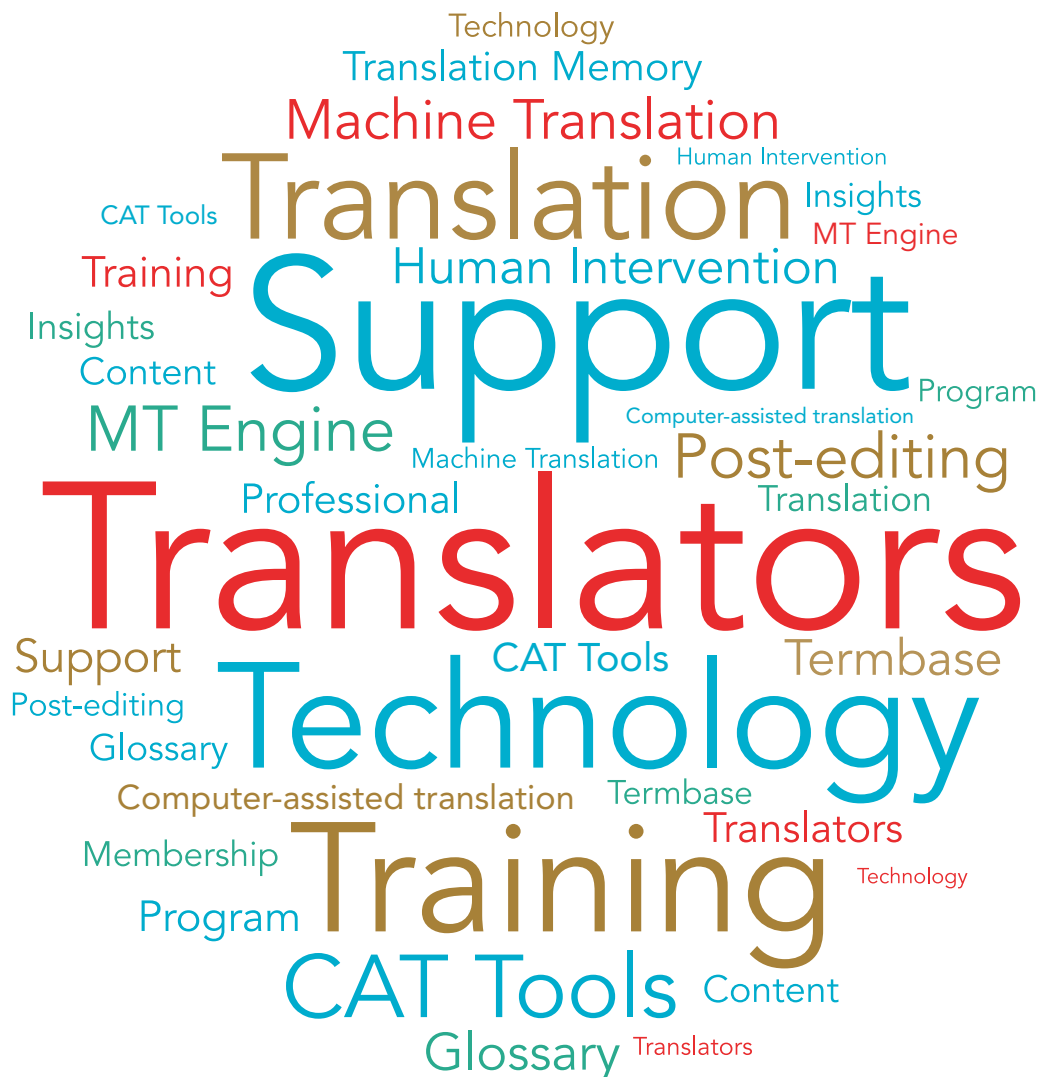


CIOL INSIGHTS

Translators and Technology

November 2021



Foreword

Technology dominates every area of our lives and the translation profession is no exception. In technological terms, the nature of the work done by our translator members and their colleagues in the wider profession has changed radically over the last 20 years and the range of tools available is both extensive and evolving rapidly. This report – the latest in the CIOL Insights series – provides an invaluable snapshot of translators' current use of technology and their attitudes towards it. As the survey findings show, while many have embraced the changes, learned new skills and adopted new working practices, a number of challenges remain, particularly around pricing models and client education. Nonetheless, in an industry that is increasingly technology-led, it is clear that skilled human translators still have a critical role to play in providing the linguistic, cultural and subject-matter expertise required to produce the high-quality work demanded by discerning clients. CIOL will continue to promote the value of professional translators, support and develop its members and represent their interests as they navigate through this fast-changing landscape.

John Worne

CEO, Chartered Institute of Linguists

Contents

Introduction	4
About the survey	5
Structure	6
Use of translation tools – overview	6
Translation memory	8
Machine translation	11
Attitudes to translation technology	15
Barriers to use of translation tools	20
Conclusion	22
Appendix	23

Introduction

CIOL is the only UK-based professional body for all language practitioners. Its members work as translators, interpreters, teachers, university lecturers and trainers, or use their foreign-language skills in sectors ranging from business and industry to government, health care, the justice system, police and the armed forces.

As a Chartered body, CIOL not only serves its own members but aims to be an authoritative and respected voice promoting the use of language skills and the status of language professionals, both in the UK and internationally. With over 7,000 members spanning all areas of language work and an extensive network of Language Partners, it is uniquely well positioned to gather and disseminate reliable information about the sector.

This survey on translators and technology is the latest in the CIOL Insights series. Previous surveys, focusing on the languages professions, careers and qualifications, and the relationship between language professionals and language service providers, are available in the Resources section of the CIOL website¹.

The purpose of the survey reported here was to examine translators' use and perceptions of translation technologies in order to:

- Produce a snapshot of translators and their relationship to technology in 2021
- Establish a baseline for future work on the use of translation technology and attitudes to it
- Learn more about translators' needs in relation to translation technology, particularly with regard to training.

Together, CIOL Insights surveys form a body of knowledge on the experiences of practising and aspiring linguists and the changes taking place in the languages sector, and contribute to CIOL's strategic aims of developing, supporting and representing its members and the wider professional community.

¹<https://www.ciol.org.uk/resources-public-policy#resources>

About the survey

Methodology

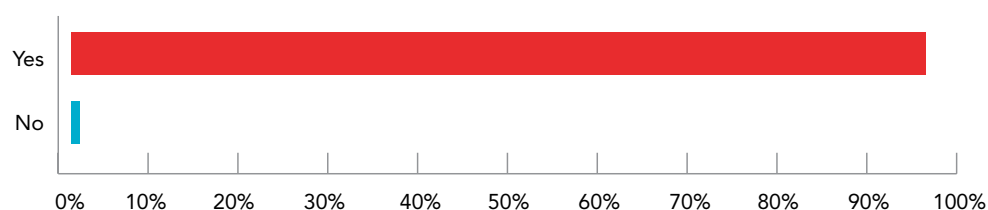
The CIOL Insights survey on translators and technology ran online for four weeks, from May to June 2021. It posed a series of open and closed questions² on translators’ experiences of a range of translation technologies, combining quantitative and open-ended responses.

The survey was promoted through CIOL’s website, social media channels and monthly members’ update. The total number of respondents was 246.

