

Translation in the European Union: Navigating Technical and Legal Issues in the Light of Artificial Intelligence — Conclusions

*L. Clément-Wilz; A. de Laforcade & I. Cennamo**

Abstract

The article explains the choice of this special issue, dealing with the challenges of legal translation in the European Union in the light of artificial intelligence. It summarises the contributions and shares some reflections that can be inferred from them. This topic, through an interdisciplinary approach which is based on the integration between European Law studies, Jurilinguistics and Translation Studies, shows that AI – at the intersection of these three disciplines – is profoundly challenging each of them. Firstly, it claims that while AI enhances productivity and supports translation tasks, it often falls short in ensuring contextual accuracy, terminological consistency, and legal nuance – necessitating continued human oversight. Secondly, this article restates the importance of comparative law, embedded in legal culture, in legal translation. It shows that AI is presented either as a source of fears and constraints, or as a source of hope and potential solutions as regards the protection of legal cultures. The contribution therefore argues that legal expertise is indispensable in the post-editing phase performed by humans. Lastly, this study presents potential pathways for the future development of AI in the field of legal translation within the EU, such as establishing a taxonomy of documents to be translated in order to determine the different levels of AI intervention. More broadly, the future lies in teaching and research design. Neural translation systems integration has determined a new paradigm shift which has been recently defined as Posthumanism, in opposition to the anthropocentrism of humanism.

*Laure Clément-Wilz: Université Paris Est Créteil, laure.clement-wilz@u-pec.fr. Agata de Laforcade: ISIT, Paris-Panthéon Assas University, delaforcade.agata@isitparis.eu; Ilaria Cennamo, University of Turin ilaria.cennamo@unito.it. The authors would like to dedicate this special issue to Professor Isabelle Pingel, who chaired one panel of the conference, and who sadly passed away in November 2024.

Keywords

legal translation, European Union law, multilingualism, comparative law, artificial intelligence, machine translation

1. Introduction

In the era of AI, specialists representing three fields of study should foster an interprofessional dialogue in order to improve their interdisciplinary collaboration. Firstly, EU lawyers; secondly, legal translators and specialists in legal translation and legal comparisons; and thirdly, specialists in the field of Natural Language Processing, namely a sub-field of computer science and artificial intelligence (AI) that uses machine learning to enable computers to understand and generate text and speech. The joint cooperation of the three organisers of the conference, which was held in Paris in March 2024, with the support of UPEC and the EUR FRAPP, ISIT-Panthéon Assas University and the University of Turin, in partnership with the Maison Ile-de-France (CIUP), has aimed to go in this direction. The result is the publication of this special issue devoted, more precisely, to the challenges AI poses to legal translation in the framework of the European Union.

Studies of European Union law focus on the specific nature of this law. They look at its guiding principles, its autonomous concepts, and the decision-making process. They seek to reconcile two opposite forces. On the one hand, the centrifugal forces, such as primacy, harmonisation, autonomous concepts, scope of application beyond the Union's sphere of competence, the Union's competence creep (or the extension of EU competences by EU institutions such as the Commission or the Court of Justice of the European Union), the “ever closer Union among the peoples of Europe”. And on the other hand, the centripetal forces, such as national identities, national and local diversity, national public orders, the absence of a European people, the principle of attribution of competence, and democratic deficit have also permeated the European Union since its birth. In other words, the Union's institutions have an ambivalent attitude towards European Union law (Hagueneau-Moizard, 2018).

EU law takes a keen interest in translation and legal comparison, since the EU produces law in 24 official languages and the Court of Justice publishes its judgments in the 24 official languages. In this temple of multilingualism, European citizens can address the European Parliament in 24 languages, and applicants and national courts can bring cases before the Court in the same languages. Translation drives not only the spirit but also the body of the European Union (Bailleux, A., 2019: 25), with around 4300 translators and 600 lawyer-linguists working within the European institutions and especially the CJEU (Pingel, 2019). Comparative law has also played an important role from the outset (Bailleux, J., 2014: 86). Not only is comparative law at the heart of the act of legal translation (Pommer, 2007), but comparative law is also considered as a source of EU law. Actually, the drafting of European legislation and case law benefits from comparative law (Lenaerts, 2003).

For their part, specialists in comparative law and legal translation are closely observing what is happening at the European level in order to identify the specific features of their

own discipline in the framework of the EU (Sacco, 1991: 18; Biel, 2020: 479). Legal translators and lawyer-linguists start from the premise that Law is expressed through language (Gémar, 2005). One could say that language is the envelope, while law is the message placed inside. And the relationship between law and language naturally leads to an interaction between law and translation in a multilingual context (Bocquet, 2008). Each language carries legal concepts and is shaped by the legal system in which it operates (Ost, 2009). Legal translation requires a command of comparative law, since the transfer of meaning in this specific context largely depends on the given source and target legal systems and their possible equivalences (Irima, 2016). The confrontation of comparative law and legal translation with European reality sometimes poses difficulties: comparative law is perceived as too ‘instrumentalised’ at the service of European integration (Perroud, 2022). The European Union’s choice of multilingualism has given rise to ‘new legal-linguistic problems’, due to the primacy and direct effect of most of its norms and the way in which European Union law is produced. The transfer of meaning in this specific context largely depends on the given source and target legal systems and their possible equivalences (Monjean-Decaudin, 2022: 51).

