



Translation Spaces Special Issue

Volume 14, Issue 1 (online first from 2023; print issue 2025)

Call for Abstracts

Title:

Is machine translation translation? Exploring conceptualizations of translation in a digitally saturated world.

Guest editors

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Overview

Any contemporary investigation of advances in translation must surely take into account the rise of machine translation (MT), acknowledging improvements in its quality and the many worthy causes it can serve (Nurminen and Koponen 2020). But irenic engagement with the technology does not have to be uncritical, and alongside a growing number of empirical investigations of translation workflows that use MT, translation studies scholars have also begun to interrogate its ethical basis (Kenny, Moorkens and do Carmo 2020). Some such studies (e.g. do Carmo 2020) touch upon the very definition of translation, its relationship to post-editing, and the material consequences for professional translators of industry's sometimes self-serving construal of these activities. But there are still only rare explorations of how we in translation studies, by embracing MT, are changing our own understanding of translation. And studies that reflect on how, by integrating MT into translation studies, we may be reconfiguring our field of inquiry, are even rarer.

Against this backdrop, this special issue aims to (re-)examine the field of translation studies and its object of inquiry, in a context in which translation could be conceived of as taking many forms, including forms that culminate in readers accessing raw machine outputs. We also wish to generate debate on the effects of the full integration of MT, and related activities such as post-editing, into translation studies as a multidiscipline, and to invite reflection on whether incorporating MT represents an advance for the discipline or an impoverishment (if we think MT constitutes a reduction of translation to automatable transfer). Ultimately, we seek to pose a question that goes to the heart of the discipline: could MT be the straw that breaks translation studies' back, under the weight of the ongoing import of knowledge from outside, or could MT be a golden opportunity for translation studies to reveal the value of the knowledge it has already constructed and continues to construct on its object of study?

Potential questions to be addressed in the special issue

This special issue seeks to build on the dialogue established at the panel entitled “Is machine translation translation?” convened as part of the EST2022 conference in Oslo in June 2022. Contributions that invoke empirical evidence are welcome, but potential contributors are reminded that the special issue has, first and foremost, a conceptual focus.

Potential contributions could focus on any of the following non-exclusive list of topics:

- Specialist and non-specialist understandings of translation/machine translation.
- Humanist and post-humanist views of translation/machine translation.
- Authenticity, legitimacy and identity in translation/machine translation.
- The presentation and representation of translation/machine translation.
- Existing theoretical frameworks in translation studies and machine translation.
- Translation/machine translation and 4EA cognition.
- Translation/machine translation and terminological flux.
- Metaphors of translation/machine translation.
- Metalanguage in translation/machine translation.
- Economic construals of translation/machine translation.
- Humans and machines in translation workflows and workforces.
- Agency in translation/machine translation.

Abstracts (500 words) should be submitted by email to all three editors at f.docarmo@surrey.ac.uk, dorothy.kenny@dcu.ie and mary.nurminen@tuni.fi with **Translation Spaces 14(1)** in the subject field.

Indicative Timeline

30 October 2022	call for abstracts
30 November 2022	deadline for submission of 500-word abstracts
15 December 2022	decision on abstracts communicated to authors by guest editors
15 April 2023	submission of full articles for double-blind peer review ¹
15 June 2023	reviewers' feedback and decision returned to authors
30 August 2023	revised versions of accepted articles due
30 October 2023 onwards	online first articles published
2025	print issue published

¹ Articles should be no more than **7,500 words** long (references included) and should follow the journal's house style. Full instructions for authors can be found on the journal website. Articles are to be submitted via Editorial Manager (<https://www.editorialmanager.com/ts/default.aspx>), choosing the option Special Issue Article.

References

do Carmo, Félix (2020) 'Time is Money' and the Value of Translation. In Joss Moorkens, Dorothy Kenny and Félix do Carmo (eds) (2020) Fair MT: Towards ethical, sustainable Machine Translation. Special Issue of Translation Spaces 9(1): 35-57.

Kenny, Dorothy, Joss Moorkens and Félix do Carmo (2020) 'Introduction', Fair MT: Towards ethical, sustainable Machine Translation, Special Issue of Translation Spaces 9(1): 1-11.

Nurminen, Mary and Marit Koponen (2020) Machine translation and fair access to information. In Joss Moorkens, Dorothy Kenny and Félix do Carmo (eds) (2020) Fair MT: Towards ethical, sustainable Machine Translation. Special Issue of Translation Spaces 9(1): 150-169.