A year of ChatGPT: translators' attitudes and degree of adoption

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Abstract

Since ChatGPT's launch in late 2022, scholars have endeavoured to investigate its potential for translation and analyse possible applications, challenges, and dangers. This article explores translators' cautious attitude towards ChatGPT and the limited degree to which it has been incorporated into their workflow, mostly for inspiration or text summarisation.

Keywords: survey; corpus; attitudes; adoption; generative AI; machine translation.

Resumen

Desde el lanzamiento de ChatGPT a finales de 2022, los académicos han intentado investigar su potencial para la traducción y analizar posibles aplicaciones, desafíos y peligros. Este artículo explora la actitud cautelosa de los traductores hacia ChatGPT y el grado limitado con el que se ha incorporado en su flujo de trabajo, principalmente para obtener inspiración o para resumir textos.

Palabras clave: encuesta; corpus; perspectivas; adopción; inteligencia artificial generativa; traducción automática .

Resum

Des del llançament de ChatGPT al final de 2022, els acadèmics han provar d'investigar-ne el potencial per a la traducció i analizar-ne les possibles aplicacions, reptes i perills. Aquest article explora l'actitud prudent dels traductors envers ChatGPT i el grau limitat amb què l'han incorporat al seu flux de treball, principalment per obtenir inspiració o per resumir textos.

Paraules clau: enquesta; corpus; perspectives; adopció; intel·ligència artificial generativa; traducció automàtica .

1. Introduction

ChatGPT, the ubiquitous large language model (LLM), has captured the attention of the media and professionals alike, polarising public opinion. Part of a larger group of newly developed text production tools known as generative AI (genAI), this disruptive technology has caused ripples throughout society. Since its release, numerous companies, including those in the translation industry, have rushed to integrate it into their services, while some critical figures have raised concerns about its potential risks and ethical impact. In the field of translation, LLMs have been incorporated into workflows and management systems (Sanchez-Gijón and Palenzuela, 2023; GALA, 2024; Briva-Iglesias et al., 2024). This has sparked the creation of a growing body of research exploring how LLMs could match or outperform current neural machine translation (NMT) systems (Jiao et al., 2023; Peng et al., 2023) and be leveraged by professionals (Chen, 2023; Ray, 2023).

Among their studies, scholars have investigated various applications of LLMs and genAI within the translation ecosystem, including terminology extraction, NMT, quality estimation, and language enhancement (Sanchez-Gijón and Palenzuela, 2023; Jiménez-Crespo, 2024). Despite these potential applications, concerns over job displacement, deteriorating working conditions, and "automation anxiety" (Vieira, 2018) often result in resistance to adopting these technologies (Cadwell et al., 2018). This resistance can be further exacerbated by the media hype, under-critical studies (e.g. Merali, 2024), and the resulting intense media coverage (Delellis et al., 2023). Therefore, and given the lack of research on the topic due to its novelty, it is crucial to explore translators' use of and opinions regarding ChatGPT and their chronological evolution. We discuss our approach to doing so in the following sections, contextualising our results with the current literature on LLM integration in section 4.

2. Methodology

Using a mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2013), the present article explores translators' attitudes towards ChatGPT and the degree to which it has been incorporated into their workflow following the sociological trend in translation studies that puts the translator at the centre of the discussion (Chesterman, 2009). It combines qualitative and quantitative data extracted from posts in practice-oriented translation networks (McDonough Dolmaya, 2007) and results from a questionnaire addressed to professionals. It builds on previous analyses of translators' online interactions (Flanagan, 2016; Läubli and Orrego-Carmona, 2017; McDonough Dolmaya, 2011; Vieira, 2018) and research in the field of translators' attitudes and usage of translation technology (Cadwell et al., 2018; Kirov and Malamin, 2022; Zaretskaya et al., 2017).

