



Technical translation and translation's technicalities?

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Traductologie de plein champ (Field-grown translation studies), ninth edition

International conference

Geneva	Saturday, 10 September 2022
Paris	Saturday, 10 December 2022
Brussels	Saturday, 25 March 2023

As Bruno Latour (2010) has shown, technology is everywhere in society. What would we do without its omnipresent tools, objects, processes and applications? Yet despite technology's ubiquitous nature, we rarely see it as such. Even industrial architecture leads us to reflect more on design than to see it as an extension – stretching back millennia – of what the human hand is capable of producing. Technology, like translation, is one of the essential, but discreet cogs in the functioning of society. Too discreet, perhaps.

The encounter between translation and technology, between an invisibility and a transparency, deserves an in-depth exploration by translation studies. Technology, like translation, is not as easy to grasp as it appears on the surface. There is nothing natural about either of them: for both, their processes need to be viewed at a distance in order to better grasp them and potentially act on them. This is what *Traductologie de plein champ* has been striving to do, in various areas of study, since its creation in 2007. And this will also be the aim of our conference's ninth edition.

Paradoxically, although the translation market has relied heavily on pragmatic translation since its inception, translation studies has only recently begun to focus on technical translation, which we will define here in the narrow sense of the translation of texts concerning “the application of science [and] scientific or theoretical knowledge for practical use and industrial or economic production” (translated



from *Trésor de la langue française*). The first authors who dealt with technical translation and specialized languages (Maillot in 1969, Wimmer in 1982, Kocourek in 1991, and Lerat in 1995) laid the groundwork for theorization. Thereafter, approaches have remained essentially practice-oriented: Marquant (2005), Byrne (2010), Lagarde (2009) and Gile (2011).

If there is such a thing as technical translation, what role does technology play in terms of the skills needed and how it is taught? And, first of all, how should technical translation be defined? Should it be distinguished from specific translation? Is it a question of specialized language, or of text typology (think of FASP or professional-based fiction and its translation)? How does it intersect and mingle with other fields, including what is sometimes called *general translation*, or *journalistic translation*? Behind these questions lies the issue of translator specialization. Specialized translators, or translation specialists? It is an ancient debate, but one that is still relevant today. For example, does the perspective of translation studies scholars on this subject correspond to choices made by translation services when allocating their resources?

The question of boundaries also arises: between words and terms, between terminologization and determinologization, between denotation and connotation in a specialized text. Should the concept of a specialized language, which has been defined and redefined, give way to that of specialized language use, a sociolect? Should we extend this research, as proposed by Mejri (2011), to phraseology, and thus show that a specialized text is a blend of words and terms, within the specialty area?

Another question worth addressing touches on models, skills and collaboration. Should a translation prioritize “correct” language usage or how it is used in the profession? Should we rely primarily on informal discussion groups and forums that bring together translators and domain specialists, or on terminology databases? Who sets the standards?

Finally, what are the cultural ingredients of technical translation? It would be hard to ignore the knowledge amassed by the translation studies field and by translation professionals, both of which are backed up by a broad general knowledge. It is sometimes assumed that mastering technology (translation tools, in particular) is sufficient to ensure good practice. But genuflecting to the technical side alone would be a mistake.

Call for papers

The eighth edition of *Traductologie de plein champ*, which focused on history (proceedings to be published in spring 2022 in *Atelier de traduction*, no. 37: <https://atelierdetraduction.usv.ro/archives/>), situated the topic within a broad epistemological perspective. Starting from a diachronic view, it contextualized the act of translating in a sociological and even anthropological environment.

This year’s conference will be an opportunity to take stock of technical translation – how it has evolved, how it is taught, and its own particular features – by examining its many facets and exploring new angles.



The issues we seek to address include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- the role of technical translation in the curriculum – a paradigm for pragmatic translation in general, or a way to turn students off to a service-oriented society?
- the place of language diversity, and therefore of terminology planning
- modes of access to specialized knowledge: corpus or specialization?
- the relationship to general knowledge
- (statistical) machine translation as a superficial relationship, as opposed to a deep understanding of the mechanisms involved
- reflections on the production of originals
- post-editing: how can biases created by new tools be remedied?
- the evolution of essential skills as technology advances
- the contributions of discourse analysis, terminology and phraseology
- the relationship between visuals and writing.

This ninth edition of *Traductologie de plein champ* will be an opportunity to revisit various aspects of technical translation and to explore new perspectives.

Practical information

This year's proceedings will be organized in the same way as previous editions of *Traductologie de plein champ* – with three distinct but coordinated days:

- Geneva – Saturday, 10 September 2022
- Paris – Saturday, 10 December 2022
- Brussels – Saturday, 25 March 2023

By holding the conference sessions in three different cities, we aim to create a cumulative effect, with the second and third sessions building on the insights of the previous proceedings.

Proposals (maximum 500 words) in French or English, the official conference languages, should be submitted no later than **30 April 2022**. Please indicate your preferences and availability regarding the conference dates. Proposals should be sent to the following three email addresses:

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Nicolas Froeliger: nicolas.froeliger@u-paris.fr

Mathilde Fontanet: mathilde.fontanet@unige.ch



You will receive an answer during the month of May 2022. The program for the three days will then be drawn up by the conference organizers.

Following a peer review, select papers from the conference will be published.

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