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Chan, Sin-wai (2017). *The Future of Translation Technology. Towards a World without Babel*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 316, £137.99/139.95€. ISBN-13: 978-1138842045.

The book is the first title in the Routledge series on translation technology. It is conceived as a comprehensive compendium on the development of mainly computer-assisted translation (CAT) technology in the last fifty years. Chan has published numerous works on this topic, including contributing to and editing *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Technology* (2015). Here he explores the nature of computer-aided and machine translation (MT), which are defined as two major elements of translation technology, and he anticipates emerging trends, possibly leading to the elimination of all language barriers, as symbolised by the Tower of Babel.

The publication starts with a historical overview of the progress in translation technology from 1967 to 2014. Chan refers to classical publications in Translation Studies and recent resources, offering an exhaustive overview of existing CAT tools and their functions. He finishes with a reflection on the future of translation technology.

One might expect the overview of MT systems to be similarly detailed, yet the choice is limited to those that are linked to CAT systems. Hence, the book leaves the expectations awoken by the title unfulfilled, as MT, particularly fully automated MT, is not being given the proper attention that it deserves. Maybe the primary focus on CAT systems is a result of Chan's conviction that most translation systems rely on human participation to a certain extent anyway or that a precise differentiation between CAT and MT is difficult?

The broad scope and practical examples make this an excellent handbook for students or translators wishing to structure their knowledge. However, experts may sense a lack of deeper analysis. The ambitious task of describing all current trends all over the world has led the author to make some debatable statements. Thanks to computer-aided systems, he says, "translation quality assurance is performed quickly. The criteria of translation quality are the same as human translation" (102). But is it really the same for machine and post-edited translation?

Chan has prepared a thorough overview of almost 50 free and paid CAT systems. However, some of the reviews are of limited scope, like that of Esperantilo TM. More attention is given to influential tools such as MemoQ. One has the impression that the organising principle of the book was enumerating as many systems as possible instead of selecting a few and comparing them to each other. It would be interesting to hear the author's opinion on the tools instead of reading about the technicalities or recent updates, as such elements are part of software manuals and are subject

to change. For instance, the reference to MemoQ Server 2014 (189) is no longer true, as a new version was released in 2017.

The book has multiple small subchapters that are not outlined in the table of contents, which makes it difficult to find the desired information quickly. The historical overview at the beginning is a running text without subchapters, and the tool descriptions are grouped according to countries and years, which makes it hard to follow the development of a particular translation system from beginning to end.

The final chapter on the future of translation technology has interesting things to say about current trends in translation in general. Some conclusions may come across as precocious (e.g. the arrival of fully automated high quality MT, 272). However, Chan describes significant changes that technology has brought to Translation Studies and that we now take for granted, without even noticing how the translator's profession has benefited from them.

Chan correctly notes that the majority of translations are not literary or unique any more but rather practical, so that the use of translation technology has become indispensable. He goes even further and claims that "technology has changed the texts we translate" (263). Chan's holistic approach and personal input make the last chapter particularly insightful. However, general remarks, such as that MT will soon become fully automated (272) or "dreams may come true one day" (275), somewhat undermine the scientific value of his arguments. Moreover, the publication presents a vision of a world without Babel but devotes no attention to neural machine translation or AI, which are the driving forces of progress in translation technology. Computer-aided translation is a good example of cooperation between computers and human translators but it is not able to lift all language barriers by making the translation processes immediate or self-perpetuating.

It was perhaps somewhat ambitious to expect a single publication of just over 300 pages to combine a macroscopic and microscopic approach. Still, it is crucial that translation professionals reflect critically and open-mindedly on technology and its impact on Translation Studies, as both will definitely be increasingly intertwined in the future.

Reference

Chan, Sin-wai (ed.) (2015). *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Technology*. Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Anna Maria Władyka-Leittretter
University of Leipzig

E-mail: amwl-sprachen@online.de