relevant literature, and discussions with various stakeholders engaged with our research consortium. Recourse to citizen translators has limitations, but we advance mitigation measures to address the ethical challenges they face providing timely information to linguistically diverse groups in crisis. We propose virtue ethics as a framework for citizen translators to examine and address ethical issues during crises. We suggest training that can prepare citizen translators for ethical challenges likely in the field.

Keywords: citizen translation, non-professional translation, crisis translation, translation in humanitarian settings, virtue ethics, translator training

Introduction: Translation and disasters

Public services are disrupted during disasters and humanitarian crises.

Translation services[1] are often needed during such events when, for example,

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[1] For the purposes of this paper, we use the term "translation" in its broader sense, that is, encompassing both translation and interpreting needs. Whenever necessary, we will make it clear if a distinction is needed between translation and interpretation

communities are characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity, particularly including languages of lesser diffusion, or when disaster responders lack knowledge of local languages and customs. When professional translators are not available, or only available in insufficient numbers, this article provides an ethical justification for the view that *citizen translators* provide a critical resource to connect people to important sources of information and support (Aguilar-Solano 2015; Federici and Cadwell 2018).

In a crisis situation, where a rapid response can be critical, one overarching ethical question is when, if ever, it is justified to use non-professional citizen translators. In this paper, we will argue that it can be ethically justified to use whoever is available to provide translation. However, problems and limitations accompany such a recommendation. Whilst the provision of translated information can arguably make a significant difference to allow people to articulate their needs and access information that supports their safety and security, the quality and delivery of such information remains important. Thus, we contend that awareness of, and reflection on, a series of ethical challenges is important before engaging citizen translators in translation tasks.

Several scholars acknowledge the importance of ethical issues in translation service provision and training (for example, Baker and Maier 2011; Drugan 2017; Drugan and Megone 2011; Drugan and Tipton 2017). Disaster settings add additional ethical issues that should be included within preparations for all responders, including translators (O'Mathúna 2016). In this paper, we present an analysis of ethical issues resulting from our experience of translation in humanitarian settings alongside the incorporation of relevant literature, and discussions held with various stakeholders during the research project from which this article emanates (see Acknowledgements).[2] *How* translation is provided during such crises, however, raises significant questions

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[2] https://sites.google.com/view/crisistranslation/home

and ethical challenges. One proposal is to use citizen translators (also referred to as community, volunteer, or non-professional translators or interpreters). Stemming from a series of ethical challenges we identify, we propose ways that ethics could be incorporated into the training and practice of citizen translators for disasters and other crises. This will allow citizen translators to prepare for when they will need to balance ethical principles and values in providing timely information in crisis contexts with culturally and linguistically diverse groups. At the same time, we recommend that professional translators engage with citizen translators in their work to whatever extent is feasible. Specifically, we suggest using a virtue ethics approach as a framework for examining and responding to the ethical issues associated with citizen translation.

Trust, translation and disasters: A virtue ethics approach

The concept of trust has been identified as important in the work of volunteer translators and interpreters in other settings (for example, Aguilar-Solano 2015; Schouten 2017; Tipton 2010; Zendedel et al. 2018). A trust-based approach builds upon virtue ethics where character traits are central to ethical decision-making (Pellegrino 1991). Virtue ethics emphasizes ethical character traits (like honesty and courage), personal integrity and the relational impact of ethics. As one of the oldest frameworks for ethics, dating back at least to ancient Greece (MacIntrye 2007), virtue ethics has been going through a resurgence of interest in many fields, including humanitarian action (Slim 2015) and research (Emmerich 2018).

Arising from virtue ethics concern for relationships, trust becomes a core ethical concern because of the power differentials between clients and professionals (Tipton, 2010). Trust is a challenging concept to define, but is very important in professional settings. For example, someone requiring translation services will not know how well

the translation is done and therefore must trust the translator. The need for trust reciprocally places an ethical responsibility on the professional to be trustworthy (Mulayim and Lai 2017). Edmund Pellegrino examined several analyses of trust, concluding that it involves five elements that combine in various ways (Pellegrino 1991). The first is confidence that what is being entrusted will be fulfilled faithfully; the second is an explicit or implicit commitment by the one trusted to serve the best interests of the other person; the third, that the one trusted is given freedom in how to act, but should thereby use this discretion ethically; fourth, that both parties understand these elements; and fifth, that underlying all these is faith in the good character of the one trusted.