This approach serves a twofold purpose covering the first two years following the launch of ChatGPT. First, it seeks to study and map the chronological evolution of professional translators' unprompted opinions, attitudes, and reactions by analysing posts and threads publicly available online. The sample focuses on the first 12 months to assess if the hype generated by the media and the subsequent coverage (Delellis et al.,

2023) created high expectations that do not match reality, leading to frustration (Glikson and Woolley, 2020) or automation anxiety (Vieira, 2018; ELIS, 2024), as suggested by previous research on technology adoption. Second, it aims to complement these findings with a survey released during the LLM's second year on the market, which will be used to corroborate, supplement and validate the data, reducing the impact of representation bias, also known as the 90-9-1 principle or the 1% rule, "which dictates that a vast majority of user-generated content in any specific community comes from the top 1% active users, with most people only listening in" (Vuorio and Horne, 2023: 3611). Furthermore, the questionnaire will provide statistical results regarding the degree of adoption and the possibility of cross-referencing different variables — age, experience, type of contract — with said data to uncover nuances and trends.

2.1 Corpus

Given the emphasis on using data specifically from professional translators, and after considering a wide variety of options, such as Discord, LinkedIn, and translation forums like TranslatorsCafé, the sites identified as containing the highest number of interactions on the topic were Facebook and ProZ.com. The corpus is therefore composed of posts and threads in these two networks written between the 1st of December 2022 and the 30th of November 2023 and mentioning the keyword 'ChatGPT', or the variations 'Chat Gpt' and 'GPT' to account for abbreviations and misspellings. Due to the varying nature of the chosen sites, the content had to be processed differently, which resulted in the effective creation of two subcorpora. Consequently, the results will be presented separately in the case of the number of posts and monthly evolution. Nevertheless, the qualitative analysis will provide the combined results from two perspectives: professionals' attitudes towards ChatGPT and the main trends in terms of content.

The corpus was manually compiled in an Excel file, using a row per post or thread and pasting the subsequent replies into columns. We initially included full posts and threads to avoid any loss of information and then carried out a series of data-processing steps. During the first refinement phase, usernames were deleted to maintain confidentiality, the comments — and replies — were sorted chronologically, and off-topic comments were eliminated. This involved assessing the context in which the mention occurred and ensuring it was pertinent to the study's objectives. Secondly, each subcorpus was once again processed separately to either classify the nature of the posts (Facebook) or remove repetitions (ProZ.com). Finally, the main trends were extracted and the content was categorised according to professionals' attitudes, as the corpus is divided "between those who embrace AI and those who abhor it, those who feel threatened and those who feel safe" (01/07/2023, Swedish to English). This three-step analysis allowed for a comprehensive review of the posts, facilitating the identification of key themes and patterns.

2.1.1 Subcorpus of Facebook posts

Using the keyword 'translation', we selected the first 2,000 public Facebook groups and then filtered them to remove those with fewer than 100 members and one monthly post, reducing the number to 1,270. The list was further narrowed down to approximately 200 by manually excluding those not in English, specific to particular companies or primarily focused on seeking translation jobs. We then searched for ChatGPT references within their feeds and, during the first and second screening phases, noted and added for future reference instances of the same post appearing in multiple groups. The resulting subcorpus contains 60,100 words (excluding repetitions), totalling 143 posts categorised into three distinct groups based on the topics discussed: (i) sharing articles, news, and training resources; (ii) discussing potential applications, opinions, anecdotes, and personal experiences; and (iii) proposing jobs, services, or products.

2.1.2 Subcorpus of ProZ.com threads

The same keywords and variations were used as parameters in the 'advanced search' feature in public ProZ forums, yielding a total of 63 threads. Given the nature of this forum, the text that was repeated as a direct quote or as an answer to a previous comment was also removed. This was a necessary step to prevent skewing the results and maintain focus on the original content. In total, out of the 63 initial results, only two were discarded, resulting in a corpus of 107,608 words after repetitions were eliminated. Additionally, a series of polls were found by the search. Relevant data will be discussed alongside our results.

2.2 Survey

After a preliminary analysis of the corpus to discern the main trends and topics being discussed, these were extrapolated to conceive a survey to complement the findings from the initial corpus and, as previously mentioned, to reduce the possibility of bias resulting from a high level of activity of individual members. Built using Qualtrics, the survey had 36 questions, ranging from multiple-choice to open-ended formats, and used 'display logic' to avoid false results. The data collected includes the respondents' ages, educational backgrounds, language pairs, degree of adoption, etc. The survey was launched on the 12th of March 2023 and closed on the 2nd of April 2023, collecting 252 complete responses. It was distributed mainly via LinkedIn, taking advantage of the search parameters and targeting professional translators in bulk via direct messages.

