



EXPECTATIONS AND CONCERNS OF THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE INDUSTRY

2019

PREAMBLE

With 1404 responses from 55 countries, including many outside Europe, this 2019 edition of the European Language Industry survey is the most successful one since its start in 2013.

This report analyses European trends rather than those in individual countries. Significant differences between countries will be highlighted only if the number of answers from those countries is sufficiently high to draw meaningful conclusions.

Table 1 below shows between square brackets the minimum number of responses from companies and individual professionals that has been defined as a reliability threshold for each country. Countries that reach the threshold are highlighted in green. Countries that are highlighted in yellow exceed 50% of the threshold. Data from these countries and for the non-highlighted countries should be analysed with caution.

	Companies	Individuals	Translation Departments	Training institutes	Other
Europe					
Central & Eastern Europe					
Albania	[5]	1 [10]	0	0	0
Belarus	[5]	1 [10]	0	0	0
Bosnia-Herzegovina	[5]	1 [10]	0	0	0
Bulgaria	3 [5]	0 [10]	0	0	1
Croatia	14 [5]	54 [10]	0	10	1
Czech Republic	5 [5]	15 [10]	0	0	0
Hungary	8 [5]	2 [10]	0	0	0
Kosovo	1 [5]	[10]	0	0	0
Macedonia	1 [5]	3 [10]	0	0	0
Poland	14 [5]	45 [10]	2	2	1
Romania	7 [5]	6 [10]	4	1	1
Russia	6 [5]	12 [10]	12	2	0
Serbia	3 [5]	6 [10]	1	1	0
Slovakia	3 [5]	8 [10]	8	3	1
Slovenia	9 [5]	29 [10]	0	1	0
Turkey	1 [5]	1 [10]	0	5	0
Ukraine	2 [5]	7 [10]	0	0	0

2019 Language Industry Survey – Expectations and Concerns of the European Language Industry

	Companies	Individuals	Translation Departments	Training institutes	Other
Northern Europe & Baltics					
Denmark	3 [5]	7 [10]	0	5	0
Estonia	5 [5]	7 [10]	0	1	0
Finland	14 [5]	64 [10]	2	14	1
Latvia	3 [5]	14 [10]	1	3	0
Lithuania	7 [5]	14 [10]	1	1	0
Norway	1 [5]	2 [10]	0	0	0
Sweden	6 [10]	6 [20]	1	2	0
Western & Southern Europe					
Andorra	[5]	1 [10]	0	0	0
Austria	10 [10]	63 [20]	1	0	1
Belgium	14 [10]	14 [20]	1	3	0
France	15 [10]	232 [20]	0	8	0
Germany	18 [10]	76 [20]	1	13	1
Greece	5 [5]	10 [10]	1	4	1
Ireland	4 [5]	20 [10]	0	1	1
Italy	17 [10]	58 [20]	0	6	1
Luxembourg	1 [5]	1 [10]	0	4	0
Malta	[5]	2 [10]	1	3	0
Netherlands	12 [10]	17 [20]	0	0	2
Portugal	11 [10]	12 [20]	1	1	0
Spain	25 [10]	65 [20]	2	2	0
Switzerland	3 [5]	0 [10]	0	3	1
United Kingdom	20 [10]	37 [20]	1	2	1

Americas					
Argentina	3 [5]	7 [10]	0	0	0
Brazil	[5]	[10]	1	0	0
Canada	[5]	3 [10]	1	1	1
Colombia	[5]	4 [10]	0	0	0
Mexico	[5]	4 [10]	0	0	0
United States of America	6 [10]	7 [20]	0	5	0

Africa, Asia & Oceania					
Australia	[5]	3 [10]	0	0	0
Egypt	[5]	1 [10]	0	0	0
Eswatini	[5]	1 [10]	0	0	0
India	1 [5]	1 [10]	0	0	0
Israel	[5]	1 [10]	0	0	0
Korea	1 [5]	1 [10]	0	0	0
Lebanon	[5]	[10]	1	0	0
Palestine	[5]	1 [10]	0	0	0
South Africa	1 [5]	1 [10]	0	0	0
United Arab Emirates	[5]	[10]	0	1	0

TOTAL	286	946	108	46	18
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Table 1 – Responses per respondent type and country

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the survey have not changed compared to previous editions. It was not set up to gather exact quantitative data but to establish the mood of the industry. As such it does not replace other local, regional or global surveys of the language industry but adds the important dimensions of perception and trust which largely determine the actions of industry stakeholders.

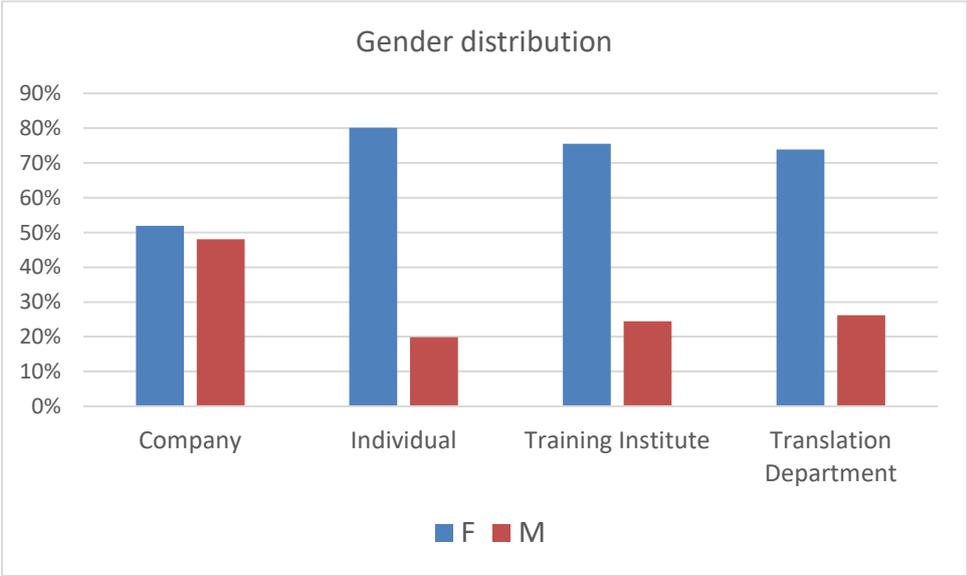
The questions concerning the market as well as the open questions regarding trends and concerns are identical to those in the previous editions in order to detect changes in prevailing opinions.

STRUCTURE OF THE INDUSTRY

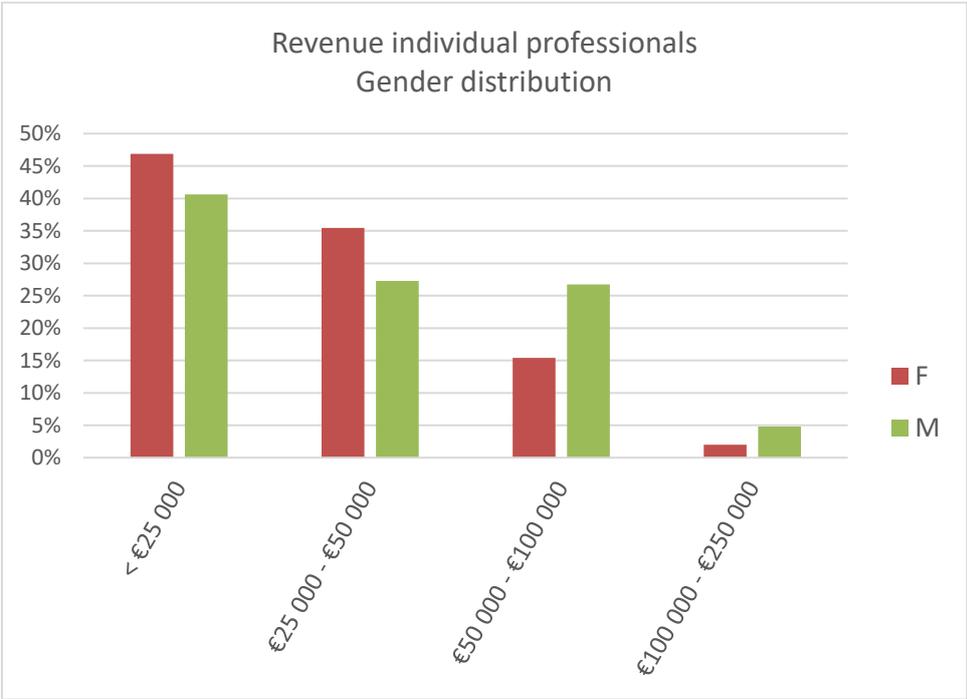
For the first time, this edition of the survey also gathered gender information to identify meaningful gender-based differences in the industry.

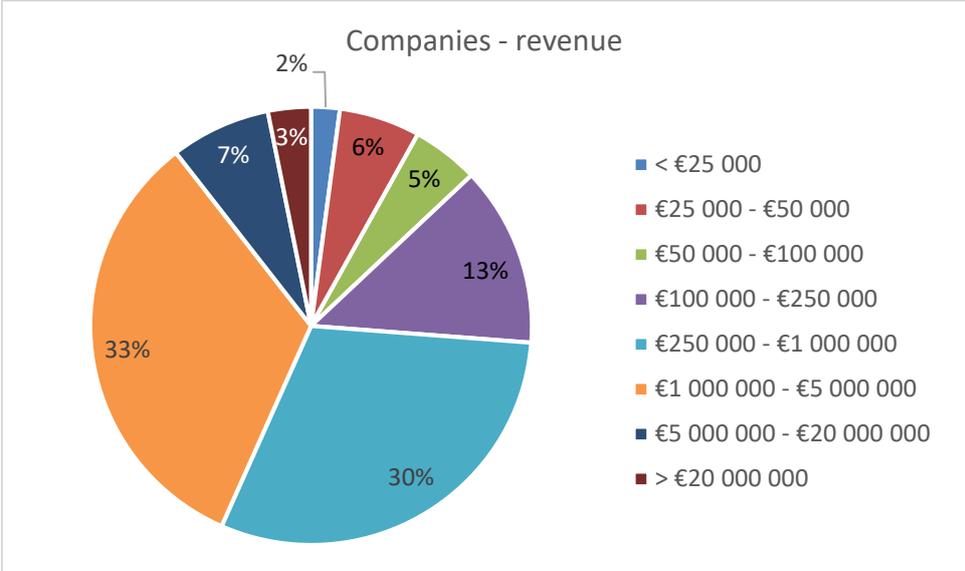
As expected, the survey confirmed the wide-spread opinion that women are strongly represented in the translation industry, with 73% of the total number of respondents.

This bias is very strong among independent professionals, training institutes and translation departments, but all but absent among those respondents representing translation companies.



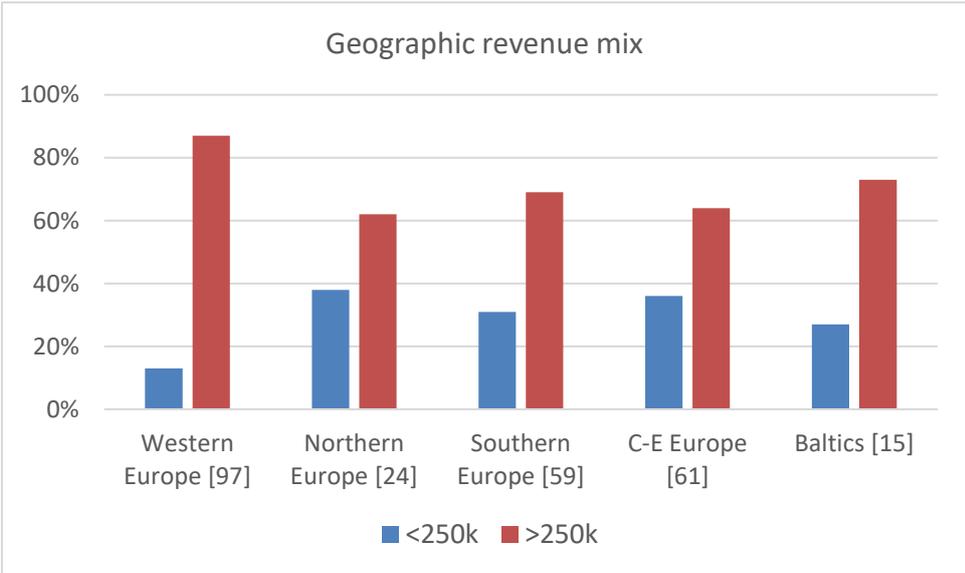
The widely discussed revenue gap between men and women is also visible in the results. A clear reason for the gap cannot be readily determined from the data.

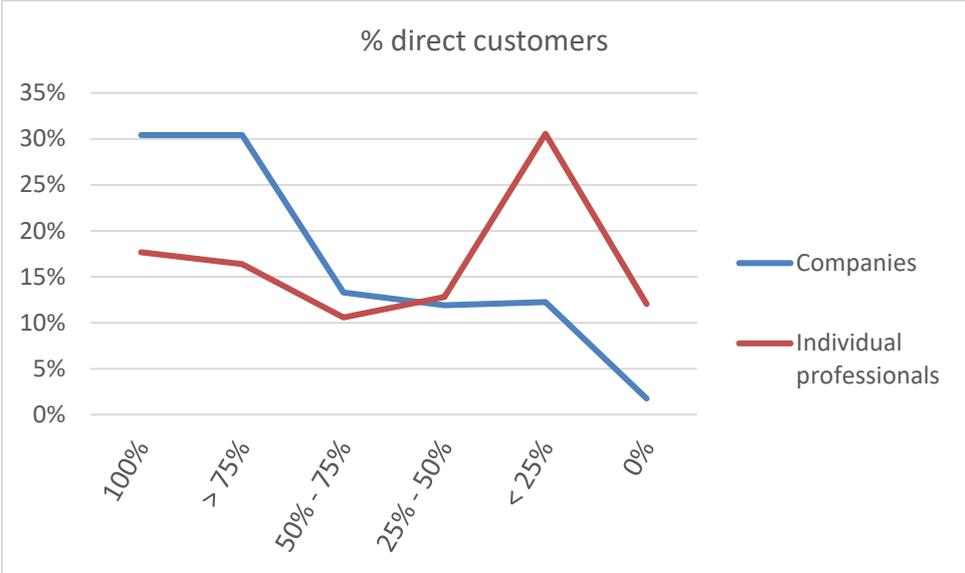




Based on the responses received, most European language service companies can be considered as small, but with 26% the segment below € 250k has significantly shrunk compared to 2018 (34%). The combined segments over € 1m are considerably better represented this year than in previous years, with 43% compared to only 30% in 2018 and 34% in 2017. 56% of all translation companies report less than 10 employees, which is lower than the 60% reported in 2018. Both sets of data seem to indicate that the average size of the participating companies is increasing.

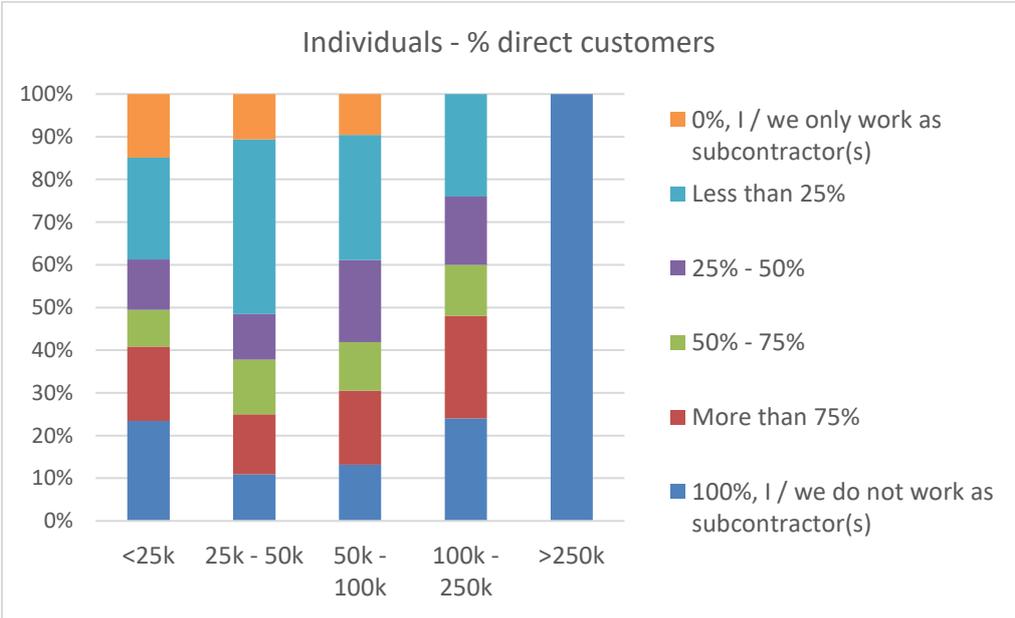
Taking 250k€ as a limit to distinguish start-up companies from the more established ones, we see a clear geographical bias towards Western Europe. While the <250k€ segment is more than 30% strong in most European regions, this section is very small in Western Europe (13%). Surprisingly, Northern Europe – traditionally considered a rich region - shows the highest percentage of small companies. Due to the small number of companies that responded from those regions, these results need to be considered with caution.





