

Machine translation post-editing in the professional translation market in Spain: a case study on the experience and opinion of professional translators

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to analyse some aspects related to the practice of post-editing services in the current translation market in Spain. To this aim, some quantitative data collected through an online survey and concerning the experience and opinion of professional translators regarding post-editing will be shown.

1 Introduction

The continuous progress in new technologies has helped to the development of new translation techniques such as machine translation post-editing in recent years. However, the emergence of machine translation has generated an intense debate between those who think that technology will eventually replace human translators and those who see machine translation as an ally that allows the professional translator to perform translations with no risk of being completely replaced (Alonso and Calvo, 2015). Taking into account some previous studies on post-editing in the language services sector in Spain, such as Rico y García (2016) and the report of the ProjecTA group (2016), a practical and interpretative data collection study was carried out in 2017 (Pérez, 2017). The aim of this study was to explore the reality surrounding perceptions of machine translation post-editing in the professional translation market in Spain on issues such as quality, productivity or ethics, among others.

2 Methodology

In this study, a methodological triangulation has been carried out. First of all, with an exhaustive review of the most up-to-date literature in this field, in an attempt to detect points of interest and trends that could be explored. This was followed by a preliminary focus group to approach the topic (qualitative method of initial exploration), in which a first contact was made

with a sample of the study's target audience and which served to categorise the main points that would form part of the research. A survey (quantitative instrument) was then developed using these data and served as the main tool for collecting information. In order to optimize the design of the survey, it was necessary to pass a series of control tests (robustness tests) before its launch to avoid problems of understanding on the part of the respondents or the inclusion of certain biases.¹ The target population of the study consisted of the total number of active translators in Spain who are familiar with post-editing, whether or not they have experience in this field and the sampling method was snowball sampling. The final sample was composed of 104 subjects from the target population.

3 Conclusions

This research has made it possible to evaluate post-editing as a field that raises major professional and ethical dilemmas, since it involves many factors, including productivity, quality, and the context of subordination in translation, among others.

References

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¹ The final version of the survey is available at the following link:
<https://www.upo.es/limesurvey/index.php?r=survey/index&sid=272728&lang=es>