Profile of respondents

1. Area of work

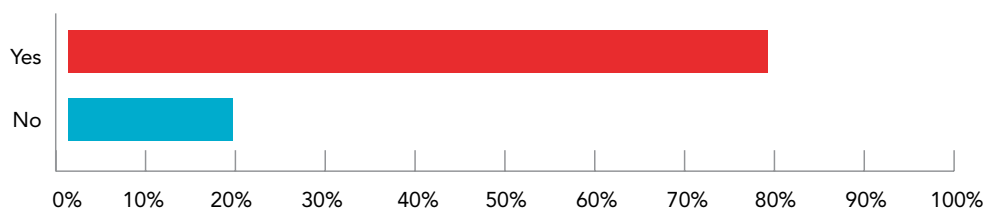
Q1. Do you consider yourself a translator?



Over 99% of respondents identified themselves as translators.

2. Membership of CIOL

Q2. Are you a member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists?



Just over 81% of respondents were CIOL members, with 19% of responses from non-members.

²The full list of questions can be found in the appendix.

Structure

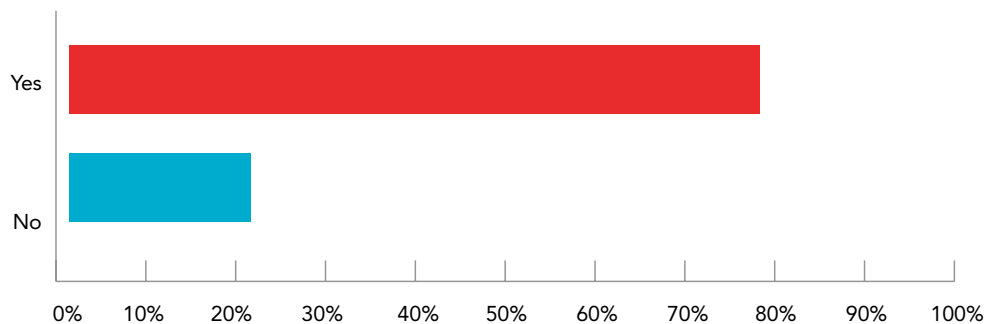
The following sections report on the survey’s findings on:

- Use of translation tools – overview (questions 6, 7, 8 and 10)
- Translation memory (questions 11, 12, 13 and 18)
- Machine translation (questions 9, 14, 15, 16 and 17)
- Attitudes to translation technology (questions 20, 21, 22 and 24)
- Barriers to the use of translation tools (questions 19 and 23)

Use of translation tools – overview

For the purpose of this survey, the terms ‘translation tools’ and ‘translation technology’ encompassed computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools typically comprising several components, including a translation memory (TM) and glossary/termbase (TB), and machine translation (MT) systems. Specific questions on translation memory tools and machine translation are covered separately in the relevant sections below.

Q6. Do you use translation tools to assist in the completion of your translation projects?

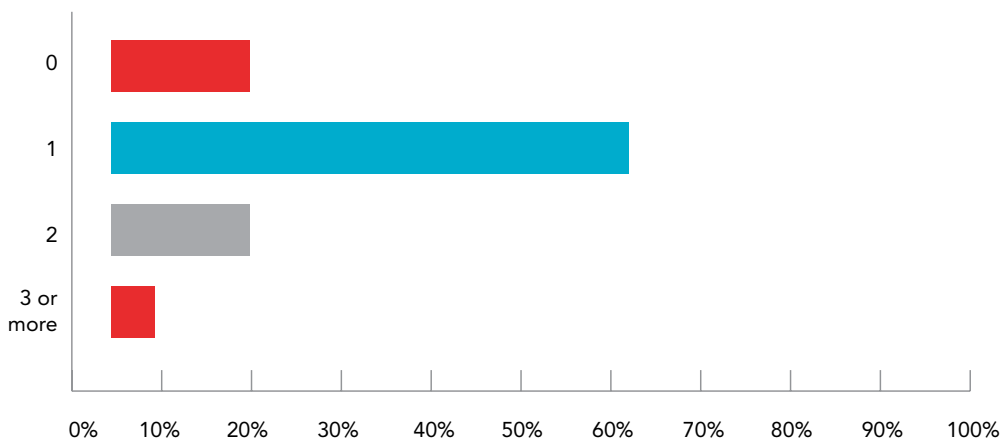


As the chart above shows, an overwhelming majority of respondents – almost 80% – reported using translation tools in their work. This appears to confirm the finding of the “increasing requirement for translators to use computer-aided translation (CAT) tools” noted in the first CIOL Insights survey on The Languages Professions 2019 – 2020³, while the use of machine translation is much less common (see “Machine translation” on the next page).

Almost 80% of respondents use translation tools

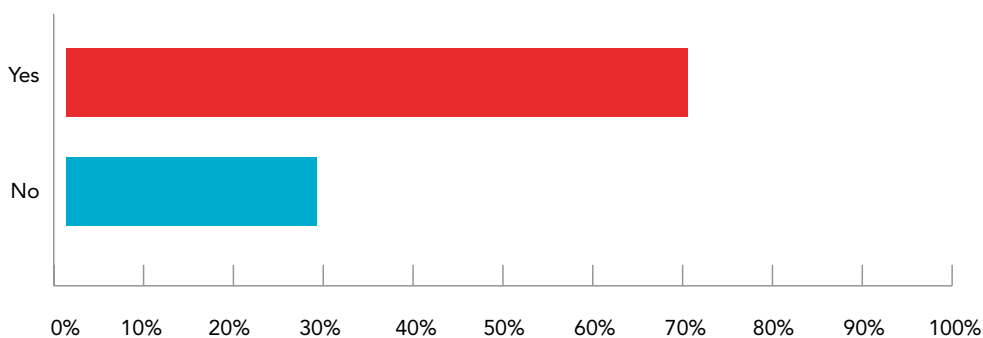
³Available at www.ciol.org.uk/ciol-insights-languages-professions

Q7. How many CAT/translation tools do you own a licence for?



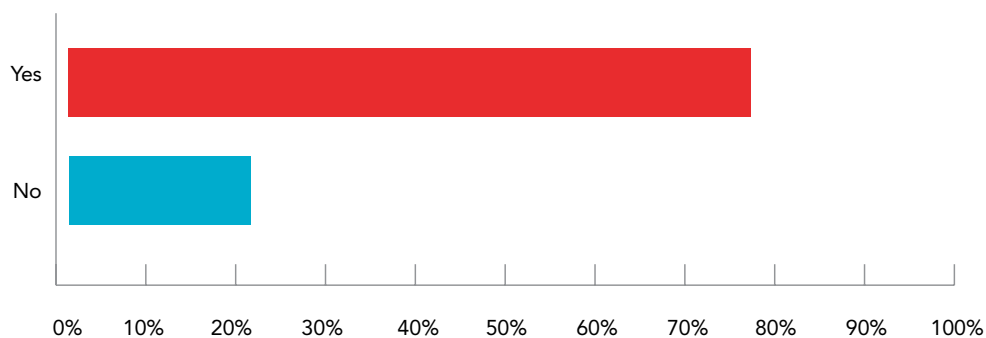
Perhaps more surprisingly, given the number of tools available and the differing preferences of language service providers (LSPs), most respondents (61%) reported owning only one licence, with 17% owning two and just 5% owning three or more. A further 16.6% of respondents indicated that they did not own any licences at all. This last figure may be because the respondents concerned are among those who do not use translation tools, but could also reflect the number of translators who are using technology provided by LSP clients, removing the need to purchase their own copy of the software. This may also be a factor in the relatively small number of translators who own multiple licences: they may only purchase a licence for their preferred and/or most commonly used tool, using the LSP’s platform or technology in other cases. Other scenarios could include choosing not to work for clients who require the use of a particular tool, perhaps because of the cost of purchasing multiple tools and keeping them up to date, and the effort involved in learning to use them. Finally, the ability of certain tools to handle the proprietary file formats of other tools may limit the need for translators to own multiple licences.

