CAT TOOLS: A CHALLENGE FOR ROMANIAN TRANSLATORS IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT

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Abstract
In this paper, it is approached the idea of Computer-Aided Translation (CAT) present in the work of the local translators. Firstly, the whole concept of CAT and CAT programs is presented, starting with the history of the first CAT programs and software and its development until present day. Furthermore, the idea of approaching local translators and their tools is introduced. The approach is based on a survey, carried out locally and sent to translators via the internet, with 15 questions in the form of a questionnaire. The result is displayed within several charts, which show the preference of the local translators and the reasons why they use a particular CAT program rather than another or maybe none at all. And finally, a conclusion is drawn based on the results of the survey.
Keywords: CAT Tools, translation, translator, questionnaire, program

Introduction

The beginning of the paper covers the theoretical part of the article, such as principles, theories and process that occur during translation. The process of translation is presented, followed by the different types of translation and including a subchapter about untranslatability, wherein different solutions to solve this issue are listed. Furthermore, it describes the various implications of the translation process that occur between different cultures and the problems that this poses. The essential role of the translator is enlisted, counting ten requirements vital during the translation process which increase the quality of such translations. The theoretical part continues with the machine translation (MT) and its computer-aided translation (CAT) subdomain. Popular CAT programs are listed, ending with the practical part wherein the local translators give voice to their opinion and their preference of one or another CAT program.

Translations. Definitions and Types of Translations.

1. Definition of the Translation Process

The Translation process is the interpretation of the meaning of a text from one language (the "source text") and the production, in another language, of an equivalent text (the "target text", or "translation") that contains the same idea and message. A translation takes into account a number of constraints, like context, rules of grammar of the two languages, the conventions of their writing, and also their idioms. This process is typically done by a human. In the latter stage of the evolution of the mankind and the development of the technology, machine translation and computer-assisted translation (CAT) are possible.

2. Principles of Translation

The principles of translation are written as a code of ethics for the control of translation as a profession, regulating and prescribing the relation: translator-client and translator-translations. The translation process may be assumed that is a job of 'encoding' and 'decoding' between languages and that a dictionary will serve as a 'codebook'. This would imply that the languages would be synthesized and synchronized with one another, a never fulfilling dream of the translators.

a) The fidelity vs. transparency

Fidelity refers to the extent to which a translation accurately gives the meaning from the source text without adding to or omitting from it, keeping the same meaning. Transparency refers to the extent to which a translation appears to a native speaker of the target language the text to have been originating from that language, following all grammatical, syntactic and idiomatic conventions.

b) Equivalence

The equivalence effect means that any translation can produce the same effect on the readership of the translation as has the original text obtained on its readership.

c) Literary translation

The translation of this texts is an art. On the translation of poetry the most emphasis is put on the creation of a new independent poem rather than doing a literal translation, word-for-word, and ordinary language must always be translated by ordinary language, being rarely a literal translation.

d) Machine translation (MT)

The machine translation is a process where a computer program analyses a source text and produces a target text, without human intervention except for the pre-editing and post-editing. The first machine translations were carried out in the 1950s, for the U.S. government, and were translations of Russian Air Force manuals into English. The MT systems analyze the input text and then produce the output. The degree of analysis of a text determines what the average output quality of the translation would be. There are three major levels of analysis, direct replacement (the source language words are replaced with equivalent target language words), transfer (syntactic transfer systems which convert the source into a tree conforming to the requirements of the target language grammar) and interlinguas (pair of languages in each direction of translated content). To ensure

that a machine-generated translation will prove itself useful, a human being hat to review and edit it.

e) Computer-assisted translation (CAT)

Also known as computer-aided translation, is a type of translation wherein a translator creates the target text with the help of a computer software. The software includes translation-memory, terminology-management, concordance search and alignment of files and in some cases it may include a dictionary and a grammar. A CAT tool segments the text to be translated in sentences and thus making it easier and faster for the translator to do his translation. The translation-memory serves as a database for further translations, so that previous translations can be re-used for any other text, saving time and helping to make a coherent and qualitative translation.

3. The Translator

The translator is the person that transfers the text from a source language to a target language. He possess linguistic knowledge of both languages and negotiates the meaning between these two. Translators are communicators, they receive signals in speech or writing, called a message, encoding it in a communication system that is not identical with their own. First they deconstruct it and then they reconstruct it again. His role is different from a normal communicator in such, that he is a bilingual person that is active in two different language communities, whereas a monolingual person is not. The translator decodes a message from one language and then re-encodes it in another. This process marks him out of the monolingual communicators, and besides one, regarding their receivers role they are the same but encoding behavior differentiates them.