Finally, in the context of the EU, translators, interpreters, terminologists and linguists are the professionals who have been closely impacted by the technological revolution of their practices, as Fernando Pietro Ramos showed in his studies (Ramos, 2024). Artificial intelligence has recently given rise to the introduction of what is known as “neural translation” (Forcada, 2017; Pérez-Ortiz et al. 2022; Yvon, 2023), which corresponds to the last generation of machine translation techniques based on the integration of Deep Learning¹ in the MT architecture. NMT assures better performances than the statistical and hybrid systems which were used before, since it can achieve better fluency, producing outputs that appear to be more similar to human translations. NMT architectures are actually trained with this aim, namely to produce machine translations that can progressively achieve human translation quality (Yvon, 2023: A19). This is why NMT is playing an increasingly prominent role in assisting human translators, making translation no longer an exclusively human activity. Translators have moved from rule-based systems, to statistical, hybrid, example-based systems, to the latest neural machine translation models (NMT) and AI generative transformers based on ‘large language models’ (LLMs) – like ChatGPT, Gemini and many others. Generative AI models are specifically trained to simulate the human brain in text and speech generation, including translation. Although their quality keeps on improving, AI still presents many limitations, especially when applied to legal texts (Moneus & Sahari, 2024).

The theme of the conference was chosen for two main reasons. The first reason is that the European Union is a reference model, since the co-official nature of the texts in the

¹ Deep learning is a sub-field of artificial intelligence that uses multi-layered artificial neural networks to solve complex tasks. This technique has been successfully applied to facial recognition, speech recognition and automated language processing, among others. (Le Cun 2019).

24 languages and the other aspects of multilingualism constitute a multilingual translation workflow that is unique in the world. The EU institutions are today's biggest translation centres: in 2022, the European Commission translated 2.6 million pages, the European Parliament's overall translation output amounted to 2.8 million pages, and the Council produced 1.3 million pages of translations. Secondly, translation has been working with digital assistance for a very long time, and translators appear to be forerunners in digitalisation and in the incorporation of AI in their translation work. Since 2004, the IATE database, an interinstitutional database which includes terminology collections prepared and managed by the Court, has listed terminology used in legal fields and sub-fields. In addition, as early as 1975, the Commission was using an in-house rule-based machine translation system called ECMT. From the mid-1990s, it used translation memory technology to store sentences and their translations in an inter-institutional database called Euramis. A new machine translation system was introduced in June 2013 (MT@EC) and in 2017, the neural machine translation system eTranslation.

More specifically at the CJEU, several tools are used: the lawyer-linguists work in the Trados Studio digital environment. They have access, in particular, to EUR-lex, the EU database covering EU law, in addition to internal and interinstitutional search engines. For terminological research, they have access to IATE, too. Since 2019, the translation project generated by Trados has contained NMT suggestions. These suggestions are proposed by eTranslation, a service developed by the European Commission for the benefit of the EU institutions and national authorities, and DeepL Pro, a commercial product.

Unsurprisingly, and this is the second reason for the choice of this topic, this new technology is creating new challenges for all disciplines and specialities. Numerous problems are emerging, and the European institutions seem to be aware of them. Indeed, for example, the strategic document of the Court points out unintentional bias in algorithms, disclosure of sensitive data, false or inaccurate information, over-reliance on technology, uncontrolled or excessive use ('over-hype'), cyber-attacks, and inappropriate use of cloud-based solutions. These essentially technical problems give rise to epistemological challenges, as legal and linguistic specialists often lack the intellectual training to engage with programming and computer engineering. However, it is no longer possible to consider the multilingual dimension of European Union law without including a discussion of the role played by AI. For instance, the work of Rachele Raus and her research network also bears witness to the interest and topicality of this issue (Raus, 2023).

In a more innovative way, this special issue, through an interdisciplinary approach which is based on the integration between European Law studies, Jurilinguistics and Translation Studies, shows that AI calls into question the fundamental assumptions underlying these three fields of study. In other words, AI – at the intersection of these three disciplines – is profoundly challenging each of them. First of all, what are the prospects for the translators working in the European Union, itself a forerunner in digitalisation

and then in AI? This raises the question of whether machines could ultimately replace human translators entirely. If we want to move beyond this catastrophic vision, we need to take a serious, uninhibited look at the changes taking place in the profession. This is what Fernando Prieto Ramos sets out to do in his study, as well as Susan Wright and Reka Somssich, who provide useful insights in that regard. Therefore, the first part of our conclusions (Chapter 2: What Will Change for Translators Within the EU in the Era of AI?) will be devoted to the recent evolution of the translator's profession, in a landscape of “augmented translation”.

