AL-FARABI KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Department of International Relations

Chair of Diplomatic Translation

**Translation business in the field of international and legal relations**

**“Translation of Scientific and Technical Documents”**

2024-2025 academic year, fall semester

**Lecture 15**

**Module 3: Scientific researches and abstracts**

**Lecture 15 AI and translation**

While TM and terminology-management tools are usually described as computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, machine translation (MT) usually refers to software that produces a translation automati- cally, without the translator’s intervention. Recent advances in statis- tical machine translation (SMT) technology (using corpora as datasets from which statistical models of language and translation are devel- oped) mean that the quality of MT output has improved considerably, compared with what was possible with previous MT approaches. For an accessible overview of SMT technologies, consult Kenny and Doherty (2014).

For some language pairs, and with an SMT system specially devel- oped for specific subject domains or genres, the output can be useful enough for translators or translation agencies to work with. This often means they take the MT output and edit it (a process called **post-editing**) to make it fit for purpose, particularly if the intended purpose is for publication or dissemination outside of an organiza- tion, but there are also purposes for which the unedited MT output may suffice. As we will see in Chapter 5 on translating patents, the European Patent Office uses a customized SMT system, called PatentTranslate, developed in collaboration with Google Translate.

Unfortunately it is also common to find organizations relying on the freely available Google Translate, without customization, to provide translations of their externally facing documentation. One example, among many we could cite, is UK-based Soil Machine Dynamics Ltd, or SMD. It describes itself as one of the world’s leading manufacturers of remote intervention equipment, including remotely operated vehi- cles for use in oil and gas industries, and for oceanographic research and other applications. A Google Translate link is offered on their website at smd.co.uk for anyone who wants to access its extensive range of promotional and technical material in a language other than English. It could be argued that their international market is not par- ticularly well served by doing so. A very brief glance at translations into other languages throws up some very obvious issues, like the fact that the company name is translated or partly translated, where it would make more sense to reproduce it in English, with or without a gloss;forexamplethecompanynamebecomes*Bodenmaschinendynamik Ltd* in German, *Terreno macchina Dynamics Ltd* in Italian and *Maaperän Machine Dynamics* in Finnish. Other problems abound throughout the MT-produced website.

A novel, apologetic approach to Google Translate is taken by German renewable-energy institute IWR on their website at www.iwr. de/welcomee.html. They warn the English-language reader that the translation is done by Google Translate, so ‘quality of translation is not always well, but you can read our news always “just in time”’. A second point explains to the reader that, whenever a news item begins with the word *cathedral*, ‘it means the town Muenster in Germany and is one of the machine-translation problem by google’. Münster, also written Muenster, is a city in Germany (referred to in some of the IWR news items), but the same word also designates a cathedral. The read- ers of Google’s translations are therefore forewarned!