

Segura Giménez, D. (2019). Dorothy Kenny (ed). Human Issues in Translation Technology. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 31, 232-234. <https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2019.842>

This article is publish under a *Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International* (CC BY):
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>



© Daniel Segura Giménez, 2019

Dorothy, Kenny (ed.) (2017). *Human Issues in Translation Technology*. London/New York: Routledge, pp. 178, £75.00 (hardback). ISBN 978 1138123298.

Since their invention, a lot has been researched and published about translation technologies (TT). However, a topic that has not been explored as much is the effects these technologies have on the user and the perception the translation professionals have about them. Science and Technology Studies (STS) is the field of study that analyzes the relation between scientific innovation and society. According to the editor's introduction, enough good-quality, academic literature applying STS methodology to TT remains to be published. With that in mind, the main goal of *Human Issues in Translation Technology* is contributing to filling that gap.

In her introduction, Dorothy Kenny explains the concept of 'technostructuralism', one of the four perspectives on innovation proposed by Tehranian (1990), which claims that new technologies' impact on society depends on the institutions or social forces that create and exploit them. Therefore, technology does not necessarily drive or prevent social progress by itself, but has the potential to do both. Kenny admits that she and most of the collaborating authors would agree with this opinion and this is reflected in the opinions portrayed throughout the book.

Human Issues in Translation Technology is a collection of eight articles that can be divided into two parts. The first four chapters are dedicated to the present state of TT and the current changes the profession is experiencing. The last four chapters shift focus to the future of translation and the probable challenges that translators might have to face in the next years. The reader will appreciate the empirical approach applied by the authors, supporting their theories and arguments with results from experiments or questionnaires.

In chapter 1, "Love letters or hate mail?", Kaisa Koskinen and Minna Ruokonen ask volunteer translators to write a love letter to their favorite translation software or an angry mail to their most hated one expressing their feelings about their 'relationship'. The researchers found that translation professionals are not necessarily reluctant to the implementation of new technology and that there is not a generational gap that makes young people more keen on these innovations.

In chapter 2, "Deconstructing translation crowdsourcing with the case of a Facebook initiative: A translation network of engineered autonomy and trust?", Minako O'Hagan comments on the issue of crowdsourced translation (a translation made using a network of volunteers). To do this, she takes as an example Dombek's (2014) PhD research about Facebook's translation to Polish using crowdsourcing platforms.

Chapter 3, “I can’t get no satisfaction! Should we blame translation technologies or shifting business practices?” by Matthieu LeBlanc, explores how translation memory software affects translators’ enjoyment and satisfaction. Subjects from three Canadian translation service providers were interviewed and observed. From those interviews LeBlanc concludes that, although TM indeed increases productivity, it does not necessarily improve text quality and is often frustrating for the translators.

In chapter 4, “How do translators use web resources? Evidence from the performance of English-Chinese translators”, Vincent Wang and Lily Lim analyze a small exercise proposed to a number of Chinese translators, which consisted in translating a short text. This research shows an evident difference between younger and older translators regarding the use of internet resources.

Chapter 5, “Translators’ needs and preferences in the design of specialized termino-lexicographic tools” by Alejandro García-Aragón and Clara Inés López-Rodríguez, reports the results of an online questionnaire asking the participants about their opinion on terminological and lexicographic tools. The research was made based on previous experience (López-Rodríguez *et al.* 2012) from similar investigations. The data extracted from the research was used to develop MeteoTrad, an online specialized dictionary.

The interest in users’ opinions regarding TT is also present in Chapter 6, “Assessing user interface needs of post-editors of machine translation”. Here, Joss Moorkens and Sharon O’Brien stress the significance of a customizable user interface when post-editing machine translations, according to a survey including data from 231 professionals and data from several personal interviews. The authors also noticed a general lack of trust in machine translation and frustration from doing repetitive tasks such as doing the same post-edits multiple times.

In Chapter 7, “Issues in human and automatic translation quality assessment”, Stephen Doherty brings up the topic of translation quality evaluation and how it can be done either by humans or automatically. The author considers the good and bad points of both methods and comments on the general perceptions translators and scholars have about them.

In Chapter 8, Alina Secară concludes the book with the chapter “*Cn U read ths?* The reception of txt language in subtitling”, a study inspired by the nonstandard spelling seen in amateur subtitles done by crowdsourcing networks and fansubs. The reception of the aforementioned subtitles by the public was tested using eye-tracking technology and the results seem to prove that ‘txt spelling’ made the subtitles more difficult to read.

Until good research on TT using STS methodology is published, *Human Issues in Translation Technology* remains one of the few books exploring

technological impact on translation professionals and possible future consequences of emerging technologies.

References

- **Dombek, Magdalena** (2014). *A Study into the Motivations of Internet Users Contributing to Translation Crowdsourcing: The Case of Polish Facebook User-Translators*. PhD thesis. Dublin City University.
- **López Rodríguez, Clara Inés, Buendía Castro, Míriam and Alejandro García Aragón** (2012). "User Needs to the Test: Evaluating a Terminological Knowledge Base on the Environment by Trainee Translators." *Journal of Specialised Translation* 18, 57-76.
- **Tehrani, Majid** (1990). *Technologies of Power*. New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Daniel Segura Giménez
Autonomous University of Barcelona
daniel.segura@uab.cat