As in 2018, relatively few companies (less than 25%) report that they work as subcontractors to other language service companies.

Among the independent language professionals, exclusive subcontractor activity decreases with revenue size. It disappears completely in the revenue segment above 100k€, but language services companies and other language professionals remain even there an important part of the client base (40%).

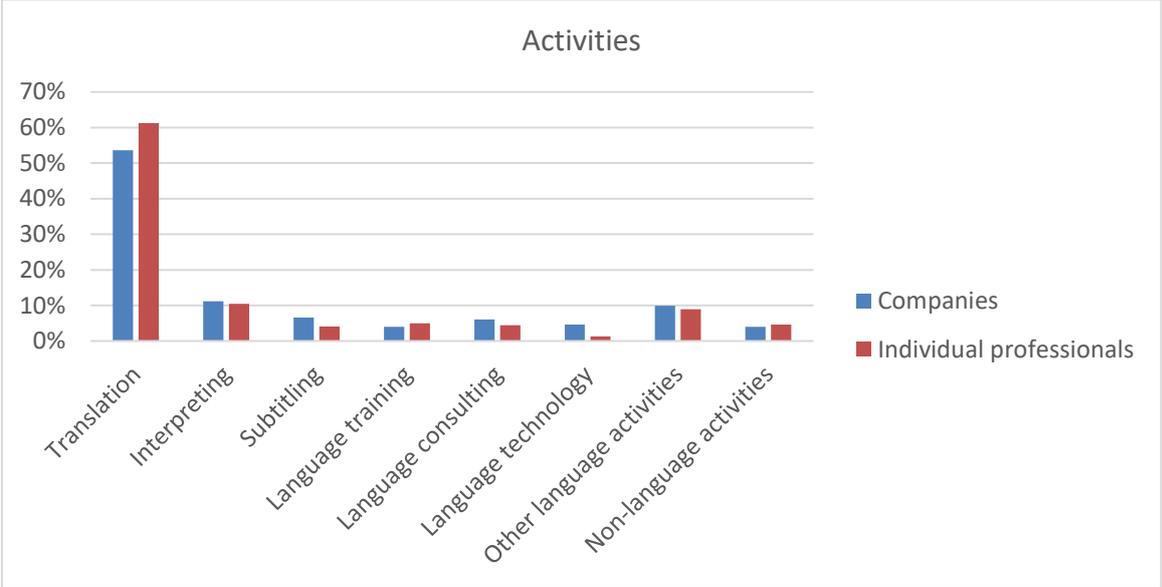


On average, however, we do see an increase in direct business among the independent language professionals (45% report that more than half of their business is with direct customers, compared to 40% in 2018).

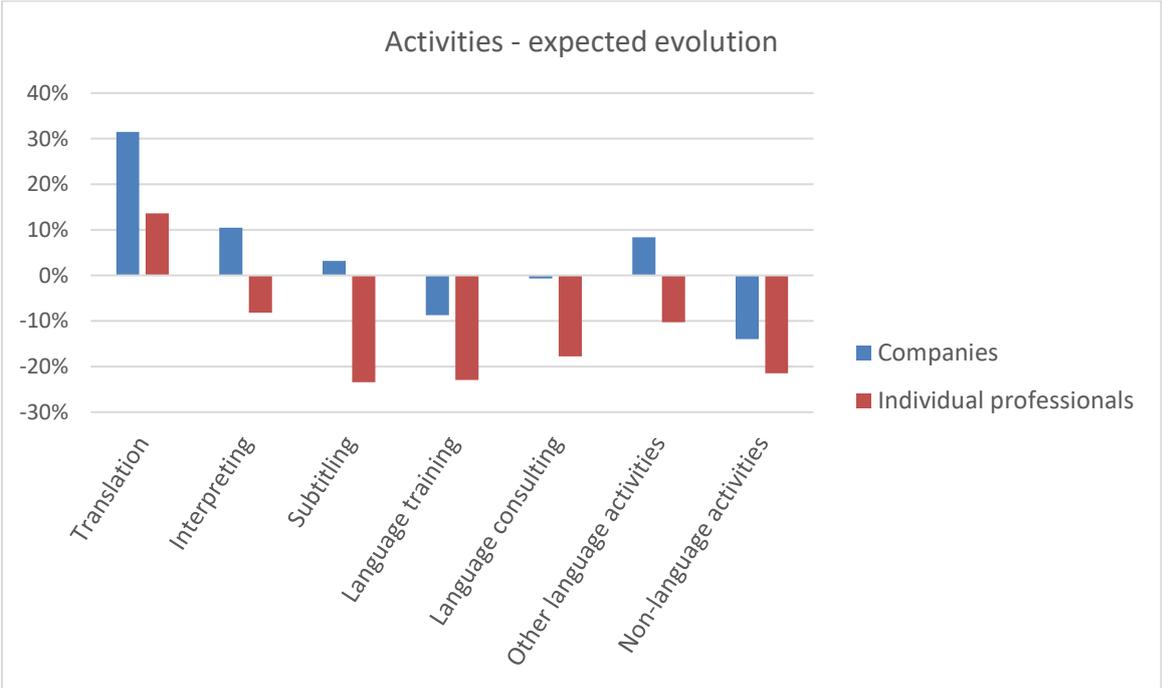
ACTIVITIES AND VERTICALS

ACTIVITIES

Based on the results of the survey, other than translation activities represent only a minority of the respondents’ activities. This is obviously not surprising in a survey that has been promoted primarily by translation associations companies. The low score of *language training* among the companies can be considered somewhat surprising since this activity is often associated with translation. Less than 25% of the companies report that they combine both activities.



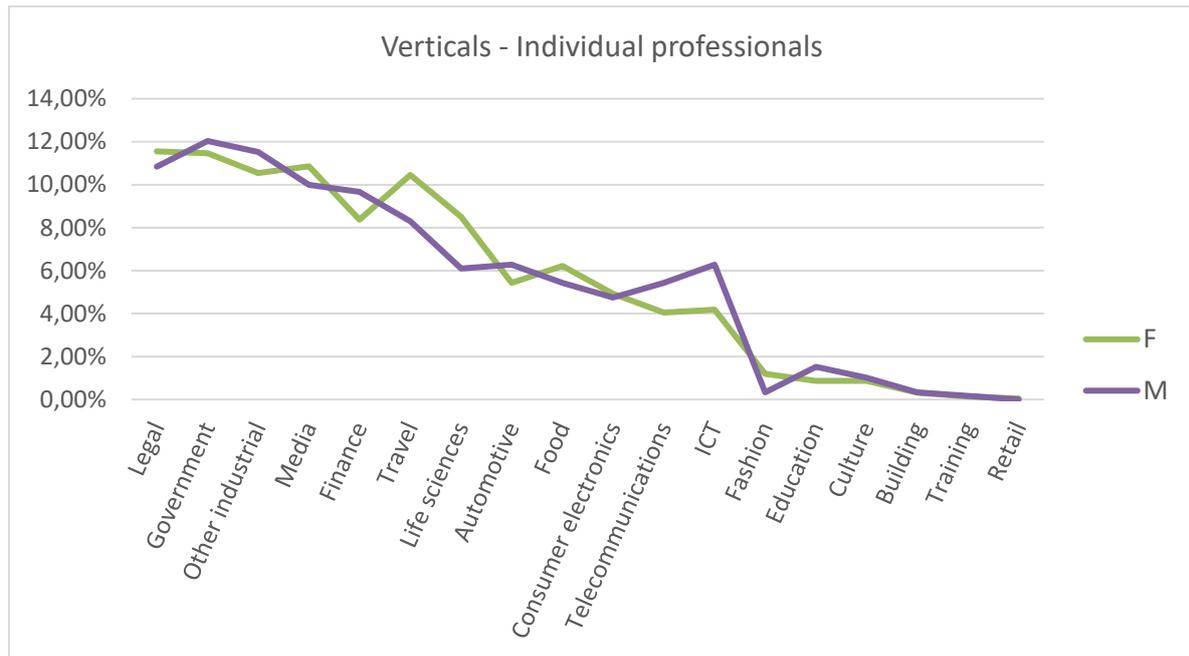
What is more surprising however, is that a significant number of respondents – mainly language professionals – indicate their intent to reduce activities other than standard translation.



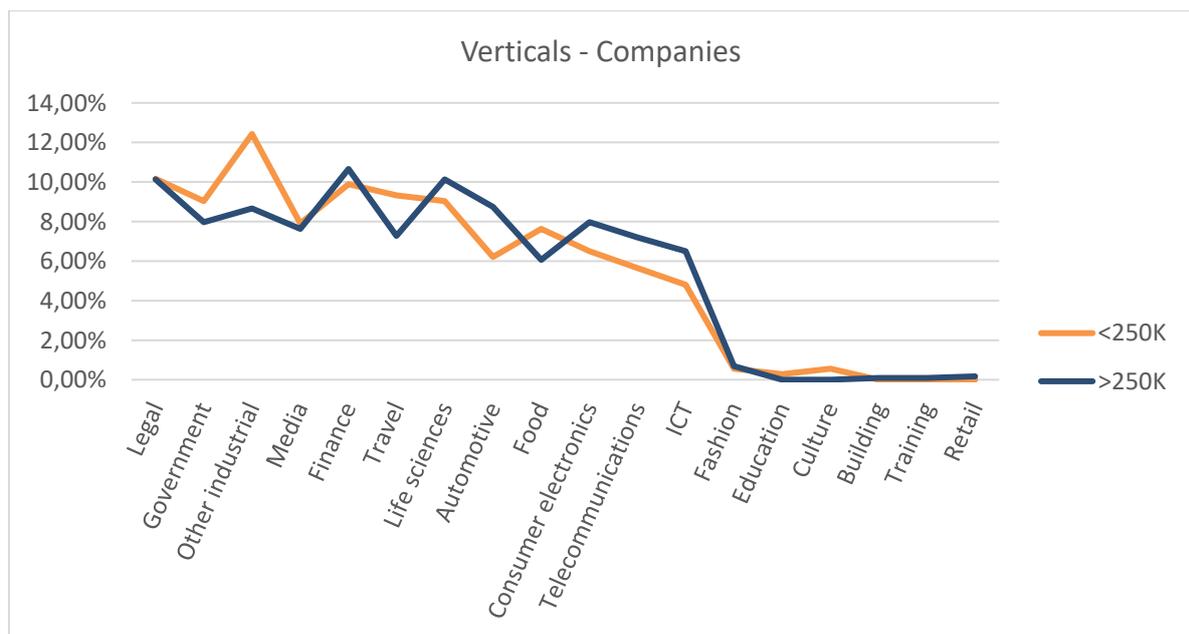
VERTICALS

The distribution of verticals looks somewhat different than in 2018. Legal services remain one of the top customer types, but government (for independent professionals) and industry, finance and life sciences (for language service companies) score at least as high.

An analysis based on gender for the individuals and revenue size for the companies reveals similar trends, but also some predictable differences such as a female spike for travel-related customers, a male ‘dip’ for fashion and a male spike for ICT. Although the absolute differences in percentage may appear small, the high number of individual respondents makes them significant nevertheless.



Differences between smaller and larger language service companies are less obvious.



As in 2017 and 2018, we see that high-volume verticals such as life sciences, automotive, consumer electronics and ICT are more often served by the larger companies, but overall tendencies are quite similar.

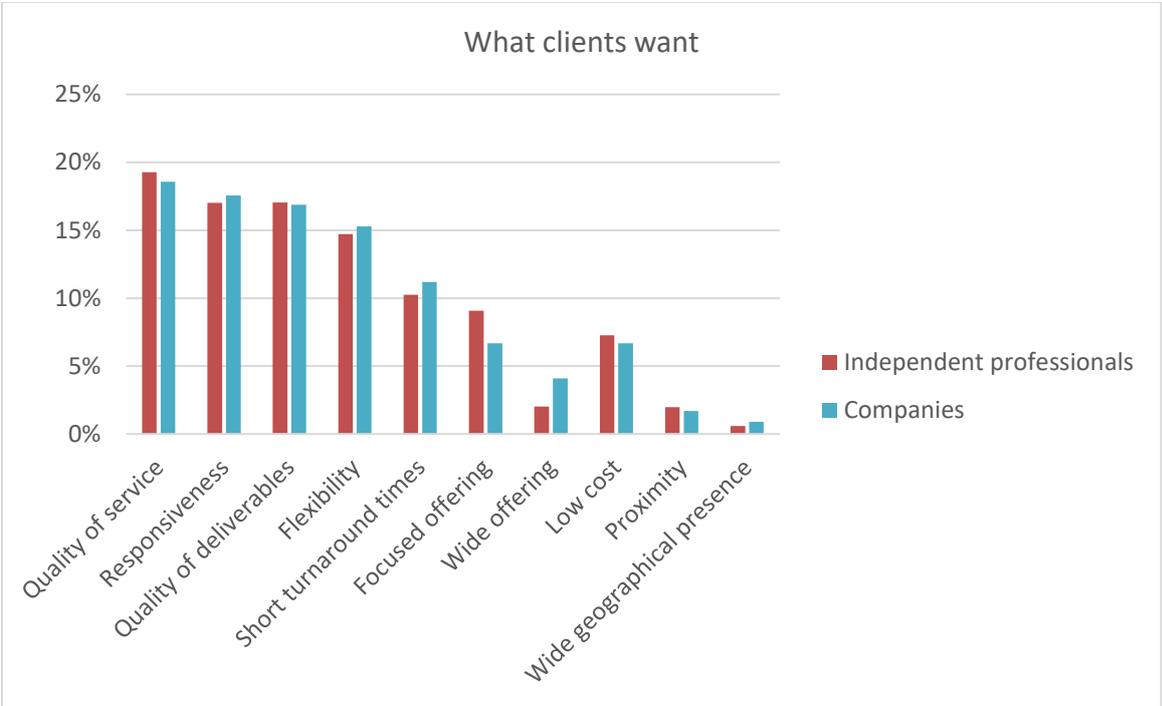
The “other industrial” category, which can also be considered as high-volume, shows an unexpected spike in popularity with the smaller companies, for which the data do not offer an explanation.

Reminder: these data show how often the verticals are served by the respondents, but do not necessarily represent their importance in terms of business volume.

WHAT CLIENTS WANT

Independent language professionals and language service companies largely agree on what their customers expect. Quality of service is top priority, followed by responsiveness, quality of deliverables and flexibility. Despite the strong concerns about price pressure that respondents voiced in other parts of this survey, “low cost” is not named as a top priority for the customer.

The only area where companies and individuals have a clearly different opinion is the level of focus that clients expect from their language provider. Individual professionals report that their clients want a high focus (ex. domain specialisation), while companies feel that a wide offering (ex. related services) is strongly valued.



OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

Based on feedback on previous editions of the survey, and specific requests from the independent professionals, this edition of the survey covers more operational practices than the previous ones. It also investigates the specific professional relationship between independent language professionals and language service companies.

