

**Massey, Gary, Elsa Huertas-Barros and David Katan (eds) (2023). *Human Translator in the 2020s*. Abingdon & New York: Routledge, pp. 149, hardback \$201.60. ISBN 9781032113142 (hardback).**

In our technology-empowered society, evidence reveals that the traditional boundaries of the language service professions have extended beyond a mere interlingual transcoding of content and style (ISO 18587, 2017). Due to shifts in the professional landscape observable in diverse job, role, and task profiles, human translators are increasingly required to perform core services in the upstream (e.g., tendering procedures, request handling, customer relations, time and budget management) and in the downstream (e.g., translation delivery, quality assurance, and translation resources maintenance) of the workflow. The shifting professional landscape calls for redefining what professional work entails from a multi-stakeholder perspective and what is expected of human translators in terms of formal education and continuous professional development. The interdisciplinary volume analysed here adopts a forward-looking perspective and offers a comprehensive review of innovative developments in technology-assisted and human-centred language translation applications. This collective volume invites readers to reflect on human values in the oceanic wave of technology, communication, and human-machine interactions.

There is a growing body of literature on how language and translation professionals have evolved over time (Gouadec, 2010, p. 123; Angelone *et al.*, 2020; O'Hagan, 2020; Yi, 2023). The volume under review, integrated in the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies yearbook series, originated from the conference themed Living Translation - People, Processes, Products, held in September 2019 in South Africa. The scholars and panellists present at the conference observed and foresaw a series of exciting innovations in technology-assisted translation applications and offered insightful contributions highlighting the value of human translators in the next decade.

The focus of this volume is to raise awareness of the ways in which advances in assistive technology are reshaping the landscape of the language industry, which has been traditionally dominated by human translators. Taking into account recent change in the evolving socio-economic, geopolitical, ethical, and demographic spheres, the book points to consistent and persistent implications that recent trends of artificial intelligence, machine translation, digitalisation, and automation applications have for the translation profession and for language mediation. From a user-centric and inclusive service perspective, the book pools together collective wisdom from experts with considerable knowledge and experience. The topics covered by the book include localisation, transcreation, multimodal and audiovisual translation, user-centred translation, accessible barrier-free communication, revision, pre-editing, post-editing, terminological services, linguistic, intercultural mediation, public service translation,



and language and communication consultancy.

The book consists of eight chapters, each dealing with specific topics related to intelligent technologies and translation. The majority of the chapters elaborate on the usefulness of technological tools and resources that human translators can resort to in order to carry out the responsibilities linked to their roles and on how these technologies are transforming the knowledge, skills, attributes, and tasks that are demanded of them.

In Chapter 1, do Carmo and Moorkens contribute to reflection within Translation Studies by examining the evolving environment surrounding translation and highlighting some wide-scale changes brought by technological advances. In Chapter 2, Sánchez Castany reviews the development of translation technology training in undergraduate translation and interpreting programmes in Spain. Drawing on the mixed-methods analysis of 994 syllabi of T&I modules, the author sheds light on further possibilities of integrated curriculum design through co-teaching and co-learning activities in practical translation modules. In Chapter 3, Robert Ureel and Schrijver delve into several competence models and compare similarities and differences in relation to translation, revision, and post-editing competence. In Chapter 4, Angelone explores potential avenues to integrate adaptive expertise within existing translation competence models, for which a series of learning activities are recommended to facilitate skill acquisition. In Chapter 5, Katan reconceptualises the role of human translators as adaptive experts that possess the unique creativity to effectively shape a meaningful narrative for a particular readership in a certain context. In Chapter 6, drawing on surveys of professional translators, translator trainers, and students on their perceptions of translation and creativity, Vine and Huertas Barros propose a future-proof pedagogical approach to rebrand translation to an expanded capacity beyond interlingual communication. In Chapter 7, drawing on the descriptive analysis of an undergraduate transcreation training initiative, Morón argues for the importance of creativity in human translator training, as creative techniques can provide added value to the services offered in the language industry. In Chapter 8, drawing on a case study focusing on administrative forms, Ruiz-Cortés proposes a service-oriented approach to the understanding of the evolving role of human translators as plain text designers in official or institutional communication.

All these chapters share an interest in treating human translators as adaptive experts who have received adequate training through formal degree-level education or professional development modules.

Drawing on her prior experience, the reviewer can resonate with many concerns shared by contributors to this volume. On the one hand, from an organisational or institutional staff's perspective, these concerns relate directly to the job replacement rates in professional language services brought about by technological developments.



