

# Bringing Translation to the Cloud

## Recent developments in translation technology

Giuseppe Palumbo



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI TRIESTE



*2012 CEL/ELC Forum*  
Brussels, 30.11.2012

## **My point(s) of view:**

Researcher in Translation Studies

Translator trainer

## **Outline of the talk**

- ✓ A brief history
- ✓ Recent developments
- ✓ Implications for:
  - professional translation;
  - translator training;
  - research on translation.

## **Emergence of “computer-assisted translation” (CAT)**

1980s and 1990s

Increase in digital content

- > More work for professional translators
- > New tools
- > Translation as an industry:  
emergence of Language Service Providers (LSPs)

### **Localization**

Linguistic and cultural adaptation of a product or service for another language/‘locale’

= translation + engineering and management

## **Translation Memory, the most significant tool**

Essentially, a database of SL and TL segments to be reused for new translations

### Benefits

- ✓ Increased productivity
- ✓ Consistency across texts and translators
- ✓ Handling of different file formats
- ✓ Integration with terminology management, Quality Control, Project Management features (e.g. project statistics)
- ✓ Storage on a local server to be accessed by multiple users

**Translation Memory,  
consequences for translators**  
(Garcia 2009)

Focus on segments/chunks, often non-sequentially

Higher productivity, but lower rates

Loss of control in favour of LSPs

Translation in web-interactive mode:

- Tool imposed on translator
- Difficult to build own linguistic assets
- LSPs have access to information on performance

## **Enter Web 2.0, or “the Cloud”**

Data moved to web servers

Translation taken up by users

Language barrier still in place

Growing demand for translation

New models

## **New models - 1: Free Machine Translation**

Easy to use; better suited for dynamism and immediacy of web communication

Quality?

OK when users are satisfied  
e.g. in Knowledge Base articles  
(Dillinger & Gerber 2009)

Only likely to improve,  
thanks to more funding, advances in text retrieval,  
availability of parallel texts

## **New models - 2: MT-assisted Translation Memories**

Text pre-translated  
with TM



Empty segments  
translated with MT



Post-editing by  
human translator



## **[MT-assisted Translation Memories]**

MT is being trained, and improved, by TM

TM systems increasingly integrate  
MT technology, e.g. at phrase level  
(AutoSuggest in SDL Trados)

TMs stored on web servers

Bulk of human intervention is in *editing*

Fiederer & O'Brien (2009): post editing output judged to be clearer and more accurate than translated output

## **New models - 3: Crowdsourcing**

Volunteer users take charge

Model emerged in open source, now embraced by commercial companies, e.g. Facebook, Skype

Collaborative workflow replacing “translate-edit-proofread” model;  
translation increasingly “a generalist skill”?  
(Garcia 2012)

# *Implications*

For

- ✓ the profession
- ✓ training
- ✓ research on translation

## **For the profession**

Focus on textual chunks

(vs top-down approach favoured in training)

Emphasis on editing tasks/skills

Demand for translation growing (too) fast

– dynamic content on the rise

Professional translation as last resort after MT  
has failed, but at lower rates

(Garcia 2009; 2012)

## **For training**

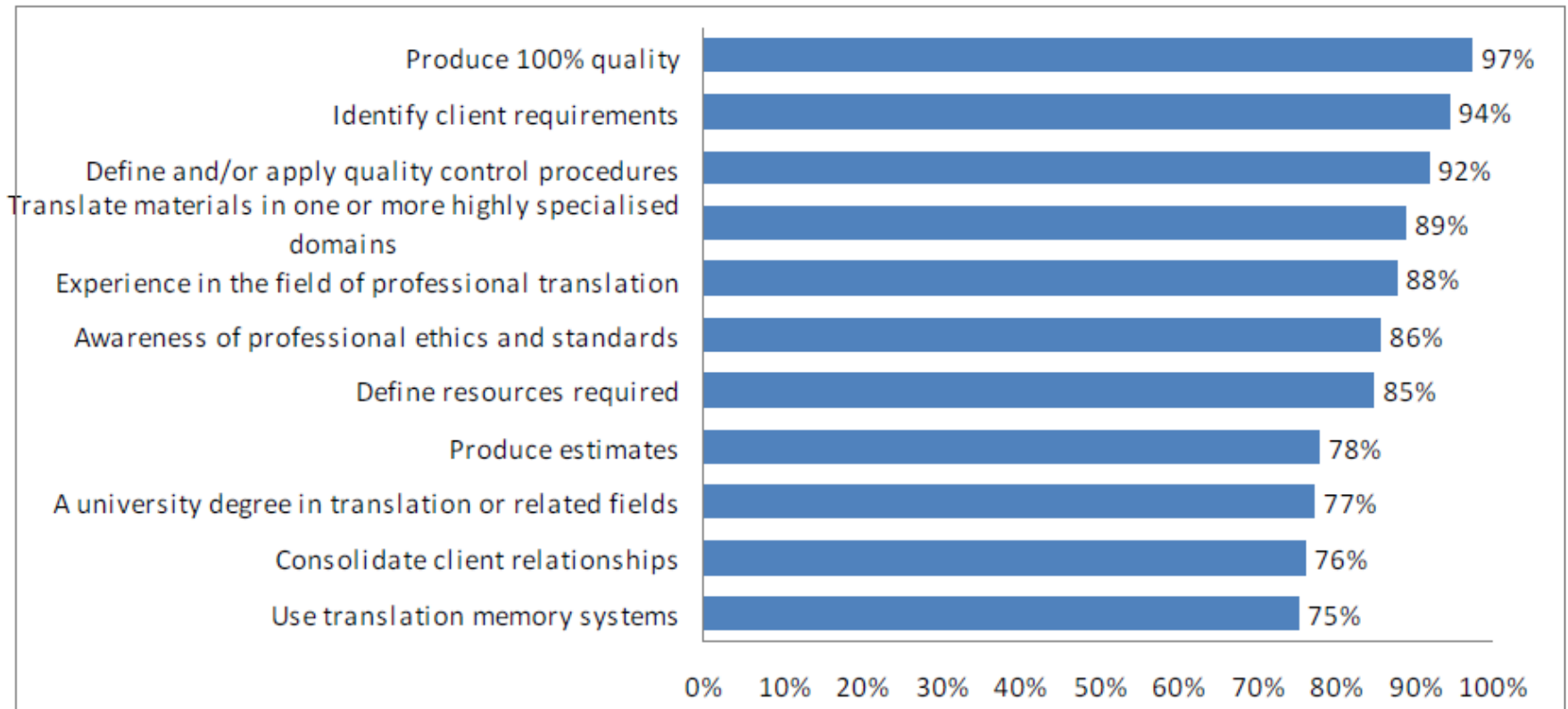
Need to introduce trainees to “degrees of quality” and to importance of editing

Emphasis on processes rather than tools?

Transfer skills still judged to be core component

cf OPTIMALE surveys

## Top ranking competences and skills requested by LSPs



Source:

*OPTIMALE Synthesis Report*

Available at <http://www.translator-training.eu/>

## **For research on translation**

Performance and use of MT

Quality: definitions and parameters

Interaction between humans and machines

As in O'Brien 2006, 2008; Valli (forthcoming)

Revising models of “translation”,  
e.g. with emphasis on users and “networks”

Cf. Pym 2006; Folaron 2012

**Thank you!**



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