

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: MACHINE TRANSLATION AND HUMAN CREATIVITY

SATURDAY
13 MARCH 2021

The event is curated by BCBF/BBPlus



10.00 AM

CONFERENCE OPENING: INSTITUTIONAL GREETINGS

SPEAKERS

ELENA PASOLI Exhibition Manager, Bologna Children's Book Fair
JACKS THOMAS Guest Director BolognaBookPlus
LARA HOLBLING MATKOVIC Segretaria Generale del CEATL - Consiglio europeo delle associazioni di traduttori letterari

MODERATOR

SIMONA MAMBRINI BCBF consultant

10.30 AM - 12.00 AM

KEYNOTE CONFERENCE: MACHINE TRANSLATION AND HUMAN CREATIVITY

Thanks to the latest achievements of AI and neural machine translation (MT) technologies, machine support in translation is used every day in many fields. Today, given certain conditions, MT can increase productivity in technical texts translated by humans without affecting the final quality of the product. However, it is commonly held that MT cannot compete with human translation of literary or more creative texts precisely because of the machine lack of creativity. But which are the meanings and processes of creativity involved in translating literary texts? What is creativity in the translating process and how does it relate to the "originality" of the source text? Is translating per se a creative activity?

SPEAKERS

ANTHONY PYM Translating studies scholar (University of Melbourne, University of Tarragona)
KIRSTEN MALMKJÆR Translating studies scholar (University of Leicester)

ANTHONY PYM is Distinguished Professor of Translation and Intercultural Studies at Rovira i Virgili University in Tarragona, Spain; Professor of Translation Studies at the University of Melbourne, Australia; and Extra-ordinary Professor at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. His publications include *Exploring Translation Theories*, (Routledge, 2010), *On Translator Ethics* (Benjamins 2012), *Translation Solutions for Many Languages* (Bloomsbury 2016) and *What is Translation History? A Trust-Based Approach*, with Andrea Rizzi and Birgit Lang (Palgrave 2019).

KIRSTEN MALMKJÆR is emeritus professor of translation studies at the University of Leicester. She is especially interested in translation theory – that is, in understanding the phenomenon that is translation, an interest that she has pursued throughout her academic career. In addition to teaching at Leicester, she has taught at the universities of Birmingham, Cambridge and Middlesex. Recent publications include the *Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies and Linguistics* (2018), the collection of articles, *Key Cultural Texts in Translation*, co-edited with Adriana Serban and Fransiska Louwagie (John Benjamins 2018) and *Translation and Creativity*, Routledge (2020). Forthcoming are *The Cambridge Handbook of Translation and Introducing Translation* both for Cambridge University Press. With Sabine Braun, she edits the *Cambridge Elements* series on Translation and Interpreting.

PAUSE

1.15 PM - 2.30 PM

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU USE MACHINE TRANSLATION FOR MORE CREATIVE TEXTS? MT AND TRANSLATION OF LITERARY TEXTS

The translation industry, the name frequently used to refer to all technical translation including software translation, increasingly uses MT to speed up the translation process. This is motivated by the need to reach more markets (in different languages) at a faster pace. Although research has looked at the implications of using MT in technical texts, where accuracy is paramount, and understanding concepts is the main goal, it has not prioritized the use of MT in more creative texts mainly due to the different characteristics of the source text, where the language is intended for much more than just understanding, and engaging the reader is the main goal with a view to advance culture in its wider sense.

For these reasons, the complexity of the source texts and the target audience expectations, the use of any technology is quickly dismissed as impossible. However, "literary" texts cover a wide range of styles and audiences, and we wondered what the role of MT could be in different types of literary texts, in terms of quality of the texts produced by the MT engine, but also in terms of the effect MT might have on the professional translator and the reader. Further, we wondered what made one literary translation more engaging and enjoyable than another one. In this workshop we will cover the research we have done in this area, mainly: How we trained literary-specific MT systems, and how to assess these systems; the result of post-editing MT when translating literary texts; the effects on creativity in translation when professional translators used MT; the readers' engagement and enjoyment with different translation modalities, including MT; the use of MT for second language acquisition through fiction: bilingual books.