3. Results

The present section presents the raw results that will be subsequently analysed and discussed in section 4 to provide a holistic overview of the findings.

3.1 Corpus

Quantitative analysis of the corpus (see Table 1) shows a peak of activity on Facebook during May 2023, with a total of 30 posts (excluding repetitions), out of which 14 were articles, news, webinars and other types of resources. The abundance of this type of content could, consequently, explain the increment in posts created by users sharing their opinions and experiences. Furthermore, this heightened activity in May would explain the gradual increase in posts offering services related to ChatGPT in the following months. Incidentally, after accounting for repetitions, the corpus shows that professional translators were bombarded with posts in the articles/news category in February, with many appearing multiple times across various groups and one particular podcast advertisement appearing nine times. However, these ads did not receive comments and were not usually reposted. In the case of the forum threads, almost a third of them (10) were created in August as a direct result of ProZ.com's decision to include ChatGPT in KudoZ and the results of a translation competition. This change stirred up a lot of controversy, impacting the word count of the month in question, and the topic continued to gain popularity throughout the rest of the sample. In general, the figures presented in Table 1 show a gradual increase in posts regarding ChatGPT, which peaks at around the six-month mark, and a subsequent gradual drop towards the end of the sample, except for the aforementioned spike of threads about KudoZ.

Month	Articles/news	Uses/opinions	Jobs/services	Total posts	Threads	Words
December	4	2	0	6	6	11007
January	6	1	1	8	3	5897
February	10	4	1	15	1	8209
March	2	8	2	12	3	21373
April	4	5	1	10	5	19655
May	14	12	4	30	3	12912
June	7	5	3	15	7	18327
July	10	1	9	20	4	8431
August	5	3	3	11	10	18137
September	4	3	5	12	5	21310
October	1	3	0	4	9	10981
November	0	0	0	0	5	11469

Table 1: Quantitative analysis of posts and threads

3.1.1 Translators' attitudes

Regarding attitudes, the abovementioned groups seem to partake in the conversation at the same rate during the first months — excluding advertisements for webinars and courses — and both ProZ and Facebook posts are balanced in terms of activity levels. However, from June on, Facebook seems to maintain a balance, whereas ProZ leans towards more negative comments, with examples such as "[t]he profession is not dead yet, but it is dying. Because the client is dying. The end-user is dying. Reading is dying. The need is dying. And in the distant future, languages will be dying." (29/07/2023, Italian to Turkish). This change results from a diminished engagement of AI enthusiasts in conversations they consider repetitive, as reflected in many of their comments. Nevertheless, these professionals are ready to engage in more positive threads, such as those asking for testers after the release of new tools, the integration of ChatGPT or the addition of the LLM as a feature. Among them, pro.wordscope.com appears for the first time in the corpus in March; Lokalise, MateCat and CafeTran and their integrations are promoted in May; and CotranslatorAI and CT-L1 Linguist, a new feature added to CafeTran, are promoted in June. Whereas the announcements in March and May are met with comments about how disappointed posters are and how poorly AI performs, the conversation about the last two reflects the enthusiasm of the professionals testing them. We observe comments left by tech-savvy translators about how the systems deal with data privacy and even requests for specific features, such as a 'rephrase' option or another to extract terminology. As one of them states, "[a]s a developer, I can tell you there are translators who wish for all those geeky and nerdy features." (20/05/2023, English to Polish).

Common arguments among those who are completely against ChatGPT include the notion of it being useless and having to rewrite everything afterwards, having far better tools out there already and preferring Google for research, not wanting to contribute to the death of the profession, quality concerns, and some very specific criticisms: "[d]o not open up your own TMs to DeeplyAwful or Gogglesaway or accept TMs produced by an unknown source. High-quality TMs are our future. And protection of them is non-negotiable." (21/08/2023, Facebook). Conversely, those who embrace ChatGPT as another tool in the box seem to be continuously playing around with it and trying to see how it performs for different tasks, ranging from substituting regular expressions (or regex) or aligning documents to counting words in a document. A typical comment left by an AI enthusiast would have some words of caution for users while maintaining an optimistic tone: "[d]espite some problems, I think ChatGPT might make a useful addition to a translator's toolbox, at least in revising draft translations. It needs to be handled with care, and a human always needs to be in the loop, but it has possibilities." (10/02/2023, Russian to English). Positive and negative contributors clash often, and in certain posts, the conversation gets very heated. We observe professionals stating that real translators do not need any type of machine translation (MT) — or any other tools — while supporters state that the technology is already being used and that those who oppose it are hypocrites.