Trust, then provides guidance in ethical decision-making as preference should be given to what promotes and strengthens trust between the parties interacting (Mulayim and Lai 2017). Virtue ethics differs from other widely used ethics frameworks like utilitarianism, with its emphasis on consequences, and deontology, with its emphasis on duties and moral rules (Slim 2015). Instead, virtue ethics focuses on "human character, practical judgment and orientation towards human well-being" (Mulayim and Lai 2017: 7). Alasdair MacIntyre (2007), the foremost modern proponent of virtue ethics, states that virtues allow people to achieve the goods that are essential to the practices and roles they are involved in, while also acknowledging the importance of their social context. When faced with an ethical dilemma, the person committed to virtue ethics asks, "What sort of person should I be?"; "What will promote trust in this situation?" The answer includes being accurate in translation, being committed to the best interests of those needing translation, and developing virtues like honesty, loyalty, justice, fairness, etc. (Mulayim and Lai 2017). Practically speaking, we learn about virtues by observing mentors and others we trust, and through the stories we tell which reveal moral

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character traits (O'Mathúna 2008). Virtue ethics thus fits easily into training and mentoring for professional translators, or into condensed training for citizen translators through discussion of ethics case studies and highlighting the importance of trust and relationships, concepts which can be more easy to relate to easily than abstract principles and concepts.

Ethical challenges with citizen crisis translation

Translators invariably make many decisions when translating texts, which can include ethical choices. From the decisions made with ambiguous words or sentences, to choosing which tool to use, translation involves a series of choices. *Professional translators* generally adhere to ethics codes, either those of professional associations, or sometimes those imposed by clients. Whether through training or professional experience, translators will be acquainted with the central procedures and common challenges related to translation. However, in the case of *citizen translators*, issues that could be taken for granted when working with professional translators cannot be assumed and may need to be explicitly discussed. The concept of translation quality may also be different for citizen translators, as they may opt for what Juliane House (2001) terms *overt translation*. As mentioned by Mustapha Taibi and Uldis Ozolins, community translators--which in our context would include citizen translators--may produce overt translations

> … that often engage in explanation, definitions, augmented information and clarification, all quite clearly pointing out that this is a foreign (host) culture that needs to be explained, and the underlying assumptions and consequences of the information presented need to be spelled out. (Taibi and Ozolins 2016: 109).

This raises a very general ethical issue: "When, if at all, is it ethically justified to use non-professional citizen translators?"

When professional translators volunteer

We hold that resorting to citizen translators may be required during humanitarian crises when professional translators may not be available, or where the number of available translators is insufficient to cover translation needs. One reason for our position is that the alternative, at the moment, is that without citizen translators, people will be at increased risk of harm by lacking vital information not available in languages they comprehend. In ideal circumstances, professionals should be used, but crises generate non-ideal situations. Ethics in crises can necessitate taking the least worst option, especially when the ideal solution is not available (O'Mathúna 2016).

This can be shown to happen in crises. For example, in June 2018, Spain welcomed migrants rescued from the Mediterranean after being turned away by Italy and Malta (BBC 2018). In preparation for their arrival, the General Directorate for language policy and management of multilingualism of the Council for Education, Research, Culture and Sports of the regional government in Valencia launched a call to recruit volunteer interpreters, particularly for English, French and Arabic. Although the professional translators association of the region encouraged their members to volunteer, anyone with a good command of those languages was encouraged to apply.[3] Urbina (2018) reported that from the 800 who volunteered originally, 450 were selected. Although we do not know the number of professional translators recruited as volunteers, it seems obvious that, for the sake of providing multilingual services, priority was given

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[3] https://twitter.com/xarxativ/status/1006947653685477383

to recruiting people who were bilingual with the languages needed and training them to assist as citizen translators and interpreters.

