



CIOL

Sentiment & Surveys

CIOL Translators Day 2024

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The Chartered Institute of Linguists



Introduction – **Not** Steve Doswell!



Dom Hebblethwaite
Head of Membership

What we will cover:

- Some highlights from the *'100 Conversations'* research
- Quick audience polls
- Recap of recent UK surveys – Inbox, ATC and CIOL
- Some emerging themes on AI
- Voices from the around the room – *especially some international perspectives!*

And then **Lunch!**

100 Conversations



100 Conversations



Before you became a translator, what were your preconceptions about living and working as a translator? How did you imagine your life would be shaped and influenced by choosing this as a profession?

“I knew it would have its ups and downs, but from my research I felt that a qualified translator should be able to earn a living. I love working from home and for myself, so it seemed the perfect combination.”



“I imagined working when I wanted to, earning a decent salary and hopefully translating literature or texts about music, gardening and cooking.”



How have your attitude or beliefs about working as a translator changed or developed over time?

I didn't realise that it was possible to be a "premium" translator, working for very high rates. I now understand that there is a wide market out there.

Each year I learn that there is something new to learn, a new skill other than translation but it is all part of translation.

It's become a very competitive, cut-throat environment. I sometimes feel like a machine as deadlines can be very tight, one job in, one job out, with several on the go at the same time.



In the beginning, I thought my job was simply to translate. Now I know that my professional responsibility is much greater. I need to expand my knowledge about the target reader, the client, the language, the tools and the source text every time I take on a project. I need to also educate my clients. I am not just a translator, I have to be a consultant of sorts too.



How would you describe your working relationship with agencies or other intermediaries who have provided you with work?



I have generally had good relationships with agencies and they have been happy with my work. The problem is with being asked to reduce rates, for example when an agency has been taken over by a bigger company.

Generally good on a personal level. Agencies are usually under pressure themselves to drive down costs and shorten deadlines to a ridiculous extent, so I realise they are just passing on their own stress to the translator.

Generally good, except when the agencies fail to educate end clients about how long a quality translation actually takes to complete.

I prefer working with agencies. Bigger contracts, better communication, less 'emotional' judging of the work.

Good. But I'm a good negotiator, and work only at the terms that suit me.



How do you see the future for translators in general?

Up and down. Feast and famine.

More and more content to translate at faster speeds...

Highly competitive.

Increasing use of AI and technology.

I think specialist translators are going to do OK, others are going to be paid lower rates to post-edit machine translation.

I think MT and AI will be used to more and more, while human translators will be reserved for more 'literary' or high-impact texts.





Finally, is there anything else you wish to say about life as a translator?

I love my work. I just wish it was valued more highly.

I have to say that, despite my comments, I do still love what I do and work to a high standard. It's just that very few people appreciate my knowledge and experience and that saddens me.



You don't get to do 'relaxing' work, but it is incredibly fulfilling. You learn a lot, but your mind needs to work at full steam all of the time. Not for the faint of mind. Also, if you don't like research or reading - don't even consider this career. You'll spend all your time with words and information and research.

**I love it.
This is my
passion!**





Live polls



slido

Join at
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What is your main challenge as a translator?

120



Low rates of pay



Getting work



Increased use of MT/AI



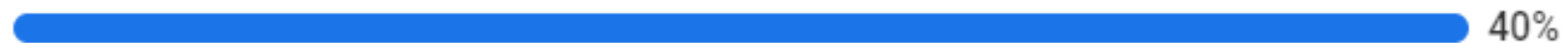


Are you feeling more optimistic or more pessimistic this year compared to last? 129  ...

More optimistic



About the same



More pessimistic





How much of a threat (or opportunity) are AIs such as ChatGPT?

124



The biggest threat to profession

10%

Similar to Machine Translation

36%

An opportunity - more content to translate!