Q8. Have you had the use of translation tools mandated to you by clients in the last 12-24 months?



Some 72% of respondents indicated that the use of translation tools had been mandated to them by clients in the last one to two years, however the extent to which this was willingly accepted was not clear: it may be that those who answered ‘yes’ to this question would have used a translation tool as a matter of preference, whether or not it was required by their clients. Similarly, among those who answered ‘no’, there may be translators who are happy to use such tools, but who have clients who do not require it. This is more likely to be the case among translators who work with end clients rather than LSPs, or who work in sectors where translation tools are of limited use – for example, in highly creative marketing, advertising or literary translation.

Q10. Do you use a glossary/termbase?



According to the answers for the last question in this section, a large majority (almost 80%) of translators use a glossary or termbase. Whether these are their own resources or supplied by a client was not clear but is likely to depend on the translator’s working environment, with translators who own their software more likely to maintain their own termbase within it, and those working with the LSP’s technology more likely to draw on a client’s in-house resources, possibly in combination with their own.

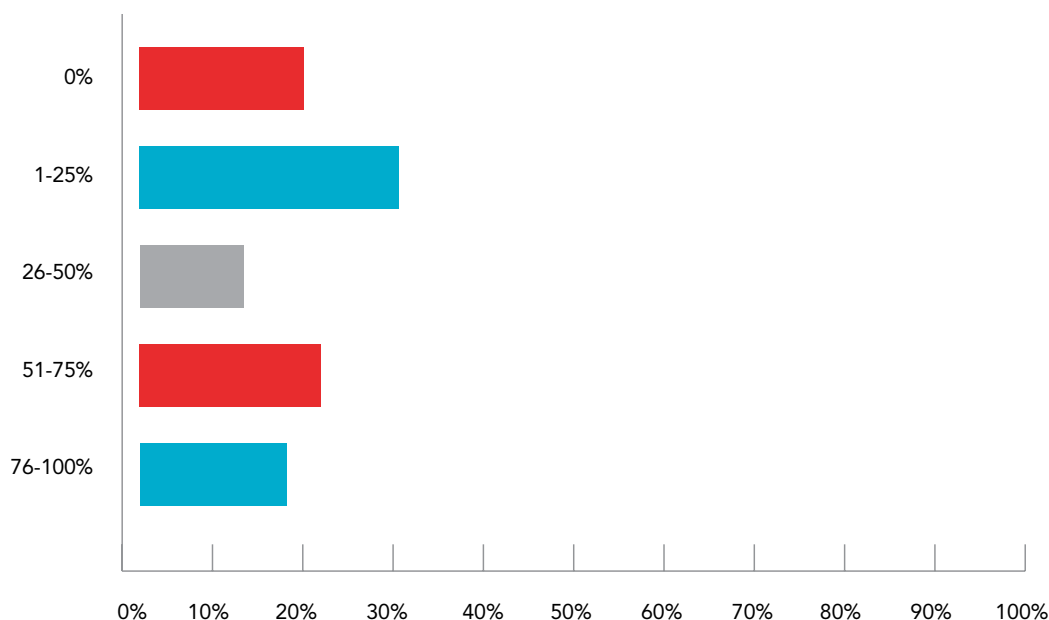
Translation memory tools

The translation memory – a database that stores sentences, paragraphs or segments of text that have been translated before – is the core component of computer-assisted translation tools and often viewed as synonymous with them. LSPs who use CAT tools in their workflow typically ‘pre-translate’ the files for translation by running them through the translation memory. Whenever a translation for a specific source-language segment is available in the translation memory, it is used to fill in the related target-language segment. The translator therefore receives a partially translated bilingual file to work on. Generally, the LSP will set the threshold for pre-translation so that only full (100%) or ‘context’ (known as 101%) matches are pre-inserted into the file for translation (the latter being deemed more accurate than a full match, as the segments either side are also full matches). Pre-translated files with a very high proportion of full and context matches – for example, an updated set of terms and conditions with a small number of changes – will need only limited editing of the target segments.

Conversely, pre-translation will have limited value if the proportion of full, context and ‘high fuzzy’ matches (where the target segment almost matches the segment in the translation memory but is not identical) is low.

Survey respondents were asked to comment on how often they were sent content that had already been processed by their client’s translation memory program, i.e. they were sent a pre-translated, bilingual file for translation.

Q11. How often are you sent content that has been through a client’s translation memory program?



As shown above, the responses appear to indicate that the use of pre-translated files by clients is perhaps less common than might be expected, with 19% of respondents indicating that they never receive pre-translated content, 31% reporting that they receive it up to a quarter of the time, and 12.5% between a quarter and half the time. Just 16.5% of respondents said they were sent pre-translated content more than three quarters of the time, with the remainder (21%) receiving it between half and three quarters of the time.

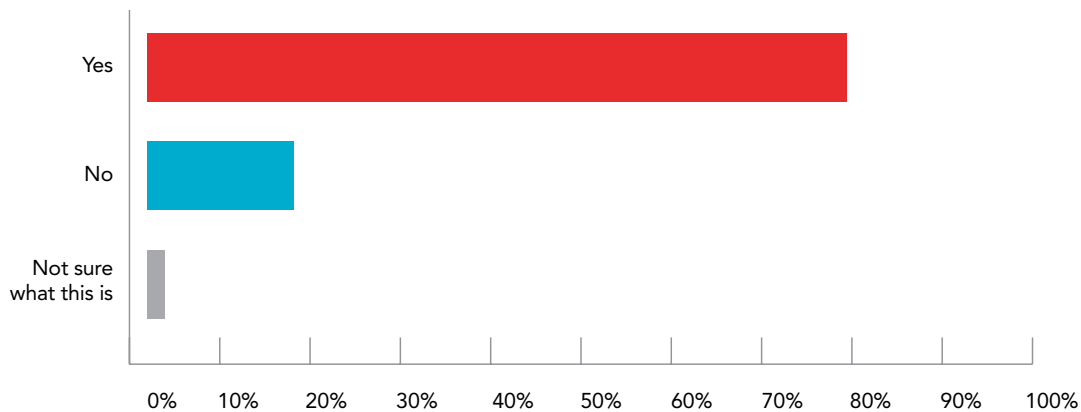
There could be a number of reasons for this. First, not all translators work for LSPs, and few direct clients are likely to work with translation tools. Secondly, not all LSPs work with translation tools – for example, if they are very small or work solely in transcreation. Thirdly, it is possible – though unlikely – that LSPs that do work with CAT tools may not pre-translate files, instead sending the translator the

source files and the relevant translation memory, in which case the translator may pre-translate the files themselves. Finally, as mentioned above, not all content or file formats lend themselves to the use of translation tools, so some projects may not involve the use of a translation memory even if both client and translator are equipped and willing to use them on other occasions.

The responses to the following question (“Do you maintain your own translation memory?”) may shed some light on this, with almost 82% of respondents answering that they did and just 16% reporting that they did not, with a further 2% unsure what this was.

These results suggest that translators may be more reliant on their own resources than those coming

Q12. Do you maintain your own translation memory?