Translators who feel unthreatened can be further classified into four sub-groups: those close to retirement age; those who have fully embraced MT and are comfortable post-editing; those working in fields or with language pairs for which MT quality is not particularly good; and those working in niche or highly specialised fields. Analysis of the content they commonly share shows a high percentage of news items, articles or posts that mock ChatGPT's performance, with titles such as "As long as NMT/AI cannot translate/answer this simple question ...". Additionally, we can observe comments about how they accept machine translation post-editing (MTPE) work and have not seen a reduction in their income because of the productivity boost. An example that summarises this group's stand would be "[l]anguage is the most exciting human thing — we would need machines that are like humans. It's not very realistic. There is literally no serious researcher/expert in this field stating that this will replace translators. This discussion is driven by fear." (02/06/2023, Facebook). Finally, the main arguments of those who fear ChatGPT are not directly related to being replaced: they worry that "it will be another excuse to try and lower prices down. Peanuts will become grains of salt."[1] (19/05/2023, Facebook). Low rates, already a burning issue in translation, are once again placed under the spotlight due to fears of new unilateral rate cuts. From the beginning of our corpus, we see references to the death of translation, with five occurrences of the word 'dead'. The majority of these fatalistic posts and comments stem from fears of not having enough translation work to make a living, a sentiment also expressed in the ELIS survey (ELIS, 2024: 22). This can be seen throughout the corpus, where we can observe posters asking whether other users have had less translation work lately and sharing information on how companies have been firing or not engaging translators.

3.1.2 Trends

Trend analysis shows that the first post we came across, published on the 5th of December 2022, is the first in a long series consisting of translators asking ChatGPT directly about the future of the industry, the role of humans or, simply, its opinion of itself. In this case in particular, the poster asks: "Can we rely on machine translation for all types of texts?"; this post became the first entry in our corpus. There are similar posts and threads throughout the corpus, including "ChatGPT, we need to talk"; a series that the poster named "Chat GPT can be 'taught'"; and "Are translators an endangered species?", among others. In these cases, translators tend to paste the full conversation for others to see and discuss. Many of the comments, regardless of their opinion of the tool itself, are directly related to the conversation and refer to the LLM's writing style, which is labelled 'shallow', 'politician-like', or like chunks of texts 'glued up together'. This lack of creativity is reflected in the model's responses, which are just variations of its response to our first post (05/12/2022, Facebook):

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[1] This harks back to discussions about translators being poorly remunerated or paid 'peanuts', which led to the 'no peanuts' campaign among translators online in the early 2010s. https://smuggledwords.wordpress.com/2010/06/03/no-peanuts/ [Accessed: 20241126].

"It is generally not advisable to rely solely on machine translation for all types of texts. While machine translation has come a long way in recent years, it is still not as accurate or reliable as human translation. Machine translation can be useful in certain situations, such as providing a general idea of the content of a text or translating a large volume of text quickly. However, it is not suitable for all types of texts, and it is important to use human translation for important or sensitive documents."

Another relevant trend observed throughout the dataset consists of putting the LLM to the test by giving it either extremely easy or extremely difficult tasks and commenting on its performance. In these cases, whenever the LLM's performance is good, the commenter merely shares a simple statement, such as: "This is very interesting. In my last job I used ChatGPT to clarify the meaning of certain terms in a specific context, it was really helpful and the answers were relevant." (19/03/2023, Facebook). However, posts are longer and more detailed when the outcome is poor. An example that resulted in a long conversation shows up in a thread under the title "Do translators have a death wish?", where a poster reports having tried ChatGPT to look up technical abbreviations. They relay their whole conversation with the LLM and end up saying: "and this is supposed to be a sort of 'intelligence' that will make us all unemployed in the next decade or so. It's like talking to a politician. It can't even get elementary logic right." (13/04/2023, Danish to English). Nonetheless, many continue to try the LLM and share good results, such as this user (26/04/2023, Facebook):

"I find it quite useful when I have a vague feeling that I know some name, but I am not sure about it. I can say to ChatGPT: Give a name of a part of a machine that begins with XXX or YYY and is used for… And I get some options. They can be accurate or can be totally wrong, but there is no way how to make such a search in Google. Sometimes I ask ChatGPT to explain a term in English and then I search for similar terms in Slovak. Or I ask if I understood some text correctly (Does it mean…?). What is also quite useful are synonyms for technical terms if I am not able to find a term in dictionaries. Many times it happens that I find just the synonym."