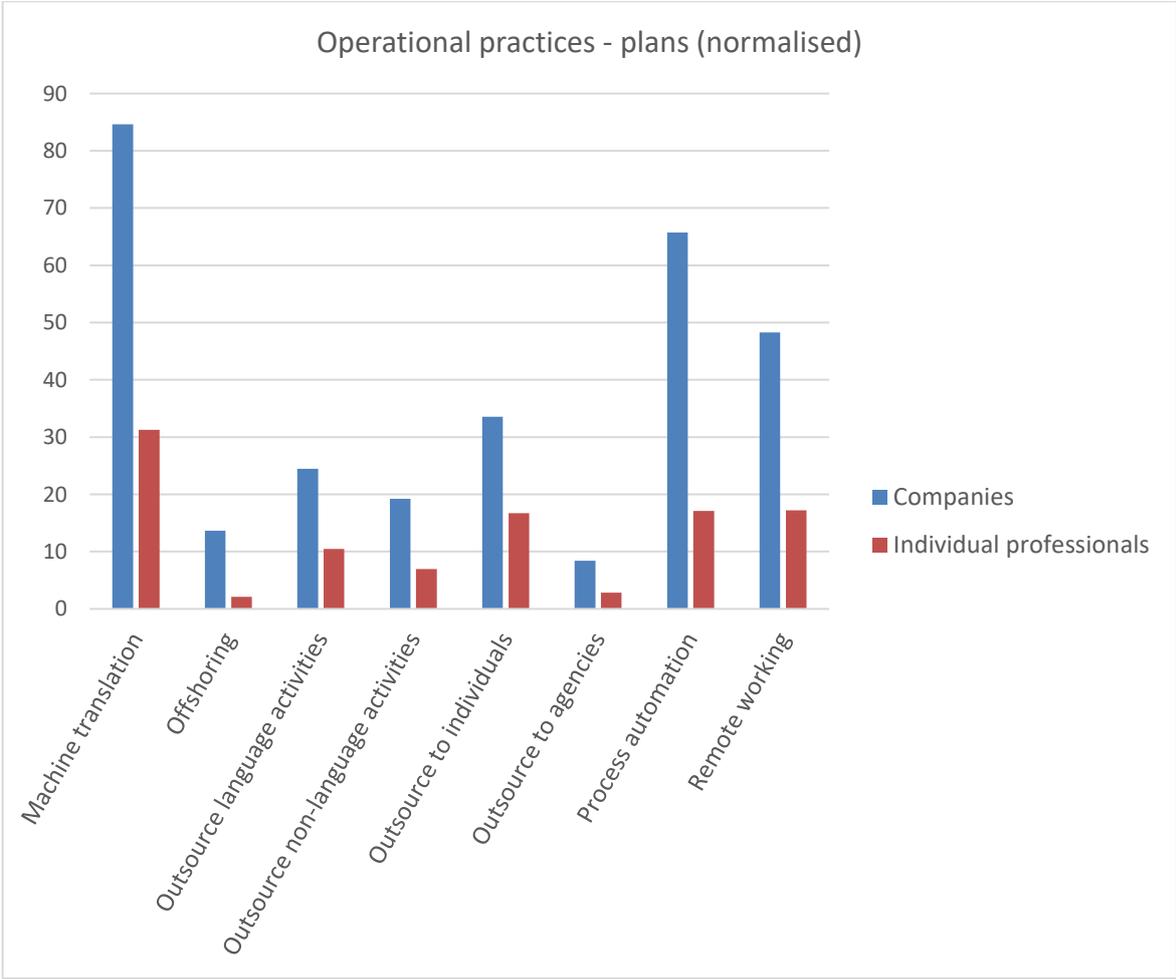
OPERATIONAL PLANS

The revised question regarding operational plans reveals important – but not unexpected – differences between companies and individual professionals.

While both segments indicate that they want to start or increase the use of machine translation the companies’ determination is much stronger (51% wants to increase its use and another 18% is ready to start), in particular among the larger companies.

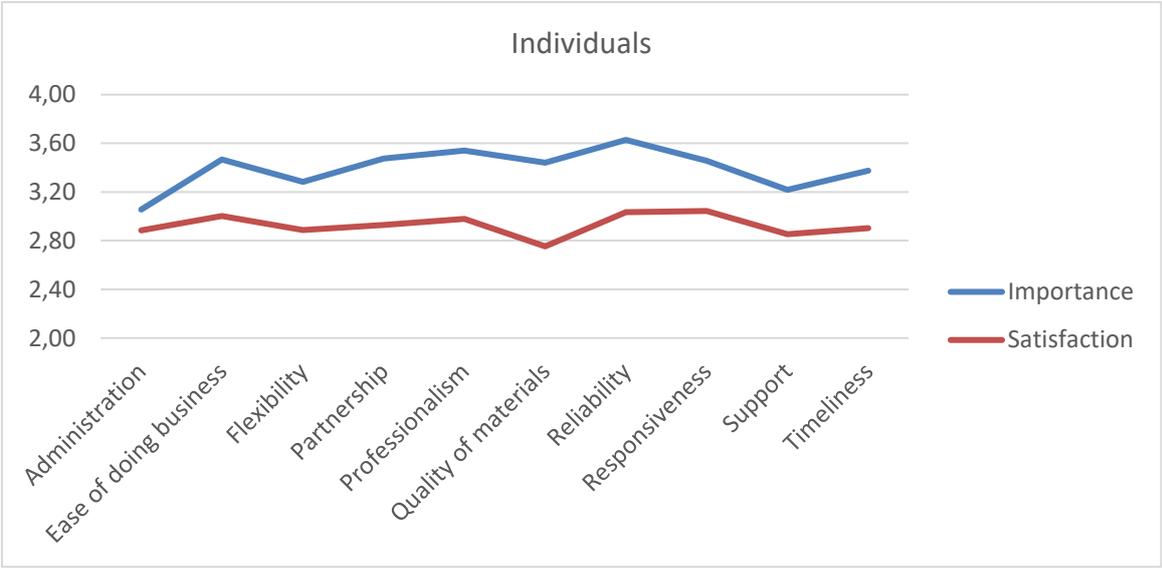
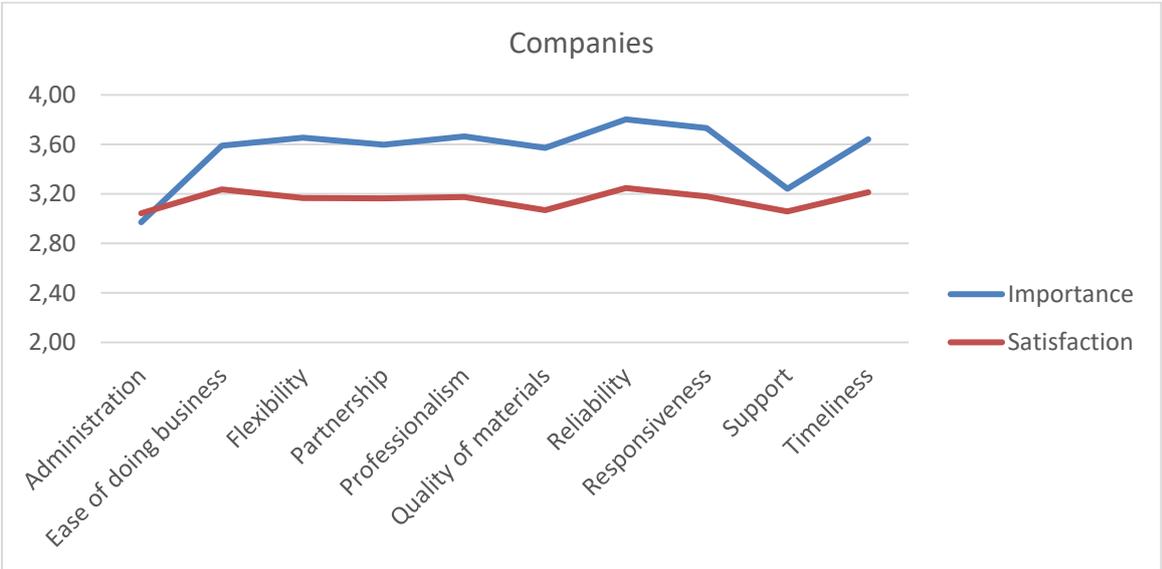
A similar difference can be noticed for process automation and remote working, two practices that have a bigger impact on companies than on individual professionals.

The fact that outsourcing scores relatively low may indicate that this practice is already so widespread that further development remains limited. We do however see a significantly stronger tendency to develop outsourcing to individuals rather than agencies.



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONALS AND LANGUAGE COMPANIES

The relationship between independent language professionals and LSCs is often a source of heated debates. This survey tries to identify which elements are considered key for a successful collaboration for both individuals and companies. Respondents also gave their opinion on how well those criteria are met in their current relationships.



Predictably, we see differences in the absolute values awarded by companies and individuals. The charts above however show that the various aspects of the relationship are largely valued in the same way by both categories, with only a few exceptions such as flexibility and timeliness being valued higher by companies than individuals.

Closer examination of the scores given by the individual professionals shows significant differences between professionals that report 75% or more subcontracting work and those that work 25% or less as subcontractors. The latter category scores their relationship with language service companies substantially lower than their colleagues who work more often in a subcontracting relationship. The difference is particularly notable in the scores 0 and 1 (23% for the scores 0 and 1

combined, compared to only 5% for their colleagues) and the score 3, which can be considered as “good” (31% compared to 48%).



Only 105 (14 translation companies and 91 independent professionals) or 7.6% of the total number of respondents used the opportunity to include a comment to elaborate on the scores. Despite this relatively low percentage, the comments provide valuable insights in the underlying concerns.

Companies express a concern that freelancers show less quality focus and should observe the specific project instructions provided to them. Keeping up with training and developments in the industry is seen as an important factor of success, particularly for high-level assignments where the quality of deliverables is currently too often considered unsatisfactory.

Companies also comment that independent professionals do not always see the language service company as a customer. Proper vendor management practices are considered as important to address these issues.

The comments voiced by the individual professionals correspond to a certain extent with the negative trends that are reported elsewhere in the survey.

Important concerns are expressed regarding proper communication around scheduling, pricing and payment practices (strong price pressure, insufficient negotiation room and lack of coverage of the time needed for queries, reviews and training, need for punctual payment), inadequate tools as well as automated processes and workflows which reduce human communication and flexibility.

Individual professionals often point the finger to project management as a major source of concern, due to a lack of support from the project managers and a lack of understanding of the translator’s needs which shows through inadequate reference materials, too short deadlines, assignments that do not always consider the translator’s areas of specialization and long but not always relevant boilerplate instructions.

Individual professionals also express the concern that highly qualified and experienced translators are leaving the industry and that professional translators are too often asked to be included in a tender submission without receiving any assignments when the company is awarded the contract.

MARKET AND DEVELOPMENT

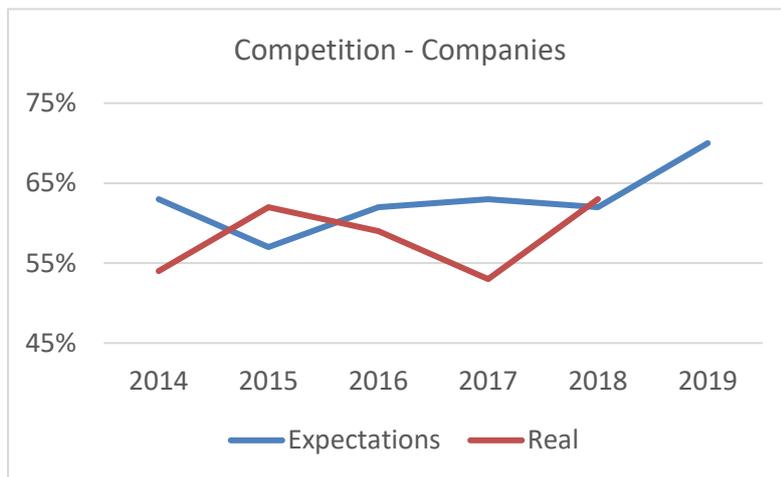
EXPLANATION TO THE GRAPHS IN THIS SECTION OF THE REPORT.

The graphs below showing Real vs Expectations comparisons represent the sentiment of the market by determining the difference between “increase” and “decrease” opinions.

A value of 50% may therefore mean that 60% of the respondents voted “increase” and 10% “decrease”, but it can also mean 70% “increase” and 20% “decrease”.

More significant than the absolute level of the values is the way in which the respondents react to the real values of the past and how they adapt their expectations for the future. The relationship between actuals of the previous year and expectations for the current year is striking, but not absolute.

COMPETITION



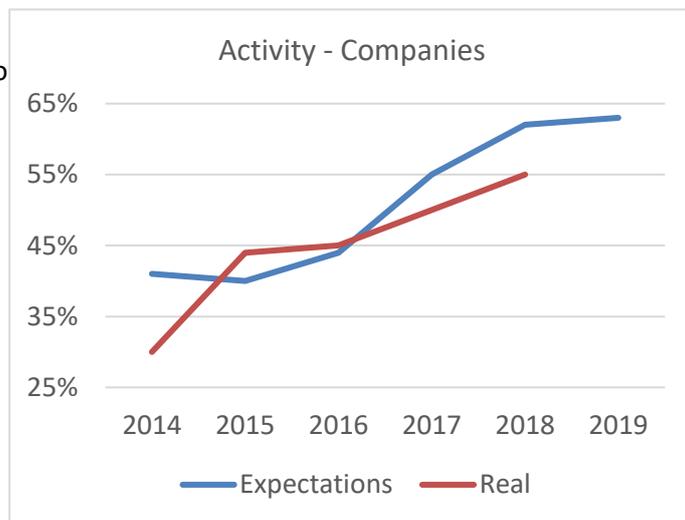
The expectations for 2019 follow perfectly the increase of competition in 2018, which leads to a staggering 70% of competition increase expectation.

Note that the “real” increase in 2018 is not a mathematical value. It represents the perception of an increase in competition.

ACTIVITY AND SALES

Companies (and to a lesser extent independent professionals) continue to see a growth of the global translation activity and expect this trend to even slightly increase.

69% of the responding companies expect a further increase in activity, against only 5% a decrease. This further improvement compared to 2017 and 2018 is clearly fuelled by the uninterrupted industry growth that companies have been reporting since 2014.





A similar picture can be drawn for the individual sales figures and expectations of the responding companies. 67% reported an increase in sales in 2018 against only 11% a decrease, which is a further improvement compared to 2017. Consequently, 70% is expecting a further increase in 2019. Only 7% are expecting a decrease.

The situation is quite different for the independent language professionals, which reports significantly lower growth in sales/revenues.

This lower growth is not surprising since individual language professionals tend to have less opportunity than a company to increase their own sales volume significantly.



The individual professionals however also report smaller growth than in 2017 (39% report an increase while 14% report a decrease in sales, against 44% and 14% respectively in the 2018 edition of the survey).

Their expectations for 2019 follow this less optimistic trend, with 40% expecting growth in 2019 and 10% a decrease, compared to 44% and 8% in the previous edition.

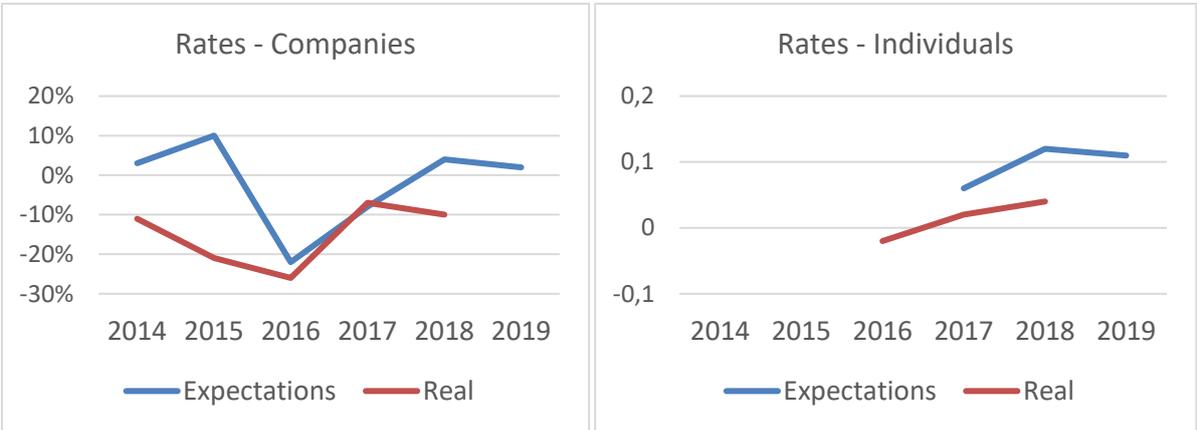
In isolation the lower sales growth expectations reported by individual professionals could merely indicate that these respondents are close to reaching their limit to accept additional business. However, they also expect a lower growth of the general translation activity than language service companies. Both elements support the statement that the growth expectation is less wide-spread among individual professionals than among companies.

RATES

In 2018 language service companies reported – for the first time since 2015 - that they were expecting a rate increase (the difference between optimism and pessimism was only 4%, but it was there).

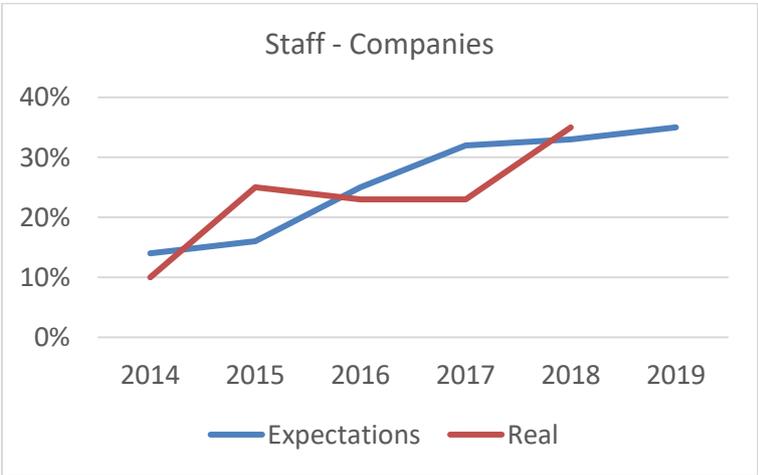
2018 however did not meet the expectations. 18% of the companies report that their real rates have increased, but 28% experienced a further price drop. Company owners are not losing hope yet (the curve is still above 0%), but the sentiment can best be described as “little or no change” (22% of the respondents expect rates to increase, while 20% expect the opposite).