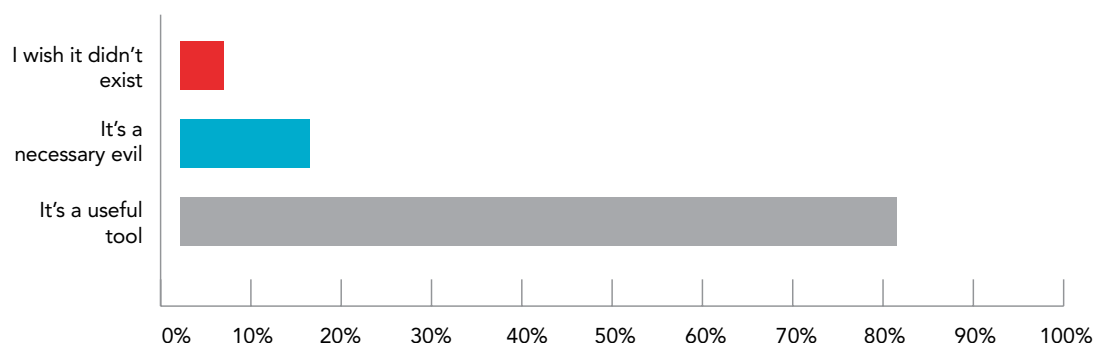


from clients, which may explain the relatively limited use of pre-translated files indicated above.

Respondents who stated that they maintained their own translation memory were then asked to estimate how much time this had saved them. The majority indicated that they had indeed saved time, with over 50% reporting time savings of up to 30%, 17% saying they had saved between 31% and 50%, and a smaller proportion (12%) indicating savings of 51% or more. Again, the amount of time saved is likely to be heavily dependent on the nature of the content, but the quality of the translation memory will also be a significant factor.

Over 50% of respondents reported time savings of up to 30% using TM

Q18. What is your view of translation memory?

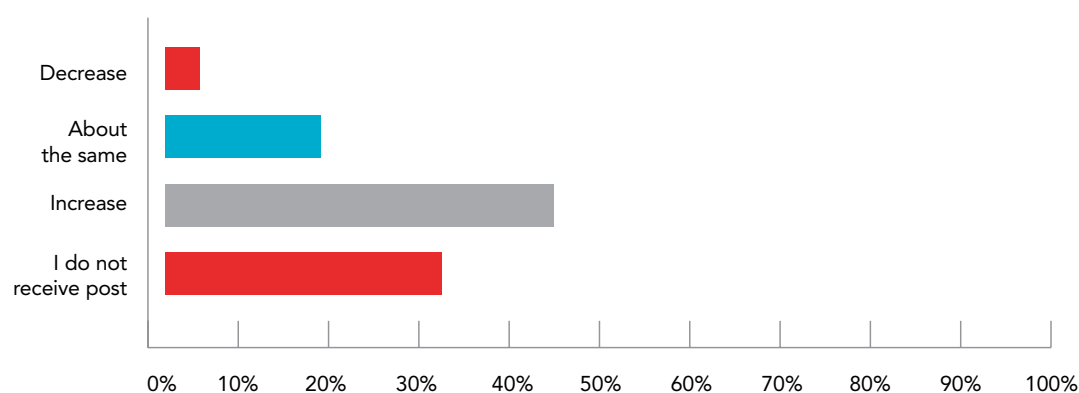


Given that saving time on translation tasks is likely to be seen as beneficial, it is not surprising that in general, respondents were highly positive about using translation memory: 80% of them agreed with the statement “It’s a useful tool”. Nonetheless, just under 16% were more reticent, agreeing with the statement “It’s a necessary evil”, while 4% indicated “I wish it didn’t exist”. The reasons for these responses are explored in more detail in “Attitudes to translation technology” below.

Machine translation

Machine translation (MT) or automated translation is a process that uses computer software to translate text from one language to another without human involvement. Post-editing is the process whereby human translators amend machine-generated translation to achieve an acceptable final product.

Q9. Have you seen an increase or decrease in offers of post-editing projects in the last 12-24 months?



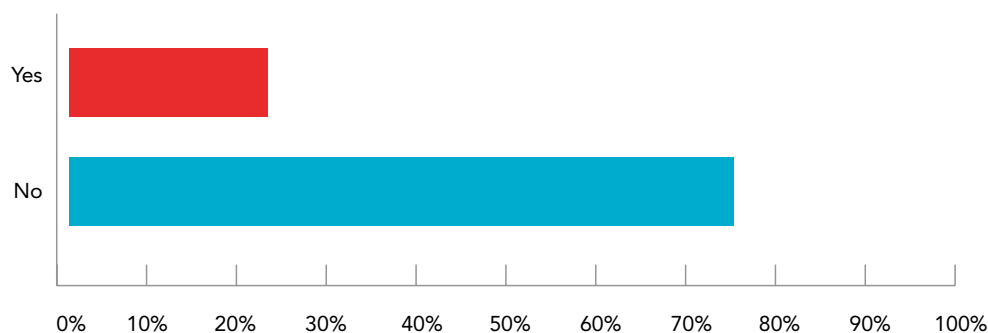
While a substantial minority (32.6%) of respondents reported that they did not receive post-editing projects at all, almost half indicated that they had seen an increase in offers of post-editing work in the past one to two years. A further 17.7% had seen little change, while just over 4.5% had seen offers decrease. The proportion seeing an increase is unsurprising among translators working with LSPs, for many of whom machine translation is now a standard part of their workflow, particularly for large projects with relatively consistent content. The implications, however, are interesting in three ways: the role of the translator, the impact on jobs and the challenge to volume-based pricing models.

Almost half of respondents reported an increase in offers of post-editing work

According to the memoQ Trend Report 2019⁴, the increased availability and improved quality of MT technology has made it possible for even small companies to offer large volumes of translated content. However, that content still requires human intervention to produce the level of quality required, potentially increasing the amount of work available. Nonetheless, translators who take on post-editing work need to master the specific skills required, suggesting a need for training and formal accreditation in this field. In particular, while neural machine translation (NMT) is considered to produce a more fluent and generally grammatically correct text compared with earlier, rules-based forms of MT, editing requires a high level of attention to detail to spot errors and omissions. It seems clear that as the translator’s role moves increasingly towards that of expert editor, volume-based pricing models (i.e. payment by the word, line, page, etc.) are becoming outmoded. According to the same report, “there needs to be an efficient way to measure post-editing efforts and then pay translators accordingly”, for example, using an hourly rate or per-project basis. Both scenarios represent a challenge to existing industry practices and rely on dialogue and a relationship of trust between the translator and their client.