In addition, comparative law and translation studies are constantly affected by methodological questions, in particular with respect to the treatment that should be given to embedded cultural items. Is legal translation a question of being a ‘dowser’ or a ‘targeter’, or of creating a third space (Clay & McAuliffe, 2021)? More broadly, the critical schools of comparative law consider that the social, economic or societal context must necessarily be taken into account in the comparison (Nicola & Frankenberg, 2024; Ziller, 2012). These questions are also specifically addressed in the contributions by Sylvie Monjean-Decaudin, Reka Somssich, and Stefaan Van der Jeught. In the second part (Chapter 3: What Role for Legal Cultures?), we show that AI is presented either as a source of fears and constraints, or as a source of hope and potential solutions as regards the protection of legal cultures.

Indeed, in the third part (Chapter 4: The Future of Legal Translation in the EU in the Light of AI – Thoughts and Translation Ethics), we want to move beyond the opposition between ‘for’ and ‘against’ AI, between fears and hopes. The issue also opens up avenues for the future, proposed in particular by Susan Wright, Maria Zimina-Poirot, Christopher Gledhill, Manon Bouyé and Sylvie Monjean-Decaudin, in order to preserve the ethics of translation while integrating AI and bearing in mind that the translation we are studying in this issue is an institutional translation geared towards normative and communicational objectives. Finally, we tried to face the following question: are translation ethics undermined or enhanced by AI and NMT? This is the question directly addressed by in the contribution submitted by Aurélien Talbot, who concludes that nowadays, NMT can help to reconcile human reasoning and machine learning and thus to rethink translation ethics in the light of AI. Ultimately, this special issue questions the very humanity of translation.

2. What Will Change for Translators within the EU in the Era of AI?

As pointed out by Fernando Pietro Ramos and Susan Wright within their contributions to the present volume, job market transformations are part of the fears and warnings in respect of generative AI. It is important to point out that, according to the principle of

augmented translation, human professionals ‘remain at the helm of the translation process’ (CJEU, 2023a: 134). Actually, only a couple of years after the introduction of the neural machine translation system *eTranslation* (Foti, 2022) in the context of the European Union, EU language services had already perceived the impact of AI through the recent integration of Deep Learning techniques in their MT engines, which brought an evolution from a statistical approach towards a neural one. The biggest challenge, as the EU host paper clearly pointed out:

is to demystify the various concepts and requirements and to integrate technology and digital aspects into the traditional profile of a language specialist. Perhaps the most necessary skill in this regard is “digital confidence”, i.e. accepting and being ready to adapt constantly to new tools and developments (2019: 15).

Analysis of the *European Language Industry Survey* (ELIS) annual reports² allows us to observe how Neural Machine Translation (NMT) is changing the identity of the profession of the translator in Europe. We recently observed how the identity of the translator is represented in ELIS data in the annual reports from 2013 to 2023. Essentially, what emerged from this analysis is that the changing identity of the profession apparently remains mainly human today, even though technology and AI have a strong impact on the different contexts of the profession (companies, freelancers and translation departments in organisations). The skills associated with the profession can be described as diversified according to the specific professional context in which they are applied, but together with technological skills, the identity of the profession still seems to be characterised by typical human soft skills, as well as language and information handling abilities. The challenge for the European industry resides in professionally rewarding this (necessarily) human nature of the profession.

Moreover, another major challenge deals with the defence of multilingualism and language diversity in the EU, as Georg Rehm and Andy Way explained in their study entitled “European Language Equality: A Strategic Agenda for Digital Language Equality”. Their contribution sheds light on the link between language technologies’ conception and uses and equal language representation in the field of EU multilingual services. Multilingualism raises a certain number of issues pertaining to technological development – where the predominance of English is just a matter of fact – but also to linguistic policies and their social and economic effects (Vetere, 2023; Gazzola, 2016; Ginsburgh & Ternero, 2022; Grin, 2022).

This is why another step forward should be made at political level, within the EU. The technical report published in 2023 by Rachele Raus under the title “How artificial intelligence can further European multilingualism. Strategic recommendations for European decision-makers” intends to propose four main recommendations with the aim of orienting European policies on AI in favour of multilingualism. In particular, this proposal emphasises the need to redefine professional profiles and professional skills

² ELIS: Available at elis-survey.org/repository/ (accessed 9 June 2025).

within the European language industry by taking into account the new requirements arising in the European translation market, as the European research project Upskills³ has recently pointed out (Bernardini et al., 2023). Moreover, this report promotes the development of AI tools in Europe for Europe; that means AI tools based on multilingual resources which are designed to represent the linguistic and cultural variety of Europe, thus enhancing EU technological competitiveness at the international level.

More broadly, the extensive application of multilingual AI is leading to the emergence of specific concepts and skills that imply new forms of awareness concerning interaction with AI tools, and a deep understanding of their risks and their potential. Linguistic annotation, for instance, is becoming one of the human competences that can help to improve machine results in tasks like inclusive reformulation and translation (Tonti, 2023). Actually, NMT systems are supposed to assist humans in predicting solutions to unknown problems, not just to retrieve past choices (as was the case within the statistical framework of alignment and memories), and human linguistic annotation can help in orienting their predictions according to specific communicative needs (like inclusive legal communication).