As a side-note, we acknowledge that some professional translators do volunteer in crises. At the same time, those planning for disasters and crises should not presume that professionals will volunteer to address translation needs and should plan to engage sufficient professional translators if at all possible. However, Sharon O'Brien et al. (2018) illustrated how such planning is often absent from national-level policies. They conducted a comparative analysis of national translation policies in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, United States, Japan and Ireland. Focusing on the availability, accessibility, adaptability and acceptability of translation in crisis events, they found significant policy gaps related to the provision and resourcing of translation services and support (though with some notable exceptions). The incorporation of citizen translators could help address some of these gaps in policy and resourcing, along with finding translation solutions that are available, adaptable, accessible and acceptable to a target community.

Thus, depending on the scale of the crisis, citizen translators may be required and ethically justified. Because of the fact that they are not professionally trained, and the difficult circumstances in which they are needed, citizen translators may provide translations of lesser quality than professionals, and the message may not be conveyed as accurately as professionals would. This is a risk that can be justified in a crisis, but should not be seen as standard practice. At the same time, steps can be taken to mitigate these risks by having citizen translators work with professional translators to whatever extent feasible. We will return to this aspect under our recommendations.

Use of ethics codes

Another concern with citizen translators is that typically, they will not have an ethics code to guide them when facing ethical issues. Codes of ethics exist in most professions to give guidance on acceptable and unacceptable behavior. While codes of ethics exist for professional translators, they are advisory in nature and apply only to those who choose to join a particular professional association (Drugan 2017). According to Joanna Drugan and Chris Megone (2011), interest in adopting ethical codes and applying to translators' work have increased substantially. In an attempt to determine whether these codes are based on a common set of ethical principles and issues, Julie McDonough Dolmaya (2011) compared the codes of ethics from seventeen professional translators' organizations and concluded that "whether a translator is acting ethically when practicing the profession depends on what network he or she belongs to, *as no general consensus about ethical translation behavior seems to exist*" (McDonough Dolmaya 2011: 45, our emphasis).

Other scholars (Brander de la Iglesia 2017; Inghilleri 2008) have discussed cases where translators believe they are obliged to violate their professional code of ethics because they believe these contradict their personal morality. For instance, Erik Camayd-Freixas, a translation scholar and court interpreter in the US, was interpreting in 2008 for a hearing of 306 illegal immigrant workers arrested while working in a meatpacking plant and accused of falsifying their US social security numbers (Camayd-Freixas 2008). During the hearing, he came to suspect that traffickers had been providing the immigrants with false social security numbers. However, Camayd-Freixas's code of ethics forbade him to speak up about this, as he was supposed to limit himself to doing what he had been hired to do: interpreting. Once the hearing was over, he published an essay sharing his personal perspective (Camayd-Freixas 2008), and

later on, in his role as a translation scholar, published a research paper on the topic (Camayd-Freixas 2013).[4] His writings have had widespread impact. As stated by Julia Preston (2008), his statement initiated a debate on "whether it was appropriate for a translator to speak publicly about conversations with criminal defendants who were covered by legal confidentiality."

Transposed to crisis translation, new challenges emerge with codes of ethics. The codes of different stakeholders may clash (for example, military responders compared to nongovernmental organization (NGO) workers). These clashes are common when situations involve different professionals such as translators and social workers (Drugan 2017). This exposes an important limitation with ethics codes, whether for professionals or otherwise. Codes and guidelines provide only a set of general ethical principles, values and positions, and ethical decision-making skills are needed to apply these to specific situations. In fact, an ethics code may provide no clear guidelines on how to address particular ethical challenges such as those discussed in Drugan and Megone's five case studies (2011). In the real world, conflicts can arise between two or more important ethical commitments, such as for Camayd-Freixas between his commitment to uphold confidentiality as per his professional code of ethics, and his personal commitment to truth and justice. Part of why virtue ethics has seen a resurgence in interest is because its approach includes developing the personal skills and traits that help to resolve the ethical challenges that codes and ethical principles *on their own* only serve to identify and thereby help to prepare people better for the 'real world' in which they live and relate (Macfarlane 2008).

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[4] It should be noted that Camayd-Freixas was in a privileged position, as he was not only an interpreter, but also a translation scholar and hence was better able to withstand the potential risks he took by violating the code of ethics compared to other professional interpreters.

Trust and citizen translators

Sedat Mulayim and Miranda Lai (2016) proposed an approach to ethics for professional translators and interpreters that makes *trust* a central factor. They argue that professionals are in positions of power because of their specialized knowledge and training. This places an ethical duty on professionals to act in the best interests of clients. In such relationships, trust should be central and guide professionals' ethical decision-making.