For a translator, the encoding is set in three steps: the re-encoding in the target language; the same message that was received to be passed on; and to consider the readership that is aimed to read the translation. This phenomenon is also described as an exchange of information by the usage of language. The following ten item requirements list, shows what is expected from a translator.

a) Therefore, as a primarily requirement to be a capable translator is to possess knowledge of both the source and the target language, mostly acquired with a university education or a similar equivalent.

b) As a second requirement, a translator must be familiar with the culture that he mediates his translations. He must be familiar with both cultures and to compare them, their names of objects and different kinds of action, but also beliefs, feelings and attitudes. That means to be familiar with a language, to be familiar with its culture, with the people who make use of it, their manners, beliefs and manners all accounted as culture.

c) Another requirement for a translator, is to continue his knowledge development, because language is a living thing and year by year, words change their meaning or simply get another meaning or another nuances. The technology

development and innovation is responsible for neologisms, and with this all, a translator has to be up-to-date.

d)   A fourth requirement of the translator, is to be aware of the distinction between the languages he translates from and into. Usually a translator, carries his translation from another's language into his own native language. The reason behind this is that the translator is more acquainted with the latter, being his mother tongue, while his studied language even after years of experience and acquired knowledge may not enable him completely to be at home with it. When a translator has lived in his acquired culture and has spoken on a daily basis that language, he may be able to translate in both directions.

e)   The fifth requirement of a professional translator is his ability to translate in more than one domain of activity. He must cover many areas, such as political, financial, economics, law and communications. And to do this he has to gain enough knowledge and acquire a vocabulary for every other area of translation, to be able to translate with high accuracy and well-written translations in those domains. At first this sound quite complicated, but then again, most technical domain use a well-defined number of terms which repeat themselves, allowing the translator to become more and more acquainted with that particular domain.

f)   The next requirement for an effective translator is his ability to write and speak and articulate quickly and accurately. His task consists of transmitting the message in good understandable language, asserting the translator like a good writer or an orator.

g)   The seventh requirement for a professional translator is a good speed. His translation come usually with a time limit and he is paid by the word count. The translator has to meet his deadlines so that particular client will return to him with more tasks, because the first question asked by a client is: 'how soon can you translate this?', and this is for the translator's benefit, translating more words within an hour translates into more money being made.

h)   The eight requirement for a translator implies that he must assert and develop research skills and be able to produce with various reference sources, high quality translations. A wide variety of sources means that the translator is well prepared for a number of unrelated domains. Some of the translators use various software to create their own database with terms useful in their work.

i)   The next requirement carries the translator on the usage of technology, no translator can be a stranger to applications, websites and software because the translation has turned itself in a computer assisted process. The more a translator is involved with work doing translations, the more he will make use of technology, computer and of the internet.

j)   The last requirement from this list is for a translator to learn a demanded language, to have to do translations on a regular basis, because some languages depending on the geographic area are more in demand as others, thus making other languages not suitable for earning money and being practical to make a living.

4. Machine Translation

Machine translation (MT) or Automatic Translation is defined as the attempt to automatize all part of the translation process from one language to another with help of computer software. According to Hutchins (1986: 15) MT is "the application of computers to the translation of texts from one language into another" (Levy, M. 1997). This means that the human translator is replaced by a computer software, whose job is to carry out language translation. The aim of MT is to create faster and cheaper translations. In practice, MT is able to provide raw translations of the text, which revised can be represent a quality translation. Although MT is a valuable tool to aid in human translation, it cannot produce perfect or almost perfect translations, but by combining the human's translator knowledge and MT, perfect results can be achieved.

The idea of MT started in 1947, when Warren Weaver of the Rockefeller Foundation wrote a memorandum to his colleague Norbert Wiener regarding interlingual transfer procedures. The memo included this two sentences: "I have a text in front of me which is written in Russian but I am going to pretend that is really written in English and that it has been coded in some strange symbols. All I need to do is strip off the code in order to retrieve the information contained in the text." (Arnold, 1994)

MT systems are classified based on their strategy for producing a translation: direct systems, which involve string pattern matching with partial rearrangement of the target string, to match the target language word order. After this principle were the first MT systems working; transfer systems, which imply the analysis of the source language text into a transfer structure, this source language structure is reproduced in the target language structure which is then used to recreate a target language sentence; interlingua systems, where the source language system is analyzed into a language-neutral representation from which is generated the target language sentence.