One of the most prevalent trends involves translators improving AI literacy by sharing sources of information (articles, webinars, courses, videos, podcasts, etc.) about how to use ChatGPT. As can be seen in Table 1, this is a constant in Facebook data until almost the end of the sample and is also reflected in threads, with commenters sharing links they have come upon online with the community. From April on, sharing becomes a more common occurrence in conversations that were already active; whenever new applications or interesting matters are discussed, translators will try to play around and test them with their own language pair and share the results. Regardless of the sharing method, the topics of the articles remain the same: either why ChatGPT is unfit to translate or how to learn to use it. Documents talking about translation and poor quality usually raise comments such as 'it was never intended to …', which are followed by advice on how the LLM should be used: "I am using ChatGPT for many tasks I used other tools in the past (transliteration, capitalization, summaries, basic calculations). It is

much more convenient and faster. ChatGPT is just a tool like any other." (26/04/2023, Facebook). In the case of articles promoting ChatGPT, from May on we can observe more reactions about either how posters are taking advantage of it or how it will be the end of translation: "Thank you for contributing to the destruction of our profession." (23/05/2023, Facebook).

Directly related to working on AI literacy, we can observe a trend of posters sharing their personal experiences to improve collective knowledge of ChatGPT and provide tips, useful prompts, and even assistance. Almost every post has a positive tone when the translator talks about using ChatGPT for research, looking up words, search engine optimisation, or improving emails. However, the remarks turn negative when it comes to the LLM's output in translation or how shallow the content feels when text is generated without a starting draft. We also found comments about how ChatGPT could be leveraged to write regex or its performance when dealing with abbreviations and acronyms, eliciting many comments calling for caution in terms of cross-checking the results. The corpus contains many interesting references to uses, most of which we extrapolated to create the survey, including the less common ones: "Practical use: creating my own HTML tag remover tool I think Robots should do chores that we don't like (that's where the name came from if I'm not mistaken)." (7/11/2023, English to French). Here too, we find violent reactions (26/04/2023, Facebook):

> Surely, anyone who uses ChatGPT to find the meaning of an abbreviation, examples of the use of a word, the translation of a term or the definition of a word can't be taken seriously as a translator? There are far better, more efficient and more reliable solutions for each of those uses. The output of ChatGPT is totally unreliable, please stop making videos to convince people it isn't. The next step is agencies claiming ChatGPT is yet another tool that justifies lowering your rates.

We also observe posters giving tips and warning others about AI pitfalls, mostly in relation to data privacy and hallucinations (the production of off-topic output). Besides the known issues of confidentiality and the need for fact-checking, in August we see references to copyright when a thread discusses how to prevent crawlers from scraping websites and in response to an article about using ChatGPT for brainstorming ideas in creative writing. In the latter thread, many translators describe using ChatGPT in such a way as 'cheating', while others say doing so is a good idea, since "[g]ood authors will consider the AI's suggestion along with a number of other inputs, then come up with something better. All writers are influenced by other authors they've read." (14/08/2023, Greek to English). Along these lines, around April we start to see translators becoming suspicious about job offers, training, or even the wording of certain comments, accusing the poster of using ChatGPT or wanting to use their work to improve the LLM. This begins as a consequence of the increasing number of job offers involving training AIs, which, in the words of one of the translators, "came in numbers. I was contacted by 4 agencies." (14/05/2023, Facebook). There are also posts about jobs for post-editing ChatGPT's output, which tend to veer off into discussions of MTPE practices and another frequently recurring topic, that of clients trying to cut costs being the root of the problem

and the impact of misinformation: "[a]rticles like the one I referenced, and from which the quote is taken, are misleading the public to believe that human translators are no longer needed." (5/02/2023, Norwegian to English).