This approach is equally applicable to citizen translators, particularly in disasters. Trust has been identified as important in the work of volunteer translators in other settings such as health care (for example, Aguilar-Solano 2015; Schouten 2017; Tipton 2010; Zendedel et al. 2018). Trust may be easier to build between citizens, or may be pre-existing if translators come from the same community. The relationships that people have within an afflicted region can encourage citizen translators to volunteer. For example, Haitians around the world volunteered to engage in crowdsourcing translation to facilitate translation from Haitian Creole into English to help in disaster relief operations (Munro 2013). Other examples might include members of a community such as a language teacher from a local school, a university student, bilingual people such as immigrants, or someone working in the hospitality industry who has experience communicating with guests in multiple languages.

Citizen translators may already know the community and thus have some advantages in establishing trust compared to professional translators. In many cases, citizen translators are members of existing communities. They may have far greater reach into the "community" through their social relationships, networks of trust and knowledge of existing power structures and politics. For instance, Rosalind Edwards et al. (2005: 78) showed in a study using semi-structured interviews with people from

various ethnic groups (Chinese, Kurdish, Bangladeshi, Indian and Polish) living in Manchester and London that "personal character and trust are important in people's understandings of good interpreting, leading them to prefer interpreters drawn from their own informal networks." In our project's discussions and training, we have found anecdotally that people who volunteer as citizen translators are also more likely to take an active role in disaster risk reduction initiatives before a crisis situation even occurs. The deeper knowledge and understanding, and the relational ties, provide a better basis to ensure that associated crisis-based information is accessible, acceptable and available to minority communities.

On the other hand, such familiarity and pre-existing relationships can add ethical complexities, particularly around such central pillars of translation ethics as impartiality and confidentiality (Mulayim and Lai 2017). If citizen translators come from communities with pre-existing prejudices, or are recruited by organizations which tolerate or contribute to existing injustices, significant ethical challenges can arise if translators carry those background beliefs into their work. Professionals may similarly come with their own background views or beliefs, such as with the Camayd-Freixas case. These challenging ethical issues will be addressed in professional training, and citizen translators require preparation here also.

Justice and translation

Disasters have a larger and more lasting impact on the poor and more vulnerable in affected societies (O'Mathúna 2018). Gaillard asserts that disasters can be viewed as "an extension of everyday hardships" highlighting how such events impact people unevenly and unequally (2007: 523). Even in well-resourced societies, immigrants can be especially prone to exploitation when they do not understand what is happening in a

disaster or what services are available to them (Cohen 2017). In the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire of West London, citizen translators played a crucial role in helping to unlock multilingual communication. As reported by Lilly Allen and Sam Duckworth (2017), the community and the volunteers plugged "the gaps left by an absent council and preoccupied parliament. The strength and dignity on display, across all cultures and ages, is an example to the whole country." Public authorities failed for weeks to make information available in any language other than English, even though the community was composed of people speaking eighteen other languages. Members of the community eventually persuaded the charity, Inquest, and a professional translation company to provide them with necessary translations at no charge, since the people themselves could not afford the services (Allen and Duckworth 2017).

Disasters can act like an x-ray to expose underlying injustices and provide societies with an opportunity to change through the promotion of justice (O'Mathúna 2018). In many cases, the stories of those who have been treated unjustly will need first to be translated so that others can learn from them. Without translators, pre-existing injustices may be accentuated, highlighting how providing translation services may have more than merely practical benefits but also promote respect and justice for vulnerable groups. This provides another ethical justification to ensuring some translation is available in crises, even if that is through citizen translators. As noted in the previous section, citizen translators may be trusted to bring stories of injustice to light, but at the same time if they come from groups which have facilitated or tolerated existing injustices, this can be ethically challenging. As above, this points to the potential value of citizen translators, but also the need for training in ethical reflection.