9%

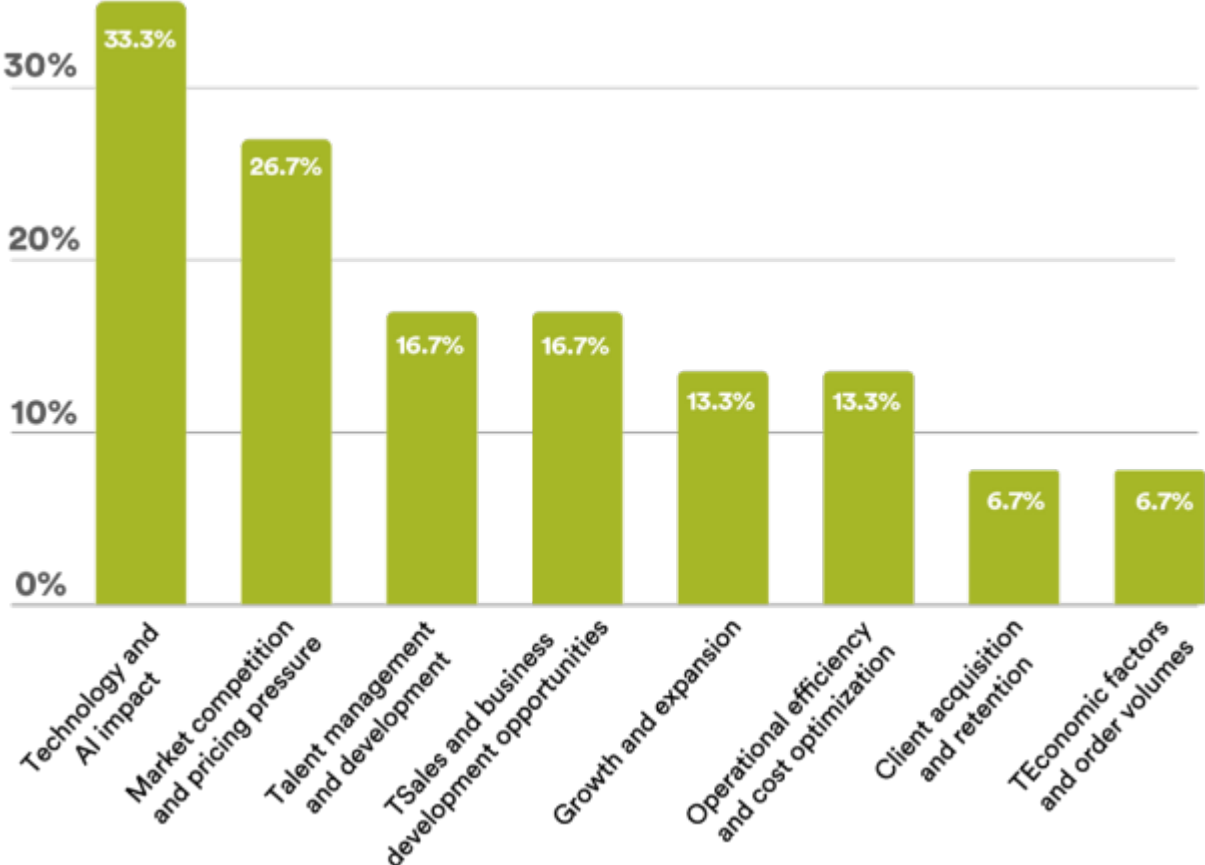
Not sure yet

44%

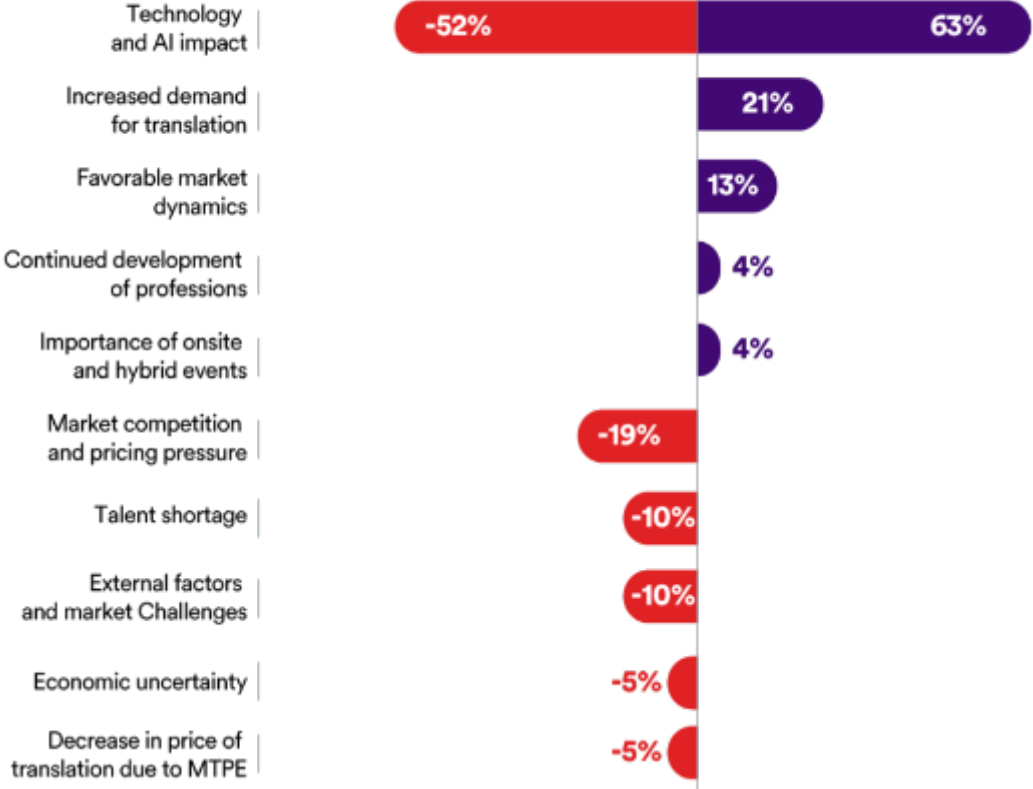


ATC UK Language Services