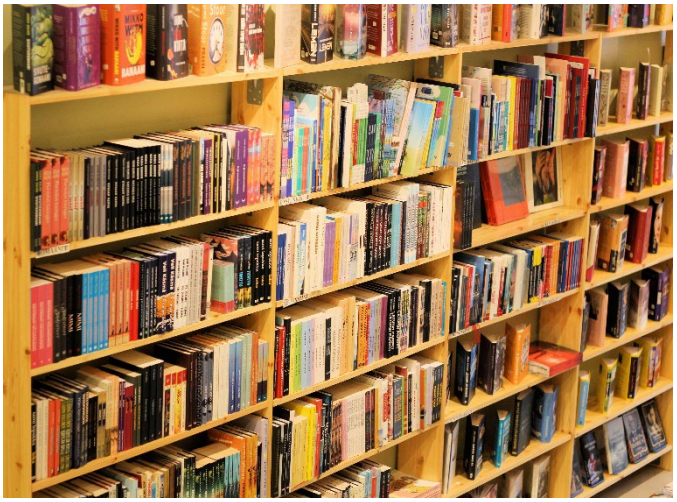
The Oulu Writers' Association's Research Project

New Tools for Promoting Book Exports – GenAI, Audiobook Samples, and Network Marketing



Picture Miida Sammale

The purpose of the project has been to identify three types of texts as tools for providing translated works of fiction: 1) To examine translations of various genres of literary texts produced using a large language model (ChatGPT 5.0) and to analyze both the weaknesses and the potential of language models in the creation of translation samples. 2) Try editing translation samples into short “audiobook samples”—auditory translation samples—using the AI-powered ElevenLabs software. 3) Produce short English-language introductory videos in a professional studio featuring a few of the authors participating in the project; these videos will be part of the promotional package.

The study focuses on translation samples—approximately 20 pages in length—used in the sale of translated literature, not complete manuscripts. The use of large language models in the translation of fiction has been a topic of discussion in the publishing industry as artificial intelligence has advanced. It has been important to examine, across various genres of fiction, what these language models are capable of and where they fall short of the required level.

Six types of text were selected for translation in the project: children’s poems, modern free-verse poetry, poetry that incorporates visual elements and prose poetry, stylistically original dialect prose, prose that blends fact and fiction, and prose that approaches drama. We wanted to translate the texts in what is known as a “translation bubble” (i.e., using an API), where the software is used separately from the main program. In this case, the information extracted from the text—not the text itself—becomes part of ChatGPT’s knowledge base.

The project employed two translators to evaluate translation quality and turnaround time; one translated from Finnish into Swedish and the other into English. The texts used were collected from volunteer members of the Oulu Writers' Association. There were no restrictions on the subject matter of the texts, but they could not have been previously published or posted online.

The Use of AI-Based Programs in Translation

In the first part of the project, we examined the use of a large language model in the translation of fiction (*Link to the website https://www.oulunkirjailijaseura.fi/yhdistys/kirjaviennin-edistamisen-uudet-tyokalut/) and concluded that a translation generated by a broad language model is not, as is, of sufficient linguistic quality; it does not conform to the structure of the target language, nor does it take the cultural context into account. And since the translator's ability to prompt the program is also more limited than in human-written text, it is difficult to produce very high-quality results. Furthermore, when using a large language model, one must bear in mind the increased energy costs resulting from frequent prompting and the heavy use of natural resources, particularly clean water. That is why, from an ecological, ethical, and economic standpoint, the work of a translator is of higher quality than the use of a broad language model.



Closing seminar at the Oulu Bookstore: Rauanjoki (left), translator Birgita Hansen, and Viivi Arela, CEO of the Helsinki Literary Agency. Photo by Anders Lundkvist.

We also examined the editing of selected translation samples to make them audible using AI-based software. The selected software was a fast and high-quality choice for text-to-speech translation. It had difficulties with the pronunciation and pausing of Finnish words, particularly when translating poetry. New features are constantly being added to software, so auditory editing, for example, is advancing by leaps and bounds. In the near future, it might be possible, for example, to

create an audio translation sample based on the translator's pronunciation, ensuring that the pronunciation is accurate and the language's intonation is correct. However, the research cannot be generalized to apply to all forms of converting text to speech, nor can we assume, for example, that this method could replace readers of entire audiobooks.

The promotional package also included a short interview video featuring selected authors. Based on the feedback (read more in the final report*), this was necessary for conveying the author's personality and the book's uniqueness.

Results and Future Outlook

Based on the findings of our study, we can recommend general guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence in the translation of literary works: The use of large language models in the translation of literary works cannot be recommended. Software development does not eliminate the need for human translators, but it can assist them in their work or help in adapting the text into another format, such as audio.

The main focus of the project has been the use of software to assist or support translation. The project has therefore conducted preliminary research on the use of AI-based software in the creation of marketing materials and, potentially, in facilitating the translator's work. Adapting a ready-made marketing package would require broader collaboration with translators and agencies—and could be a truly interesting topic for a follow-up project.

INFO:

New Tools for Promoting Book Exports – GenAI, Audiobook Samples, and Network Marketing

· Project Code: A81487 New Tools for Promoting Book Exports – GenAI, Audiobook Samples, and Network Marketing

· Implementer: Oulu Writers' Association, Project Manager Katri Rauanjoki, Executive Director Tuomo Heikkinen, Treasurer Jenny Kangasvuo, as well as translators and AI experts

· Implementation Period: 1.4.2025–31.5.2026

· Cost Estimate: 101 609 euroa· ERDF funding: 71 124 euroa

Euroopan unionin osarahoittama

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