Volume-based pricing models are becoming outmoded

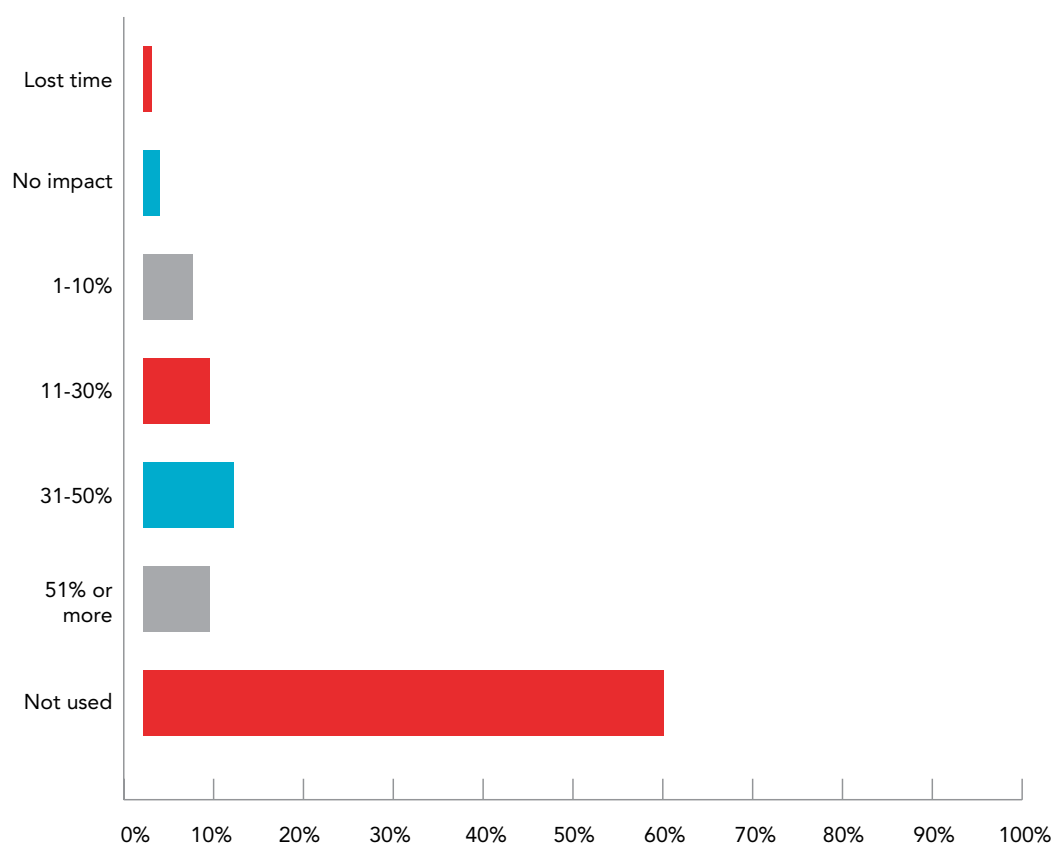
Q14. Do you use a your own machine translation engine?



⁴Available at: <https://trends.memoq.com/machine-translation-impacts-translation/>. Accessed August 2021

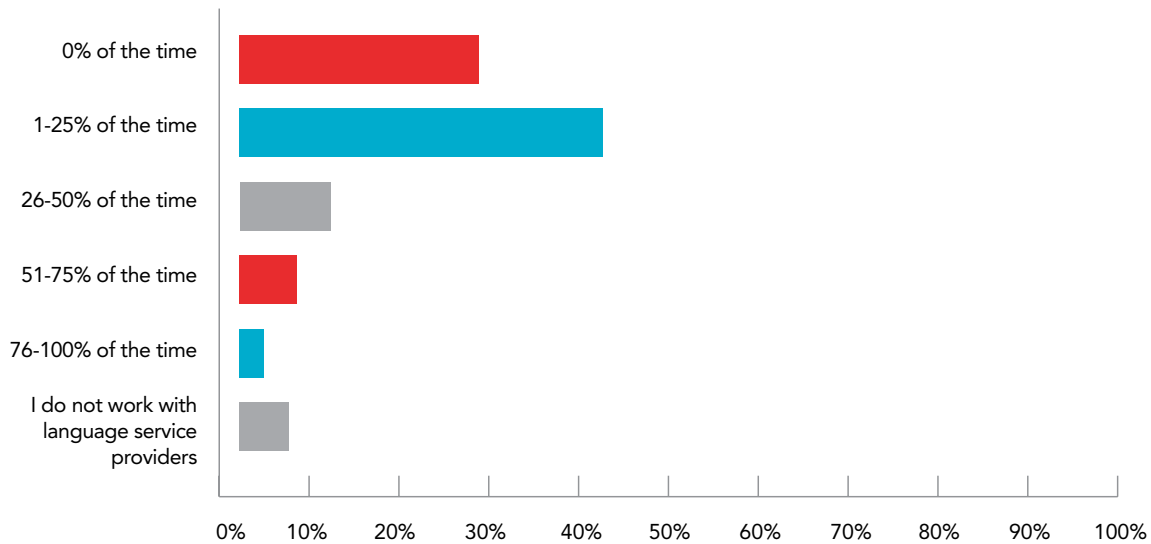
As the chart shows, far fewer respondents indicated that they used their own MT engine compared with the 82% of translators who reported that they maintained their own TM, with just over a fifth (21.6%) managing their own MT resources. Perceived complexity, a lack of relevant technical skills, a reluctance to use MT in general and a lack of access to sufficient volumes of data may all be explanatory factors.

Q15. If you do use a machine translation engine, could you estimate on average how much time this has saved you?



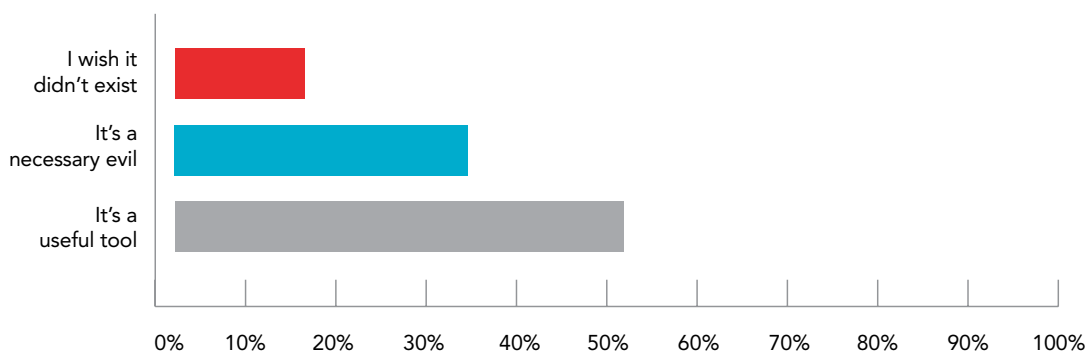
According to the survey results, the time savings generated by using an MT engine appear less clear-cut than with translation memory. Over 65% of respondents stated that they did not MT, while relatively small numbers reported significant time savings: around 10.5% estimated that using an MT engine produced time savings of 31-50%, and just 8% indicated time savings of 51% or more. This apparent mismatch between what is widely promoted as the key benefit of MT and translators’ practical experience of it may explain why take-up seems to be low compared with translation memory systems.

Q16. How often are you sent content that has been through a client's machine translation engine?



The use of MT also appears to be much less widespread among LSPs. As the responses above show, almost 30% of the survey respondents never receive content that has been processed by a client's machine translation engine, and most receive it less than 25% of the time, with only around 11% being sent content that has been pre-translated using MT more than half the time.

Q17. What is your view of machine translation?

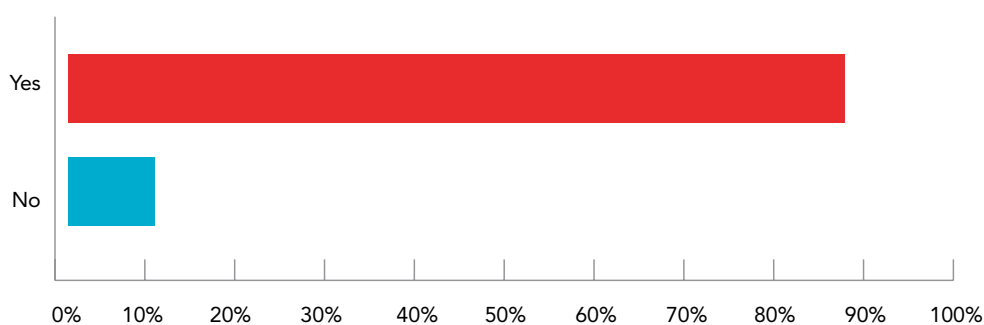


Finally, overall attitudes to machine translation were evenly split, with 50% of respondents viewing it as a useful tool and the remainder either "wishing it didn't exist" (15.6%) or seeing it as "a necessary evil" (34.1%). These findings are much more negative than the respondents' attitudes to translation memory, 80% of whom viewed TM as a useful tool, with just 4% opting for "I wish it didn't exist".