We see a similar evolution, but at a more optimistic level, in the expectations of the independent language professionals. Somewhat more moderate than last year but still clearly positive, with 24% of the respondents expecting an increase and only 14% a decrease. These expectations are clearly rooted in the further increase in actual rates that the individual professionals report (20% report an increase and 16% a decrease).



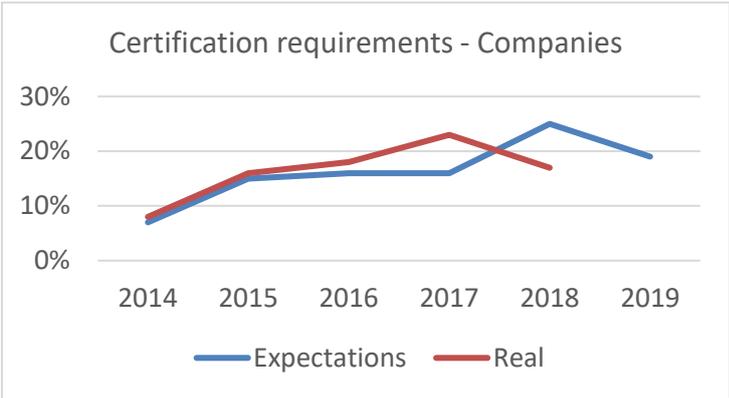
STAFFING

The language service companies report a quite significant increase in new recruitment in 2018, which exceeds even the expectations. This is fuelling a further increase in hiring expectations for 2019.



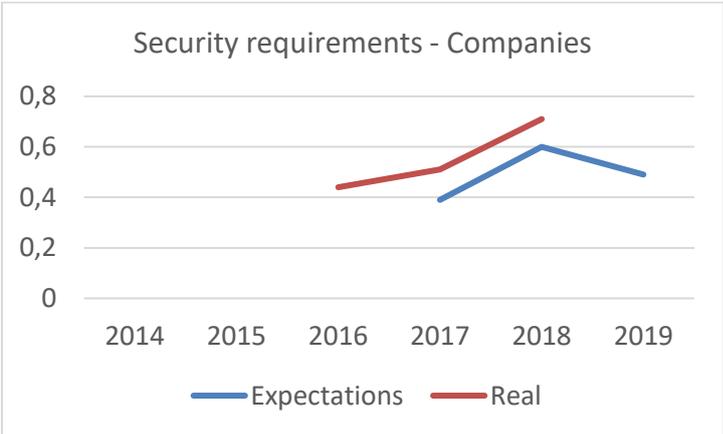
CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Companies report still report an increase in certification requirements in 2018 (as they had expected in the previous edition of the survey), but the increase was not as strong as expected. Consequently, they have also adjusted their expectations for 2019 to a somewhat lower increase. 22% of the responding companies expect an increase and only 2% a decrease.



SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

The real 2018 increase in security requirements is reported to be even stronger than predicted last year. This was also the case in 2018. Contrary to last year, the companies have not further increased their expectations for 2019, which remain at a very high level with 49% of the responding companies predicting a further increase, and nobody expecting a decrease.



INVESTMENT, DISINVESTMENT AND CERTIFICATION PLANS

The optimistic views that speak from the answers regarding the market evolution are also reflected in those about investment and disinvestment plans.

57% of all responding companies report that they have investment plans (a small increase by 3% compared to the already optimistic 2018 results), with 42% wanting to realize those plans in 2019. Only 8% report disinvestment plans.

Regarding certification plans, 47% of the responding companies selected “not applicable” which in this context means that they are already certified. This is approximately the same percentage as in 2018. Of the remaining 53%, 22% plan to certify (15% in 2018) and 30% have no certification plans (which is 4% higher than in 2018). These percentages indicate that the certification efforts are stagnating, as we already saw in 2018.

The investment sentiment looks positive throughout Europe. France and Finland show a relatively high number of reported disinvestment plans compared to the number of responding companies. In 2018, we obtained a similar image for Belgium and the United Kingdom. For Belgium, those expectations were confirmed by actual M & A activity.

	# Companies	Invest	Disinvest	Certify	Sentiment	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Austria	10	14	1	0	13					
Belgium	14	9	1	1	8					
Croatia	14	15	0	9	15					
Czech Republic	5	6	0	0	6					
Estonia	5	4	0	0	4					
Finland	14	11	3	1	8					
France	15	12	4	4	8					
Germany	18	18	2	10	16					
Greece	5	6	0	2	6					
Hungary	8	10	3	2	7					
Italy	17	15	2	3	13					
Lithuania	7	7	2	2	5					
Netherlands	12	18	1	8	17					
Poland	15	12	0	6	12					
Portugal	11	13	0	7	13					
Romania	7	3	0	1	3					
Russia	6	6	0	2	6					
Slovenia	9	13	0	7	13					
Spain	25	16	2	10	14					
United Kingdom	20	26	4	9	22					
	11,7	1	4	10,7						

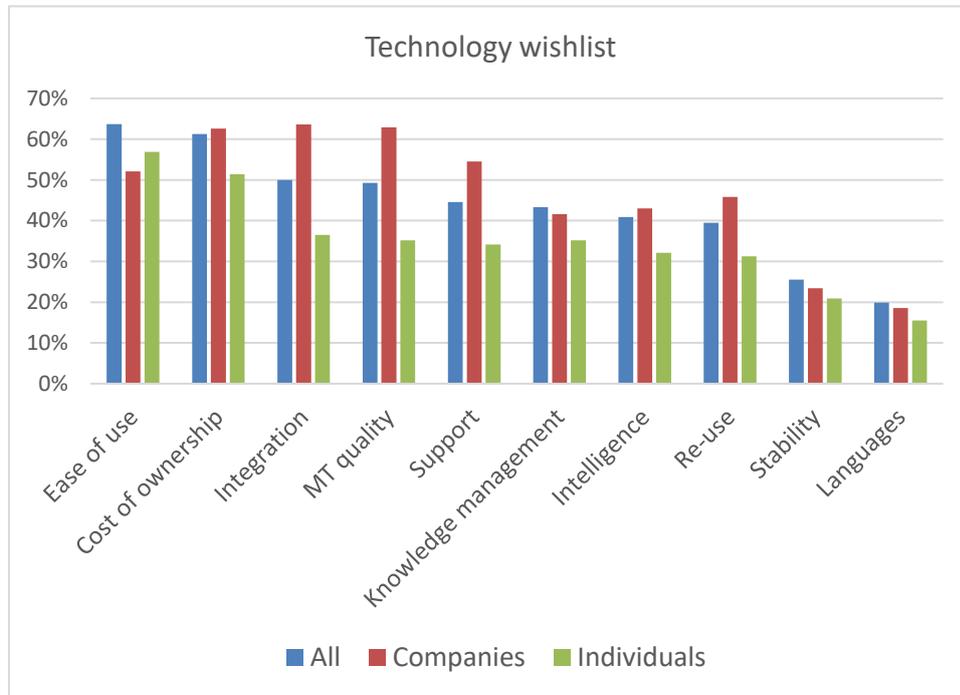
As in 2018, short-term plans (to be carried out in 2019) are weighted twice as high as the less concrete ones.

The sentiment score is the difference between investment score and disinvestment score. Green indicates that the sentiment score is at or above the set relevance threshold for that country. Yellow indicates that the sentiment score is at least at 50% of the relevance threshold for the country. Please refer to table 1 for the relevance thresholds of the various countries.

TECHNOLOGY

The technology section of the survey has been revised to focus more on tool awareness, investments, impact and improvement requests.

TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENT WISHLIST



Based on the return from our respondents, expectations vary widely depending on the respondent’s profile, which is not unexpected. Independent professionals are mainly looking for better ease of use and lower cost of ownership. Quite a few professionals added that the software vendors should listen to translators to improve the functionality of their tools.

Language service companies require mainly lower cost of ownership, better integration and better MT quality, but better ease of use and client support are not far behind. We do however see clear differences in priorities based on the size of the company.

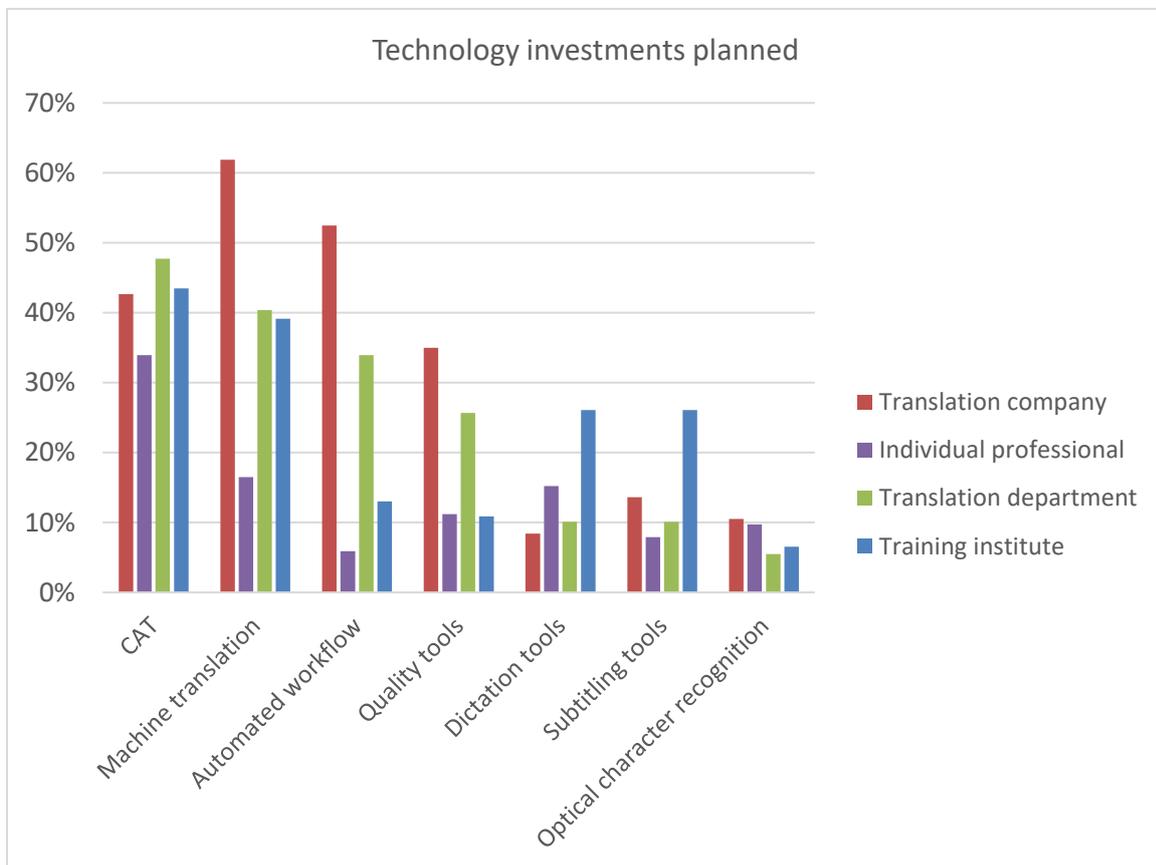
Cost of ownership is clearly the strongest requirement among smaller companies (below 250K€ revenue), while larger companies are more concerned about seamless integration, the quality of machine translation output and the support they are getting from the tool providers.

Larger companies also would like to see better re-use mechanisms which can allow them to become more competitive.



Most respondents seem to be satisfied with the stability of the tools they work with. The availability of the tools in the language of the user is considered mostly adequate or less important.

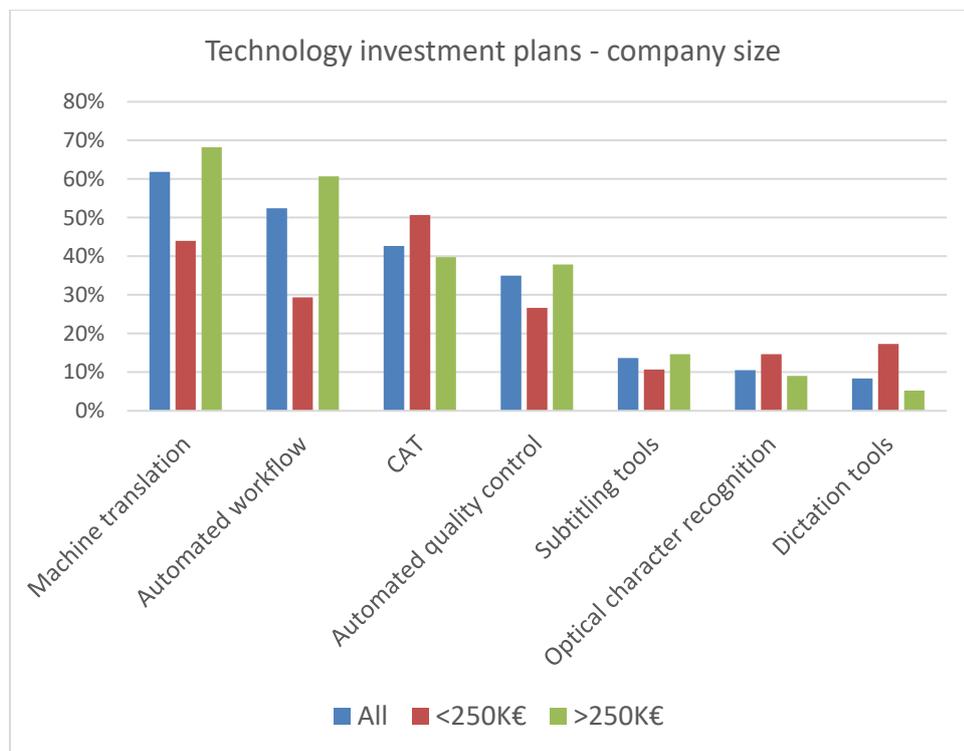
TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT PLANS



Technology investment plans look also quite different for the various types of respondents. With 62% and 52% respectively, investments in MT and automated workflow are clearly highest on the priority list of translation companies, while these investment types score only 16% and 6% with the independent professionals.

All respondent types plan solid investments in CAT tools, while quality assurance tools are only popular with translation companies (35%) and to some extent translation departments (26%). Only 11% of the independent translators intend to invest in these tools. This lack of interest does not seem to be caused by a lack of familiarity. In terms of awareness a typical QA tool like QA Distiller is ranked in 35th place by the independent professionals, which is not that far behind the 29th place given by translation companies. In terms of usage however, the tool ranks in 23rd place for the companies and only 34th place for individuals. This is an indication that the independent professionals are not entirely convinced that these tools help them in their work.

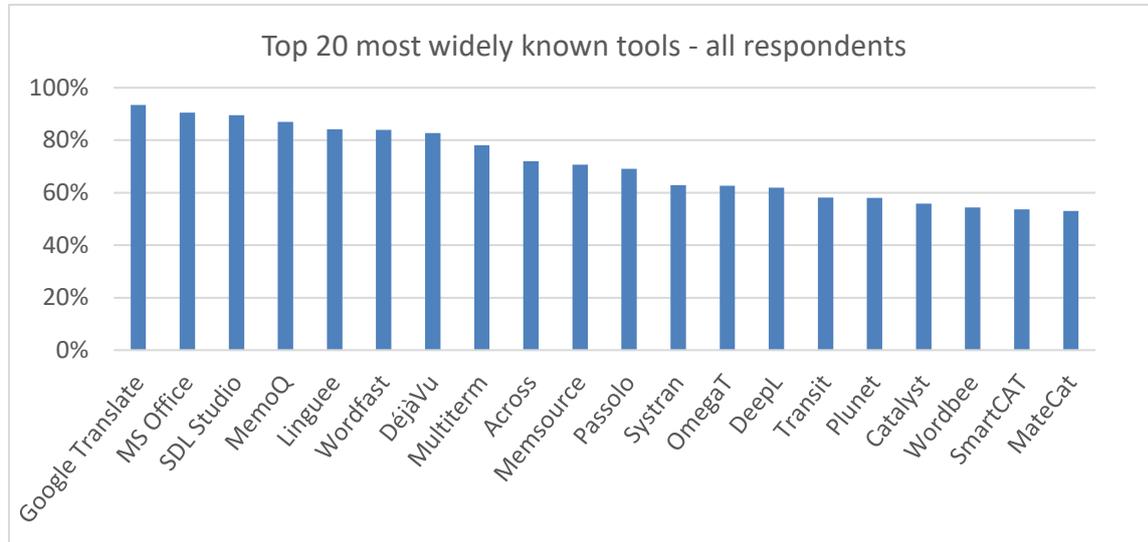
Training institutes show a clear interest in dictation and subtitling technology. It is also interesting to note that dictation technology scores almost as high as machine translation with independent professionals.



According to the survey results, technology investments area also strongly dependent on the size of the companies. Machine translation and to an even stronger degree automated workflow are clear priorities for the larger companies, while the smaller segment is still more focusing on CAT technology, with machine translation taking a strong second position.