5. Computer-Assisted Translation

Computer-assisted translation or computer-aided translation (CAT) involves the use of computer software to assist a translator in the translation process. The human translator is responsible for the translation, but the software can simplify particular aspects of his work. The main difference between MT and CAT, refers to the process of translation, how it is carried out. The MT is a process wherein the translation is carried out without or little human intervention, in the pre-editing or post-editing, while the CAT is helping the translator in his translation, by eliminating repetitive work, recycling previous translation and automating the terminology lookup.

CAT was first researched in the 1960s, with the creation of term banks, wherein structure information was stored on a computer. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the advances in computer technology made possible new ways to interact with a computer and thus with CAT tool, searching and retrieving information. Martin Kay (1980) was one visionary that created tools which later were regarded

as the backbone of CAT. Yet, such tools were not available for the regular user until the mid-1990s, when the technology evolved quickly and made CAT affordable, accessible and popular for translators to address their work and the large volume of text, that was needed translated in a short period of time.

CAT tools are practical in the translation process, for the following reasons: they save time compared to a translation carried out without CAT tools; they manage different projects for a single source language into various target language; they make possible to import previous translations and use them as a resource for new ones; they ease the handling of different file formats and their page layout; they standardize different protocols in the translation process; and they assert different professional roles within the translation process and encourage translators to specialize in various fields.

6. Example of CAT Tools

CAT tools are practical for translators because they ease the task of translating and save time. In some cases, certain companies ask for their translations to be carried out within specific CAT tools. This part focuses on particular CAT tools or programs, which are most spread and well-known among translators worldwide. These tools increase the productivity of a translator, so it is safe to say that every professional translator should know how to use one of these CAT programs. These are: Déjà Vu X3, memoQ 2013 R2, OmegaT, SDL Trados Studio 2014 and Wordfast PRO in alphabetical order.

7. A Personal Survey

This part focuses on the results of a survey based on a 15 question-questionnaire. This questionnaire was posted on the internet, on a specific forum, dedicated to translators, on the Romanian dedicated sub forum of Proz.com; it was handed in person at local translators offices and alike; and sent via E-mail to a list of local translators. The questionnaire was with multiple choice answers and was filled in entirely by 23 translators, which means that the results cannot be taken statistically. The purpose of the survey was to find out translators opinions regarding the usage of CAT programs, of internet resources, like online dictionaries, of hands-on dictionaries, and of needed personal qualities to succeed as a professional translator. Furthermore, as a student with the aim to become a professional translator, I included a final question that requires from the translator to share his advice for a future translator, like me. The questions from 1 to 12 are multiple choice, whereas 13, 14 and 15 are requiring a typed personal answer.
The purpose of the following question was to find out whether translators use CAT programs and which they are. The result shows that such programs are not that popular among local translators, the main reason constitutes the pricing of such CAT programs, which in several cases represents a big amount of money. The result also showed a big gap in usage of CAT programs, whereas SDL Trados (Fig. 1) is quite popular among translators.

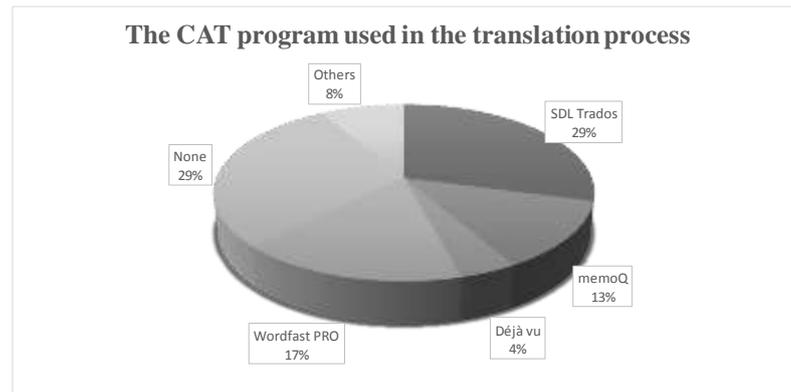**The CAT program used in the translation process**

Figure 1 Representation of the CAT programs used by the translators

The result shows that 29% of the respondents use SDL Trados as their main CAT program, 29% do not use a CAT program, 17% use Wordfast PRO and memoQ is used by 13% of the respondents.

SDL Trados has a long history and reputation all over the world, which has a huge impact on the translators' choice, namely which CAT program to use. SDL Trados brings with every new edition, new interface that is more user-friendly and redesigned key features for flawless maneuvering while doing translations. It is referred to as "the world's #1 translation software" and used by over 190,000 professional translators worldwide. (SDL Trados Studio 2014). The developer offers a 30-day trial to convince translators of its practical importance.