Attitudes to translation technology

In general terms, an overwhelming majority of respondents (90.3%) felt that technology had improved since they first started using it.

Q20. Has technology improved since you first started using it?



The question “Overall, what is your view of translation technology?”, however, produced some considerably more nuanced and interesting responses, ranging from the highly positive (“In my language pair, I can see fabulous options now”) to the very negative (“I hate it. If clients insist that I use it, I will go into another profession”) and in certain cases, diametrically opposed (“It saves our time and money” / “A waste of time and too expensive”)! As will be seen below, attitudes were broadly much more positive towards translation memory/glossary tools than machine translation.

Among respondents who commented on the positives they saw in translation technology, **consistency** was the most commonly mentioned benefit: statements such as “It’s an incredibly useful tool for maintaining consistency” were widely echoed. In most cases, the emphasis was on terminological consistency and more than one respondent pointed out the value of building up a termbase (glossary) for regular clients, or using concordance searches of the translation memory to check how particular terms had been translated in previous projects. Even respondents who were less keen on working with CAT tools conceded that they were useful for consistency. Others mentioned the importance of keeping consistent terminology when multiple translators worked on different projects for the same end client, and in collaborative projects, with one respondent commenting, “It is impossible to collaborate with others without a translation tool”.

Consistency and collaboration are the key benefits of translation technology...

Other positives mentioned were the fact that segmentation helped the translator not to miss out any of the text and that the tools provided a better interface in which to work than, for example, Word.

One respondent, for instance, commented “I also find that having the interface of a CAT tool makes translation more enjoyable and satisfying” (though others would disagree, as outlined below). Another found inspiration from their previous translations in the translation memory when working on a difficult passage of text, while one mentioned quality assurance and using the TM as a back-up in the event of the tool or a word-processing program crashing.

A large number of respondents described translation technology as “useful”, but with a series of caveats, summed up by one translator as “useful but not sufficient”. Several, for example, found the technology available to be “useful, if in the hands of professional translators”, while one commented that “like dictionaries, it [translation memory] needs to be used with caution and by expert linguists”.

Human intervention was another common theme. As one respondent commented, “All tools in the toolbox are useful, but you still need to know how to translate, and they can’t replace humans.” Several respondents commented on the usefulness of translation technology being dependent on the subject matter concerned. Creative translation was seen as particularly unsuitable, with one respondent commenting “I do a lot of transcreation and the human touch cannot (yet!) be replicated” and another expressing their view of MT based on their recent experience: “No matter how good machine translation is, I can’t believe it can produce fully localised creative text. It can’t write ads for a British audience or adapt blog articles to make them applicable to an international readership, both of which I’ve had to do in the last couple of days.” Areas mentioned in which translation memory programs were felt to be more useful included, for example, “large chunks of contracts [and] repetitive/technical texts” but still with the caveat that “it depends on how good it [the translation memory] is.” Another respondent echoed this, commenting, “Very useful for some types of translation such as technical [or] government documentation [or] manuals where there are a lot of set phrases, terms, and repetition, etc.”

The human touch cannot (yet!) be replicated

Linked to the notion of human intervention in the translation process were various comments about **enjoyment**, with one respondent commenting that although they found using a translation memory useful and that it saved them time, it “also takes the fun out of translating”. Others talked about a loss of **creativity** or finding their work less interesting, saying that they felt it “very much takes away from the creative process of translation” or that they “did [their] best thinking/most creative work without a CAT tool”. One respondent went further, seeing it as “a hindrance for documents that require originality or flair in the translation”, while another remarked in relation to MT, “Sometimes it makes it harder to actually translate something because you have the machine translation in your head, thus making your output less natural.”

Complexity was a concern for a number of respondents. While one respondent found tools to be “slow and cumbersome”, others commented on the difficulties of getting to grips with multiple tools and then keeping up to date with them as features were added and changed. One person responded: “Very baffling when coming back to translation after many years and I spend longer trying to work out how to use it and worrying that I’ll seem unprofessional if I don’t understand something or the lingo ... Maybe I’ll get used to it. But when I first heard about it, I nearly decided not to bother coming back to translating”. Some respondents saw tools as being too feature-rich and felt that they only used the basic functions.

Time was mentioned in a number of different ways. Numerous respondents referred to the time savings generated by using translation tools, saying, for example, that there are “aspects of translation technology that are essential for speeding up the process (depending on the content) and ensuring consistency”. This was particularly true for translators who worked for the same clients regularly or frequently translated similar texts. Others, however, commented on the time they had to spend on training to learn new tools or new features, or felt that opening/creating files or updating translation memories was too time-consuming to be worthwhile on small projects.

Financial issues were raised frequently. For one respondent, the changes brought about by technology meant that it was now “harder to quote on jobs and understand whether we are being paid fairly or whether we are earning less. Billing is not transparent and different clients/agencies calculate this in different ways. We aren’t always paid for 100% matches even though we have to check them. We have to check against the original PDF but aren’t paid for this either. There are lots of little extras that don’t seem to be taken into consideration.” While at least one respondent found that “Good agencies (...) seem to work out the weighting fairly”, another commented that “Many translators are already undervaluing themselves – and undercharge. That’s a worry.” Several respondents felt that the increasing use of technology had put downward pressure on rates and had had a negative impact on their income. Others went further, with one respondent stating, “Machine translation would be fine, if only clients didn’t use it to cut rates right back and pay slave wages!” The cost of tools was a concern for some respondents, who felt that they were overpriced, while another raised the issue of fair distribution, saying: “Overall I think translation technology is both useful and necessary, but I am not happy with the way the industry has consistently passed all the profits from using it to the end client. I would have liked to have seen at least a small share going to the translator, who is expected to learn, use, maintain and train these tools while offering discounts that sometimes far outweigh the effort and outlay. I find MT particularly skewed in this sense as not even agencies seem to acknowledge that in their current state, MT engines often require more effort than translating from scratch. I have had big, well-known agencies tell translators that ‘while we appreciate it’s hard work right now, you will soon see the benefit as you are training the engine’ only to turn around a few months later and say ‘well, as the engine is now much better, we will be expecting further discounts from you’. Where is the incentive for the translator?” One other interesting response reflected on the relationship between translation technology and pricing: “Translation technology per se can be a very useful tool. The problem is how it’s been used to calculate translation costs, via per-word discounts, and therefore reduce translators’ income. If translators were paid per hour, there would be no problem with translation tools and/or machine translation.”

...but complexity, time and financial issues are barriers to adoption

The “radical difference” between translation memory tools and machine translation was highlighted by many respondents, with the former seen as useful and the latter having “a long way to go”. One response summed up several individuals’ views in stating, “CAT programs are fine. The rise of machine translation is forcing me to think about diversifying and/or seriously start looking for a new career. I am a well qualified translator but I do NOT want to spend the next 15-20 years post-editing machine translations. Feeling compelled to post-edit machine translations to tightly specified time limits takes away all the job satisfaction and enjoyment that comes from working as a translator.” Others, too, were

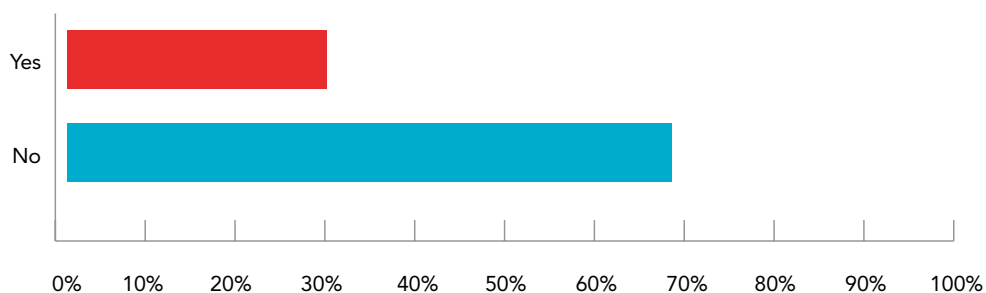
wary of MT, though several acknowledged that the output was improving and required less editing than in the past. A dislike of post-editing machine-translated output came out in several responses, partly on financial grounds and partly because of dissatisfaction with the end result. Others were fearful of its impact on jobs, concerned that MT would “kill off the profession and turn us all into editors working for next to nothing” or push a lot of translators out of the market entirely.

