

## **Is There a Culture War Against Professional (Human) Translation and Interpreting?**

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Culture wars are conflicts over identity, morality, and social norms, driven by propaganda, activism, lobbying, and media influence. These conflicts evolve with technology, from religious pamphlets in the Reformation to digital activism today. Key phases include ideological clashes in pre-20th century Europe, the rise of global identity politics, and the 21st-century amplification through social media and AI-driven algorithms. Culture wars rely on strategic fragmentation to control narratives, divide groups, and maintain power structures. This lecture examines the fragmentation strategies employed by both external and internal agents to control social narratives surrounding translation and interpreting (TI). The discussion will analyze how governments, corporations, AI developers, and policymakers leverage gatekeeping mechanisms, linguistic hegemony, automation, and algorithmic control to shape perceptions of TI and isolate professionals. Additionally, the lecture will explore how professional organizations, elite interpreters, and industry leaders contribute to fragmentation through practices such as hierarchizing TI professions, enforcing myths of neutrality, and discouraging cross-sector solidarity. This lecture will offer a preliminary examination of the intersection of power, technology, and labor in shaping the future of linguistic work. Counter-strategies for resistance, including ethical AI policies, multilingual advocacy, grassroots professional recognition, and digital literacy initiatives, will be proposed to foster solidarity and protect linguistic diversity.

### **Bio**

Dr. Esther Monzó-Nebot is Associate Professor of Translation and Interpreting Studies at Universitat Jaume I, where she also serves as Director of the Master's in Researching Translation and Interpreting. Her research explores the intersections of translation, technology, and society, with a focus on legal and institutional translation, digital sociology, and translation politics. She holds a PhD in the Sociology of Translation and Interpreting and previously held a professorship in that area at the University of Graz, Austria. Her recent work examines the ethical dimensions of machine translation and artificial intelligence, particularly concerning marginalized communities and language minorities. She leads the international research network GenTech, which investigates gender aspects arising from the digitalization of translation and interpreting, as well as the research group Translation and Postmonolingualism (TRAP). Through her publications, editorial roles, and participation in policy initiatives on language rights and equity, she actively promotes the engagement of scholars with social justice issues.