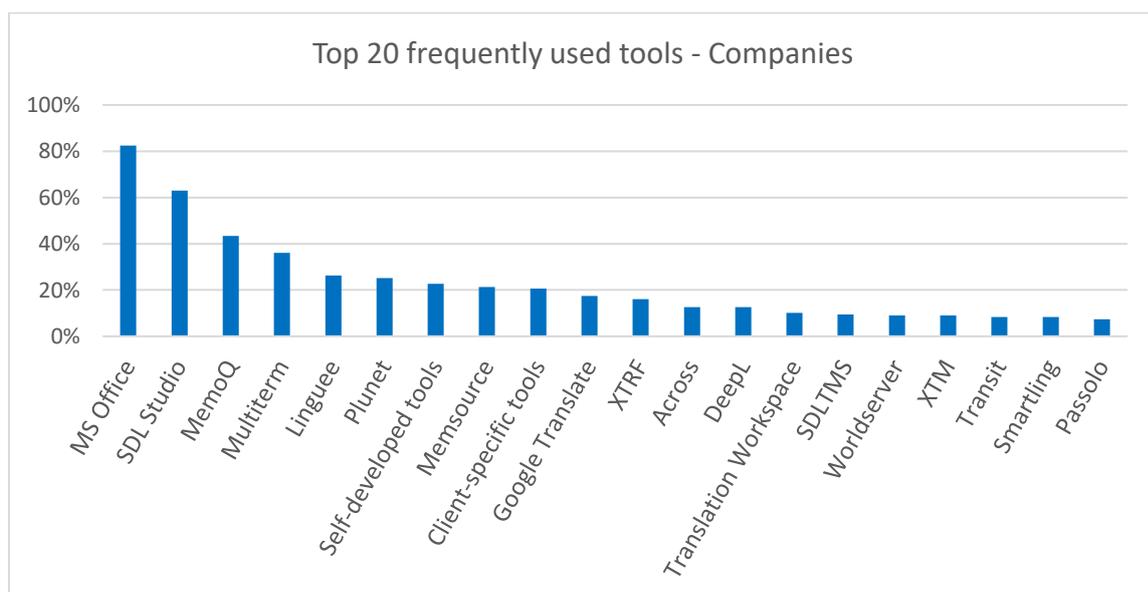
TOOL FAMILIARITY AND USAGE

In previous editions of the survey respondents had indicated which MT, CAT, TMS and other tools they were using. This edition listed 55 of them to investigate how familiar the respondents are with tools and whether being familiar also means that the tools are used – occasionally or as part of the standard working environment.



While the usual suspects such as MS Office, SDL Studio (or any of the Trados versions) and Google Translate are found in the top 5 as expected. We do see some remarkable differences between familiarity and usage.

Some tools with a rich history such as Wordfast and DéjàVu score high in the familiarity ranking (6th and 7th respectively) but are much lower ranked when it comes to actual usage. Independent professionals put Wordfast in 11th rank and DéjàVu not even in the top 20. Companies do not put either of them in their top 20 of frequently used tools.



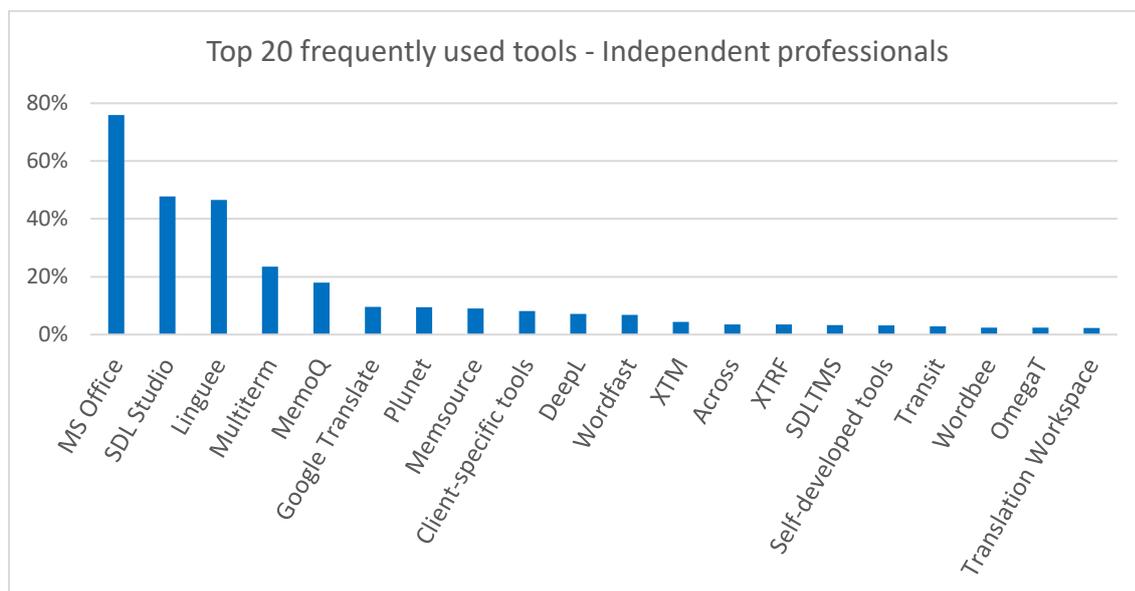
These traditional tools have been replaced by more recent CAT tools such as MemoQ (43% for companies and 13% for independent professionals) and Memsource (21% for companies and 9% for individuals), but even more strikingly by the online dictionary and bilingual corpus service Linguee (26% for companies and even 47% for individuals).

Another striking result is that among independent professionals the already named Linguee service scores only 1% lower than the most widely spread traditional CAT tool SDL Studio (and all Trados versions).

Among language service companies, the situation is different. Linguee ranks in 5th position with 26% of frequent usage, while traditional CAT products such as SDL Studio (63%) and MemoQ (43%) score considerably higher.

As can be expected, process automation and translation management tools such as Plunet, XTRF or SDL TMS score much lower, even among translation companies. Plunet is the most widely used with 25%.

This analysis also confirms the assumption that despite machine translation has still a long way to go before it will be a standard part of the toolbox of the translation professional and company. Less than 20% of the translation companies report that they are frequently using machine translation (17% mention Google Translate and 13% DeepL). Among independent professionals these percentages drop to 10% and 7% respectively.



Asked which tools had impressed them the most or had the biggest impact on their operations in 2018, the respondents named no less than 110 (!) different tools. Interestingly, the response rate was significantly higher among the translation companies (71%) than among the other respondent categories (61% among the individuals), which is in line with the common assumption that companies have a stronger focus on technology. However, it also reflects the fact that specific classes of technology such as process automation (both Plunet and XTRF made it in the companies' top 10) have little or no impact on the operations of an individual professional.

No real surprises in the outcome of the question, with SDL Studio/Trados scoring above 15% in all respondent categories. Worth to mention are the relatively high score of MemoQ for the companies (15%) and the 11% score given by training institutes to DeepL and the CAT tool Smartcat.

CAT USER RIGHTS AND OWNERSHIP

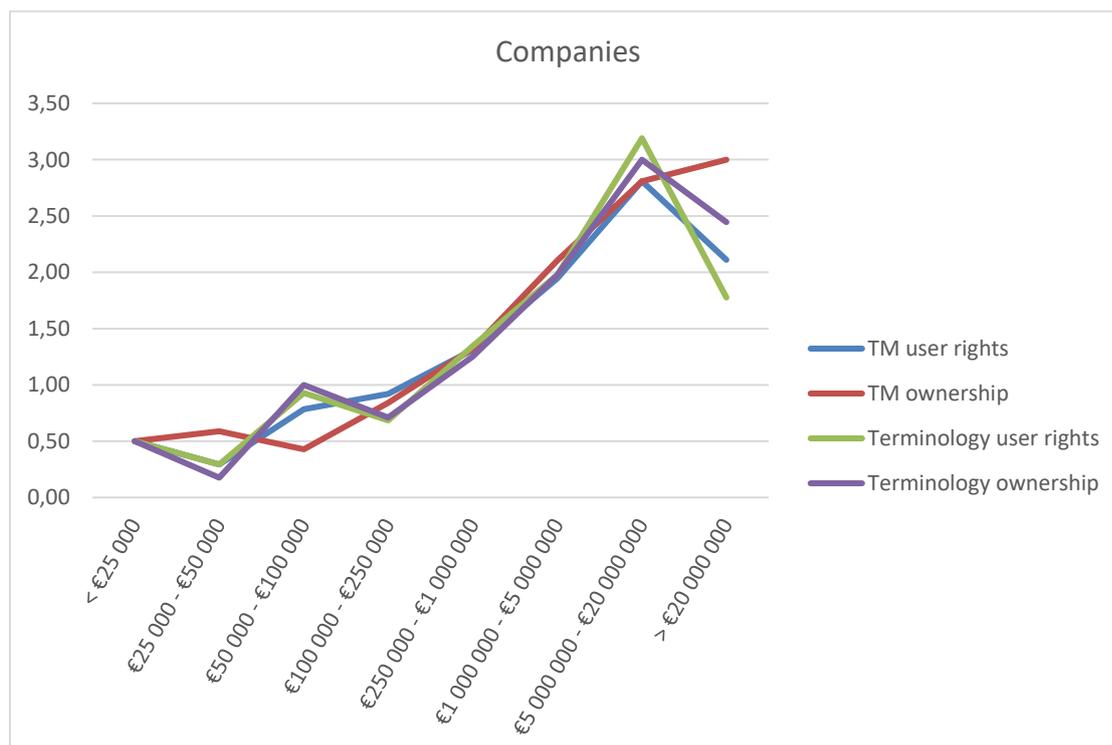
The 2019 results do not differ significantly from those in 2017 and 2018.

This means that the transfer of user rights and ownership of language assets such as translation memories remains as sensitive as ever. With increasing globalisation and competition, we expect that the difference between European and Anglo-Saxon intellectual property rules will continue to fuel the discussion on this subject.

As we already saw in previous years, larger translation companies are more inclined to transfer translation memory and terminology rights to their clients, probably due to the impact of international business and larger customers who require this transfer in their purchasing conditions.

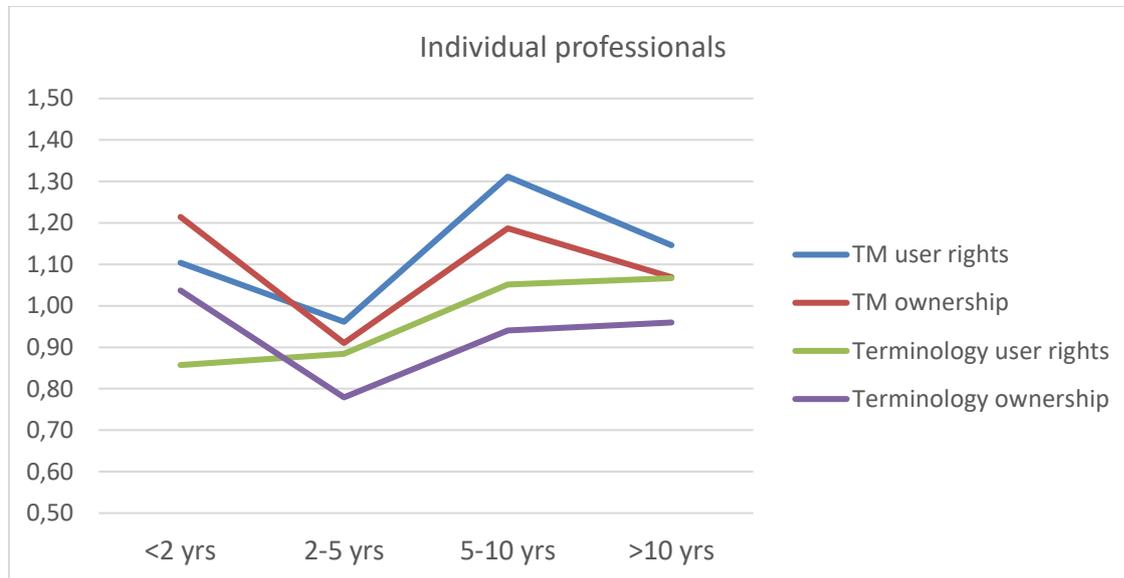
While the curves are very similar to those obtained in 2018, we see one remarkable difference in the highest size category (above 20 million Euro). Contrary to last year, these respondents report an even higher transfer of TM ownership than their smaller colleagues.

The lower transfer of user rights or ownership of terminology in this category is not surprising due to the lower contractual focus of customers on this area. The lower transfer of user rights on translation memories goes hand in hand with the higher transfer of ownership. The results of this size category should however be handled with caution due to the small number (only 9) of respondents in this segment.



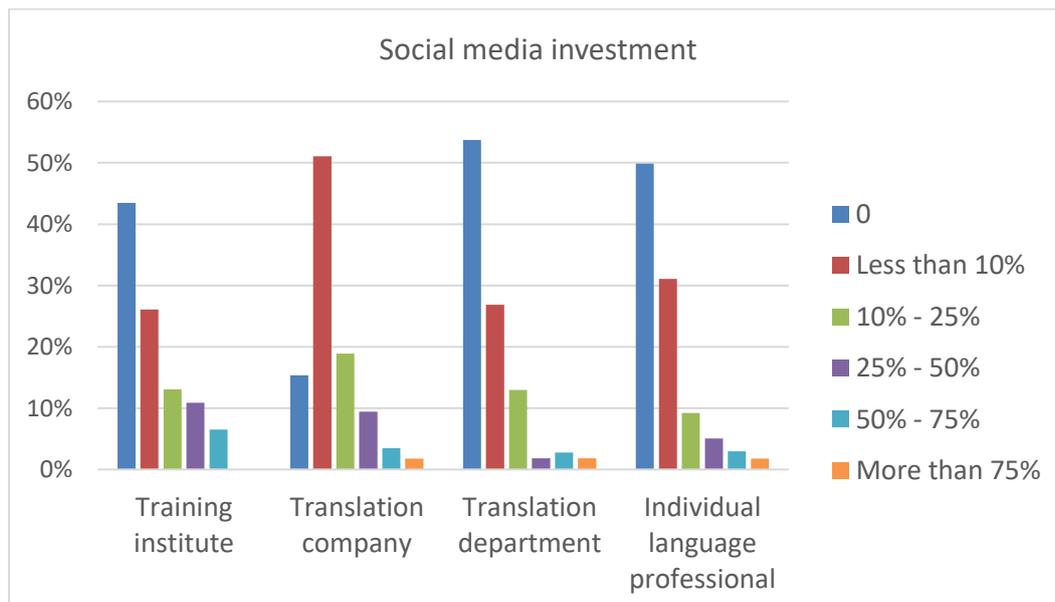
Companies and individuals of the same size segment report comparable transfer levels and the average transfer levels have not significantly changed.

There seems to be some correlation between years of service and the rights transfer rate, but the actual relationship is unclear.

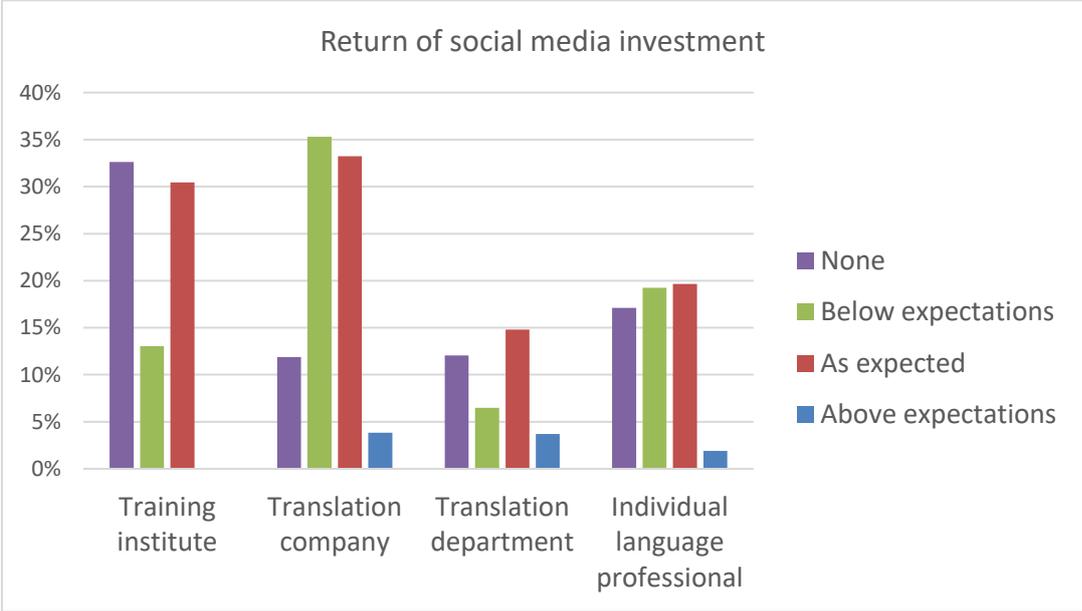


SOCIAL MEDIA INVESTMENTS

Overall, investments in social media are small scale. Despite wide-spread attention to social media, approximately half of the independent professionals (and a similar part of the translation departments and training institutes) report that they do not make any investments in this communication channel. Only 15% of translation companies do not invest at all in social media, but most companies invest less than 10% of their marketing budget in it.



