



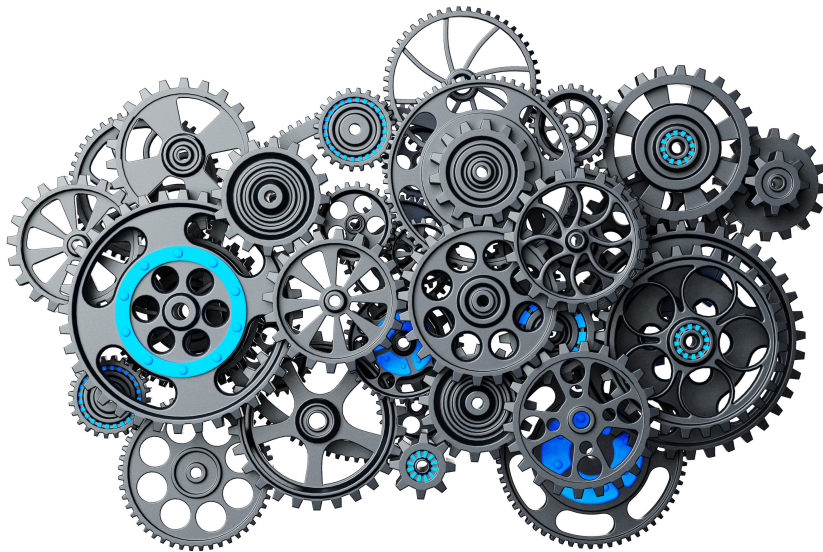
Research seminar organized by the IILP-UJI

Monday 15 May 2023 at 17:00 CEST

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## Ethics and sustainability in machine translation



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Speaker: Joos Moorkens, Dublin City University  
Respondent: Vicent Montalt, IILP Universitat Jaume I

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Neural machine translation (MT) can facilitate communication in a way that surpasses previous MT paradigms, but there are also consequences of its use. As with the

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development of any technology, MT is not ethically neutral, but rather reflects the values of those behind its development. This is a particularly important consideration when using technology that is predictive.

Conventional notions of validity and reliability are based on testable and consistent results, yet these cannot apply to machine learning, and thus considerations regarding reliability tend to be overlooked. Well-designed products are expected to be almost invisible, an extension of the user, but again this is not possible with unpredictable technologies such as MT (among other products based on large language models). This presentation reflects on ethical issues around MT, beginning with data gathering and reuse and looking at how MT fits with the values and codes of the translator.

The computing power requirements of neural networks also behoves us to think about issues of environmental as well as social sustainability related to the deployment of MT. Rather than promoting an approach that involves following a set of instructions to implement a technology unthinkingly, contemporary thinking in this area highlights the importance of a conscious decision-making process when designing a data-driven MT workflow.

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[Joss Moorkens](#) is an Associate Professor at the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies in Dublin City University (DCU), and leads the Transforming Digital Content challenge at the ADAPT Centre, an Irish research centre focusing on AI-driven digital content technology. He is a member of DCU's Institute of Ethics and Centre for Translation and Textual Studies, and has authored or coauthored over 50 journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers on translation technology, machine translation post-editing, user evaluation of machine translation, translator, precarity,

and translation ethics. He is General Coeditor of the journal Translation Spaces with Prof. Dorothy Kenny, and coeditor of a number of books and journal special issues. He is also a coauthor of the book 'Translation Tools and Technologies: A Practical Guide for Students and Translators' on Routledge (2023). He leads the Tools and Technologies working group (with Prof. Tomáš Svoboda) as a board member of the European Masters in Translation network and sits on the advisory board of the Journal of Specialised Translation.

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This seminar will take place on May 15 at 17:00 CEST on Zoom

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