These concerns also point to a series of ripple effects resulting from technological change in the landscape of the language industries, particularly accelerated by the disruptive pandemic, from staff downsizing and cuts in hiring budgets to reduced job stability and security for human translators.

On the other hand, from a certified practitioner's perspective, these reasonable concerns reflect the shifting perceptions about the value of human service to some degree. Today's practitioners are better educated than previous generations when they first enter the professional realm. Based on labour participation reports released by government labour bureaus around the world, entry-level positions in the language industries are increasingly taken up by university graduates who have spent at least four years of formal training in language-related disciplines. There are also numerous cases in which a more advanced degree is required for institutional settings, normally in the form of postgraduate diplomas or research experience, additional certification requirements or specialist knowledge in a specific domain that aligns with the interests of the recruiting organisation. Thanks to advances towards professionalisation, the job market is becoming more competitive, and the requirements for career opportunities in the language sector are increasing. For graduate job seekers, the average time, money, energy, and resources spent to acquire job-ready knowledge and skills through formal education, specialised training, and certification increase accordingly. The concept of lifelong learning thus emerges as a response to technological developments, in a context where job security is diminishing and individual career development is becoming less linear.

The edited volume captures the current trends in technology-assisted translation in the 2020s. Drawing on a wealth of empirical data, the book's contribution is mainly three-fold. Firstly, it enhances our understanding of developments in the contemporary language industry. In the technology-accelerated 21st century, how can our human translators assert their place in the language industry immersed in media hype around machine translation, and in what ways can they experiment with AI options that are said to be able to replace human translators and interpreters as resourceful tools to facilitate human translators in accomplishing their assignments? Ethics-minded human translators can shape the optimisation of these advanced technological tools for the greater good. The second contribution lies in the book's focus on the cross-fertilisation of specialised translation activities with valuable inputs from experts from various disciplines. Situated in the intersection of role-based ethics and technology-ignited social change, the book brings together collective wisdom from 10 contributors with considerable knowledge and extensive expertise in legal translation, public service interpreting, translator and interpreter education and specialised training, machine translation, and transcreation. The volume analysed here enriches our understanding of the role of technology for specialised translation and interpreting activities. Last but by no means least, the book highlights the importance of practice-informed research for future pedagogical and professional activities. The book takes a symbiotic approach



and provides a holistic reflection on various multi-faceted challenges and difficulties that impact high-stake specialised T&I practice in the professional realm.

The volume also invites readers to reflect on three main aspects of professional development: intra-professional, interprofessional, and para-professional. With respect to the intra-professional aspect, the ability to align with the strategic and operational goals of clients or organisations has become increasingly central to the evolving role of the human translator, either as a professional with a permanent position in a company or working as a freelancer for different clients. This added layer of complexity requires human translators to be prepared for self-learning in order to perform their duties with flexibility, adaptability and using on-demand skills sets in an increasingly diversified professional landscape. With regard to the interprofessional aspect, the mismatch between what suitable job candidates can reasonably offer and what the organisation or individuals expects from them requires measures to reconcile the interests of all stakeholders. In relation to the para-professional aspect, the presence of untrained bilinguals or volunteer amateur translators has invited highly trained translators to rethink their niche positions in certain market segments and to re-evaluate how to ensure professional development throughout their career.

In summary, this interdisciplinary book adopts a multi-stakeholder perspective and makes sensible and realistic recommendations on the intra-professional and inter-professional dimensions. However, it could be more insightful if the book also drew on experiences and practices related to other languages and beyond Europe and North America. With major merits and this minor limitation, the book is an informative reference for students, scholars, researchers, and interested readers in translation technology, specialised translation, human resources management, human-centred application design, and beyond.

## References

Angelone, E., Ehrensberger-Dow, M., & Massey, G. (eds.) (2020). *The Bloomsbury Companion to Language Industry Studies*. Bloomsbury. 10.5040/9781350024960

Gouadec, D. (2010). *Translation as a Profession*. John Benjamins.

ISO 18587 (2017). Translation Services – Post-editing of Machine Translation Output – Requirements. International Organization for Standardization.

O'Hagan, M. (ed.) (2020). *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Technology*. Routledge. 10.4324/9781315311258

Yi, R. (2023). The promise of linguistic equity for migrants in Australian courtrooms: a cross-disciplinary perspective. *Australian Journal of Human Rights*, 29(1), 174-180. 10.1080/1323238X.2023.2232171



**Ran Yi**  
**The University of New South Wales**  
E-mail: [ran.yi@unsw.edu.au](mailto:ran.yi@unsw.edu.au)