Dealing with intercultural communication

Cultural differences represent a significant overarching issue for citizen translators. In a crisis scenario, communities from different backgrounds and cultures may come together and intercultural communication becomes important for effective communication. As argued by Sharon O'Brien and Patrick Cadwell, in the context of crisis communication, "cultural and social meanings need to be considered when adopting a perspective on translation" (2017: 26). As they report, not only is it important to give access to information in a language that the target community understands, but also the means used to communicate such information should be culturally appropriate. Their research in Kenya found out that 82% of the 95 participants who responded to their survey preferred spoken communication. When asked how they would rather get such information, 72 indicated a public gathering, 66 the radio, and 51 the church. This means that the medium of communication is as important as the language in which the message is conveyed. If, for instance, a campaign was carried out in Kenya to raise awareness of the spread of an epidemic disease, the study by O'Brien and Cadwell (2017) suggests that, rather than using leaflets and posters in the community target languages, crisis responders should convey their messages through oral communication via local radio and public gatherings. In addition, using healthcare workers to spread the message would not be as effective as when it comes from trusted figures in the community and the church.

While citizen translators from the same community may be aware of cultural issues, this may not always be the case. Citizen translators from other communities in the same region may or may not be aware of cultural differences. For instance, the Canterbury earthquakes in New Zealand (2010--2011) created situations where many different linguistic groups required information about ongoing aftershocks, updates

about the recovery process, and a mechanism to communicate their needs to relevant authorities. A number of citizen translators from the community filled this role (Wylie 2012). However, notions of "community" are complex. Community politics and power relations can have significant ramifications for the delivery of such information and these dynamics are often invisible to outsiders. For example, the Afghan community that lives in Canterbury's major city, Christchurch, could look, to an outsider, like one unified community. However, at least three distinct ethnic groups from Afghanistan live in Christchurch. These groups would (at times) regard themselves as separate communities with different needs and relationships (Marlowe 2015: 193).

Some degree of cultural training is important for an effective crisis translation workflow. Both crisis responders and citizen translators will need to be aware of these issues to avoid misunderstandings and ensure effective communication. In some cases, this may even imply making doctors or other responders aware of cultural traditions in the community affected, as well as other cultural differences. In certain communities, for instance, a female responder may not be heard or respected unless she is considered an authority (e.g., a doctor).

In the case of refugees arriving in Spain in June 2018, it appears from the available media reports that it was originally planned to have women only translate for other women to ensure that trust relationships were quickly established and that they would talk freely about their situation without any gender bias (Urbina 2018). In this way, culturally sensitive plans were made. However, a shortage of female translators led to male citizen translators interpreting for women who had been victims of sexual abuse. This led to the professional translator associations of Spain releasing a public statement highlighting the need to rely on professional translators in emergency situations (Red Vértice 2018). This highlights how crises can lead to less than optimal

services being provided, which are ultimately ethical challenges. Would it have been better to leave some women with no translators rather than violate their cultural values? Similar challenges will arise if outsiders are not trusted or viewed as acceptable by the target community, and yet these may be the only translators available. Such ethical challenges may make it impossible to ensure that a translator will be listened to or trusted. We will return to this issue in our recommendations section.

Determining the volunteers' profile

While we have claimed that in some crisis scenarios we may need to avail of citizen translators, this does not mean that *any* given citizen translator should be accepted in every circumstance. When selecting volunteers, consideration may be required of issues such as their age, minimum language proficiency for translation tasks, whether or not they are prepared psychologically to deal with the situation and what they will have to translate, or even, whether the risks involved are acceptable. War zone interpreters, for instance, are faced with a perilous task as they do not benefit from any protection status such as those from which doctors, nurses and journalists benefit (Baker 2010). Fabrizio Gallai (2018) also highlights how "civilian interpreters – and their families – are under constant threat: forced to live in hiding or under disguised identities."

As mentioned earlier, Urbina (2018) reported that 800 people volunteered as translators to help with refugees arriving in Spain in June 2018, but only 450 were selected to help. One of the criteria used to select the volunteers was their knowledge of African dialects as this was deemed important for grasping nuances, emotions, body language and culture. These volunteer interpreters received training by the Spanish Red Cross and the Council for Education to ensure that the volunteers made the arrival of the

migrants as dignified as possible. In this instance, concern for cultural and ethical issues was built into their training. Citizen translators will be better prepared with this type of training given the types of sensitivities noted above with these issues.