Industry Survey & Report 2023

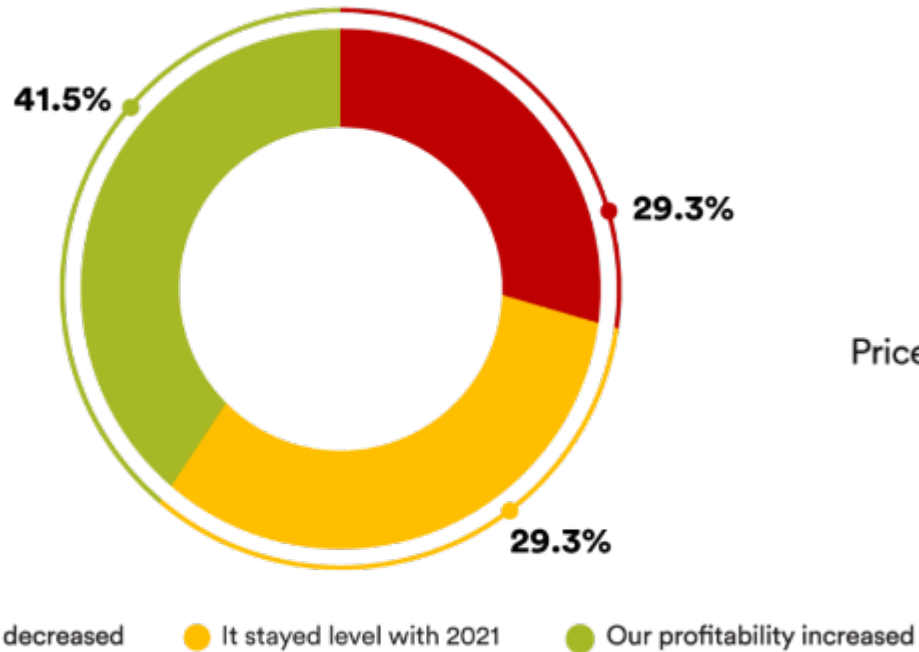
Biggest challenges and opportunities in 2023 and beyond



