Machine translation from a professional angle

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Being clear on what it is and how it works

Machine translation (MT, eg Google Translate)

- matches 'segments' of source text against bilingual material on the internet - "statistical matching"

Translation memory software (TM, eg. MemoQ, Trados)

- matches segments of source text against previously translated material (also a form of statistical matching)

Being clear on what it is and how it works

'On the ground", these are always used together:

- Machine translation 'toolkits' always integrate a translation memory function

- Translation memory software always has the option of a machine translation 'plug-in'

Project Operations Edit Format Translation View Tools Help

Project home | Les institutions du système de santé français ×

Source | Target | aA | Sort | No sorting | Translation results

de santé en France sont assez complexes car il existe une multiplicité d'autorités administratives ayant compétence dans ce domaine (ministère, structures centrales, collectivités territoriales, organismes d'assurance maladie).

activities in France are quite complex because there are multiple administrative authorities with jurisdiction in this area (federal ministries and organisations, local authorities, health insurance organizations).

3. hlnk rpr Les institutions nationales rpr hlnk — hlnk → rpr National institutions rpr hlnk | 0%

4. hlnk rpr Les institutions décentralisées rpr hlnk | 0%

5. hlnk rpr L'Assurance Maladie rpr hlnk | 0%

6. hlnk rpr Les agences et instituts rpr hlnk | 0%

Les		1	The
Normes nationales et internationales.		2	National and international standards.
INSTITUTION		3	ESTABLISHMENT
institutions		4	financial institutions
institutions		5	money institutions
institutions		6	self-control institutions
les		7	Nabis
Les institutions nationales		8	National institutions

Les institutions nationales

Les

The

Translation preview

The institutions of the French health system

The organization and coordination of health activities in France are quite complex because there are multiple administrative authorities with jurisdiction in this area (federal ministries and organisations, local authorities, health insurance organizations).

- National institutions
- Les institutions décentralisées
- L'Assurance Maladie
- Les agences et instituts

Les institutions nationales

De nombreuses structures nationales, aux compétences variées, interviennent sur les questions de santé. Parmi elles figurent notamment :

Pro | Cli
Dom | Sub
Created 8/21/2013 10:27:40 AM (Administrator)
Doc n/a
8/21/2013 10:27:40 AM | My translation memory
Administrator | 65%

A brief overview of translator practices via proz.com polls

Translation memory software ('CAT tools'):

○ 65.6% use CAT tools on a regular basis

○ 46.8% think they 'definitely' increase output

○ 35.3% think they improve quality

Machine translation (eg. Google Translate):

○ 37.1% use machine translation tools (in 2013, up from 15% in 2009)

○ 67% say they do not accept assignments to post-edit machine translations

Advantages of CAT tools?

○ Machines are good at mechanical tasks: repetitive, menial aspects of texts, can allow the translator to focus on more complicated elements

○ Translation memories allows translators to automatically draw on past body of work and build valuable resource

○ Makes it easier to develop a term base/glossary

○ Easier to check for consistency

Disadvantages of CAT tools (MT especially)

○ 'Fixing' a machine translation can take as long as or longer than translating from scratch, and be less enjoyable

○ Intrudes on translator 'flow'

○ Distracts from source text

○ Can introduce unnoticed errors

○ Can create false confidence

○ Fragmentation, lose picture of text as a 'whole'

Variables - text

Can't talk about benefits/drawbacks of MT independently of the kind of text.

Better:
short sentences
simple sentences
standardised
technical
formulaic
restricted subject area
repetitive

Worse:
long sentences
complex sentences
creativity
ambiguity
novelty
judgment
sensitivity

Variables - language

Can't talk about benefits/drawbacks of MT independently of the language.