Assuring quality

In any translation task, errors can occur. Translation errors in crisis situations may range from the trivial to life-and-death situations. Gentile (2017) reports on a video released by Wij zijn sprakeloos (2012) depicting an immigrant to the Netherlands who goes into a medical consultation showing clear signs of having an allergic reaction. She speaks Dutch and the consultation is carried out in that language. However, even though the immigrant is bilingual, she misunderstood a crucial word during her consultation and leaves believing she should avoid *zuiker* (sugar) whereas she was told to avoid *zuivel* (dairy, which sounds very similar to *zuiker*). The video exemplifies how even those who seem to have a good command of the language may misunderstand important terms or make mistakes. In a crisis situation, this could have fatal consequences. The chances of such mistakes occurring with citizen translators are higher, and thus additional steps are needed to elevate the quality of translations delivered by citizen translations. One such mechanism could be the use of other citizen translators as peer reviewers, or professional translators could be involved as supervisors (Federici and Cadwell 2018). However, we acknowledge that any such proposals will be challenging to implement practically in crisis situations.

To summarize this section, although we have argued that the use of citizen translators can be justified in disasters, we believe that a number qualifications must be made to this practice. While there are benefits to engaging citizen translators, ethical challenges can also arise. Sometimes the advantages brought by citizen translators, such

as their familiarity with the community, can raise ethical challenges, such as with confidentiality or impartiality. For these reasons, citizen translators should be provided some level of training, both in linguistic skills and ethical decision-making. The details of this are likely to vary with the time and other resources available. Given our various experiences and knowledge of various fields, this leads us to propose a number of recommendations for such training and deployment of citizen translators.

Recommendations for training citizen translators

We have described a number of ethical and practical challenges with using citizen translators in disasters and other crises. Compared to professional translators, they may not be aware of some of the difficulties and ethical challenges with translation. Their vocabulary will likely be less extensive than a professional translator and, with less training and experience, they may be more prone to inaccuracies. However, as members of the same local community, they may (or may not) be more aware of, and sensitive to, language and cultural issues that non-local translators may be unfamiliar with. They may also have trusted relationships within the community which will facilitate communication.

Given the various advantages and disadvantages associated with citizen translators, we hold that the urgency associated with humanitarian crises leads us to recommend using citizen translators. When the alternative is that translators are not available to assist in crises, we believe that 'some' translation is better than none. In crisis situations, when communities no longer have the resources they need or are used to having, similar types of decisions are forced on them regarding healthcare, nutrition, security, etc. In disasters, people and communities are forced to make do with whatever they have available. At the same time, this does not mean that *any* form of translation is

acceptable. Having identified these issues in practice and the literature, and discussed our findings within our project team and others, we now offer a set of recommendations, particularly focused on ethical issues, to facilitate citizen translators serving local communities as well as possible during disasters. We offer this as a proposal, where the various components will need to be implemented and evaluated to ensure that the recommendations have the intended effects. These aim to ensure that citizen translators engage with an ethics of practice that is more likely to meet community translation needs in effective, safe and trusted ways.

In what follows, we first list six recommendations related to the different ethical challenges we noted above in relation to engaging citizen translators in crisis scenarios. Some of these address the specific issues noted above, while others are practical implications of introducing citizen translators. These recommendations need to be considered critically and adapted for local contexts, not prescriptively applied. After listing them, we return to develop each recommendation in greater detail.

1. Training should prepare citizen translators for emergent ethical issues in crisis situations such as maintaining neutrality, and addressing conflicts of interest and cultural differences. These will vary with each context, but people should be made aware of the fact that ethical dilemmas are likely to arise and prepared with ways of addressing them.

2. Virtue ethics provides a framework for examining ethical challenges. It includes using case studies and other narratives to highlight various virtues, trust and relationships in disasters to prepare citizen translators for the ethical complexities of their role.

3. An ethics in practice requires an analysis of context and relationships that includes consideration of cultural issues, community power

structures, gender, age, geographic location, and the multiple roles that citizen translators may have to negotiate.

4. The use of citizen translators is not intended to replace professional translators. We suggest that best practice is finding complementary roles between citizen and professional translators. Team-work should be emphasized, which ties into ways that virtue ethics provides a basis for these relationships.