From August on, the conversations on ProZ.com are monopolised by the use of ChatGPT in KudoZ, with the longest five threads discussing this in depth. For example, in October, all long threads but one are about ChatGPT's use either in KudoZ or in ProZ to win translation competitions. The only thread not originally about KudoZ, "Are you managing to use AI in your work?", ends up being monopolised by the topic anyway (going into further detail is beyond the scope of this article). Finally, the first thread of November is the site's summary of the results of a series of posts and surveys on AI. It raises many questions about whether the data corresponds to LLMs or NMT, but even more about the representativeness of the results, given that certain figures are not provided ("The number of respondents is sufficient […] but at least in the hundreds") (3/11/2023, N/A), and at least half the messages question the validity of the post and ask if ProZ is being paid to promote ChatGPT. Although we could not verify which survey the poster referred to, we found a series of polls about ChatGPT (6) and AI in general (10), each with 199 to 1,452 votes, which showed that 71.8% of respondents had not used or did not plan to use ChatGPT (14/03/2023);[2] 44.2% of respondents offered post-editing services for AI-generated content (10/10/2023);[3] and 43.1% of respondents viewed translation output generated by ChatGPT for their language pair as at least OK (13/10/2023).[4]

3.2 Survey

The results of the survey show that the most represented age group among the participants was 25 to 34 (41% or 104 individuals), followed by 35 to 44 (35% or 87) and 45 to 54 (14% or 35). Given the participants' ages (see Table 2), the survey's sample was well-balanced in terms of years of experience, with an almost even split between those with below 10 years (49%) and those with above 10 years (51%). The survey may thus provide insightful information when contrasted with the results of the latest ELIS survey, where 75% of respondents had more than 10 years of experience (ELIS, 2024), or those of the ELC Special Interest Group on AI, where 65% of the translators involved had at least 10 years of experience (Rivas Ginel et al., 2024). In terms of education and level of specialisation, 79% of our respondents had at least a bachelor's degree in translation and 87% stated that translating was their main source of income. Finally, as is typical in the market and reflected in previous research on the field, the majority of the participants were freelancers (81% or 205 individuals), with the next largest groups

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[2] https://www.proz.com/polls/20848?action=results&poll_ident=20848&sp=polls [Accessed: 20241126].

[3] https://www.proz.com/polls/21202?action=results&poll_ident=21202&sp=polls [Accessed: 20241126].

[4] https://www.proz.com/polls/21217?action=results&poll_ident=21217&sp=polls [Accessed: 20241126].

being in-house translators working in companies that do not provide translation services (8% or 20) and in-house translators in language service providers (6% or 16).

Age	Percentage and count		Experience (yrs.)	Percentage and count
18 to 24	4% (9)		Under 1	4% (11)
25 to 34	41% (104)		1 to under 5	18% (46)
35 to 44	35% (87)		5 to under 10	27% (68)
45 to 54	14% (35)		10 to under 20	36% (90)
55 to 64	6% (15)		More than 20	15% (37)
65 or older	1% (2)			

Table 2: Respondents' age and professional experience

The participants were also asked about their fields of work and the services they provided, using a multiple-choice format that allowed them to pick more than one answer. Many respondents selected localisation, which was placed second to proofreading/revision (81% or 205 individuals) and was followed by audiovisual translation (42% or 105). The most commonly chosen field of work was general/other (70% or 177), then marketing (52% or 130) and art/literary (44% or 110). Although not included as a field, many added, either as a comment or as a response to a message on LinkedIn, that they had chosen art/literary or — more often — tech/engineering (37% or 93) as a reference to video game localisation. When we consider the participants' fields of work and services together, we can observe that many translators work in highly creative contexts, and previous research has shown that MTPE constrains creativity (Guerberof-Arenas and Toral 2020, 2022), a fact that might impact the degree of adoption and will be discussed in the next section.