Better:
suitable linguistic structure
large language group
large internet presence
good quality existing human translation
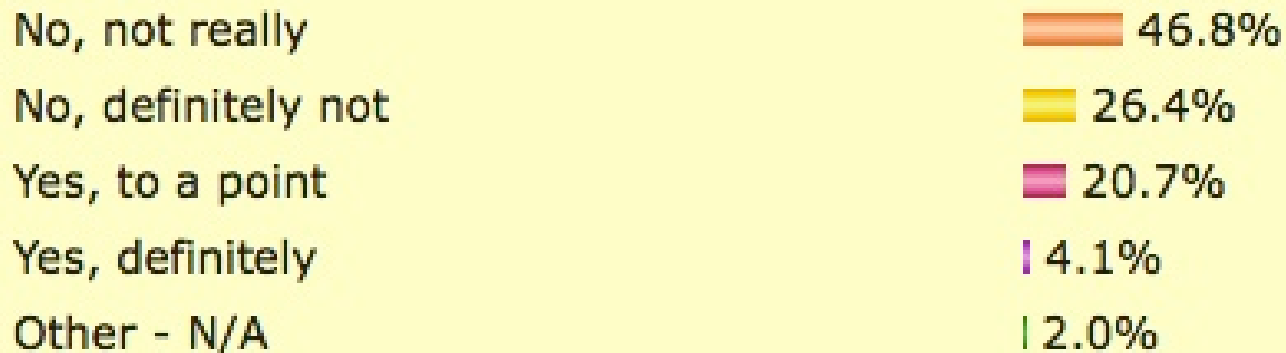compatibility between source and target language

Worse:
unsuitable linguistic structure
small language group
low internet presence
low quality existing human translation
compatibility between source and target language

Proz.com practitioner poll 23 November 2014:
"Do you feel threatened by machine translation?"

Do you feel threatened by machine translation?

By P Laura Ibáñez - featured on 23 Nov

No, not really	46.8%
No, definitely not	26.4%
Yes, to a point	20.7%
Yes, definitely	4.1%
Other - N/A	2.0%

709 vote(s). You have voted on this poll.
[Discuss in forum (17)] [View this poll]

Proz.com practitioner poll:
"Do you feel threatened by machine translation?"

On the 'no' side:

- Machine translation a long way from being good enough to be a threat, especially for certain languages

On the 'yes'/'maybe' side:

- Feel threatened by the perception or expectations that machine translation creates

Proz.com practitioner poll:
"Do you feel threatened by machine translation?"

A last word from the 'no' side:

I do not take the fly!   22 Nov

I am under no bad blood. Do not break your head, even if machines have long teeth and break our feet. We take away the thorn from the customer with our "human" quality.

(Oops, sorry, I tried out a little French>English Google Translate and things didn't work out the way I had hoped.....)

*What would
the threats be?*

What would the threats be?

Obsolescence?

Fig. 1795. — Dronte.

Obsolescence?

○ No.

○ Misunderstands how translation works, whether human or machine.

○ Remember, machine translation still relies on human translation as its 'data pool'

○ Even if massively improved, would a reputable company risk releasing a translation untouched by human hands?