The next question asked the respondents to answer, in their opinion, how difficult are such programs to learn and get acquainted with them. About 60% of the respondents say that learning how to use a CAT software requires some effort, whereas only 5% consider that such programs are hard to learn how to use. The rest of 35% either consider that the effort to learn to use a CAT program is either small or absent. The users of SDL Trados responded mainly with the latter answer, confirms yet again the fact that SDL Trados is a user-friendly and easy to learn CAT program.

In the tenth question the participants were asked what constitutes the advantages of the CAT programs which they use during their translation process. The figure 2 shows that the great majority of respondents (39%) picked the translation memory as the best advantage. The fact that CAT programs are easy-to-handle constitutes the second advantage with 22% and completing the top three, the fact that the CAT programs feature a terminology database is appreciated by 16% of the respondents.
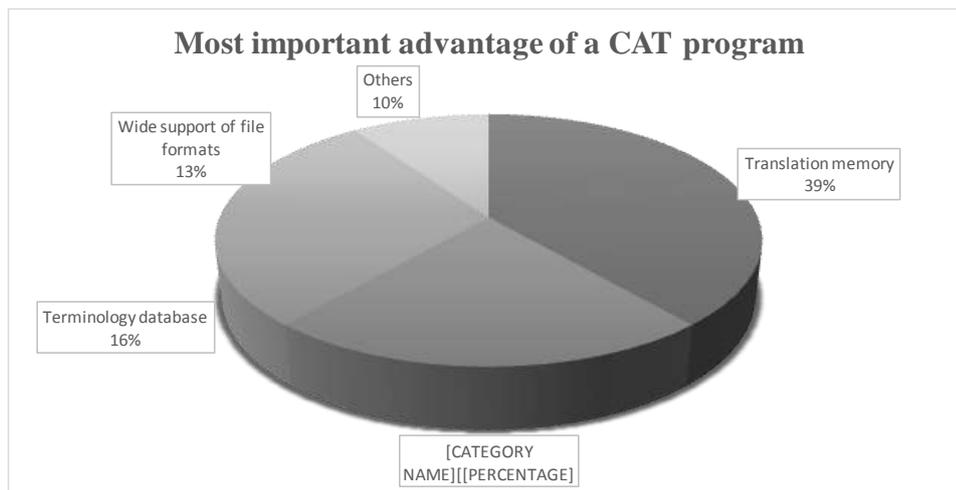
Figure 2 Representation of the most important advantage of a CAT program

The result is not surprising since the translation memory represents the best feature a CAT program has to offer. It allows for a faster translation of repetitive texts, by either providing an exact match or a fuzzy match. Within the 10% of reasons which constitutes an advantage in the eye of the translator was the feature of effective time measure, spent translating, which is encapsulated in CAT programs such as SDL Trados or Déjà Vu.

The eleventh question was interested in the disadvantages that such programs have from the translators' point of view. The majority (60%) of respondents claims that the significant disadvantage constitutes the high price, followed by the disadvantage of inexactness with 20% and hard-to-handle with 5%. The price for a genuine copy of a CAT program is regarded as high, as aforementioned, a genuine copy of SDL Trados costs 695 Euros, the most expensive of all within analyzed CAT programs, and thus less accessible for the Romanian translators mainly because of the economic situation that exists in our country. Within the 15% of other disadvantages (Fig. 3) are enumerated reasons such as: insufficient file format recognition and less usefulness in the case of non-repetitive texts.

8. The Conclusion of the Survey

To sum up all the data from the survey is that the most used program by the Romanian translators is SDL Trados, which is also recommended by its various useful features. The downside to it represents the price which is high and for some translators makes it harder to want and to use.

