Translation in the hands of many

Centering Lay Users in Machine Translation Interactions

B. Savoldi, A. Ramponi, M. Negri, L. , Bentivogli

FONDAZIONE BRUNO KESSLER

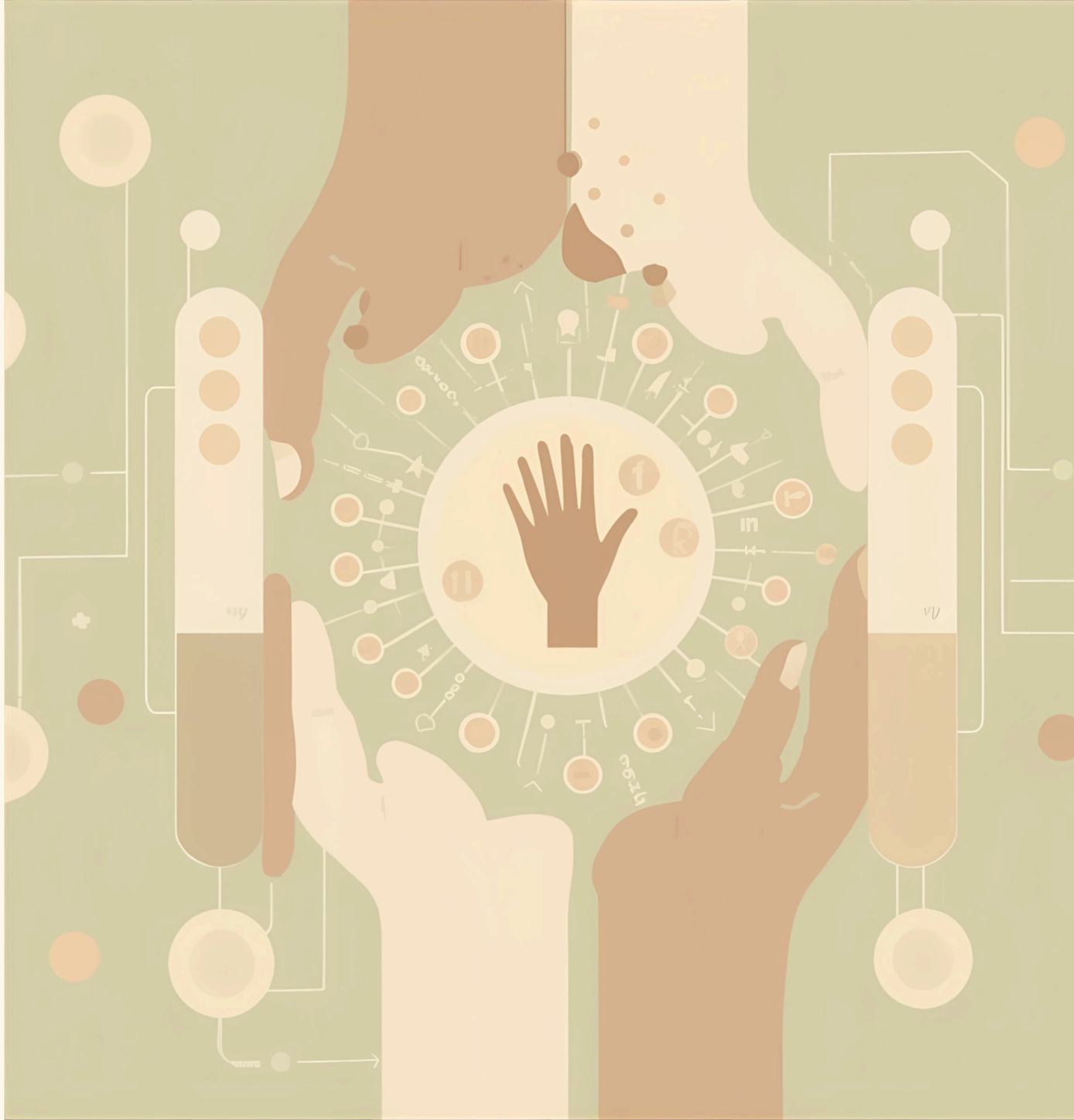
MT MACHINE TRANSLATION

DH DIGITAL HUMANITIES

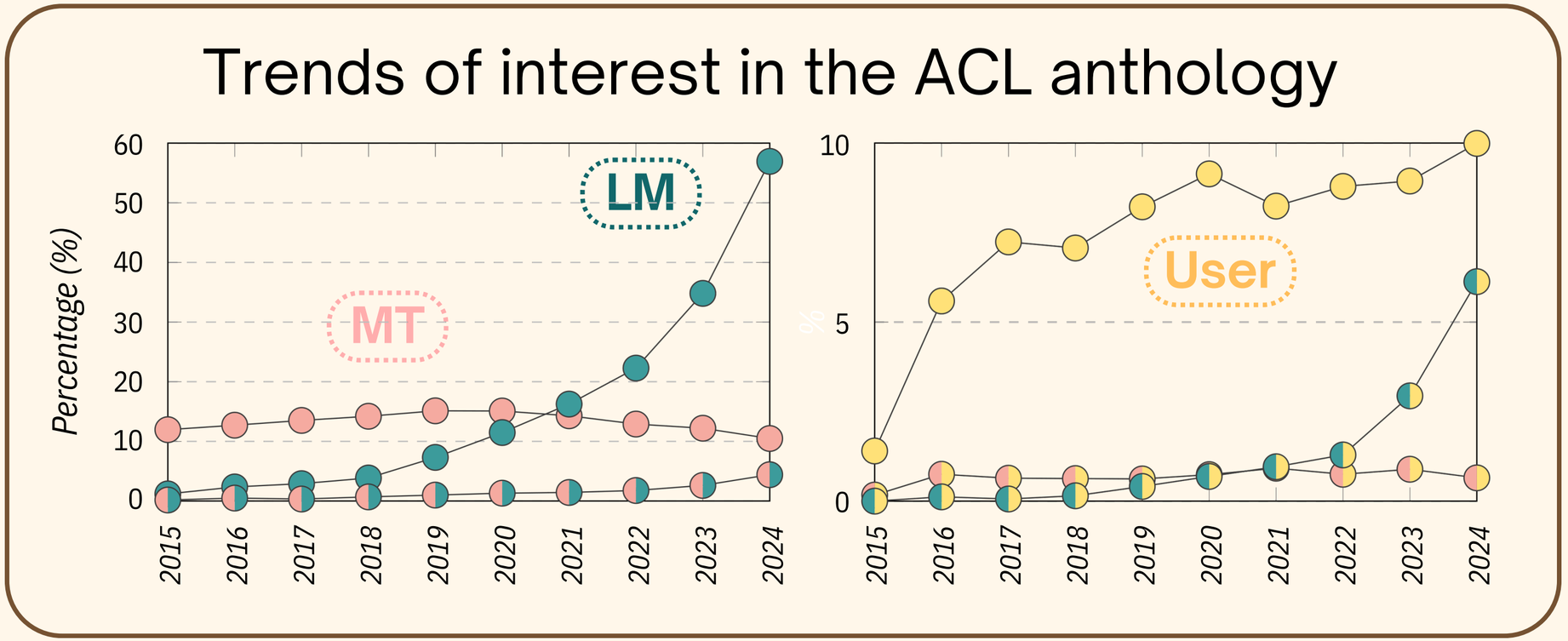
Position

The success of technology hinges on its ability to serve users

- MT cornerstone application, with wide adoption
- Yet, research on lay users and their interactions with the technology remains limited



MT is a global tool, with **LLMs** now powering multilingual needs and **users** concerns have increased



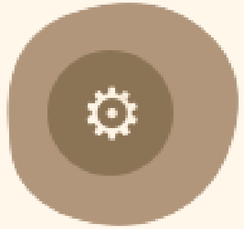
An temporal outlook and shift

- Historical prevalence of real-world applications of MT has regarded “**mixed MT**” workflows

- **Raw output** consumed by lay users is comparatively more recent

    - ...rise of Web and personal devices
    - stronger MT capabilities and language coverage
    - multilingual demands

Usability



Align with Users

We optimize what we measure—but generic performance scores miss usability in achieving goals.

Trust

Calibrate Reliance

Fluency can mask critical errors—transparency and uncertainty can help calibrate appropriate trust.

Literacy

Empower Users

MT is a two-way interaction—literacy equips users to be agentic and with critical engagement.

A call to Action

- Design with users in mind and for utility
- Surface uncertainty and transparency
- Foster user agency
- Bridge disciplines

Curated literature on human-centered MT

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Thanks for your attention!

Poster Session
Nov 5
11:00–12:30
Hall C

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