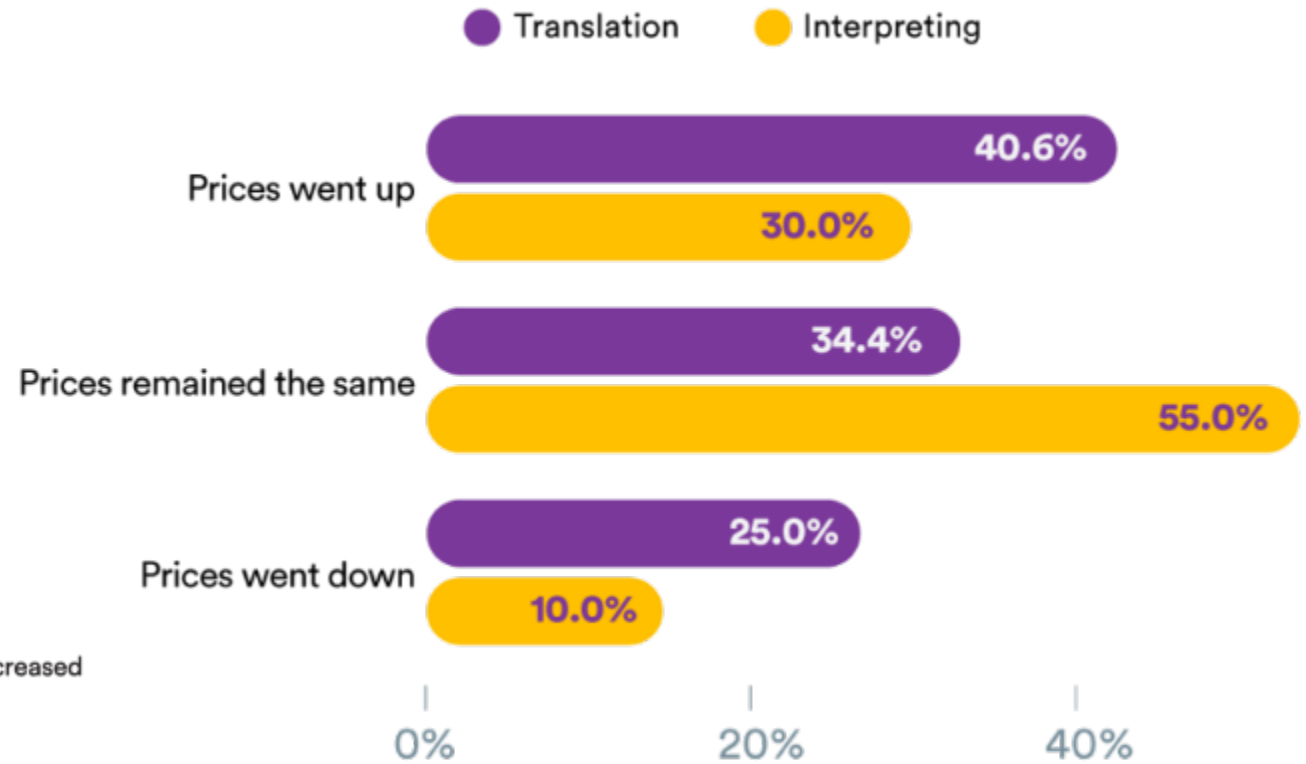
Language industry trends



ATC UK Language Services Industry Survey & Report 2023



Profitability

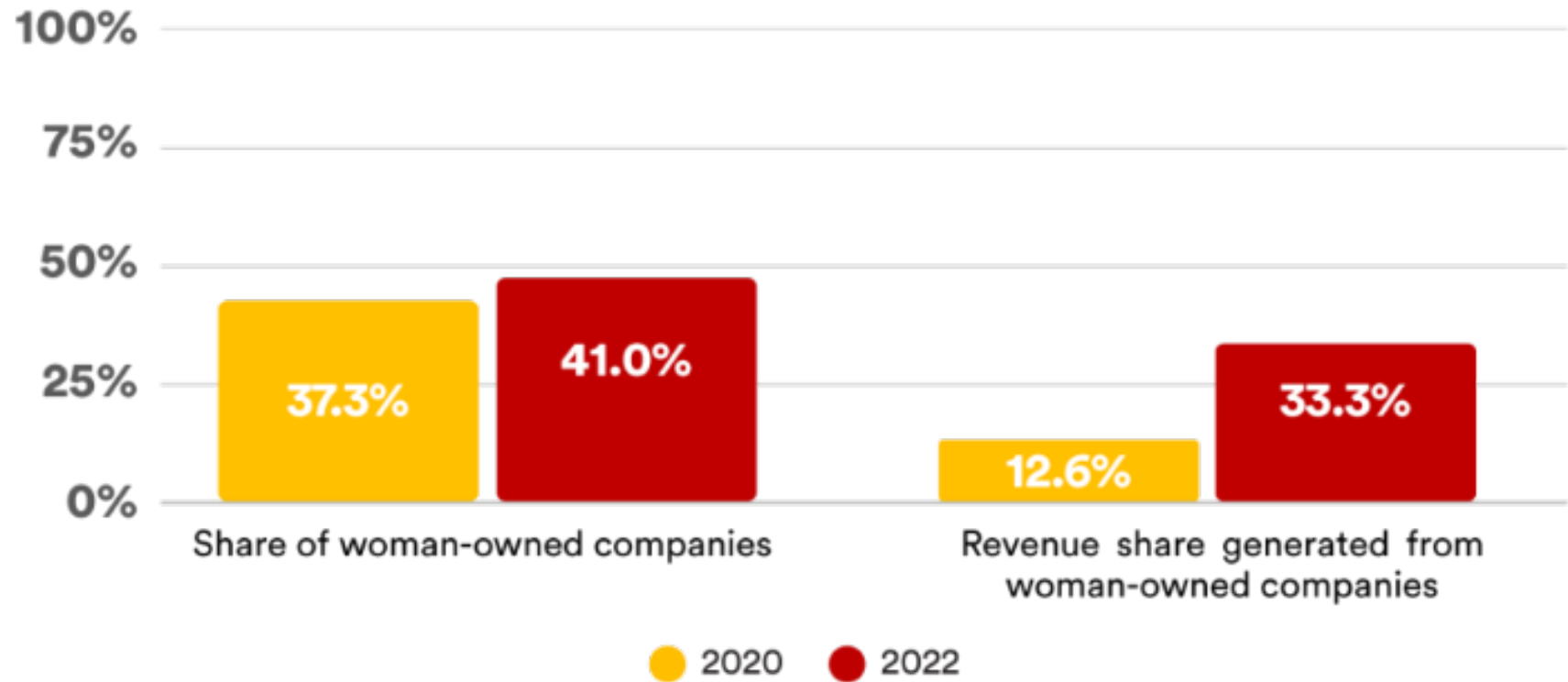


Pricing

ATC UK Language Services Industry Survey & Report 2023



Women now run 41% of language companies and generate a third of all revenues.