Main disadvantage of a CAT program

Hard-to-handle
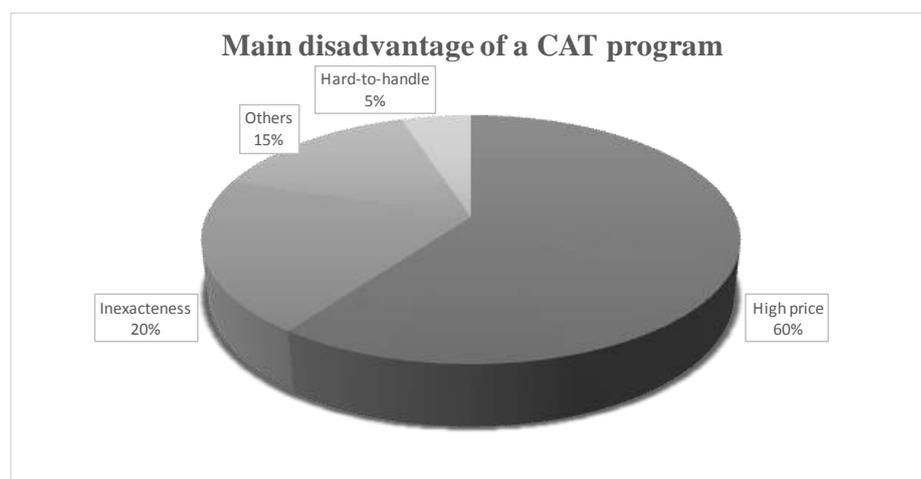5%

Others
15%

Inexacteness
20%

High price
60%

Figure 3 Representation of main disadvantages of the CAT programs

The survey ends with two questions asking the respondent to fill in two necessary qualities that a professional translators should have. The most important quality underlined by many of the translators is perseverance and responsibleness. Knowledge of grammar and terminology are also found relevant by many of the respondents.

The last question in the survey contains piece of advice from the respondents that they think would prove useful for a future professional translator. One answer describes in simple words how such a process should take place: "The more you read in foreign languages, the more lives you live, the more cultures you absorb, the better you become", meaning that a culture is to be acquired for a guaranteed success as a professional translator. Another piece of advice observed the task of a translator to consist of a "life-long learning" process, which enables the translator to become open-minded and finally a professional translator.

This pilot survey reveals interesting feedback from the local market of translations and as a conclusion to it I prepared an interview with one professional translator who uses SDL Trados as main CAT program. Her name is Toma Simona Dorina (former Simon) and she obtained her first diploma as a translator in English (Judicial Science) in 2003, by taking an exam held in Bucharest at the Ministry of Culture. Later on she decided to obtain a university degree in modern languages graduating in 2012 from Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad, Applied Modern Languages (English-French).

The first question I addressed in my interview was to find out which languages she translates form and into and if she works for a company or as a freelancer:

"My language pairs are English and French and I have been working as a freelance translator for four years."

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The second question: "When have you started using a CAT program, was it hard? Say a few things describing the CAT program you are using."

"I have been using SDL TRADOS FREELANCER 2011 on an almost daily basis for 2 years now. When I first started using the program I found it very difficult and almost impossible to understand as far as utility is concerned. It actually seemed ok as a working environment, but I did not understand the concept of translation memories until later when I decided to enroll at a translation bureau (Professional Translations) and start working for them in order to learn all there is to know about the program.

The program is excellent for my work as I have the same clients for years and the texts that need translation are repetitive, so translation memories have helped me a lot even to the point where some documents were almost completely translated solely based on the translation memory I had, so based on the work I had done so far up to that point.

So the program saves time, helps you in making less typos and you can always keep track of all the work you have done over the years."

The third question: "How long are the documents that you are usually translating, and after the translation is finished, do you proofread it or somehow correct it, or the CAT program spellchecks for you?"

"I work on different kinds of documents, I can have short documents of a few pages and documents comprising up to 500 pages.

All translations need proofreading. I always make time to proofread the translations at least twice, to make sure they have the level of quality required.

The CAT program has a spellchecker that helps a lot, especially when translating from Romanian into English. However, when translating form English into Romanian, the spellchecker that comes with SDL TRADOS is not very good and the text has to be checked more thoroughly. So you cannot rely only on the spellchecker provided within the CAT tool."

The fourth question: "Does it bother you that sometimes the content of the translating documents is repetitive?"

No, on the contrary. Since I make translations memories for every client, the repetitive content is a blessing. It means less work for the same amount of money.

The last question: "Why would you recommend someone to use a CAT program, what are its main advantages and disadvantages?"

"I would recommend using a CAT tool for the clean working environment, for the fact that it saves up to 40% of your time. Translations done with CAT tools have a better quality, with less typos.

The main advantages of a CAT program refer to the fact that the program saves you time and helps you keep track of the work done throughout the years, while also helping you offer a better quality of the translation.

The main disadvantage of SDL TRADOS, as this is the CAT tool I am using, is the fact that it is far from perfect regarding pdf files containing scanned images. Such files need to be converted with a different software before being able to work on the file in SDL. Sometimes, such files cannot be converted perfectly and SDL does not allow editing on such a file, considering it as faulty. Thus, you are back to old-fashioned editing..."

Conclusion

The interview correlates with the answers from the survey, meaning that CAT programs are useful and should be used more often because as it is said above, "it saves up to 40% of your time", time which is costly in our society. The CAT programs have also a great impact on the quality of translations and it increases simultaneous with further developments carried out in this domain. CAT programs cost a big amount of money and then a big amount of time to learn how to use them, but on the long run they prove useful and return the investment.

This paper shows the general opinion of local translators about CAT programs and serves as a helping hand to those who emerge from the university in choosing which program they should use or if they should use one in first place.

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