Additionally, we asked the participants whether they had actively sought training or education in LLMs, and the results show that only 17% (n=42) had. Although the figure is too low to be representative, most of them stated that they used ChatGPT frequently or occasionally and reported having mostly gathered information for themselves about AI literacy (57%), prompt engineering (50%), integration with CAT tools (43%), and data protection (21%). The questionnaire shows that 41% of the respondents had heard about ChatGPT but did not use it at all, while 28% said they used it sometimes, 17% stated that they had done so once or twice, and 13% declared themselves regular users. Out of those who had tried it at least once (58.7% or 144 individuals), only 22 had paid for it and a mere five had integrated it into their translation workflow. Table 3 shows the reported uses of ChatGPT, with use as a source of inspiration (53%) at the top of the list, a practice mentioned only once or twice in the corpus but which seems to be more

widespread than initially expected. The next most prevalent uses are 'summarising, drafting emails, looking up terms, looking up multiple term choices' (45%) — the tasks most frequently mentioned in the corpus — ahead of rephrasing (41%) and understanding technical expressions (30%).

TASKS	Results
Inspiration	53% (78)
Summarising, drafting emails, looking up terms, looking up multiple term choices	45% (67)
Rephrasing	41% (61)
Understanding very technical expressions	30% (45)
Deciding between multiple-term choices	24% (35)
Translating	23% (34)
Looking up acronyms	21% (31)
Looking up abbreviations	19% (28)
Proofreading	14% (21)
Checking fluency	11% (17)
Other	22% (33)

Table 3: Reported uses of ChatGPT

4. Discussion

Both the corpus analysis and the results from the survey show a low level of adoption specifically for translation tasks (34 reported cases, or just under 13.5% of the total) and report poor performance, aligning with previous research that places poor output among the top five key barriers to adoption (Rivas Ginel et al., 2024). The significant percentage of respondents working in highly creative contexts and their role as specialists result in higher expectations regarding quality, as "domain experts are likely to pay attention to different trust cues than those that impact end users or customers" (Lockey et al., 2021: 5464). Similarly, according to the findings of an Authors Guild survey of 1,700 authors, published in May 2023, "[o]nly around 7 percent of writers who employ generative AI said they use it to generate the text of their work" (The Authors Guild, 2023).

In terms of overall use among freelancers, we can observe an increase in adoption in comparison with the figure of 17% of 919 professionals given in the ELIS 2024 report (ELIS Research, 2024: 36), that of 25.4% of 500 translators indicated by the ELC Special

Interest Group on AI (Rivas Ginel et al., 2024), and that of 37.7% of 41 freelancers reported in a smaller study in the USA (Jiménez-Crespo, in press). Our research shows that 40% of our respondents used ChatGPT either regularly or occasionally, a divergence that can be attributed to differences in the average experience and age of the participants. Our results represent an almost even split between participants with fewer than and participants with more than 10 years of experience. Consequently, and although this has been impossible to verify in the case of the ELIS survey, our respondents were younger — the most represented age group being 25 to 34, in contrast to an average age of 45 for the ELC (Rivas Ginel et al., 2024) — which has been shown to impact translators' perceptions of control and command (Jiménez-Crespo, in press).

Nevertheless, the comments left online by translators and the data presented in Table 3 demonstrate that, even in creative contexts, professionals are finding ways to take advantage of this new technology. In fact, 78 participants (almost 31%, and over half of those who had used ChatGPT at least once) chose 'inspiration', making it the top-ranked reported use. This appears to be a common, and perhaps under-researched, use of NMT, judging by a survey by Farrell (2023), in which over 86% of 290 MT-using translators reported the use of MT for inspiration. Outside of translation, if we refer back to the Authors Guild survey, 29% of the respondents reportedly used AI "for brainstorming plot ideas and characters" (The Authors Guild, 2023). Other reported applications extracted from both sources in our research were proofreading, drafting emails or CVs, search engine optimisation (SEO) strategies, dealing with abbreviations, and finding documentation. The use of LLMs as a virtual assistant appears to be popular in both translation (Sanchez-Gijón and Palenzuela, 2023; GALA, 2024; Jiménez-Crespo, 2024) and other fields.

Some research that focuses exclusively on productivity suggests that translation tasks could be performed more quickly with LLM assistance, even claiming a link between the scale of training data and performance, without any consideration of the translation domain or whether working with LLMs produces job satisfaction (Merali, 2024). In research with marketing trainees, Dell'Acqua et al. (2023) found participants to perform creative, analytical, writing, marketing and persuasiveness tasks more quickly (on average), but noted that participants tended to become reliant on AI over time and less effective, with many failing to identify an AI-inappropriate task. As Dell'Acqua et al. (2023: 3) caution, LLMs can be very useful, but may also fail either completely or in subtle, unobtrusive ways "that are difficult to predict in advance". An example is the seemingly simple task of counting words, as basic arithmetic can present a problem (Metz, 2023). It should be borne in mind that counting words is not straightforward: even different versions of Microsoft Word can report vastly different word counts (see Zydroń, 2017).