This special issue, particularly the article by Fernando Prieto-Ramos, is a continuation of these studies and brings important new information. In his paper, based on interviews with almost 500 translators from different institutions, he underlines human-machine interaction in the landscape of “augmented translation”. He reveals the results of a large-scale survey of institutional translators from the EU, the UN, the WTO and other IGOs on the features of post-editing and the impact of the use of NMT on translation processes, products and competences. The survey shows the modification of translation workflows, the need to possess solid translation skills to ensure the quality of an increasingly hybrid and dynamic mix of translation actions in an augmented translation context. Most translators see more advantages than disadvantages in using NMT, but also a higher risk of lower translation quality and negative effects on the target language. According to them, MT does not take into account terminology consistency and the specific “in-house language” of different institutions. Moreover, MT contains unpredictable mistakes, which makes revising it more time-consuming. More senior groups perceived NMT as having a more negative impact on quality than less experienced groups. On the other hand, most of the translators agree that MT improves productivity in the translation process, saves time and enables them to focus on solving translation problems and improving translation quality.

Currently, the use of NMT cannot fully satisfy the quality requirements of legal translation, especially as many texts drafted in the EU will be legally binding. The intervention of lawyer-linguists and legal translators and their collaboration with computer scientists

³ Their final report outlines a new professional profile, that of the language data and project specialist, and includes a detailed description of the knowledge, skills and competences that present-day and future graduates in languages and linguistics should obtain to improve their employability in the digital business sector. Available at upskillsproject.eu/ (accessed 9 June 2025).

remains essential. Their role is crucial not only in developing, refining, and improving translation technologies but also in reviewing and editing AI-generated translations during the post-editing phase. Human expertise remains indispensable to ensure accuracy and precision in legal translation, even in the age of AI. This special issue provides two examples.

Firstly, as pointed out by Reka Somssich, looking at eTranslation in the context of Slovenian, some authors found that the neural translation tool is highly innovative in creating new words, using non-existent words in place of their existing equivalents in the event that the engine encounters words not included in the data sets used in its training. In her view, these are not consciously generated words, but mistakes. These decisions can only be made for the time being by translators, national experts and lawyer-linguists. She also demonstrates that IATE and eTranslation sometimes contradict themselves, meaning that the best version is not always obvious. According to her, “in this specific case, it seems it is the AI which needs human correction”.

Secondly, Susan Wright shares her concern about the quality of the corpora. To her mind, “The quality of machine translations also depends on the quality of the corpora on which the engine has been trained, and the quality of the algorithms applied in producing the translation”. She further says that “at present, the material fed into the Euramis translation memories is derived from high-quality ‘enhanced’ translation, not (post-edited) machine translation. In turn, eTranslation is trained on Euramis material, producing a virtuous circle”. However, she rightly raises the following question:

if future translations are more heavily reliant on AI-produced text, will it be possible to maintain the quality and integrity of translation memories not only as corpora to train engines, but also as a reliable source for the lawyer-linguist in search of official translations?.

3. What Role for Legal Cultures?

Translation involves finding equivalences not only from a linguistic but also from a functional perspective (Nord, 2018), whereby the function, or *Skopos*, of a given translation project determines the choice made by the translator among available target language items (terms, expressions, phrases) which can best fit this purpose even though they may not match the source language items exactly. Legal equivalence in different legal systems is often partial, in which case legal translation reaches its limits (de Laforcade, 2023). Legal translation actually goes beyond linguistic perfect matches; it represents a functional encounter between languages, cultures, and legal systems. It requires finding equivalence not only between words but also between distinct legal cultures. Accordingly, translating legal concepts is a delicate task and comes with numerous challenges. Every legal system has its own traditions, which influences the meaning of its institu-

tions and legal concepts. Any translation necessarily involves interpretation of legal tradition, which in turn triggers the application of a foreign legal framework. In this context, comparative law plays a crucial role in legal translation. On one hand, legal translation requires a true comparative dimension to ensure that the meaning of the source text is not distorted. On the other hand, comparative law itself relies on translation, as most comparative legal studies are based on an act of translation. Finding appropriate legal terminology is one of the greatest challenges in legal translation, and this is where the expertise of legal scholars, predominantly in comparative law, becomes particularly useful. Thus, for some legal concepts, no direct equivalent exists between the source and target legal systems, while for others, equivalences may be approximate. A comparative law approach in translation highlights the inherent imperfection of legal translation, which, in most cases, can never be fully precise. Legal translation can thus be seen as a compromise. The search for an unambiguous legal language is an ongoing challenge for translators and legal scholars. However, such a language remains an unattainable ideal, demonstrating the inherent limitations of translation. Moreover, the EU Law decision-making process often leads to ambiguity for different reasons, explained by the contributors to this special issue.