According to the respondents, the return on social media investments does not meet the expectations. Note that the many respondents that did not invest in social media had to answer “non-applicable” to this question regarding the return on investment.



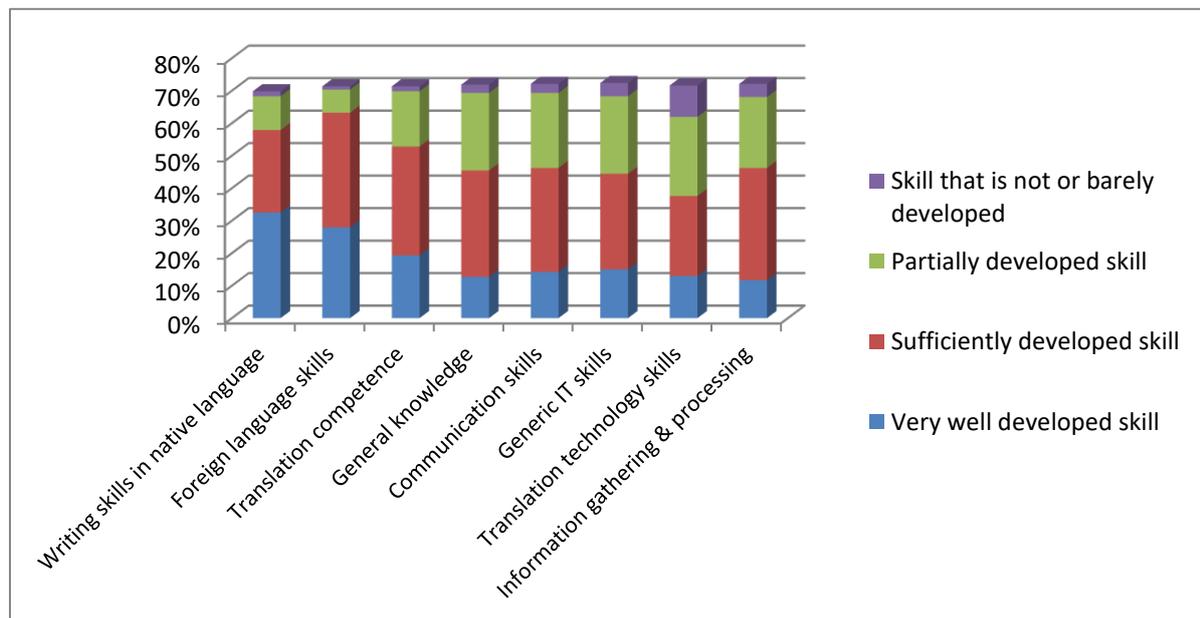
RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

SKILL LEVEL OF NEW MASTER-LEVEL GRADUATES

The results below refer to training institutes, translation companies and translation departments (359 respondents).

A majority of these respondents rate all skills of new graduates as either sufficiently developed or very well developed. Translation tool skills score lowest, despite the stronger cooperation between universities and translation professionals, and the efforts made by translation tool providers.

10 to 15% used the “not applicable” answer, which indicates that the person who completed the survey is not involved in recruitment and therefore was not comfortable giving an opinion.



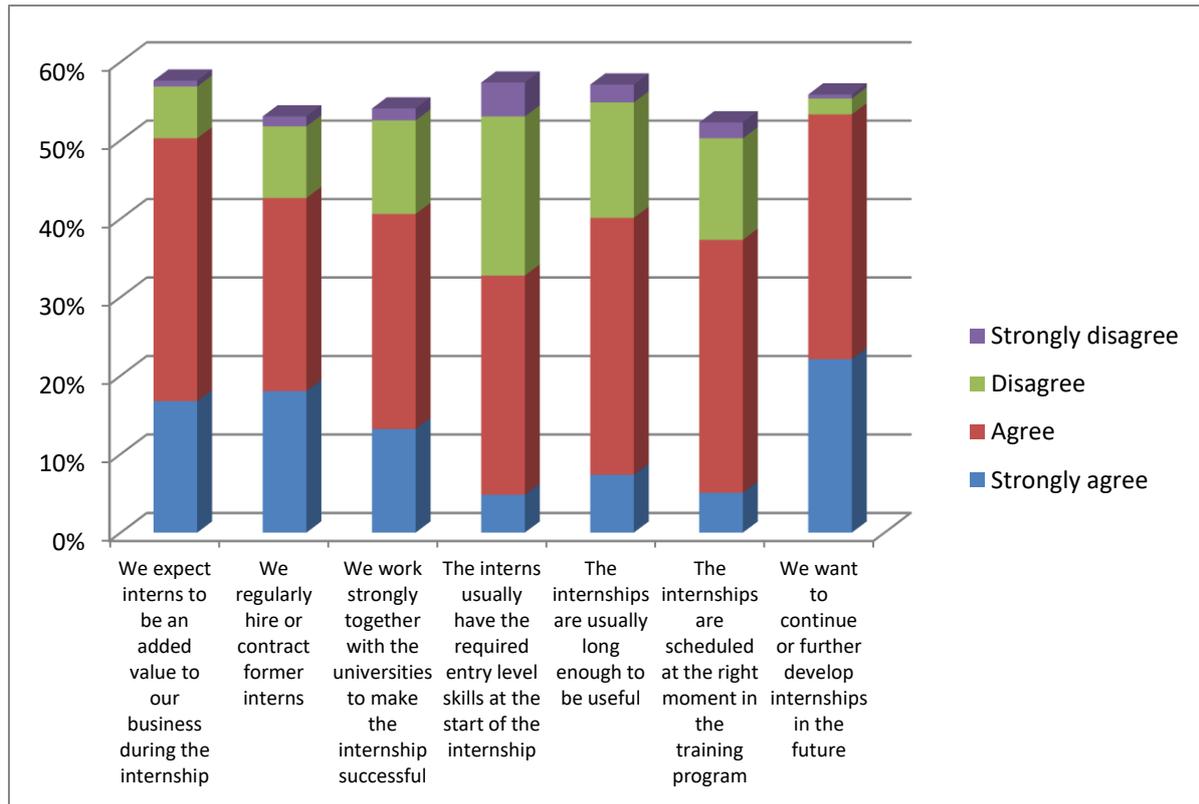
INTERNSHIPS

In 2018 the survey included for the first time a series of questions on internships, a practice that is widely considered as an excellent means to narrow the gap between university and profession. 285 companies, training institutes and translation departments provided information on this subject.

Again, quite a high percentage (19%) of these respondents answered “not applicable”. Approx. 50% of these did however answer the questions about graduate skills. It is therefore reasonable to assume that these organisations do not have experience with internships. The graphs below do not show the “not applicable” category.

The results show in general a rather positive view on internships. Of those respondents who provided a reply, about 86% expect interns to be an added value. It is therefore not surprising that 87% want to continue or further develop internships in the future.

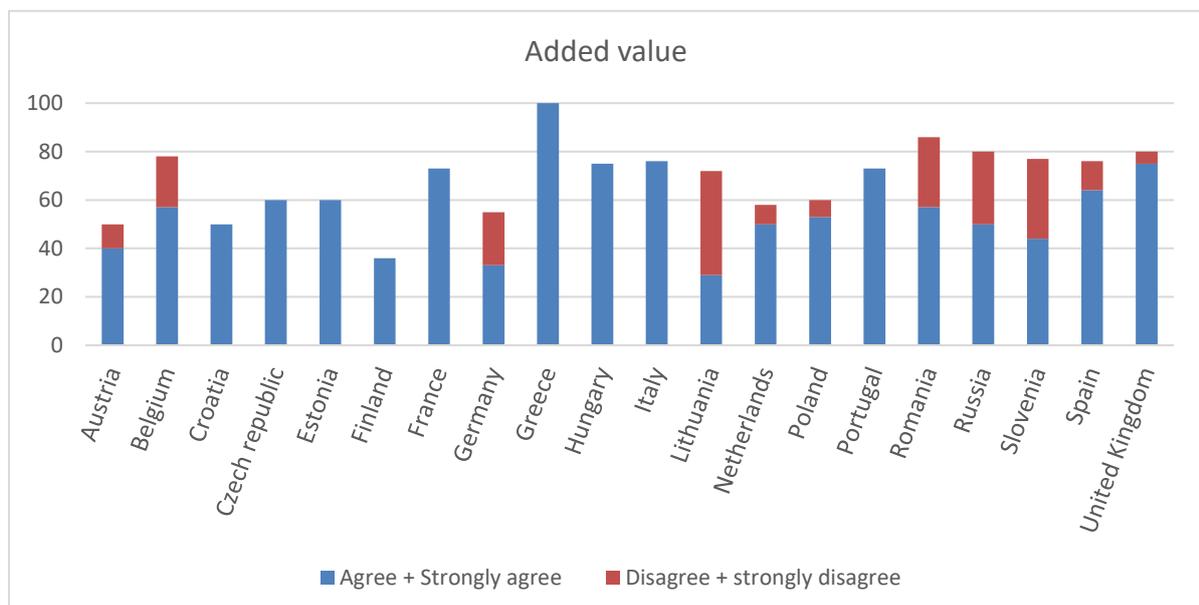
A little less positive were respondents on the skills of the interns and on the duration of the internships. Only 48% agreed that the interns usually have the required entry level skills at the start of the internship and 60% considered the internships are usually long enough to be useful.



A country-specific analysis limited to the countries that delivered at least the required number of answers set in Table 1 reveals some interesting patterns. Note that the graphs below represent the answers from language service companies. For many countries, a high number of “non-applicable” answers were received, which indicates that the practice of internships is not yet widely spread in all countries.

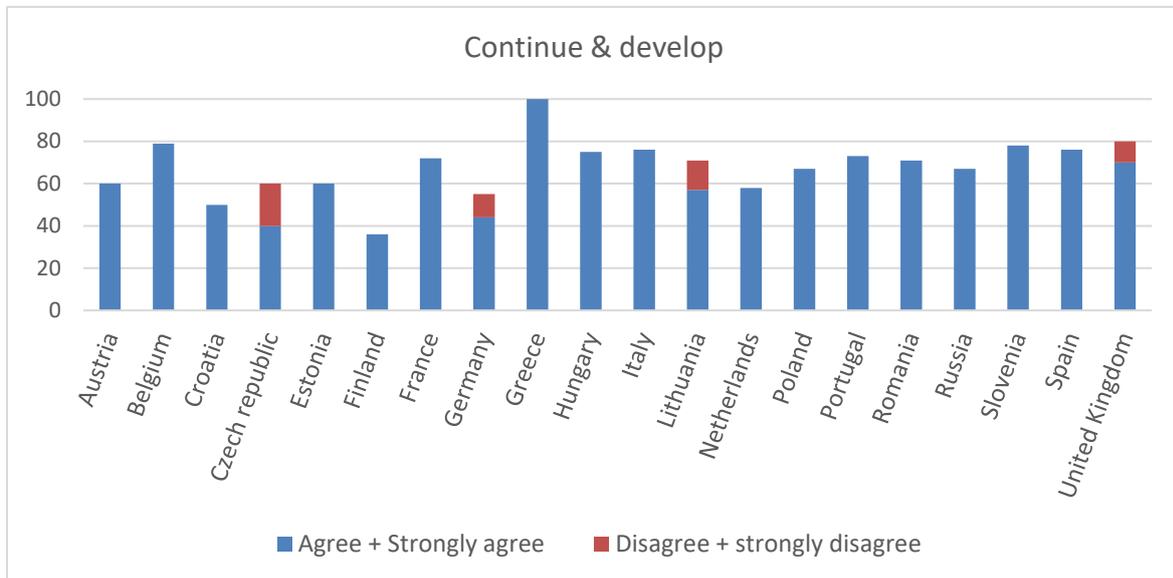
Added value

Except for Lithuania, where most of the respondents disagree (“not applicable” not considered), a majority of the respondents agree that internships need to be an added value to the organisation already during the internship.



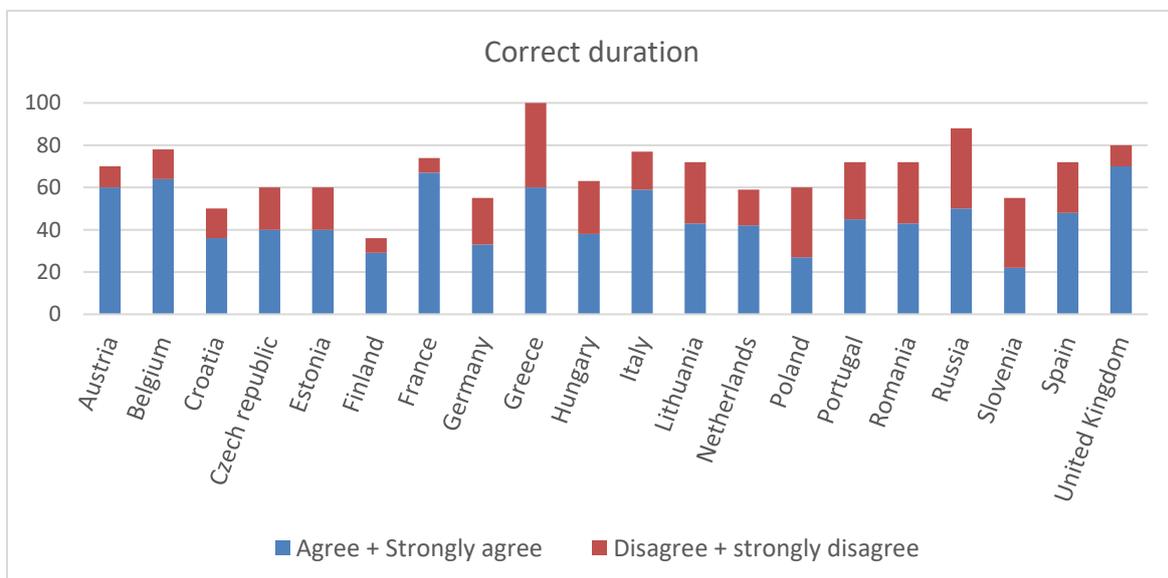
Future

An even stronger consensus appears with regards to the future continuation or development of the internship practice.



Duration

The appropriateness of the internship duration causes more differences in opinion, both between countries and within the countries themselves. While a clear majority of Austrian, Belgian, French and British respondents are clearly satisfied with the current duration of the internships, Poland and Slovenia show more negative than positive answers and quite a few countries express mixed feelings.

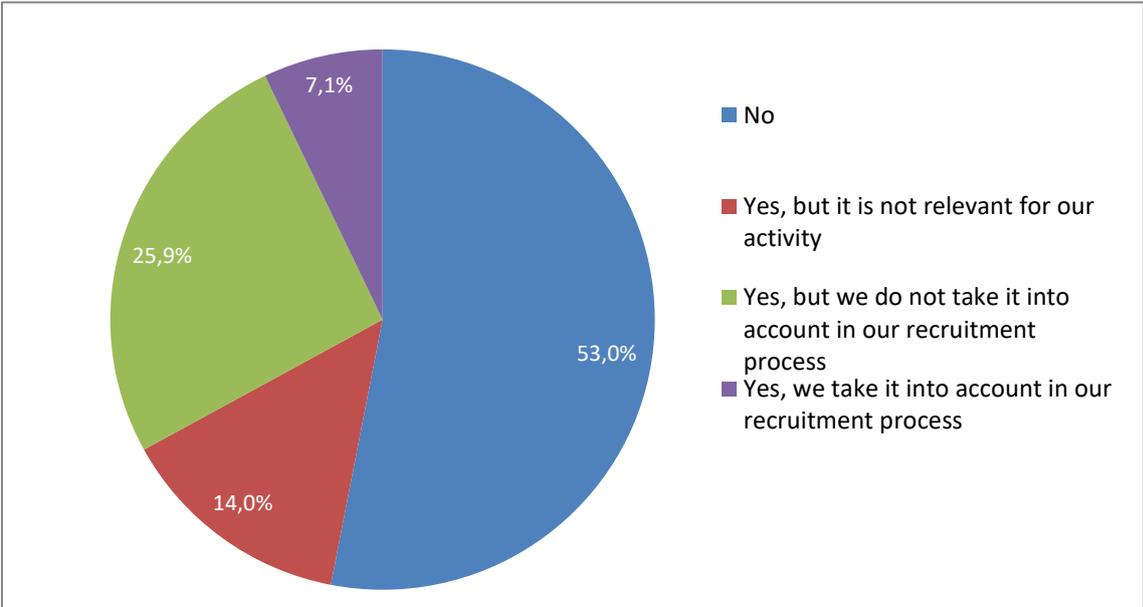


These results can be useful input for the further internship discussions within the framework of the EMT university network.