5. Building capacity should include addressing the importance of self-care. Working in crises is challenging and draining. The ethical challenges can lead to moral distress, which can undermine responders' ability to help.

6. All responders and associated stakeholders (government, NGOs, faith-based groups, etc.) should be prepared so that they understand the complexities and potential of engaging citizen translators.

1. *Training for emergent ethical issues*

As we have highlighted above, several ethical issues arise when using citizen translators, including the need to negotiate multiple roles, power relations, mediating between different cultures, preserving neutrality, and others. In a crisis scenario, insufficient time may exist for in-depth or extensive training, but we believe that some briefing on potential ethical issues is possible. The examples provided earlier highlight why this should be prioritized. Such rapid training may, at least, help citizen translators become aware of potential sources of conflict or ethical challenges so that they are ready to seek additional support from others if the need arises. In addition, some advanced training for citizen translators could be added by the inclusion of an ethics module into disaster preparedness programs, so that future volunteers and others

become aware of ethical challenges and ways to address them in crises. Other stakeholders could be included in this training as it is likely that citizen translators will be interacting with other groups during crises. Such joint training may help to reveal different people's perspectives on ethical issues, and establish trust and relationships that can facilitate working together during disasters.

2. *Virtue ethics and cases studies*

Training in ethics should prepare people for the challenges in this area, especially if personal and cultural views of values, trust and relationships differ. Sometimes, simple guidelines may be sufficient to avoid problems. For example, Urbina (2018) discussed how the training provided to volunteer translators for refugees arriving in Spain in June 2018 included simple rules to help them with translation, such as using simple terminology that is more likely to be easily understood by the refugees. Throughout this process, translators were asked to be open to other cultures and values, to show respect to them, and to understand that refugees have a variety of backgrounds themselves (Urbina 2018).

Such straightforward guidelines are beneficial, but some ethical issues are more complex and require further analysis. For the reasons noted above, we believe virtue ethics provides a good framework for ethical analysis rather than codes and guidelines alone. Virtue ethics leads to considering the impact of choices on trust and personal relationships, rather than focusing on adherence to codes or regulations. This approach uses case studies to highlight ethical challenges, and means to resolving them, which engages people with the ethical decision-making skills required for real world dilemmas. Relevant case studies can be developed for various contexts, as has already been done for translation more generally (Drugan and Megone 2011).

Additionally, relevant film clips, songs or other narratives can be used to creatively engage people with ethical challenges that are more relatable and culturally adapted. Virtue ethics traditionally uses narratives in ethics education to address the interpersonal and emotional aspects of ethics and encourage development of ethical virtues (O'Mathúna 2008). Carefully chosen case studies can lead groups to have in-depth discussions about ethics, trust and relationships, and explore the potential implications of different approaches to resolving ethical dilemmas. This may lead trainees to identify alternative ways of resolving the situation that are more appropriate or acceptable for their context. Role-playing during training can also help to make the ethical challenges and their resolution more personal.

3. Cultural and community awareness

Citizen translators may relate more closely to local perspectives than non-local responders. This can be an advantage, but as noted earlier can also lead to ethical challenges. Therefore, ethics training for citizen translators should include discussions of important cultural issues. This can be difficult, especially if citizen translators are part of local power structures which they are expected to accept, but external responders may challenge. For example, a medical responder to an earthquake in Turkey struggled with how a local doctor insisted that his relatives be evacuated by helicopter first, even though this left more seriously injured people behind (Bilal et al. 2007). Other local authorities supported the doctor highlighting the cultural value placed on status and family. These decisions led to intense feelings of anger, guilt and sorrow within the responder, who came from a different region in Turkey. While advance training in cultural differences will not remove the difficulties, it can help prepare people for the challenges they may face.

4. Addressing the relationship between citizen and professional translators

A possible implication of our proposal is that citizen translators could replace professional translators. We do not agree with this, but instead suggest that both types of translators have complementary roles. In disasters and crises, when sufficient professional translators are unavailable, we believe citizen translators can assist with providing timely and accurate information to linguistically diverse groups.