Firstly, Sylvie Monjean-Decaudin points out that the use of autonomous concepts in EU law can also create a danger for legal certainty, and legal texts and their translations are deliberately drafted without direct reference to national legal terminologies to prevent confusion between national and European legal concepts. Indeed, this practice gives rise to polysemy, which in turn can give rise to discordant interpretations of the same legal concepts at European and national level. Furthermore, the search for consensus can lead to the choice of unclear terms. Concerning the European legal acts, some so-called “empty terms”, such as “the competent authority” (Robertson, 2011: 55) are intentionally left vague in order to be concretised in national law. As Ioriatti aptly puts it, EU translation is not only a linguistic transposition activity, but also the “engine of the mechanism aimed at transforming EU law into a new European language” (2023).

Secondly, Reka Somssich indicates that the terms used in EU law are integrated into these national languages, creating thereby a kind of parallel legal language at EU level; However, she also claims that “the EU legal language and the national legal language are not two independent systems that operate side by side”. Ultimately, European translations are not deeply rooted in the legal cultures of the Member States, since the source text concerns EU law (and not the law of a particular Member State) and, consequently, translations intended for the Member States distance themselves from their respective legal lexicons. Her study shows the effect of AI on the importation of new words, of Latin or English origin, into languages such as Hungarian, through the European translation process. First of all, as these words are often initially used in soft law, these documents are fed into the corpus and are then used when translating hard law instruments. Then, based on other studies, she shows that AI translations lacked legal terms and used alternative simple words instead. According to her, “this shortcoming may of course also be

due to poor or inadequate training, but also to a lack of contextual awareness”. She adds that skilled human translators will be able to deeply understand the languages and cultures, and that their judgment and knowledge makes them able to “make informed decisions about translating idiomatic expressions, metaphors, and other language-specific features”. The emphasis here is on informed decisions. This means that AI makes it all the more necessary to have a human presence, immersed in national cultures, in order to limit the neutralising effect of European language.

Stefaan van der Jeught insists on an aspect that establishes a distinction between the CJEU and other institutions. He brings up the phenomenon of “the multilingualism paradox in EU Law”: it is settled case law of the CJEU that EU regulations are not enforceable against individuals in an EU Member State if the regulation has not been officially published in the language of that Member State (ECJ, Case C-161/06 *Skoma-Lux*, EU:C:2007:773, par. 32 et seq). At the same time, however, reliance on one’s own language version is only relative. Indeed, it is also settled case law that individuals cannot rely solely on a particular language version of EU law read in isolation (ECJ, case C-283/81, *CILFIT*, EU:C:1982:335, par. 19). The true meaning of EU law must be determined by a purposive interpretation in the light of all language versions. One or more language versions may therefore prove to be inaccurate. To solve this paradox, Stefaan van der Jeught argues that individuals should not have to bear the burden of linguistic inconsistencies. He therefore stresses the importance of taking national legal cultures into account, and sees AI as an aid to achieving this objective.

More generally, the situation in the CJEU is a little different regarding translation, because a case can be brought before the Court in the 24 languages. National courts formulate their question for a preliminary ruling on the basis of the national case and national law. Thus, expertise in comparative law is essential at this stage to fully understand the question put to the Court (Iannone, 2024). However, a machine translation tool compares words and sentences but does not compare legal systems and legal cultures. The CJEU has a large comparative law department, which produces studies to help judges and advocates general decide on a case (Iannone 2021). A good command of comparative law is therefore essential at the Court of Justice.

4. The Future of Legal Translation in the EU in the Light of AI – Thoughts and Translation Ethics.

This special issue ultimately aims to move beyond the binary of being for or against AI in translation – beyond both excessive enthusiasm and excessive reluctance. This study presents potential pathways for the future development of AI in the field of legal translation within the EU. They are of three kinds. The first one is a practical solution. Susan

Wright favours a worthwhile fit-for-purpose approach based on a taxonomy of document types. In the same vein, the research for the CULT Committee entitled “The European Union’s approach to multilingualism in its own communications policy” already provided suggestions about how to develop a realistic framework and standards for multilingual communication on websites that can be compatible with budget constraints. It establishes a multilingual needs typology using a ‘substantive approach’ that distinguishes variations in multilingual needs based on legal formal arguments and on reasoning about the substantive effects of language policy choices. (Mendez et al., 2022: 48; Clément-Wilz, 2023).

The future also lies in teaching and research design. First and foremost, legal translation includes multilingual drafting, which today must contend with the EU’s need to take into account language inclusiveness. The paper written by Maria Zimina-Poirot, Christopher Gledhill and Manon Bouyé suggests avenues for future experimental research applied to foreign language and translation training. Their article explores the potential for Generative Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools to be used as writing aids in the reformulation of expert content into clear, simple and inclusive language. This study focuses on the feasibility of fully automating the reformulation of legal texts, and the challenges of setting standards for automatically generating content in multilingual settings. Those standards apply to how AI should be managed in order to govern how machines communicate with humans and to define the appropriate paradigm that should be adopted in human-machine interaction.