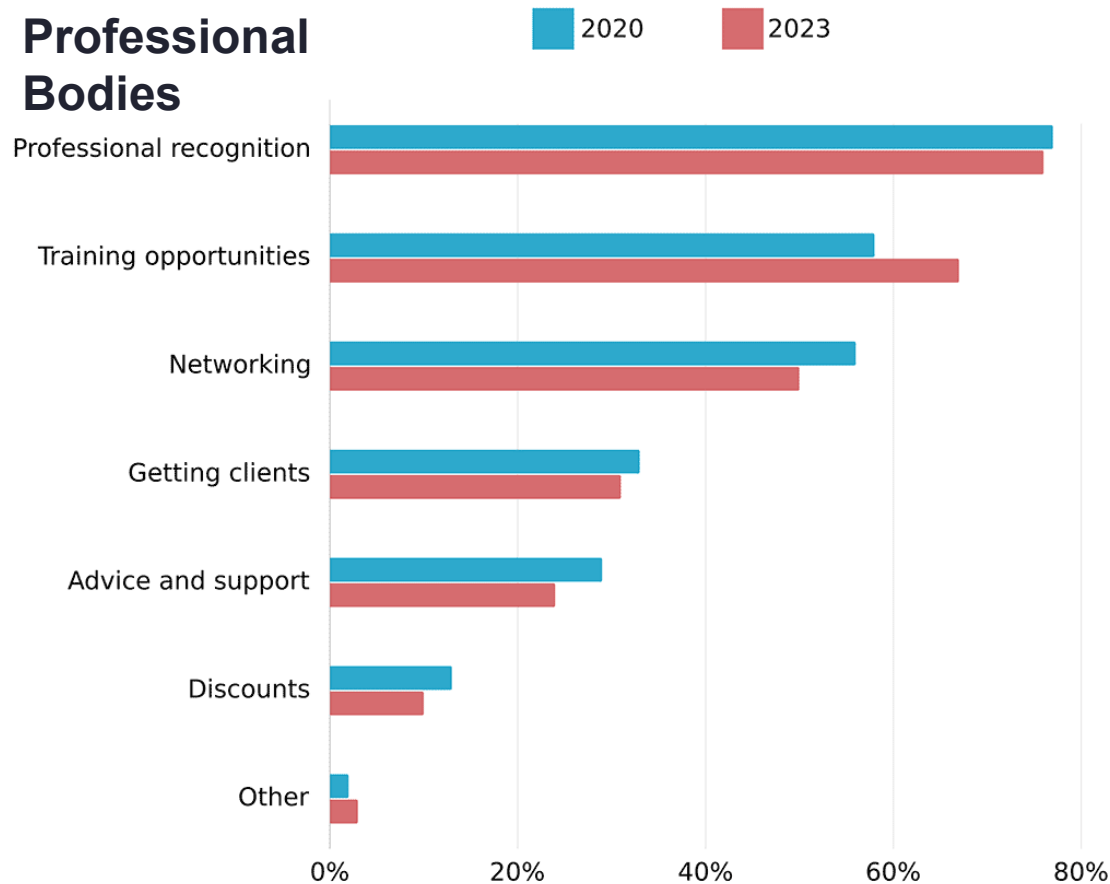


Freelance Translator Survey 2023

Inbox Translations

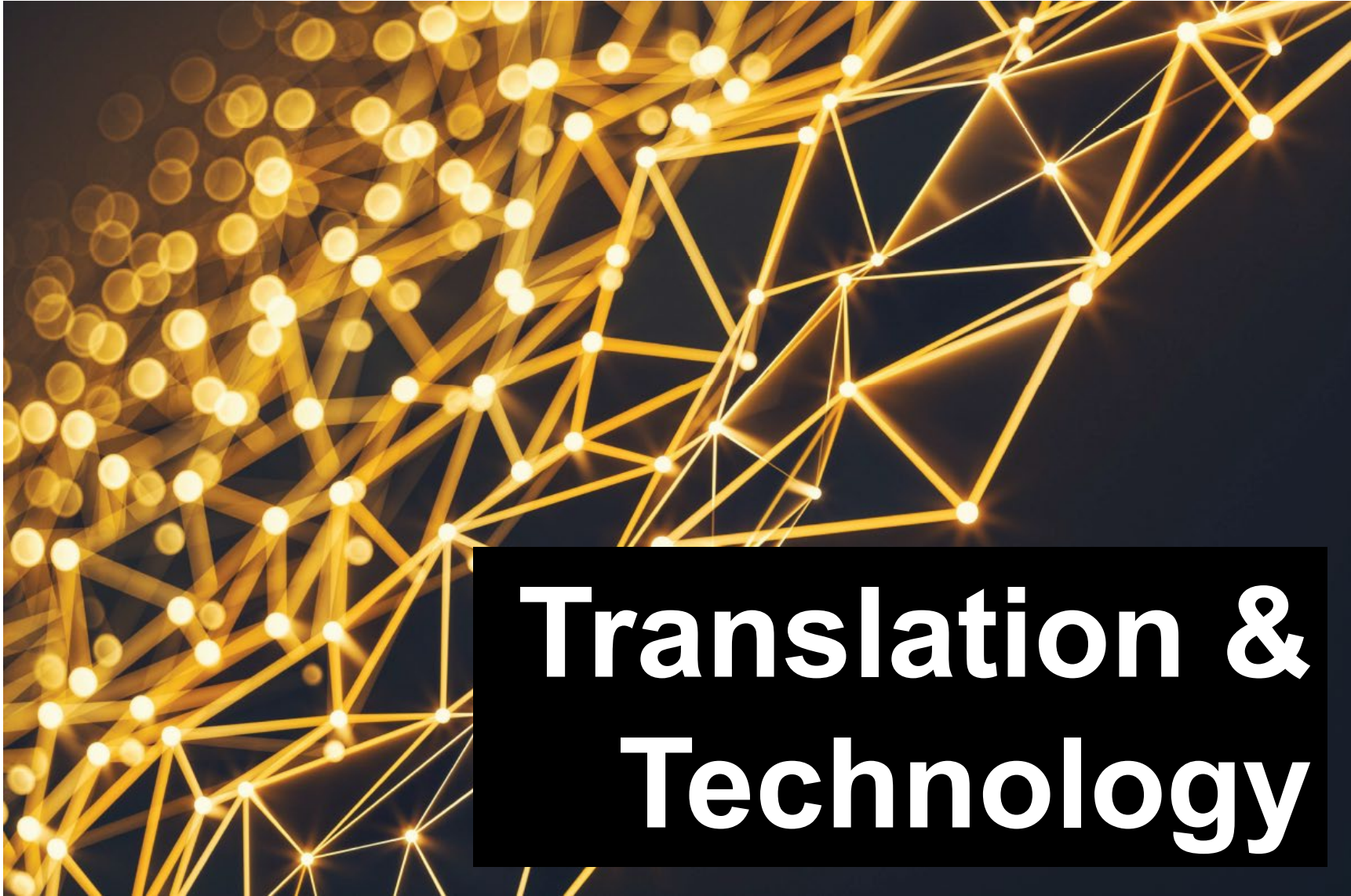


Benefits of Professional Bodies



Members of professional associations are able to charge **44% more** on average (ranging between 22% and 75% more) than non-members.