Citizen translators may be the way to ensure *some* communication in a crisis, but measures should be taken to ensure that the value of the work of professional translators is not undermined. One way of doing so could be using the available professional translators as coordinators, trainers and supervisors of the citizen translators. If the only available translators are citizen translators, other measures should be taken, such as at least mentioning some of the challenges with translation and describing best practice in translation and ethics. Training coming from a virtue ethics framework could also build in discussions of humility and how it promotes the value of different people's roles and abilities, and how team-work can best assist those in greatest need.

5. Capacity building and self-care

Working proactively with communities to identify possible community translators before a disaster occurs provides a basis for capacity building in disaster risk reduction (DRR). If community members are informed about potential hazards in their given locality and trained to respond to these (from a virtue ethics standpoint) then this can benefit the community before a crisis occurs. The virtue of humility can help here, where people acknowledge their limitations, and seek rest and help for themselves so they can continue to help others.

As citizen translators will likely be part of the affected community in a crisis, it is imperative that they are equipped to practice self-care. By engaging in crisis response, citizen translators risk suffering from vicarious trauma which, in turn, could reduce their effectiveness in the field. The Turkish responder mentioned above struggled psychologically to the point of being taken from the field (Bilal et al. 2007). The term 'moral distress' refers to the psychological disturbances resulting from ethical dilemmas, and is being seen in disaster responders (Gotowiec and Cantor-Graae 2017). Marjory Bancroft (2017) surveyed interpreters to trauma survivors and reported that 73% of her respondents stated they were emotionally impacted by the interpreting they had done. She proposed training for interpreters in Trauma-Informed Interpreting which includes teaching interpreters about self-care.

In the case of refugees arriving in Spain in 2018, the selected translators were trained to avoid 'choosing sides' on migration issues and remain somewhat neutral, without showing too much empathy for the refugees (Urbina 2018). This was done with the aim of helping translators avoid getting overly personally involved and overly affected by the situation (Urbina 2018). Other disaster responders are encouraged to avail themselves of psychological assistance and provided debriefing post-mission to ensure their well-being, and training in ethics is proposed to build resilience to moral distress (Gotowiec and Cantor-Graae 2017). Similar services should be available to any translator (citizen or professional) involved in a crisis scenario (Miller et al. 2005; Splevins et al. 2010).

6. *Working with stakeholders*

As briefly noted earlier, citizen translators often will interact with other professionals and responders during disasters. Multiple stakeholders are involved in

DRR and response, including police, fire services, health agencies, international organizations, professional translation organizations and others. Citizen translators should be aware of these different services and their roles and authority, and these stakeholders should be informed about citizen translators.

In addition to sharing information on roles, involving different stakeholders in advance training can help build trust and reduce the potential for misunderstanding, as was noted earlier regarding ethics training. Other initiatives developed in different contexts for professional translators could be transposed to crisis scenarios involving citizen translators. For example, Sandra Hale (2015) reported on a series of workshops carried out to raise awareness among judges and magistrates and improve court interpreting. She concluded that the workshops were not only successful, but they led to the inclusion of interpretation sessions in conferences for magistrates, judges and tribunal members which, in turn, contributed to more dialogue between judicial officers, interpreters, interpreter trainers and educators. In another example, a detailed guide to interpreter-mediated medical consultations was provided when non-professional interpreters were used (Bischoff et al. 2009). This guide addressed issues such as working as a team, intercultural communication, confidentiality, non-verbal communication, stress, limitations and precautions, and the legal implications of such services.

Conclusion and future work

This paper presents an overview of some ethical issues derived from the involvement of citizen translators during disaster preparation and response, and how these can be incorporated into training plans. While the use of citizen translators raises ethical questions, we provide reasons why we believe this can be justified when

sufficient professional translators are not available. In non-ideal settings, we believe some translation is better than none because of the importance of information and communication in disasters. However, we also propose that training should be provided for citizen translators, and, if at all possible, support through the involvement of professional translators in complementary roles.

We believe that citizen translators should be provided training in delivering crisis-based information in timely, safe and ethically sensitive ways. We critically examine a number of ethical issues with citizen translation and propose ways to include these challenges in training for citizen translators and other stakeholders. To maximize the impact of such training, we suggest a virtue ethics approach that uses case studies and other narratives. These can engage citizen translator trainees in both rational and emotional aspects of ethical decision-making for disasters. When incorporated into training, they can help to build ethical decision-making skills for citizen translators and help mitigate the ethical challenges likely to arise.

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