For these experiments, we have used different genres and languages. So far, we have dealt with fiction (in different styles) and the English-Catalan and English-Dutch language combinations. We feel, however, that most of our methods are genre and language independent.

Language combination: English/Spanish/Catalan

SPEAKERS

ANA GUERBEROF (CREAMT project -UE),
ANTONIO TORAL (University of Groningen)

MODERATOR

SIMONA MAMBRINI BCBF consultant

ANA GUERBEROF-ARENAS is a Marie Skłodowska Curie Research Fellow at University of Groningen. Her project (CREAMT) looks at the impact of MT on translation creativity and the reader's experience in the context of literary texts. Ana is also a Senior Lecturer in Translation and Multimodal Technologies at University of Surrey (UK) where she is a member of the Centre for Translation Studies. She has worked more than twenty years in the translation/localization industry in roles that ranged from translator to operations manager. She has authored refereed articles and book chapters on MT post-editing productivity, quality and experience; pre-editing and post-editing; reading comprehension of MT output; translator training and creativity and reading experience with different translation modalities.

ANTONIO TORAL is Assistant Professor in Language Technology at the University of Groningen. He holds a PhD in Computational Linguistics from the University of Alicante and has been researching in the field of Machine Translation (MT) since 2010. His research interests include the application of MT to literary texts, MT for under-resourced languages and the computational analysis of translations produced by machines and humans. He coordinated the Abu-MaTran project, which was flagged by the European Commission as a success story. Recently he has won the best paper award at MT Summit 2019 for his work on post-edits.

2.45 PM - 4.00 PM

SECOND-CHANCES: COMPARING REVISION AND POST-EDITING

Until a few years ago, the translation and revision of a literary text was considered an exclusively human activity, mainly due to the creativity, linguistic sensitivity and stylistic skills required. Recently, neural machine translation has shown that it can also deal with texts of a different kind. Traditional revision could therefore be paralleled to a post-editing carried out on literary texts first translated using a machine translation system. New and complex challenges thus emerge for the post-editing of literary works, different from those usually associated with traditional revision.

With the aim of proposing a constructive comparison between revising and post-editing, in order to grasp their specificities and strengths in a perspective of "positive" contamination, the workshop will discuss the What, the Where, the When, the How, the Who and the Why of both activities, and then proceed to a contrastive analysis of different renditions in Italian (professional translation to be revised and neural machine translation outputs to be post-edited) of a children's/young adult fiction book in English. A number of examples will be analysed, providing the basis for reflecting on issues such as the variety and variability of the output in terms of creativity and quality; the presence of recurring revision/post-editing needs; and the degree of greater/lower freedom and responsibility in the choices of intervention on the text.

Language combination: English/Italian

SPEAKERS

FEDERICO GASPARI (University for Foreigners "Dante Alighieri", Reggio Calabria)
GIOVANNA SCOCCHERA Literary translator and independent scholar

FEDERICO GASPARI teaches English language and specialised translation at the Università per Stranieri "Dante Alighieri" in Reggio Calabria, where he is director of the Centro Linguistico d'Ateneo, and collaborates with the ADAPT Centre of Dublin City University on international research projects on translation technologies. After graduating in translation from the University of Bologna (Forlì campus), he obtained a PhD in machine translation from the University of Manchester. He has held teaching and research positions at the Universities of Manchester, Salford, Bologna and Macerata. His main teaching and research interests are in machine translation (quality assessment, post-editing, machine translation used by professional translators as a productivity tool), corpus linguistics, descriptive and linguistic variation of English, and applied Translation studies.