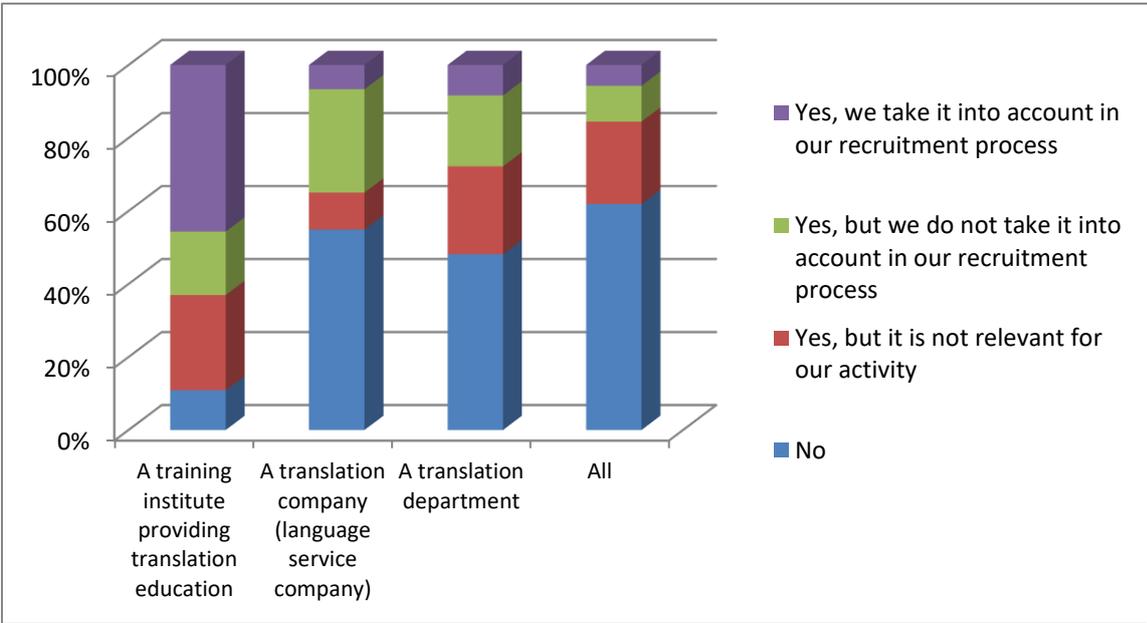
EUROPEAN MASTER’S IN TRANSLATION (EMT)

The graph strongly resembles the one in the 2017 edition of the survey, but we do see a modest increase in awareness. While 54% of the respondents were not aware of the EMT label in 2017, that percentage has dropped to 47% in this year’s survey.

A less positive finding is that the percentage of respondents that take it into account in their recruitment process has not changed. It is still only 13%.



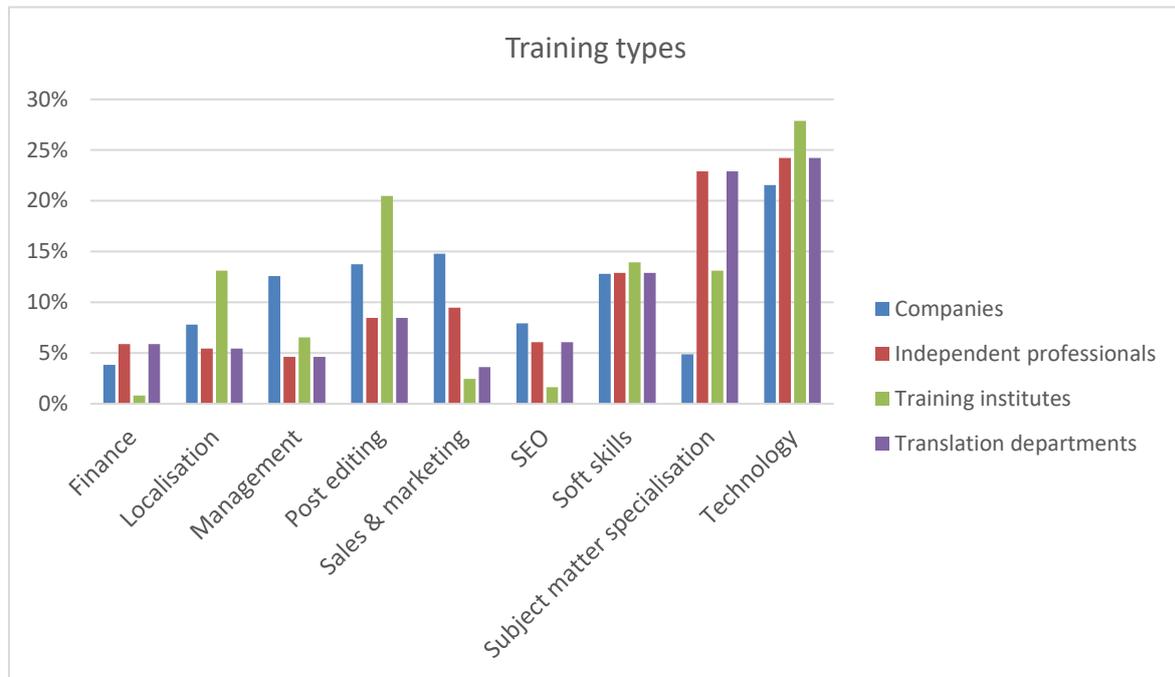
Even though the number of respondents from training institutes (22) and translation departments (41) is not very high, the following breakdown could be considered:



INVESTMENT IN TRAINING OR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

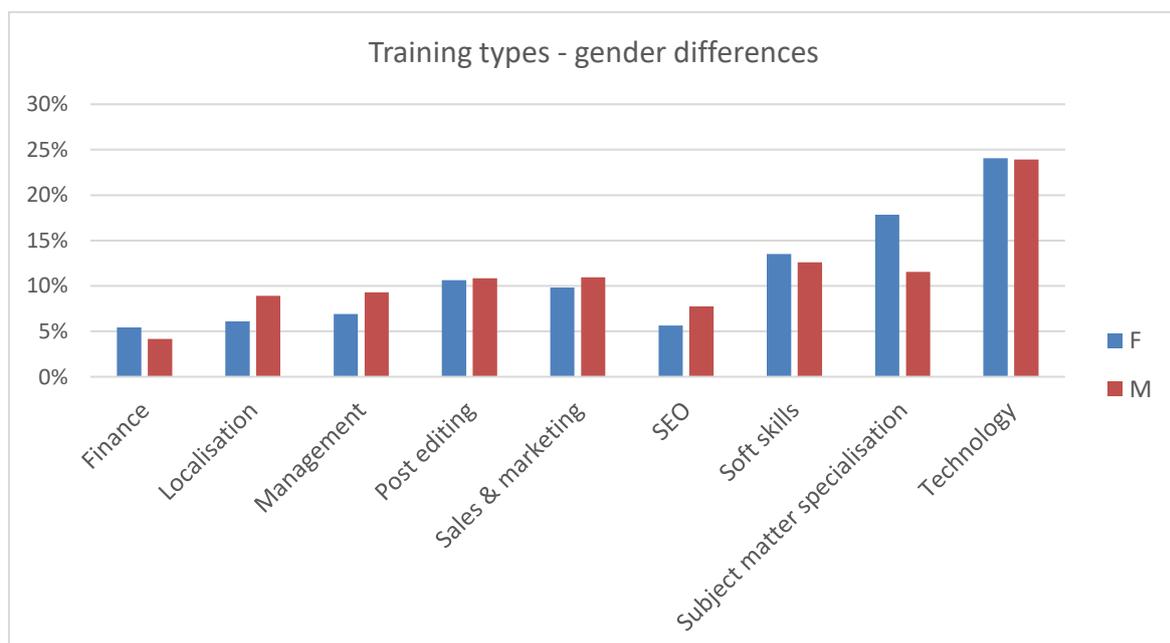
WHICH TYPES OF TRAINING HAVE YOU ORGANISED OR ATTENDED IN 2018?

The following chart presents the popularity of the various types of training across all respondent types.



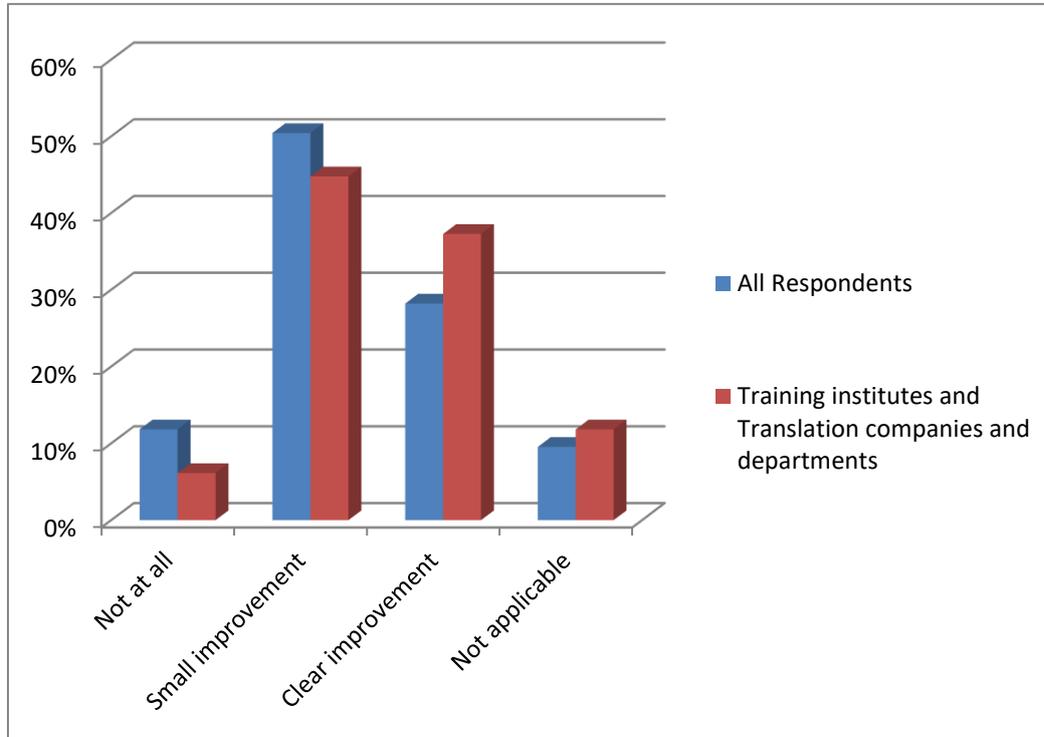
The survey does not show significant differences in training types followed or organised by men or women except for subject matter specialisation, which is more often mentioned by women, and to a lesser extent the localisation, management and SEO trainings which are more often mentioned by men.

Tool- and technology-related trainings are mentioned as often by men and women.



RETURN ON TRAINING INVESTMENT

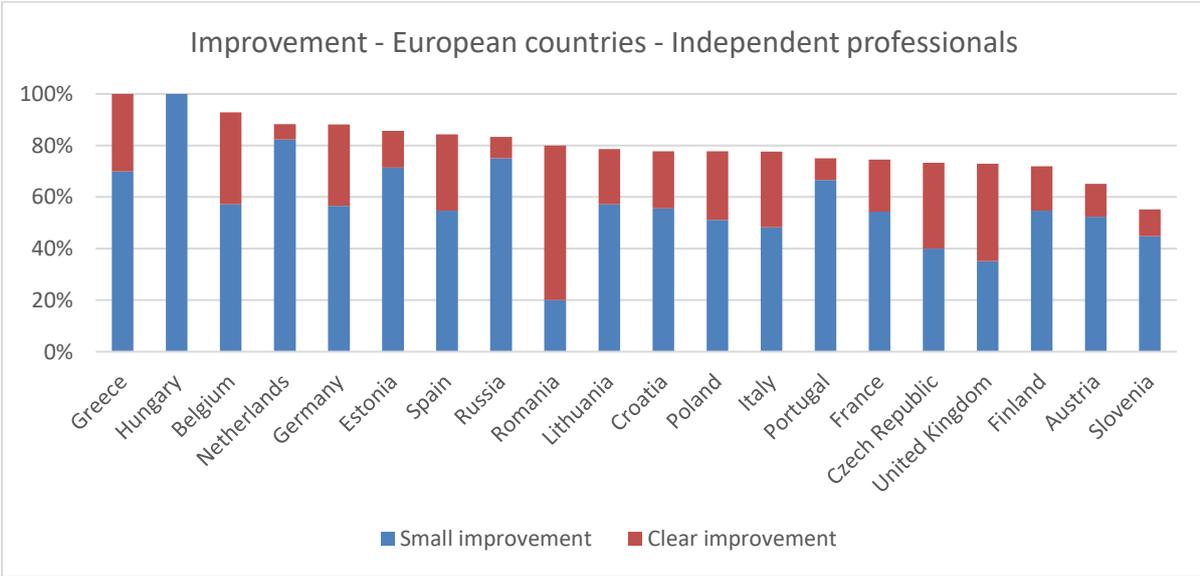
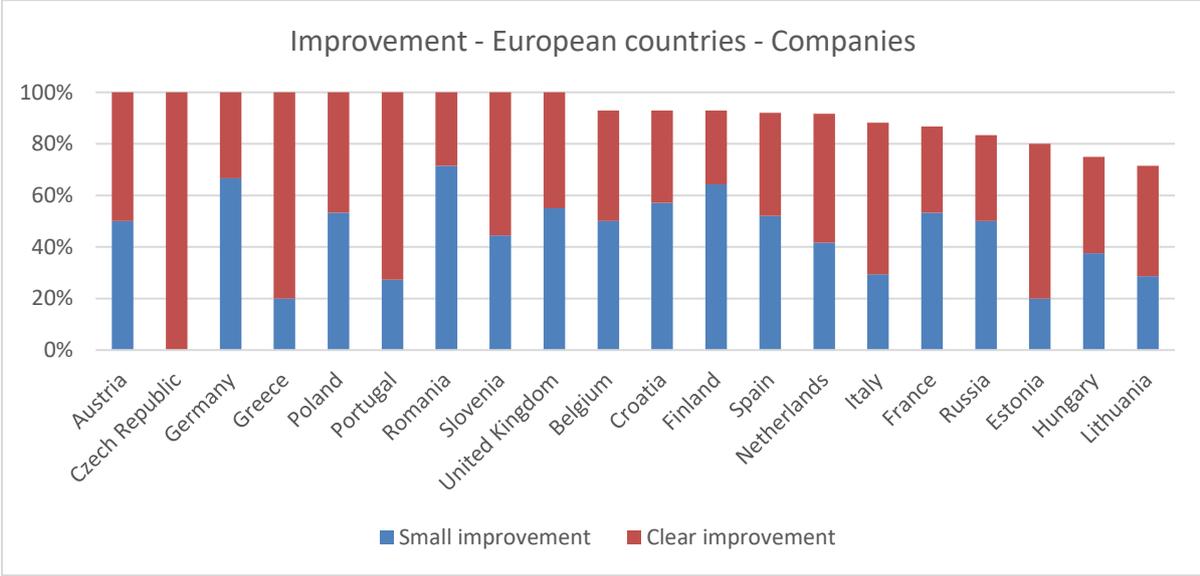
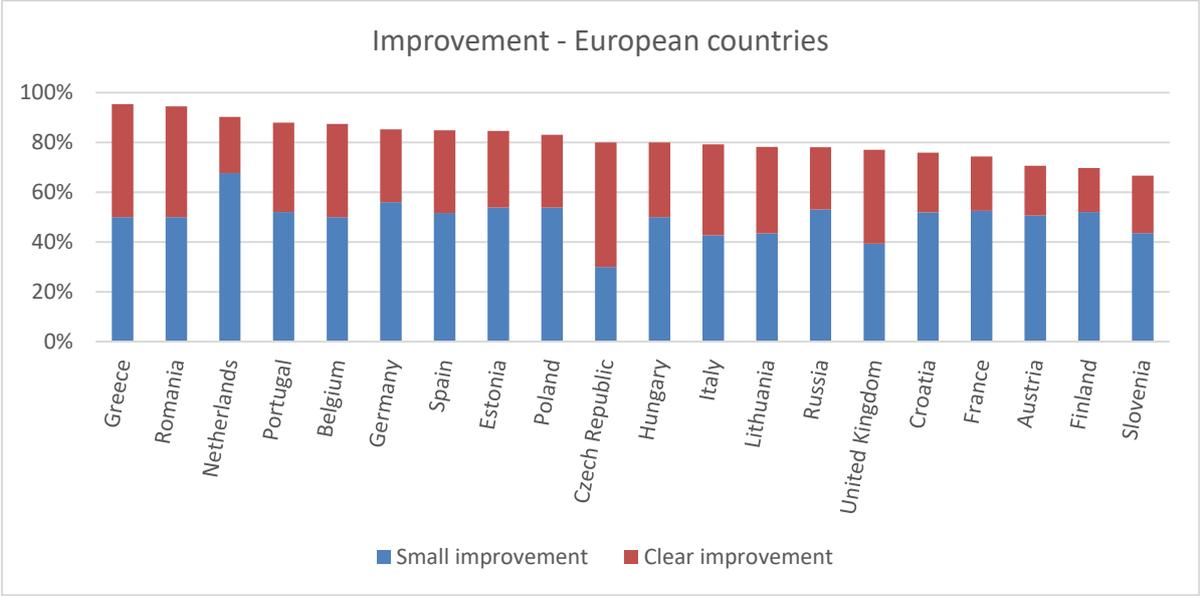
As in 2018, training institutions, translation companies and translation departments report a considerably higher impact of training on their performance than the individual professionals, which make up most of the respondents.