The need for **client education** was another theme to emerge from the responses. Several respondents commented on ever-shorter deadlines and clients over-estimating the ability of technology to speed up the translation process. One felt, for example, “that customers are ignorant of the fact that a good translation still takes time; customers seem to think that, with translation technology, projects can be completed very quickly and easily. This often leads to working late into the night and at weekends, or else refusing the job because of lack of time.” Others were frustrated by being sent “huge” TMs for small projects, while others deplored the lack of maintenance of LSPs’ translation memories, making them far less useful than they could be.

Ultimately, according to a number of respondents, translation technology is here to stay: “It’s not going to go away so it’s best to make the most of it and use it to our advantage.” Some positively embraced it or felt the benefits outweighed the disadvantages: “I find it does make my job quicker and easier. [...] As long as there’s plenty of human input too, I don’t think the quality is too badly affected. In fact, I’ve noticed a huge improvement in the quality of MT output in the last few years”. Others, however, were more resigned – “I don’t feel like there’s a choice, unfortunately” – or simply saw it as a commercial reality in an era of huge growth in content production: “In today’s market, you have to use translation technology to remain competitive”.

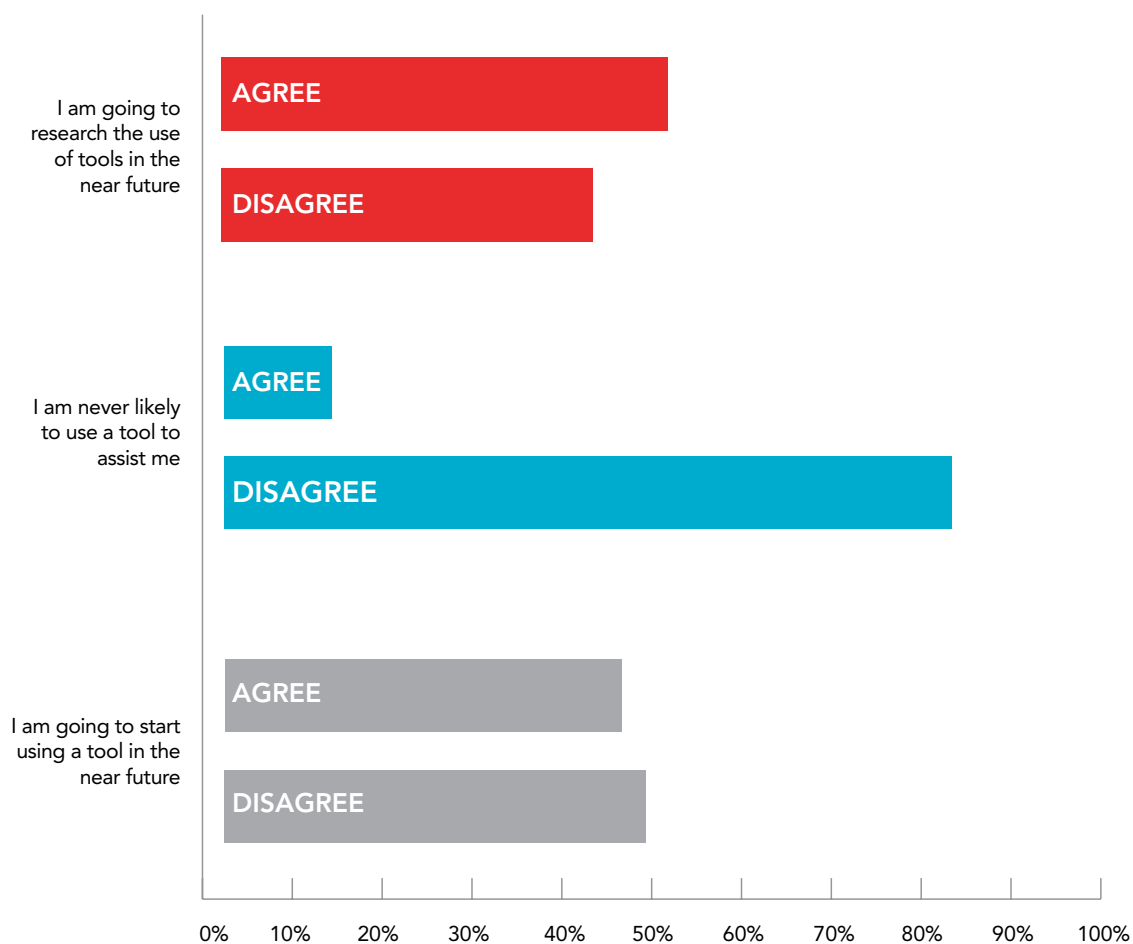
It seems that despite the perceived benefits of using translation technology cited by respondents, the caveats identified still apply. As shown below, when asked “Have you turned down work because the client has mandated the use of technology in the last 12-24 months?”, just over 30% said they had. It appears that LSPs and translation software suppliers still have some way to go in persuading translators of the benefits of using their technology.

Q22. Have you turned down work because the client has mandated the use of technology in the last 12-24 months?



Nonetheless, when asked to agree or disagree on a series of statements on whether they would be likely to research and/or use a tool in the future, the proportion of respondents stating that they were never likely to use a tool was relatively small, at 13%. Responses to the statements “I am going to research the use of tools in the near future” and “I am going to start using a tool in the near future” were fairly evenly split between those who agreed and those who disagreed, with slightly more (53.6%) agreeing with the first statement, compared with 47.6% for the second.

