

## ABSTRACT

Invited Talks: 3 September, 2013

Invited Talk 2

**Date and Time:** September 3rd

**Speaker:** Dr. Violeta Seretan

**Organisation:** University of Geneva (Switzerland)

**Bio:** Violeta Seretan is a Senior Researcher at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting, University of Geneva. She received her PhD in Computational Linguistics from the University of Geneva in 2008. She has been a Lecturer at the Language Technology Laboratory in the Department of Linguistics of the University of Geneva (2008-2010), then a visiting researcher at Institute for Language, Cognition and Computation at the University of Edinburgh (2010-2011). Her research interests are in language analysis, computational lexicography, machine translation and language generation. She has authored a book and over 30 papers in international journals and conference proceedings in these areas.

**Title:** On Translating Syntactically-Flexible Expressions

**Abstract:** The performance of translation systems largely depends on their ability to identify the units of meaning in text. These units are not limited to single words, but, to a large extent, they are represented by multi-word expressions. Because of their non-compositionality, such expressions cannot be accounted for in a word-by-word basis, but have to be processed as a whole. A major challenge in processing them is, however, their syntactic flexibility: While theoretical studies describe multi-word expressions as relatively fixed, with the syntactic fixedness going hand in hand with the semantic opacity, evidence from corpus-based studies showed that there is a surprising range of variation, leading to the discontinuity of the composing items. This presentation will first look at the extent to which existing translation paradigms are able to cope with this discontinuity. Then, it will outline the findings of an empirical study showing that syntactic flexibility affects the translation performance, but to a degree which is dependent on the type of the systems (rule-based vs. statistical). The recent advances in hybrid machine translation, which integrate grammatical modelling in statistical machine translation, may provide a suitable solution to the flexibility challenge in translating multi-word expressions.