What would the threats be?
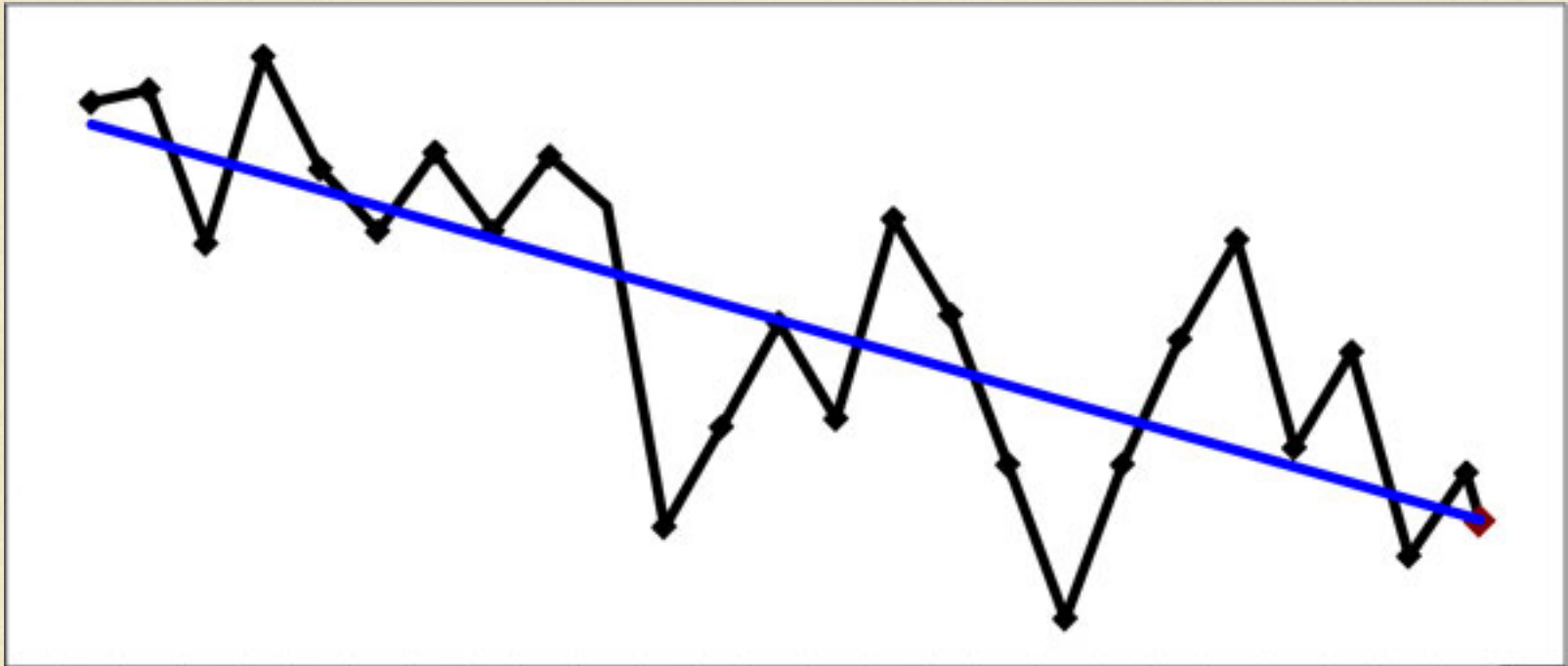
Less work?

Less work?

○ No.

○ Need for translation seems to be limitless and growing, CAT tools help meet need rather than reduce it.

○ **If** there are savings, hopefully (☺) organisations will try to do more with the same budget rather than the same amount with less

○ Greater access to foreign-language texts through MT potentially creates demand for more HT

○ BUT: the post-editing field is likely to grow

What would the threats be?

Lower rates?

Lower rates?

○ Yes.

○ Lower rates are a problem when they <u>do not reflect actual time saved</u> by the translator

○ Clients may have <u>inflated expectations</u> about how much time machine translation saves

○ This is once again about <u>client education</u> and <u>good client-translator relationships</u>

Other cost factors

○ Upfront technology costs (for you and your translator)

○ Ongoing administration of technology costs (mostly for you)

○ General administration costs (for you and your translator) stay the same regardless of translation method

Other things you may not have thought of

Confidentiality:

○ some clients ask translators not to use tools such as Google Translate because of data security concerns

○ If you are obliged destroy personal documents after translation, translation memory won't be an option

Industrial relations:

○ Once you insist on your translator using certain tools or providing certain tools for them, you may be crossing the contractor-employee line

Take-home messages

○ Understand your tools and how they work.

○ Understand the variables and how they work.

○ **Understand your translator and how he or she works. Develop a relationship of mutual respect and communication, learn from their knowledge and experience.**