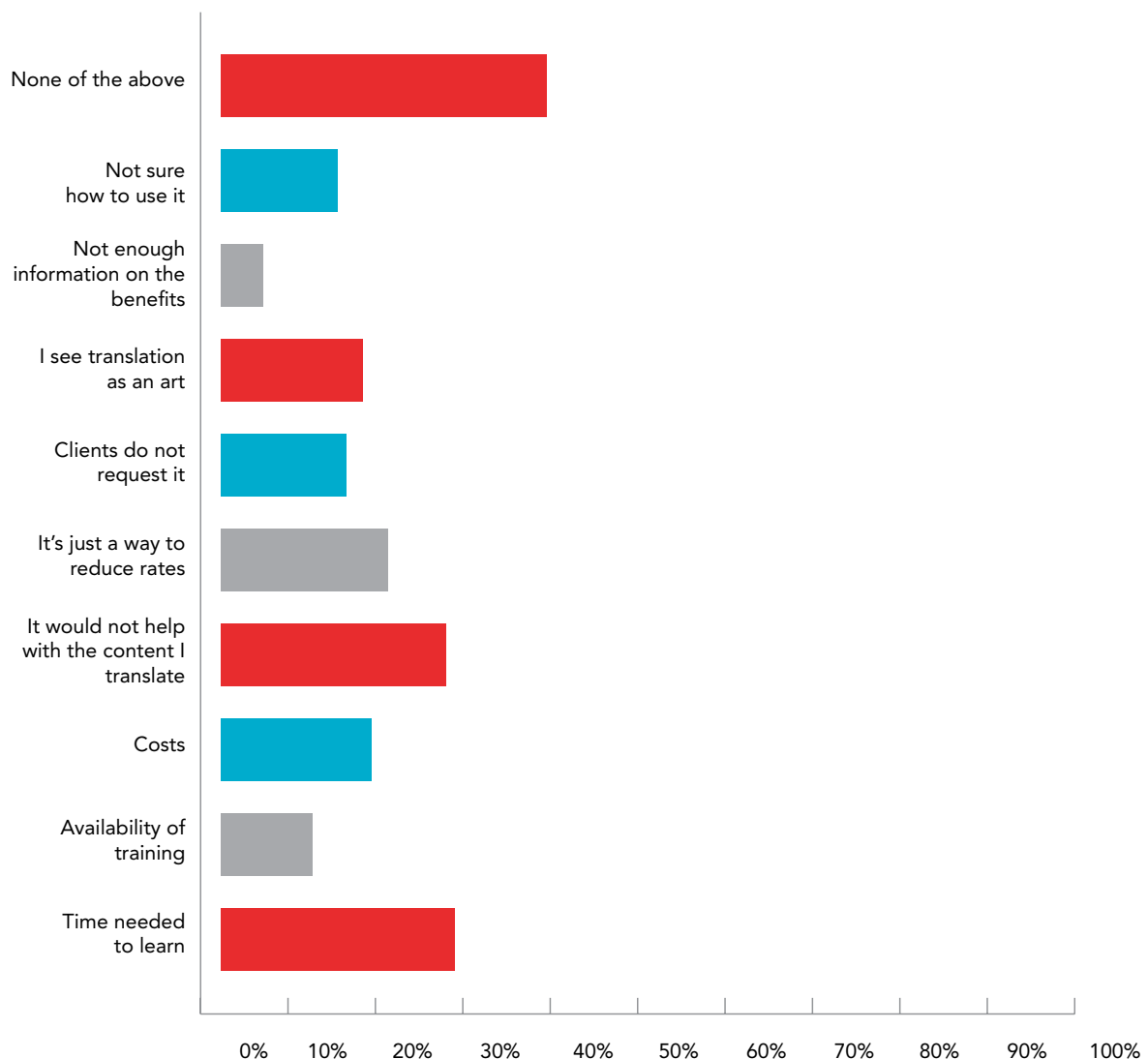
Q24. What is your view of each of these statements?



Barriers to the use of translation tools

Responses to the question “What is stopping you from using technology to assist you?” produced a useful summary of the points raised in the previous section, with a relatively even split of reasons, as shown below.

Q23. What is stopping you from using technology to assist you?



The top answer – “It would not help with the content I translate” was selected by 27.6% of respondents and echoed the verbatim responses given to an earlier question. “Time needed to learn” (26.6% of respondents) emerged as a significant barrier, along with the perception that “It is just a way to reduce rates” (21.1%). Taken together, the responses “Not sure how to use it” (14.1%), “Not enough information on the benefits” (5.5%) and “Availability of training” (11.1%) suggest a need for much more information and better training opportunities. Cost (18.1%), seeing translation as an art (16.6%) and a lack of demand from clients (15.6%) were other significant factors.

A number of respondents offered interesting reflections on the reasons why they do not use translation technology, two of which are reproduced here:

- “Software tools such as Trados, etc. undoubtedly have their place in certain subject fields and for some text genres and I know that many translators use it successfully. I would be very wary about using it in dealings with LSPs, however, as it has – in my view – the potential to further distort what is in many cases already a tense and unequal relationship, particularly when it comes to ‘fuzzy match’ rates, etc. On a personal level, I am yet to be convinced that it would help improve either the quality of my translations or my productivity, largely because of the type of work I do. Having tried it, admittedly on a very limited number of occasions, I found that it got in the way of my translation process, which is far from being logical and linear! I felt that it was pushing me down certain translation routes, that it encouraged repetition and paucity of vocabulary and that it acted as a brake on creativity. The time and effort I spent fighting against this tendency would have been better used formulating my own translation from the outset. That said, I have seen colleagues who use the glossary functions of such programs to great effect.”
- “I have Trados Studio 2019 because I came to believe I have to have a CAT tool, so I will try to learn to use it more proficiently so as not to waste the money I spent now I do have it. But I would have preferred not to have felt that I had to buy it and that I was going to be judged on the quality of my language work rather than technology, which is a different skill I am not naturally suited to. Anything can be learnt, but things against one’s skillset take a lot more work and effort and are therefore not as efficient or beneficial. Like being a team player. Ideally one looks for someone with complementary skills so as to work with one’s strengths. CAT tools for me mean I have to work against my strengths. That doesn’t mean I can’t translate, so why should I look less than I am because tech is not my strength? Anything can be learnt of course. To a degree.”

Conclusion

As the responses to the survey indicate, the use of translation technology is now embedded in many translators' working practices, in part dictated by their clients' requirements – particularly among those who work for LSPs – and in part by their own preferences. More mature technologies, such as translation memory systems, have gained widespread acceptance and are generally perceived as having at least some benefits (notably around consistency), even by those who are less enthusiastic about using them. Translators are much more wary, however about the use of machine translation and its impact on the nature of their work and the profession more broadly, while conceding that the results it produces have improved in recent years.

Above all, the consensus is that translation remains a human activity, with translation tools seen as just that: part of the toolbox that professionals use to produce accurate, consistent, well-written translations for their clients. Nonetheless, it is accepted that translation technology ("like the internal combustion engine", as one respondent put it), is here to stay and there is a clear need for more and better information and training to allow those translators whose work lends itself to the use of such tools to take full advantage of them.

Finally, as the use of translation tools increases, volume-based pricing models – despite the benefit of transparency they offer – have become outmoded, with the time taken to produce the quality of text required being the key factor in play. Shifting the dominant pricing model in the sector to hourly rates will undoubtedly challenge some industry stakeholders and requires a significant level of trust but would help align translators with professionals in other sectors and perhaps address what some perceive to be an imbalance of power between translators and their clients.

Appendix

CIOL Translators and Technology Insight Survey 2021 – list of questions

1. Do you consider yourself a translator?
2. Are you a member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists?
[3. to 5. – personal information]
6. Do you use translation tools (CAT tools, translation memory, machine translation) to assist in the completion of your translation projects?
7. How many CAT/translation tools do you own a licence for?
8. Have you had the use of translation tools mandated to you by clients in the last 12-24 months?
9. Have you seen an increase or decrease in offers of post-editing projects in the last 12-24 months?
10. Do you use a glossary/termbase?
11. How often are you sent content that has been through a client's translation memory program?
12. Do you maintain your own translation memory?
13. If you maintain your own translation memory, could you estimate, on average, how much time this has saved you?
14. Do you use your own machine translation engine?
15. If you do use a machine translation engine, could you estimate, on average, how much time this has saved you?
16. How often are you sent content that has been through a client's machine translation engine?
17. What is your view of machine translation?
18. What is your view of translation memory?
19. If you choose not to use a translation tool, what is stopping you from using technology?
20. Has technology improved since you first started using it?
21. Overall, what is your view of translation technology?
22. Have you turned down work because the client has mandated the use of technology in the last 12-24 months?
23. What is stopping you from using technology to assist you?
24. What is your view on each of these statements?
 - I am going to research the use of tools in the near future
 - I am never likely to use a tool to assist me
 - I am going to start using a tool in the near future



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