Their analysis is particularly interesting if we consider the context of multilingual drafting within the EU and the revolutionary impact that Generative AI is expected to have. Their first results suggest that while automatic assistants can produce greatly simplified texts, legal implications and contextual reasoning still depend on human content management. The authors underlined the importance of prescriptive guidelines in the light of generative artificial intelligence. Furthermore, they demonstrate the need for human know-how and oversight in auto-generated content, as well as in the development of AI-assisted translation and reformulation tools. The need for guidelines, continuous monitoring and applied research focused on balancing human interaction with automation is also pointed out. As far as the EU is concerned, this contribution highlights that the application of a “style guide/language policy” should be a phase in the translation cycle along with post-edition and revision, with the aim of ensuring quality in written texts in an effective multilingual context.

Pedagogical implications become particularly significant in the light of neural machine translation and the more recent generative AI. On this last point, as stated by the framework proposed by the European Master’s in Translation network in its 2017 framework:

artificial intelligence and social media have considerably changed people’s relation to communication in general and translation in particular, with machine translation applications and other language tools now commonly available on desktop and mobile devices. This is gradually impacting the translation

process and many translation markets, and has changed the perception of translation among the general public and among translation studies students and graduates. Technological and societal changes such as these need to be taken on board in academic translator training programs, so that future graduates become aware of both the challenges and opportunities that they represent, and can adapt their skills and practices accordingly (EMT 2017: 2).

In the last few years, an increasing amount of theoretical analysis and experimental research in Translation Studies has shown the need for training to respond to this technological and societal change by innovating in teaching and learning practices (Raus & Tonti, 2025; Raus et al., 2022; Mattioda et al., 2023; Kenny, 2022; Bowker & Ciro, 2019). In this volume, with a particular reference to European law, this reflection is developed within different contributions. Indeed, Susan Wright explains that:

An educational system must teach the student to think, how to learn, how and where to find an answer to a new question or problem, the skills of research, analysis and synthesis. The ability to adapt to new tasks and unknowns, openness to change, and flexibility in providing a variety of services fit for purpose on the basis of varying levels of post-editing have all become more than just ‘nice to have’.

And lastly, our study touches on the ethical issues that must necessarily guide any reflection on AI. In the paper written by Aurélien Talbot, the author traces the interconnections between translation, law and the specific context of European law on a theoretical level by analysing two publications by François Ost: *Le droit comme traduction* (2009a) et *Traduire. Défense et illustration du multilinguisme* (2009b). Talbot intends to underline the interest of the “paradigm of translation”, as it was defined by Ost, in order to develop a critical and theoretical analysis applied to the modern paradigm of neural translation. Talbot tries to show the benefits of taking a retrospective look at the hypothesis of “law as translation”, as formulated by Ost. More specifically, according to Talbot, the construction of European law is able to validate this hypothesis. The author refers to the opposition between the concepts of analogical reasoning and binary logic, as presented by Ost, in order to point out the challenges linked to the application of neural translation, and more in general of Deep Learning, paying particular attention to the risks associated with the dispossession and disempowerment of translators.

Neural translation systems integration has determined a new paradigm shift which has been recently defined as Posthumanism (Lee, 2023a), in opposition to the anthropocentrism of humanism, since it highlights that it is becoming necessary to move beyond “the traditional humanist ways of thinking about the autonomous, self-willed individual agent in order to treat the human itself as an assemblage, co-evolving with other forms of life, enmeshed with the environment and technology” (Nayar, 2014: 4). A new environment is actually designed for translation in the era of AI:

Embedded within a larger textual-media ecology, translation is enacted through dialogical interaction among the persons, texts, technologies, platforms, institutions, and traditions operating within that ecology. This gives rise to a different ontology of translation: translation, like distributed language, is non-local in that it is not the sole preserve of the translator’s creative and subjective mind and is therefore not a local realm *sui generis* (Lee 2023b, 376).

5. Conclusion

This article investigates the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) in the context of legal translation, particularly neural machine translation (NMT), in the European Union framework. The important question was how AI technologies are reshaping professional practices, theoretical frameworks, and ethical aspects of legal translation within the EU's multilingual legal system. AI challenges the traditional standards of legal translation, requiring new competencies and especially a collaborative method of work among translators, lawyers and AI specialists. The article also explores the effects of AI on legal cultures and translation ethics. Legal translation is currently navigating at the intersection of human and machine intelligence, requiring transparency in the use of AI tools to preserve the cultural heritage rooted in EU multilingual law.

