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**The floor to..... Pierrette Bouillon**

Pierrette Bouillon has been a professor at the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation (FTI) since 2007 and head of the Multilingual Computer Processing Department (TIM). Vice-dean of the FTI for many years, she is now the dean of the FTI. Very active in research, Professor Bouillon has participated in numerous Swiss and European projects in the field of machine translation. Together with the HUGs, she co-leads the BabelDr project and, with ZHAW, the new "[Swiss Research Center Barrier-free Communication](https://bfc.unige.ch/en/)" centre, in addition to being part of the new COST network "EnetCollect - European Network for Combining Language Learning with Crowdsourcing Techniques". She has published widely in the field of computer linguistics and language processing, particularly in lexical semantics, automatic speech translation in limited fields and, more recently, in the field of pre- and post-editing. It is on this last subject that she has agreed to speak at greater length to us today.

1. **Professor Bouillon, you were appointed Dean of FIT for four years last summer. What will be the priorities of your mandate?**

In terms of training, I would like to strengthen links between departments, in particular by better integrating technology into richer training programmes, in order to respond to changes in teaching methods and our professions. In terms of research, I encourage the support of transversal projects that exploit the skills of our three departments, as well as technological innovation projects in collaboration with the city and various companies. One of the central themes of my term as Dean is the development of post-editing research and teaching.

1. **Can you explain what post-editing is?**

Over the past decade, machine translation (MT) has made significant progress: it now occupies an important place in the translation industry, alongside translation memories. After 50 years of research in the field, we have finally reached an exciting stage where machine translation is becoming really useful for translators. However, despite the enormous progress made, especially with neural technology, the results are still far from perfect. Thus, to obtain a final translation of similar quality to that produced by a translator, it is always necessary to post-edit it. Post-editing is the stage during which professionally trained translators or linguists proofread the text produced by MT and correct it to remove errors.

1. **What is the current position of post-editing in your Faculty?**

We have been working on machine translation and post-editing for many years. We are one of the first translation faculties to have taught them and we participated in the first research projects in TA (Eurotra). The new study plan increases the number of Technology courses for translators and has integrated a [Master's degree in Multilingual Computer Processing for the](https://www.unige.ch/fti/fr/enseignements/ma-tim/) past two years, which trains translation technology specialists with established language skills.

With regard to post-editing, this year we have proposed [a new continuing education module](https://www.unige.ch/formcont/cours/memoires-de-traduction) on this subject. This training, which attracted more than 40 participants, was a great success. We also work with several Swiss companies in three areas: training MT systems; helping language services to properly integrate post-editing into their practice; and training and monitoring their teams of translators. For example, we are currently working with the language service of the Swiss Post to test the implementation of MT from German into French, Italian and English. This project aims to compare several MT systems and test different types of integration with translators. This collaboration is very fruitful because, as researchers, we can work with company data and test our hypotheses with professional translators.

1. **What results have you already been able to achieve in this project with industry?**

The integration of MT works well if it is used by trained translators, if it is of good quality and if it improves over time, i.e. if it takes into account the corrections made by the translators. That is why we have ensured that translators in the Post Office's language service receive specific training before asking them to use and evaluate the systems. We are convinced that it is crucial to actively involve translators in order to promote a positive approach towards these new systems and to avoid a biased assessment through resistance. It is necessary to start by providing them with good MT so that they do not spend their time correcting machine errors. Then we explain how it works: indeed, a good understanding of the tool is necessary for optimal use of the MT, which can then be of real interest to the translator.

1. **To conclude, how do you see the future of this field?**

Today, the quality of MT has improved so much that it finally provides real help to translators. However, if we want a translation of equal quality to what a person can do, it will always be necessary for a human to validate the translation done by the machine. For the time being, the computer translates sentence by sentence and cannot take into account either the context in which the translation is made or the implicit nature of the text. It should also be remembered that current translation systems are based on data translated by humans.

On the other hand, it is clear that the translator's profession will change. As the title of a presentation given by Thierry Fontenelle, Director of the European Commission's Translation Centre, said, technology will not replace the translator, but he will be replaced by a translator who uses technology. The translation of repetitive texts will be made easier, and that is a good thing! This will free up time for translators, who can devote it to translating more and more content, in order to make available texts that we did not have access to in the past. Indeed, it is estimated that only 1% of the content produced is now translated. The help of the machine can thus promote, for example, access to texts written in languages other than English and participate in a real cultural openness. Soon, we will also be able to automatically translate into simplified texts (easy to understand language), pictograms, Braille or sign language.