The high percentage of *Not Applicable* answers from translation departments (28%) – though lower than the 43% of 2018 - indicates that these departments have difficulty in estimating the return of investment of their training efforts.

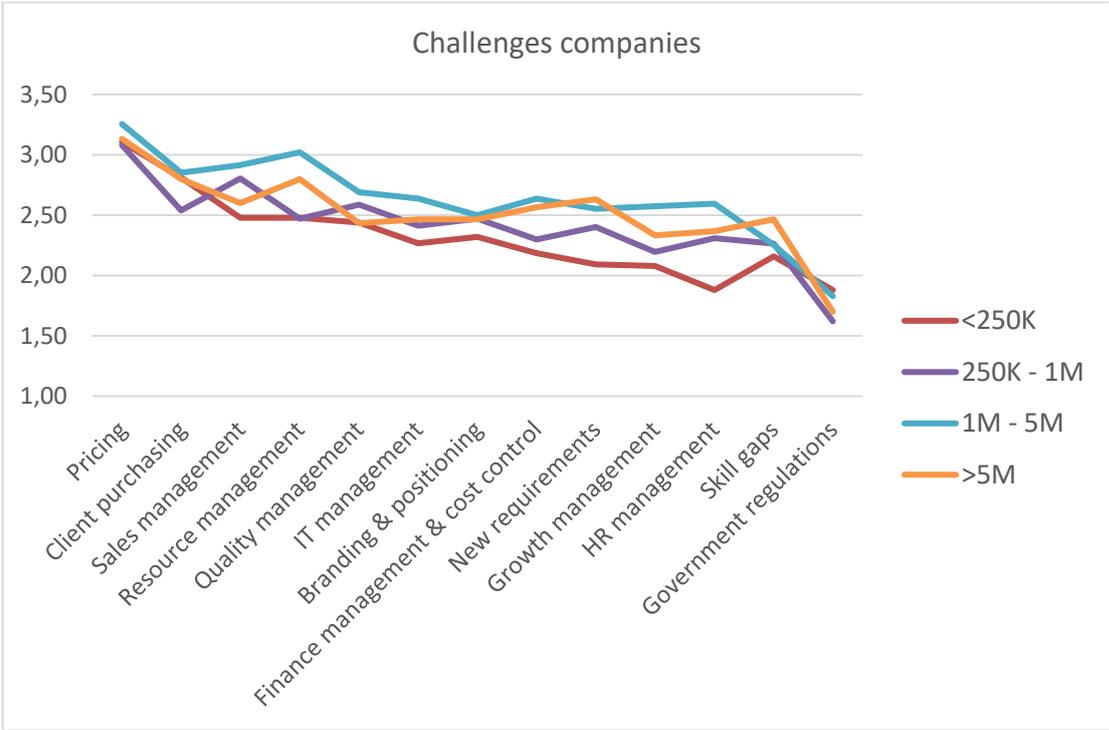
The analysis per country gives different results for individual professionals and companies. In all countries, except Estonia, Hungary and Lithuania, companies score consistently higher than individuals. The charts below show only countries for which the number of responses meets or exceeds the respective relevance threshold (see table 1).

Except Romania and to a lesser extent the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom, independent professionals report much less clear improvement than small improvement. Among the companies, no less than 6 countries report considerably more clear improvement than small improvement.



CHALLENGES

Contrary to previous editions of the survey, this 2019 edition presented different sets of challenges to be scored by the language service companies and individual language professionals. While some challenges such as the inevitable “pricing” are common to both categories, others such as “sales management” or “training and self-development” are specifically targeted to one or the other.



For all companies, pricing remains the strongest challenges and government regulations the weakest one.

There are however clear differences however in levels of concern between larger and smaller companies. Companies in the size segment between 1 million and 5 million euro show consistently stronger concerns than the smaller ones and for most of the challenges also higher than the highest size category. The results seem to indicate that this size segment is a particularly challenging one. Companies in this segment show significantly stronger concerns in growth-related aspects such as resource management and growth management.

The highest size segment is particularly concerned about resource management, new market requirements and skill gaps while the 26% smallest companies, with a size under 250K €, express less concern than their larger colleagues, except for pricing, skill gaps and government regulations.

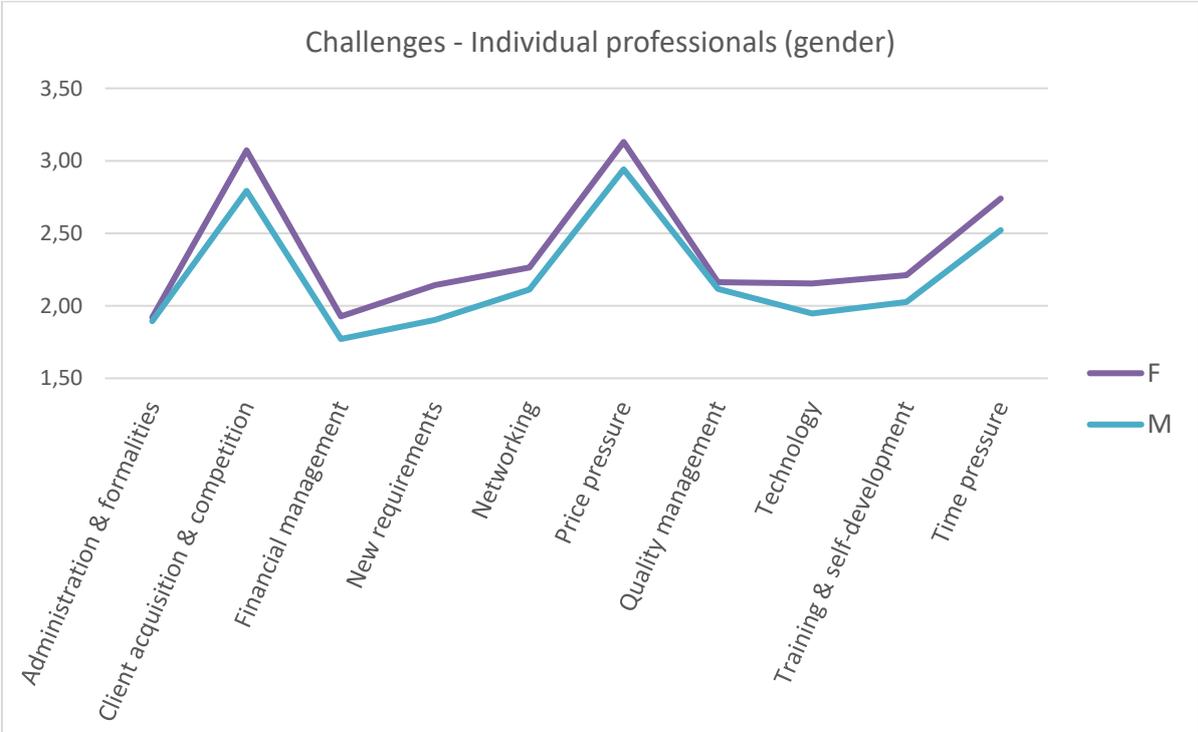
The results do not show any gender-based differences and only minor differences based on the time in business.

As expected, the results for independent professionals show strong concerns regarding competition and price pressure, but at the same time very limited concerns about financial management which confirms the confidence showed in the expected rate evolution. Technology is scored lower than expected based on the free comments about negative trends in the industry.

Professionals that are newer in the business show consistently stronger concerns than their more experienced colleagues (except for price pressure), but the difference is small.

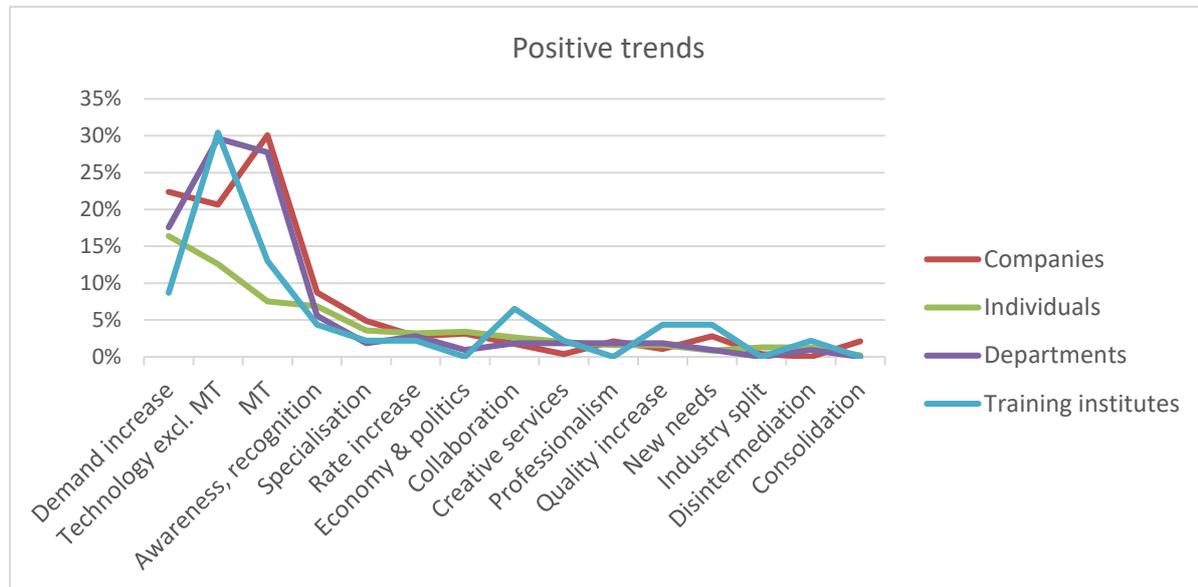


A similar small but consistent difference shows between men and women. Women show slightly higher level of concern in all areas except administration and quality management.



TRENDS FOR THE INDUSTRY

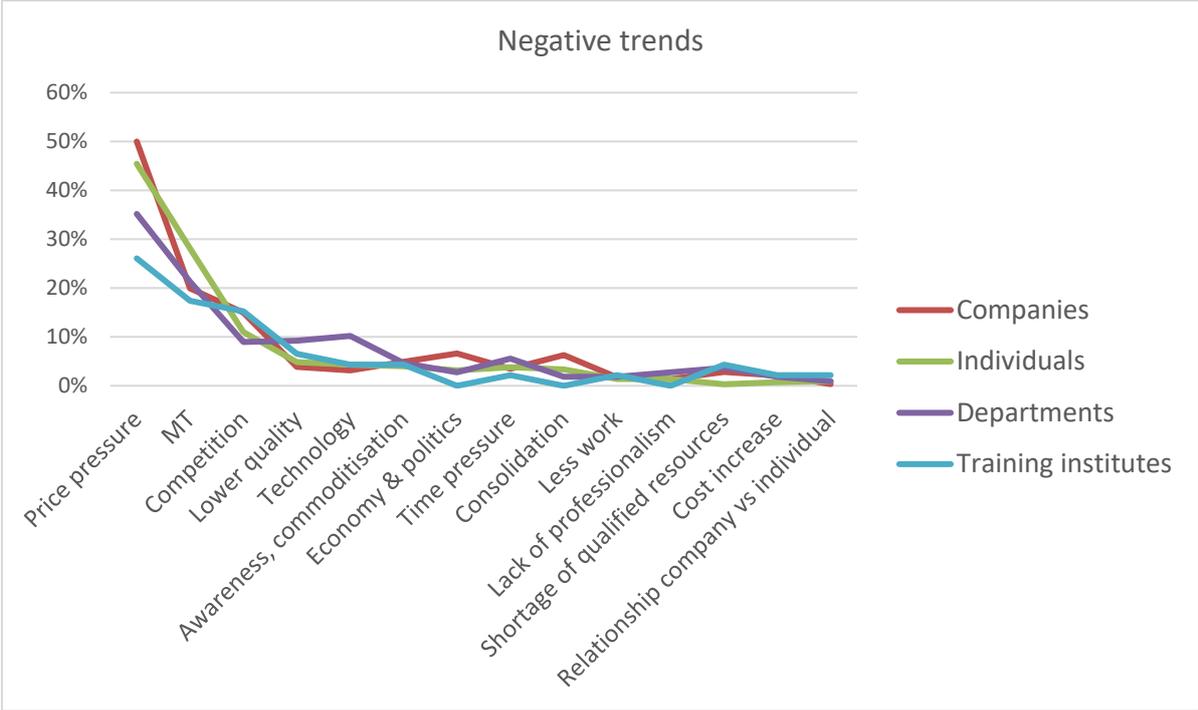
The positive opinions regarding overall translation activity is also clearly visible in the open questions about trends in the industry. An increase of the demand is the most frequently named positive trend (with the logical exception of training institutes which are less exposed to the fluctuations in market demand).



Companies and translation departments are also very positive about recent and future technology developments, both in the areas of machine translation and other technologies. Training institutes share this opinion for the non-MT technologies, but are a lot less optimistic regarding machine translation. Only 13% of the independent professionals see technology in general as a positive trend, and with 8% machine translation even less so.

Overall, the companies are clearly seeing more positive signs than the independent professionals: only 16% of the companies do not see any positive trend, compared to 41% of the individuals.

The explanation to this apparent contradiction is once again to be found in the negative trend “Price Pressure”, which is dominating the negative chart even more than in 2018.



All respondent types see price pressure as the main negative trend, though both language service companies and individual professionals expect at the same time a status quo or even an improvement in pricing. In 2018 we saw a similar apparent paradox which in our opinion indicates that they are confident that they will be able to withstand the pressure.

In this edition of the survey, 30% of the companies see machine translation as positive while only 20% of them see it as a negative trend. This is a significant change compared to 2018, when 15% mentioned it as positive and 22% as negative. Independent professionals on the other hand are even slightly more negative about MT than in 2018, with 28% of negative mentions compared to 26% last year. 8% of them mentioned MT as a positive trend, which is the same result as in 2018.

All types of respondents agree that market awareness of the importance of professional translation is slightly improving, with 7% mentioning it as a positive trend and only 4% as a negative one.

Competition remains one of the most often named negative trends, primarily by language service companies and, surprisingly, by training institutes. In many cases respondents associate this negative trend directly with the arrival of new competitors that are perceived as less professional or with the wider application of machine translation and post-editing.

The respondents from translation departments showed more than average concerns regarding technological developments other than machine translation and a loss of quality. This confirms the results of 2018. We therefore believe that we can consider this as real concerns despite the lower number of respondents in this segment.

AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

Language service companies and independent professionals are unanimous with respect to the availability of information.

They both report that language information is sufficiently available to them. Market data and information about the competition however are felt to be lacking, despite the existence of surveys run by national associations and the reports published by international market research organisations.

Information about industry-specific training programs also scores below average.



CONCLUSION

2019 results depict a somewhat more cautious picture than the strong positivism shown in 2017 and 2018. Respondents still expect growth, both for the industry at large and for their own business, but the expectations are tapering off, particularly among the independent professionals.

Investment sentiment remains convincingly positive throughout Europe and other indicators such as hiring expectations also point to strong confidence in the industry.

The open question regarding trends however continue to show the same concerns as in previous years, with price pressure as the dominant negative trend in the industry (usually attributed to low-cost, low-value competition and the inroads that machine translation and post-editing are making) followed by machine translation.

Ironically, language service companies name that same machine translation as the most positive trend and put it without discussion at first place in terms of operational trends, with process automation as a strong runner up.

When looking at real usage however, machine translation has still a long way to go before it will be considered as a mainstream tool, since only a minority of the respondents – including translation companies – report that they use it on a regular basis.

The new section about the relationship between language service companies and independent professionals yielded interesting insights that can help enhance their cooperation. Based on the results, there is room for improvement in the area of project management practices.

Finally, adding the gender question allowed us to identify differences in professional attitudes and concerns between women and men, but also striking similarities in certain areas. Unfortunately, the results of the survey also showed that the infamous gender pay gap is also present in our industry.