

AFO Seminar “Responsible use of AI in public sector translation processes” - 4 December 2025

The [Agder Forum for Translation Studies](#) would like to invite all those interested to the seminar “Responsible use of AI in public sector translation processes” at UiA (on Campus and online participation possible). AI and MT are easily accessible to everyone and can offer users automated translation output in seconds for different domains and for a large variety of languages. However, the quality of machine-generated translation is not perfect and varies tremendously across languages and domains. Especially lay people, but also professionals working outside the language industry may not be able to grasp the potential risks that come with machine-generated translation or understand how to use the technology responsibly. In professional translation practices, different ethical aspects need to be considered. In line with the variety of usage scenarios of machine-generated text, there is not one best-practice solution.

In this seminar, we will discuss the risks of using AI and MT for automating translation processes for different user groups and domains in the public sector and how these technologies can be used responsibly in the different scenarios. Research from Finland and the UK will provide up-to-date insights into processes in neighbouring countries. Experience and ongoing discussions within the Norwegian public sector will be reported as we jointly consider the topic from national and international perspectives.

Format: Hybrid – on Campus and online (Room and Zoom link will be shared after registration)

Registration: <https://uia.pameldingssystem.no/afo-seminar> (open until 27. November)

Schedule

Time	Speaker
11:00	Welcome
11:00-11:30	Maarit Koponen (UEF, Finland) – Automatic translation as a tool for multilingual information: perspectives from migrants and public services
11:30-12:00	Félix do Carmo (University of Surrey, UK) – Is there a high risk in using AI translation in healthcare? Where is the evidence?
12:00-12:30	Q & A (Moderator: Jean Nitzke)
12:30-13:15	Lunch
13:15-13:35	Khrystyna Solomchak and Nebojša Matić (UDI, Norway) – The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and the language technology
13:35-13:55	Maimu Berezkina (Norsk Helsenett, Norway) – Multilingualism and AI in Norway's Digital Health Services
13:55-14:15	Jean Nitzke (UiA, Norway) – Risk and ethical considerations when using AI in specialised translation
14:15-14:45	Q & A (Moderator: Sandra Halverson)
14:45-15:00	Coffee
15:00-15:45	Round table discussion
16:00	Concluding remarks

Detailed Information

Maarit Koponen

Automatic translation as a tool for multilingual information: perspectives from migrants and public services

Access relevant, reliable knowledge and information is essential for participation in the functioning modern society. Global mobility means that societies are increasingly multilingual, but at the same time, information produced by societal institutions like public administration and media is generally limited to dominant local languages and to a lesser extent some lingua franca, typically English. This creates linguistic barriers to information. To cross these barriers, international migrants often turn to automatic translation, and increased interest in the use of this technology can be seen also on the part of public authorities.

In this presentation, I discuss two studies conducted by the sub-project *Linguistic barriers, algorithms and epistemic capabilities* of the multidisciplinary project consortium *Democratic epistemic capacity in the age of algorithms* (DECA). The first study, conducted in 2024, focused on the linguistic accessibility and the role of automatic translation from the perspective Ukrainian and Russian migrants in Finland. Through interviews and simulated information search experiments, this study explored the participants' strategies for finding information and their use of automatic translation. The second study, conducted in 2025, focused on the perspective of public services through a survey that charted the use of automatic translation in the Finnish public sector.

Drawing on these two studies, I discuss observations about how automatic translation is used as a tool to both access and provide societal information, as well as possibilities, limitations and potential risks of technology.

Short Bio



Dr Maarit Koponen is Professor of Translation Studies at the University of Eastern Finland where she leads the research group Translation and multilingual communication in digital society (TraDiSoc) at UEF. Her research focuses on theoretical and practical aspects of the use of translation technology, particularly machine translation, in professional workflows as well as non-professional settings. She has published on the topics of machine translation and post-editing, machine translation for information purposes, quality of machine translation and usability of translation technologies.

Is there a high risk in using AI translation in healthcare? Where is the evidence?

AI is already used in the provision of healthcare services all over the world. Its use as a tool to get translated texts, in and outside clinical contexts, is understudied and underreported, but there is enough evidence that highlights the risks this technology brings to patients, staff and to healthcare organisation as a whole.

In this presentation, I will show the results of two studies based on existing evidence on the use of AI in translation in the NHS, the UK healthcare system that is the largest employer in Europe. The first study was a “Freedom of Information” request sent to all NHS trusts (besides councils and police forces, asking for information on their use of translation and interpreting services and technologies, and on policies associated with this use. The second study is an evidence review report that collected documented cases of use of AI in translation, institutional reports on risks and recommendations for the responsible use of AI in healthcare and other public service providers.

These two studies show that lack of guidance on the use of AI in public services may be associated with a transfer of responsibility from the organisations to the users. Since communication is central for the provision of public services, this may affect the organisations’ reputation and challenge the purpose of the service provision. The research presented here shows the relevance of studies on the social context of translation practices to highlight professional and societal challenges generated by the widespread use of technological solutions.

Short bio



Félix do Carmo is a Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Translation Studies of the University of Surrey, where he teaches and researches the application of technologies to translation work processes, with a focus on their ethical and professional implications. He is a Fellow of the Surrey Institute for People-Centred Artificial Intelligence, and an Expert member of the Surrey Future of Work Research Centre. He worked for more than 20 years in Porto, Portugal, as a translator, translation company owner and university lecturer, and he was awarded a post-doctoral research fellowship to work at Dublin City University. He can be contacted at: f.docarmo@surrey.ac.uk.

Khrystyna Solomchak and Nebojša Matić The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and the language technology

Khrystyna Solomchak is Senior adviser at the Language Services Team with The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI). She holds a master's degree in journalism from Ukraine and a Master's degree in Middle East Studies with Arabic language from the University of Oslo (UiO). She has also completed the online program "Translation in the Public Sector" at the University of Agder. She is currently pursuing a Bachelor's Program in Public Sector Interpreting. Within UDI, she works on enhancing and collecting knowledge about artificial intelligence (AI), with a particular focus on how AI can be used as an augmentation tool to support work of interpreters and translations.

Nebojša Matić is Senior adviser at the Language Services Team with The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI), sworn translator and sworn interpreter for Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian and Norwegian. Within UDI he works with a wide range of aspects in interpreting and translating, involving both humans and technology.

Maimu Berezkina – Multilingualism and AI in Norway's Digital Health Services

Maimu Berezkina leads the work on making Norway's main digital health platform, Helsenorge, more multilingual. Her work ranges from ensuring compliance with the Norwegian Language Act regarding Nynorsk to localizing health information for Sámi users and translating content into English and immigrant languages. AI already plays a significant role in improving translation processes, and its growing presence also raises important questions about the value, quality, and prioritization of translations in the digital public sector. Maimu is passionate about minority languages and digitalization and is an advocate for multilingualism in public communication. She holds a PhD from the Center for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan (MultiLing) at the University of Oslo, where her research examined how state institutions in Estonia and Norway manage multilingualism on their websites.

Jean Nitzke – Risk and ethical considerations when using AI in specialised translation

Jean Nitzke is associate professor for translation with a focus on translation technology at the University of Agder, Norway. Before, she was a lecturer and researcher in Germany, mainly at the faculty for translation studies, linguistics, and cultural studies in Gernersheim, University of Mainz. Her main teaching and research interests are post-editing machine translation, translation technologies, domain-specific translation, and cognitive translation studies.