References

- Bailleux, Antoine (2019). Traduction et Droits Européens – Premiers Jalons. In Bailleux, Cartuyvels, Dumont & François (Eds.), *Traduction et Droits Européens: Enjeux d'une Rencontre* (pp. 17–34). Presses Universitaires: Saint-Louis Bruxelles.
- Bailleux, Julie (2014). *Penser l'Europe par le Droit, L'invention du Droit Communautaire en France*. Dalloz.
- Bernardini, Silvia; Ferraresi, Adriano; Milicevic Petrovic, Maja (2023). Nuovi profili professionali a cavallo tra lingue e tecnologia. Risultati dell'analisi dei bisogni condotta nel progetto erasmus+ UPSKILLS. In Raus (Ed.), *Per Un'Intelligenza Artificiale a Favore del Multilinguismo Europeo Raccomandazioni Strategiche Rivolte ai Decisori Europei / How Artificial Intelligence Can Further European Multilingualism Strategic Recommendations for European Decision-Makers* (pp. 35–38). Milan: Ledizioni.
- Biel, Łucja (2020). Eurolects and EU legal translation. *The Oxford Handbook of Translation and Social Practices*. Oxford: University Press, 479.
- Bocquet, Carole (2008). *La Traduction Juridique. Fondement et Méthode*. De Boeck.
- Bowker, Lynne & Jairo Buitrago, Ciro (2019). *Machine Translation and Global Research: Towards Improved Machine Translation Literacy in the Scholarly Community*. Emerald Publishing.
- Clay, Edward & McAuliffe, Karen (2021). Reconceptualising the third space of legal translation: A study of the Court of justice of the European Union. *Comparative Legilinguistics*, 45, 93–129. DOI: [10.2478/cl-2021-0005](https://doi.org/10.2478/cl-2021-0005).
- Clément-Wilz, Laure (2022). Le multilinguisme procédural, horizon indépassable de la CJUE ?. In Pingel & Barbato (Eds.), *La Langue du Procès International – Questions de Justice Linguistique* (pp. 63–76).
- Clément-Wilz, Laure (2023). Comment encadrer juridiquement la communication sur internet des institutions européennes en matière de multilinguisme ?. *Dossier Multilinguisme et Union Européenne De Europa – European and Global Studies Journal*, 6(1), 15–24.
- ECJ, Case C-161/06 Skoma-Lux, EU:C:2007:773.
- ECJ, case C-283/81, CILFIT, EU:C:1982:335.
- European Language Industry Survey, ELIS. Available at elis-survey.org/repository/ (accessed 9 June 2025).
- European Master's in Translation – EMT. Available at commission.europa.eu/system/files/2018-02/emt_competence_fwkw_2017_en_web.pdf (accessed 9 June 2025).

- European Union Institutions (2019). New technologies and artificial intelligence in the field of language and conference services. *International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications (IAM-LADP)*, 27–29. Bruxelles. Available at knowledge-centre-translation-interpretation.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/final_host_paper_iamladp2019_en_version.pdf (accessed 9 June 2025).
- Forcada, Mikel L. (2017). Making sense of neural machine translation. *Translation Spaces*, 6(2), 291–309.
- Foti, Markus (2022). eTranslation. Le système de traduction automatique de la Commission européenne en appui d'une Europe numérique. *Traduire. Revue Française de la Traduction*, 246, 28–35.
- Gazzola, Michele (2016). Multilingual communication for whom? Language policy and fairness in the European Union. *European Union Politics*, 17(4), 546–569.
- Gémar, Jean-Claude (2005). De la traduction (juridique) à la jurilinguistique. Fonctions proactives du traductologue, *Meta*, 50(4). DOI: [10.7202/019840ar](https://doi.org/10.7202/019840ar).
- Rehm, Georg & Way, Andy (2023). European Language Equality: A strategic agenda for digital language equality. *Cognitive Technologies*, Springer Cham. DOI: [10.1007/978-3-031-28819-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-28819-7).
- Ginsburgh, Victor & Moreno-Ternero, Juan D. (2002). Brexit and Multilingualism in the European Union. *Metroeconomica*, 73, 708–731.
- Grin, François (2022). Principles of integrated language policy. *Advances in Interdisciplinary Language Policy*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 23–42.
- Hagueneau-Moizard, Catherine (2018). *Introduction au Droit Compare*. Dalloz.
- Iannone, Celestina (2021). Research and Documentation: Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). *Max Planck Encyclopedia of International Law*. Oxford Public International Law.
- Iannone, Celestina (2024). Comparative Law in the Practice of the Court of Justice. *Law Research Paper Series*, 1–14.
- Irimia, Dorina (2016). Pour une nouvelle branche de droit ? La traduction juridique, du droit au langage. *Etudes de Linguistique Appliquée*, 183(3), 329.
- Ioriatti Ferrazi, Elena (2023). Common contexts of meaning in the European legal setting: Opening oandora's box ?. *International Journal for the semiotics of law*. (online).
- Kenny, Dorothy (2022). Machine translation for everyone. Empowering users in the age of artificial intelligence. *Translation and Multilingual Natural Language Processing*, 18, Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.6653406](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6653406).
- de Laforcade, Agata (2023). Les mots intraduisibles en droit à travers la comparaison entre les éléments du système juridique britannique, français et polonaise. *Comparative Law and Language*, 2(2).
- Le Cun, Yann (2019). *Quand la Machine Apprend. La Révolution des Neurones Artificiels et de l'Apprentissage Profond*. Odile Jacob.
- Lee, Tong King (2023a). Artificial intelligence and posthumanist translation: ChatGPT versus the translator. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 15(6). DOI: [10.1515/applirev-2023-0122](https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2023-0122).
- Lee, Tong King (2023b). Distribution and translation. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 4(2), 369–390.
- Lenaerts, Koen (2003). Interlocking legal orders in the european union and comparative law. *52 Int'l & Comp. L. Q.*, 873.
- Mattioda, Maria Margherita; Molino, Alessandra; Cinato, Lucia & Cennamo, Ilaria (2023). L'intelligenza artificiale per la traduzione: Verso una nuova progettazione didattica?, *MediAzioni*, 39.
- Mendez, Carlos; Gazzola, Michel; Clément-Wilz, Laure; Triga, Vasiliki; Mendez, Fernando; Djouvas, Constantinos; Charamboulos, Andreas & Bachtler, John (2022). *Research for CULT Committee – The European Union's Approach to Multilingualism in its Own Communications Policy*. European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels.
- Moneus, Ahmed Mohammed & Sahari, Yoused (2024). Artificial intelligence and human translation: A contrastive study based on legal texts. *Heliyon*, 10, e28106.
- Monjean-Decaudin, Sylvie (2022). *Traité de Juritraductologie*. Presse universitaire du Septentrion.
- Nayar, Pramod (2014). *Posthumanism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Nicola, Fernanda & Frankenberg, Günter (2024). *Comparative Law – Introduction to Critical Practice*. Edward Elgar.
- Nord, Christiane (2018). *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained*. London/New York: Routledge.