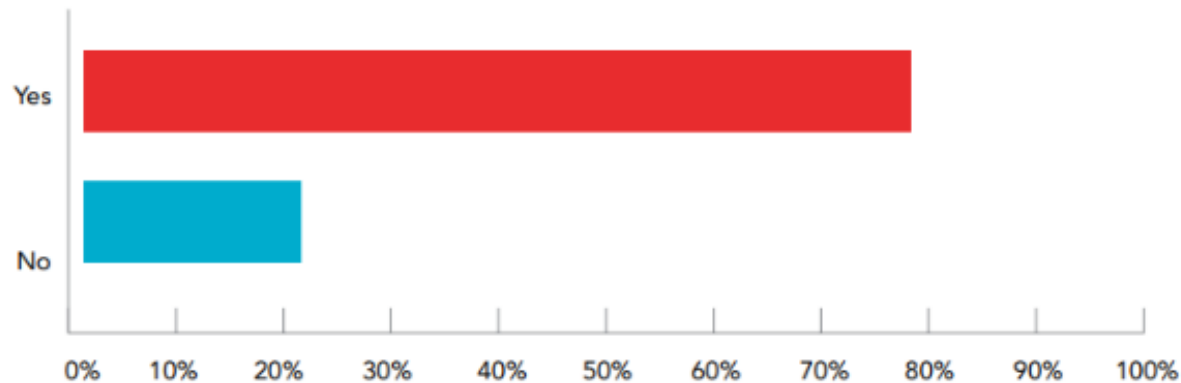




Translation & Technology

Use of technology by CIOL members

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).

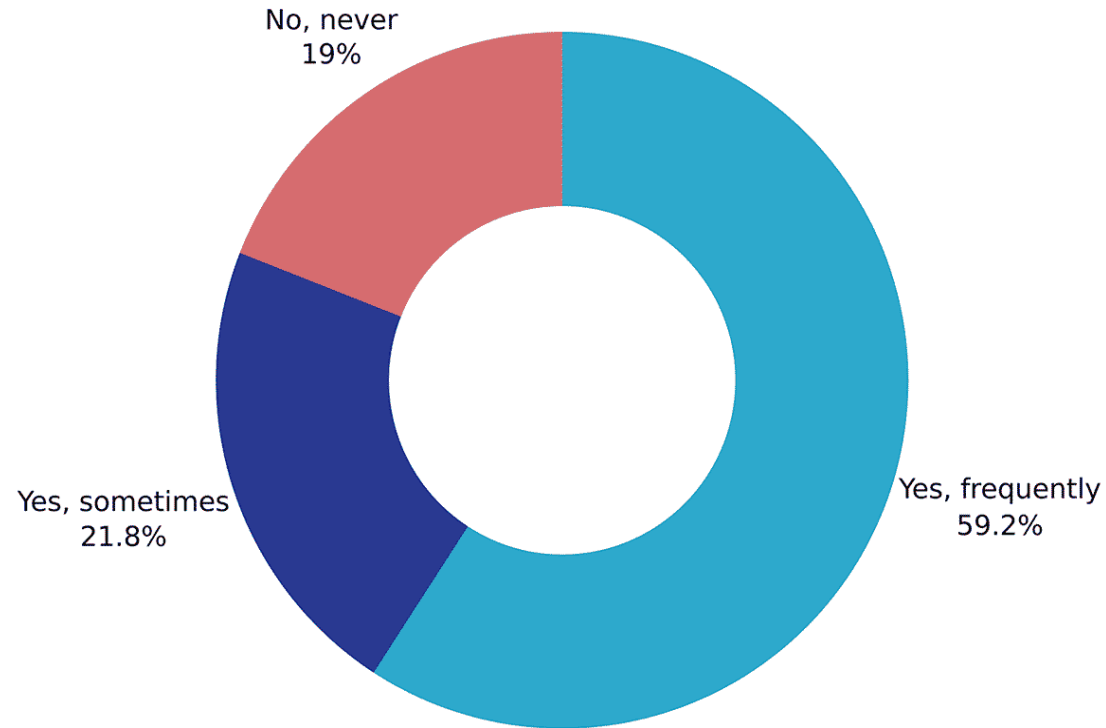
Almost 80% of respondents use translation tools

Freelance Translator Survey 2023

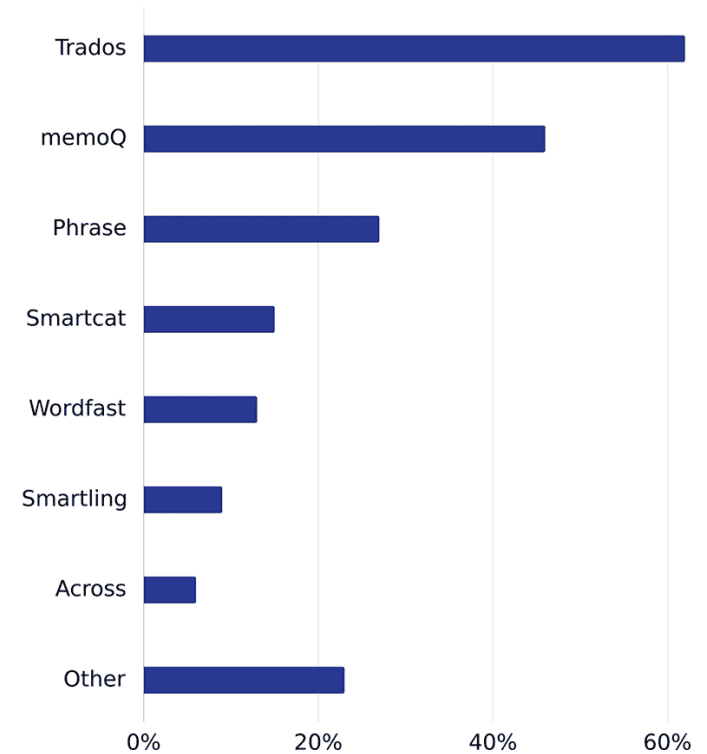
Inbox Translations



Use of CAT tools



Tools used



What about **AI, LLMs** and **NMT**?