GIOVANNA SCOCCHERA has been a literary translator from English for over twenty years. In addition to translating, she revises other people's translations and conducts translation and revision workshops. In 2015 she obtained a PhD in Translation, Interpretation and Interculturality from the School of Languages and Literatures, Translation and Interpretation of Bologna (Forlì campus) and published her research work on editorial revision *La revisione della traduzione editoriale dall'inglese all'italiano. Ricerca, professione, formazione*, Aracne: Rome (2017). In 2018 she was awarded the Nini Agosti Castellani prize for her translation of C.E. Morgan's *The Sport of Kings* (Einaudi).

16.15 PM - 17.30 PM

"MAY THE ODDS BE EVER IN YOUR FAVOUR": MACHINE TRANSLATION, FRIEND OR FOE?

Thanks to recent developments in artificial intelligence, machine translation has achieved very high standards, approaching, according to some, human parity. These results are not however shared across all language pairs and text types. In this workshop we shall first of all review the state of the art in neural machine translation, particularly as concerns the English/Italian language pair and creative translation (e.g. of narrative texts, subtitles etc.). In the second part, participants will carry out a guided comparative evaluation of the output of several machine translation systems, analysing more or less adequate choices. The hands-on session uses Suzanne Collins' *Mockingjay* (volume 3 in the *Hunger Games* saga) as a case in point.

Language combination: English/Italian

SPEAKERS

SILVIA BERNARDINI (University of Bologna)

ESTER DOLEI PhD student (University of Bologna)

FEDERICO GARCEA Research fellow (University of Bologna)

CLAUDIA LECCI (University of Bologna)

SILVIA BERNARDINI is professor of English linguistics and translation, and Dean of the Department of Interpreting and Translation – DIT – University of Bologna. Her research interests are in the areas of corpus linguistics, technology for translation, and translator education.

ESTER DOLEI, PhD student at the Department of Interpreting and Translation – DIT – University of Bologna. Her research interests focus on neural machine translation systems and their application in the business world.

FEDERICO GARCEA is a research fellow at the Department of Interpreting and Translation – DIT – University of Bologna. His research interests are in the areas of machine translation and computational linguistics applied to literary and artistic content. He previously worked as development manager for the Translator team at Microsoft Research.

CLAUDIA LECCI graduated in Specialized Translation and Translation for the Publishing Industry at the Advanced School of Modern Languages for Interpreters and Translators (now Department of Interpreting and Translation – DIT – University of Bologna). She currently coordinates the modules "Computer-Assisted Translation & Web Localization" and "Machine Translation & Post-Editing" of the MA in Specialized Translation and "Methods and Technologies for Interpreting" of the MA in Interpreting. She is an SDL Trados Authorized Trainer for SDL Trados Studio and SDL MultiTerm 2021.

5.45 PM - 7.00 PM

DECISION-MAKING IN LITERARY TRANSLATION: COGNITIVE PROCESSES INVOLVED IN TRANSLATING LITERATURE AND IN POST-EDITING A MACHINE-PRODUCED TRANSLATION

With recent advances in machine translation and the ready availability of programs like Google Translate or DeepL the use of machines for the translation of literature, be it for adults or for children, may seem to be just around the corner. Depending on the type of literature, we may expect a shift away from translation to post-editing work in the medium term. In this workshop, we will look at how literary translation differs from post-editing, and how the different cognitive processes involved impact the final target texts. In the first part of the workshop, I will present some findings from my research that give us insight into the translation process as it happens and the black box of the translator's and post-editor's mind. In the second part, the participants will be invited to actively engage in post-editing some examples taken from machine-translated versions of books for children.

Language combination: English/German

The presentation will be held in English, the working languages in the second part will be English and German.

SPEAKERS

WALTRAUD KOLB (University of Vienna)

WALTRAUD KOLB is Assistant Professor of Literary Translation at the Center for Translation Studies at the University of Vienna. She studied translation (English, French, Portuguese/German) and holds a PhD in comparative literature. One focus of her research is on literary translation processes and machine translation in the literary field. She is also a professional translator and a member of the executive board of the Austrian Association of Literary Translators.