The combined results show the impact of "automation anxiety" (Vieira, 2018) and confirm the hypothesis, formulated in the previous ELIS report (2023: 4), that anxiety is "possibly based on ChatGPT coverage in press and forums". In fact, a preliminary manual analysis of sentiment shows that, in the subcorpus extracted from Facebook, the highest number of comments including the words 'dead', 'killing' or 'fear' were made in posts

overtly praising ChatGPT's qualities, whereas positive comments were made in the forum whenever a poster shared news reinforcing the idea of needing human translators. However, when we examine the comments in greater depth, we observe that more than being replaced, translators fear being unable to make a living from translation alone in the future, as many have already experienced rate cuts related to a shift towards MTPE and, in many cases, LSP discounts for fuzzy matches.

The findings from our corpus point directly to clients and agencies as the source of distrust and corroborate Jiménez-Crespo's (in press) postulate that such fears may not be specifically related to and directed towards technology itself but rather the human links in the translation chain. These fears, found as early as in the second entry in the corpus and mentioned at least once every month, result in entire conversations in which professionals warn those considering becoming translators to find alternative sources of income or to specialise in a potentially AI-proof field, and reflect concerns for the sustainability of the profession: "[w]ith a drop from 63% to 51%, especially those with more than 10 years of activity are clearly questioning their professional future" (ELIS, 2024: 22). Nevertheless, the ELC survey shines a more optimistic light on the topic, as it reports that, over the years, pay rates have either increased or remained the same for 70.34% of the 600 participants and only 35.5% of respondents currently have a reduced workload (Rivas Ginel et al., 2024).

5. Conclusions, limitations, and future work

The main limitations of this study include the lack of data on the topic due to its novelty, the use of English-only comments due to the nature of the networks chosen, and the fact that the corpus analysis had to be carried out manually. Cross-referencing opinions according to language combinations on ProZ could not be done in time and remains something to be studied in future articles. Similarly, sentiment analysis, which, due to the high number of sarcastic posts and remarks, has to be carried out manually, will be performed in the future. Our study shows that despite significant media hype and the resulting automation anxiety (Vieira, 2018), the adoption of ChatGPT for translation tasks among professionals remains limited but is gradually increasing. Currently, only 13.5% reported using ChatGPT for translation, with many users leveraging the LLM primarily for inspiration, as described in previous research about NMT tools (Farrell, 2023). A smaller proportion of translators use the LLM as a virtual assistant, to help draft emails, amend SEO strategies, and (slightly worryingly) proofread. Furthermore, the data published by ELIS Research, Nimdzi, and GALA corroborates that, so far, the translation industry is still exploring how to best incorporate this technology into its workflow. Many translation tools, such as memoQ, Lokalise, Smartcat, and Lilt, have incorporated GPT or LLM tools (often via Microsoft) for proposing translations, rewriting text, or even generating multilingual text, with no published results to demonstrate the effectiveness of this integration at the time of writing.

Comments from translators support Briva-Iglesias' (2024) notion that technology adoption in the language service industry often involves a process of the human adapting to the tool, as evidenced by their exploration of various potential uses. Nonetheless, our corpus shows the emergence of a dialogue between developers and professionals, in the case of certain tools like CafeTran, that reflects principles of "human-centred AI" and "augmented intelligence" (O'Brien, 2023; Jiménez-Crespo, 2023, 2024). This approach advocates for the creation of user-centred technologies that meet professionals' needs, thereby enhancing acceptance and maximising their effectiveness (Briva-Iglesias, 2024). Overall, the corpus shows the significant impact of automation anxiety and fears about job security, often directed at clients and agencies rather than the technology itself (Jiménez-Crespo, in press), as "AI and MT are considered to be equivalent in the sense that both reduce the appreciation and therefore also the financial compensation, for human language work" (ELIS Research, 2024: 40). In conclusion, the qualitative and quantitative data presented in this paper is intended to be a baseline for future analyses of the chronological evolution of the degree of adoption of genAI in translation.

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