- Ost, François (2009). *Le Droit Comme Traduction*. Presse de l'Université Laval.
- Pérez-Ortiz, Juan Antonio; Forcada, Mikel L. & Sánchez-Martínez, Felipe (2022). How neural machine translation works. *Machine Translation for Everyone: Empowering Users in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, 18, 141.
- Pingel, Isabelle (2019). Le multilinguisme à la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne : questions choisies. *Int J Semiot Law*, 32, 449–462.
- Perroud, Thomas (2022). *The CJEU and Comparative Law in the Creation of New Jurisprudential Principles. A Case of Judicial Manipulation? A Tribute to Professor Patrick Birkinshaw*. In. press. DOI: [hal-03818337](https://doi.org/10.3818337).
- Pommer, Sieglinde (2007). Droit comparé et traduction juridique – Réflexions jurilinguistiques sur les principes communs. In St-Pierre & Thibault (Eds.), *Actes des XXIes Journées de Linguistiques de l'Université Laval* (p. 27). Peter Lang.
- Prieto Ramos, Fernando (2024). Revisiting translator competence in the age of artificial intelligence: The case of legal and institutional translation. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* 18(2), 148–173.
- Raus, Rachele; Silletti, Alida Maria; Zollo, Silvia Domenica & Humbley, John (2022). *Multilingualism and Language Varieties in Europe in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, DE EUROPA, Special Issue 2022, 307–335.
- Raus, Rachele (2023). *Per Un'Intelligenza Artificiale a Favore del Multilinguismo Europeo Raccomandazioni Strategiche Rivolte ai Decisori Europei / How Artificial Intelligence Can Further European Multilingualism Strategic Recommendations for European Decision-Makers*. Milan: Ledizioni.
- Raus, Rachele & Tonti, Michela (2025). Intelligence artificielle, corpus et diversité linguistique : enjeux et perspectives. *Langages*, 237(1).
- Robertson, Colin (2011). Multilingual legislation in the European Union: EU and national legislative-language styles and terminology. *Research in Language*, 9(1), 51–67. DOI: 10.2478/v10015-011-0011-3.
- Sacco, Rudolfo (1991). *La Comparaison Juridique au Service de la Connaissance du Droit*. Economica.
- Tonti, Michela (2023). La figura professionale dell'annotatore per garantire una maggiore affidabilità dei dati provenienti dall'Intelligenza artificiale. In Raus (Ed.), *Per Un'Intelligenza Artificiale a Favore del Multilinguismo Europeo Raccomandazioni Strategiche Rivolte ai Decisori Europei / How Artificial Intelligence Can Further European Multilingualism Strategic Recommendations for European Decision-Makers* (pp. 39–44). Milan: Ledizioni.
- Vetere, Guido (2023). Elaborazione automatica dei linguaggi diversi dall'inglese: introduzione, stato dell'arte e prospettive. In Raus, Zollo, Domenica & Humbley (Eds.), *Multilingualism and Language Varieties in Europe in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, DE EUROPA, Special Issue, 69–87.
- Wolf, Michaela (2000). The third space in postcolonial representation. In Simon & Saint-Pierre (Eds.), *Changing the Terms: Translating in the Postcolonial Era* (p. 127). University of Ottawa Press.
- Yvon, François (2023). La traduction multilingue : analyse d'une prouesse technologique. *Mediazione*, 39, A17–A34. DOI: [10.6092/ISSN.1974-4382/18785](https://doi.org/10.6092/ISSN.1974-4382/18785).
- Ziller, Jacques (2012). Comparative Public Law. In Smits (Ed.), *Elgar Encyclopedia of Comparative Law* (pp. 744–753), Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2nd Edition.

Note: JLL and its contents are Open Access publications under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



Copyright remains with the authors. You are free to share and adapt for any purpose if you give appropriate credit, include a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made.

Publishing Open Access is free, supports a greater global exchange of knowledge and improves your visibility.