



An international conference for researchers and translators

Human Translators in Focus: Exploring the Human Aspects of Japanese Literary Translation through a Sociological Lens

22 – 24 October 2025 - Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

The First Call for Papers

The human aspects of literary translation have been attracting increasing scholarly attention across Translation Studies. The shift from focusing on translation as a product to examining the human translator has emerged as a sub-field, termed "Literary Translator Studies" (Kaindl 2021). Recent research on human translators offers new methodological approaches that examine literary translators through a sociological lens, highlighting the multifaceted roles they perform beyond translation: from image-building and visibility-attracting (Sela-Sheffy 2008, 2010), to engaging directly with readers and marketing themselves on social media (Fini 2024), to their involvement in self-publishing (Marin-Lacarta 2018) and teaching translation (Woods 2020). These approaches emphasise the significance of translators' roles beyond the chain of translated literature production.

However, literary translation studies in the Japanese context—an underrepresented area within the discipline in general—traditionally tends towards close reading-based approaches to text analysis or biographical-based studies in historical contexts (Wakabayashi 2012 175-176). Nonetheless, a human translator-focused approach is highly relevant to the Japanese context, as demonstrated by research such as that by Bilodeau (2019), Karashima (2020), Zielinska-Elliott (2020), and Akashi (2018, 2024) which highlights the significance of translators' contributions to the popularity of their source authors and works in receiving cultures. Similarly, other human aspects of translation—such as translators' roles in giving target readers access to the voices of marginalised communities in the source culture (e.g., Okinawan, Ainu, and Zainichi Korean)—not only by translating their literature but also through activities like public talks, workshops, and interviews, could foster meaningful discussions within the discipline.

This conference showcases research on the human aspects of Japanese literary translation. It contributes to the development of Japanese Translation Studies and raises the visibility of the Japanese context within Translation Studies. With these goals in mind, we invite abstracts on topics related to literary translation from or into Japanese, including but not limited to:

- Translator-publisher/editor relationship
- Hierarchy within the translator community
- Human translator/AI relationship
- Translator (in)visibility (e.g., celebrity translators)
- Translators' presence and agency in digital spaces (e.g., online diaries and social media)
- Forms of non-translated writing by translators (e.g., translator memoirs)
- Translators' self-publishing
- Translators' roles in readership-building
- Translators' commercial roles and personae
- Translators training translators (e.g., mentorship, workshops, translation schools)
- Translator collectives

Each speaker is given 20 minutes to present, followed by a 10 minute Q&A session. Submissions are made in the form of abstracts of no more than 300 English words to this [Online Form](#) by 17:00pm (GMT) 31st January 2025.

***There are two calls for this conference. This is the first call. Responses to this call are given priority.** Abstracts submitted in response to the second call are considered only if there are spaces left. The second call will open from 1st February and closes on 15th March 2025.

This conference has a hybrid format, meaning that remote and in-person presentations are both accepted. The entire event will be recorded and made available online after the event.

All presentations and talks are in English.

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