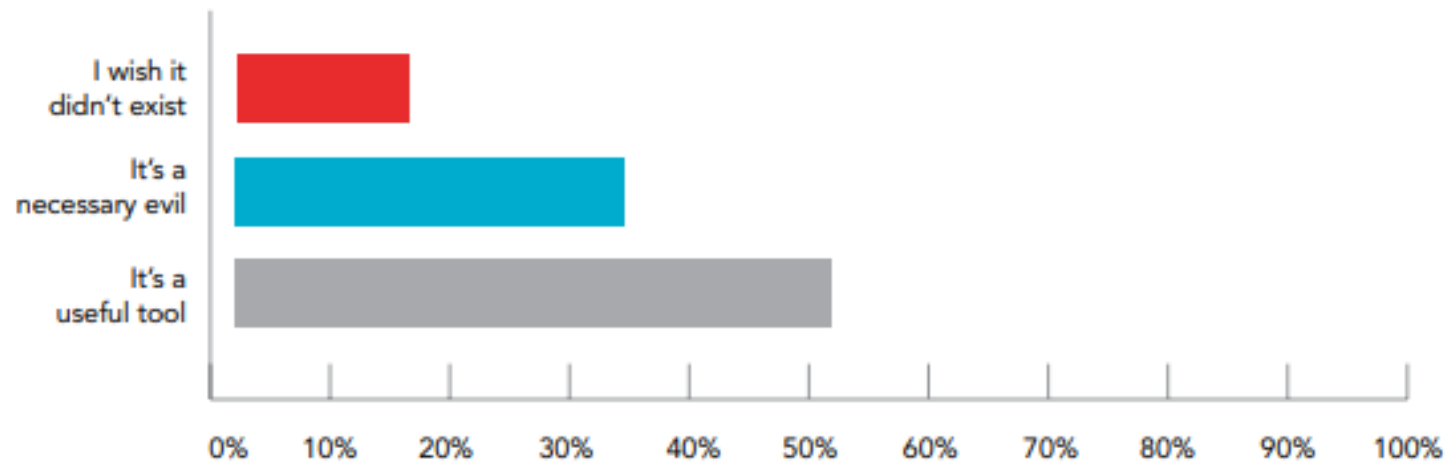
CIOL Voices - expert/practitioner views and issues for policymakers

CIOL AI Updates – regularly updated resources for linguists on policy, practice and research into the use and issues with AI in language services.



Views on MT from CIOL members

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”.

Translation has already seen many tech **revolutions**...

The Translation industry/profession has already been greatly influenced by technology, for example:

- Terminology tools
- Translation Memory
- Machine Translation

...and now **Generative AI?**

Machine Translation **Hype** cycle

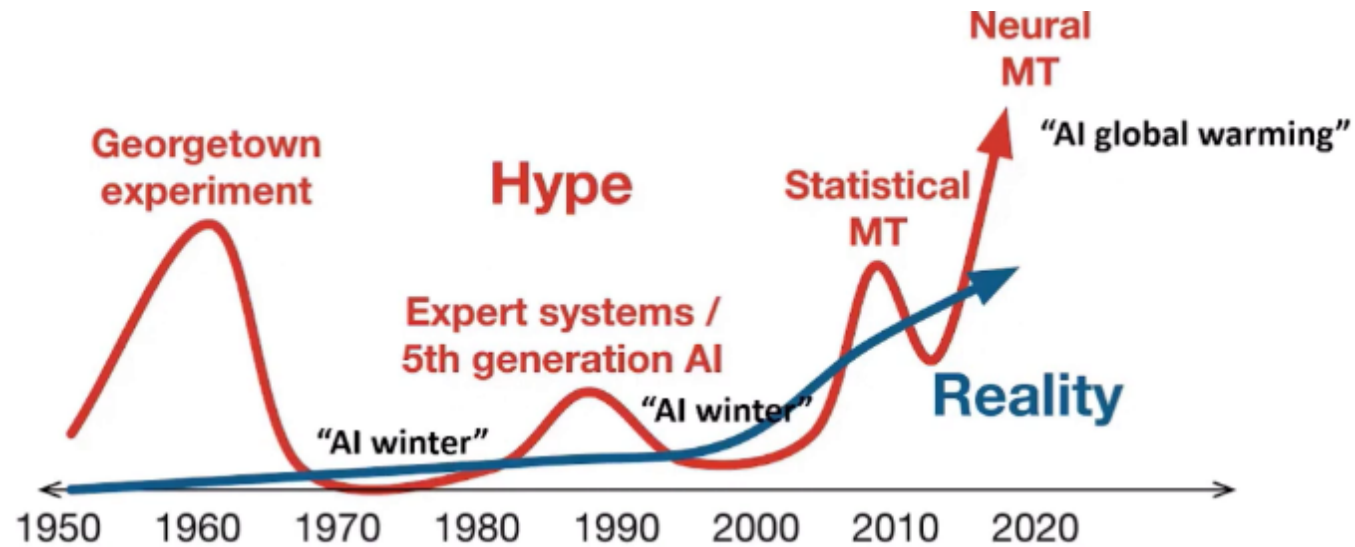
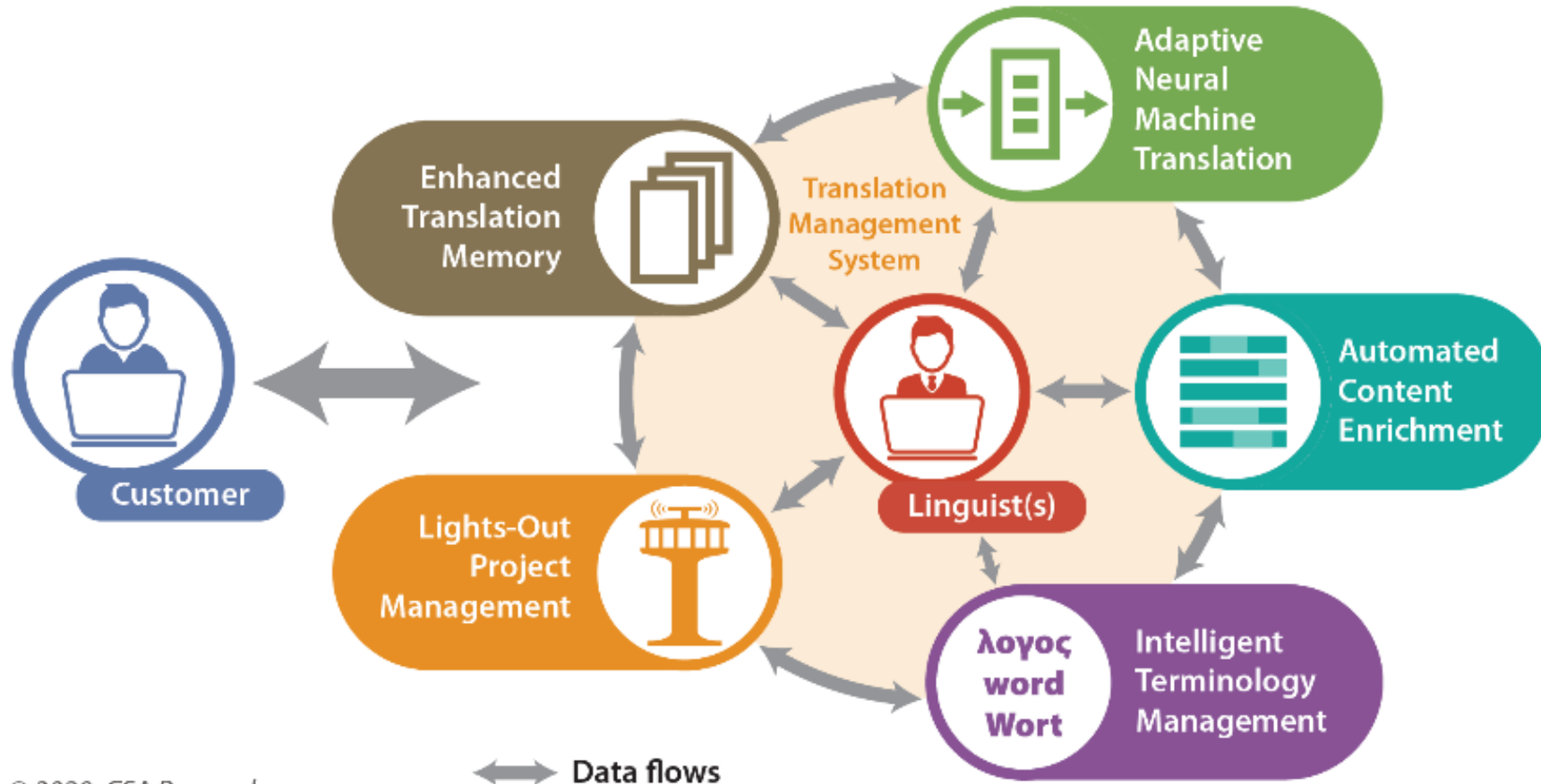


Figure 3.1 Machine translation (MT) hype cycle. For most of its history the expectations of machine translation quality have either over- or underestimated the real progress in quality, forming boom-and-bust cycles for research and development. Nevertheless machine translation has become a practical reality over the last 20 years. (Note: chart based on my subjective impressions, not hard facts.)

* Philip Koehn, "Neural Machine Translation", 2020

Translation **workflows** before GenAI

Augmented Translation Ties Humans and Machines Together



CIOL view on **AI, LLMs & NMT** impacts



1. We can't stop AI technology but there are aspects of it we may need to challenge
2. New models will mean new opportunities
3. In the future much more content will be translated
4. The human is – and will continue to be – essential
5. The most skilled linguists will be the most in demand



Our context and developing experience with AI



Major concerns:

- Unsupervised use
- Leakage of personal data
- 'Fatal errors'
- Hallucination
- Model collapse

Possible opportunities:

- Content generation
- Creativity
- Efficiency gains
- Language & quality checks
- Versioning

Questions for the room?

- Are you feeling a more **optimistic** or more **pessimistic** this year than last?
- How much of a **threat** (or **opportunity**) are AIs such as **ChatGPT**?
- Are you seeking to develop **capabilities** beyond your “**pure**” **translation skills**?
- Are translators **better prepared** than most professionals for an “**AI world**”?
- What **markets/clients** are **most interesting** to you in 2024?
- What is still **special** that the **skilled linguist** brings in an **increasingly** ‘**tech-first**’ translation **world**?
- What do people **based outside the UK** make of this – is it the same or different where you are?

Plus, we can talk over **lunch** and ask the **Council Panel** their opinions this afternoon too...



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