

Translation Business Practices Report

GSDTI

August 2004

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WE HELP THE BANK COMMUNICATE!

The Translation Business Practices Survey and this report were prepared by Claudia Pinto (Vendor Coordinator) with the assistance of Andrew Draheim (Manager, Translation and Interpretation Unit). We would like to thank all the participants for their input.

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW | 4 |
| Methodology: | 4 |
| Executive Summary:..... | 5 |
| GENERAL QUESTIONS | 6 |
| Figure 1: In-house language combinations..... | 6 |
| Figure 2: Amount of work subcontracted..... | 6 |
| Figure 3: Reasons for subcontracting | 7 |
| Figure 4: Total output subcontracted..... | 7 |
| Figure 5: Work subcontracted | 8 |
| Figure 6: Types of subcontractors | 8 |
| Figure 7: Size of translation agencies..... | 9 |
| Figure 8: Required qualifications | 9 |
| Figure 9: Supplier diversity | 10 |
| Figure 10: Recruitment methods | 10 |
| Figure 11: Assistance to freelance translators | 11 |
| Figure 12: Difficulty finding translators..... | 12 |
| RATES | 13 |
| TERMINOLOGY | 19 |
| Figure 13: Translation memory technology used..... | 19 |
| Figure 14: Terminology tools used..... | 19 |
| Figure 15: Interest in translation technology | 20 |
| Figure 16: Decision to use a particular tool..... | 20 |
| QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA) | 21 |
| Figure 17: Revision of outsourced translation..... | 21 |
| Figure 18: Proofreading of outsourced translation | 21 |
| Figure 19: Feedback to translators..... | 22 |
| Figure 20: Master glossary | 22 |
| TRAINING | 23 |
| Figure 21: Training for freelance translators..... | 23 |
| Figure 22: Types of training provided..... | 23 |

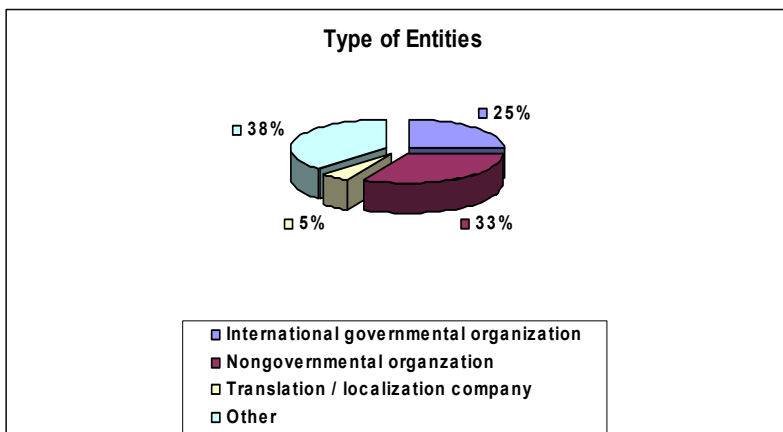
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The World Bank Group’s Translation Unit (GSDTR) surveyed a number of companies and organizations for the purpose of benchmarking its business practices with the market, with an emphasis on buying rates, language combinations, quality assurance and technology. It is important to note that the World Bank did not fill out the survey, in order to produce a more accurate comparison on the basis of the findings.

Methodology:

The survey was sent to 111 governmental and nongovernmental organizations, translation agencies and private sector companies. We would like to begin by thanking the 51 respondents for their feedback. These 51 respondents represent 46% of the organizations that received the survey. Our special thanks go to those who chose not to respond to the survey because they felt do not fit in any of the categories targeted by the survey. Many of these organizations offered to make themselves available to discuss their workflow management practices with us at another time.

The following types of entities responded to the survey:



The other categories include software developers and publishers, computer hardware manufacturers, and information technology providers.

Executive Summary:

Most organizations outsource translation even if they have in-house capacity. The main reasons are: (a) inability to meet demand with in-house production capacity and (b) dedication of in-house linguists to quality assurance and quality control. The majority of organizations outsource more than 50% of their work. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents prefer to work with translation agencies, of which medium-size multilingual vendors (MLV) are the vendors of choice. When recruiting individual translators, organizations focus on a wide variety of criteria, including technology skills, education, and experience.

Two-thirds of the respondents indicated that supplier diversity is important to them and that the best way to achieve it is through contact with universities, translators' networks, and newsgroups, and by networking in general. Screening of unsolicited CVs was also mentioned as a useful way to identify freelance translators, but contact with translators' networks and recruitment of retirees were said to be the most successful methods.

According to the Vendor Satisfaction Survey, conducted in parallel with this survey, there is a strong discrepancy between freelancers' needs and vendor support practices. Whereas the vast majority of freelance translators named terminology and style guides as the primary tools needed to produce quality translations, only 28% of the organizations provide terminology to their translators, and only 26% of the organizations provide background material.

Most organizations reported difficulty identifying qualified translators who are familiar with the organizations' general subject matter and terminology. Moreover, because there is not much demand for work in the less common languages, it is difficult to be able to count on finding qualified translators available when their services are needed.

Although Trados is still the most widely used translation tool, other tools were also mentioned. Most organizations indicated that they will continue or would like to start using translation memory tools and that the decision to use a particular tool is not left to the discretion of the translator.

Regarding training, most respondents expressed an interest in learning more about the various types of translation tools/technology available on the market.

Finally, with regard to QA, some organizations stated that the level of importance of the material translated determines whether it is revised and proofread. Other respondents spot check in-house or outsource the task.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1) For which language combinations do you employ in-house translators?

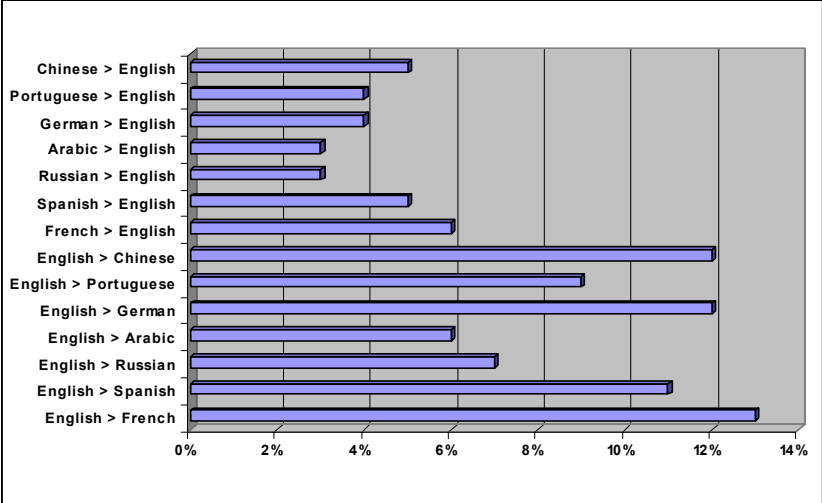


Figure 1: In-house language combinations

Additional language combinations translated in-house are English into Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, the Scandinavian languages, and Ukrainian.

2) Do you subcontract work to translators for language combinations for which you have in-house translators?

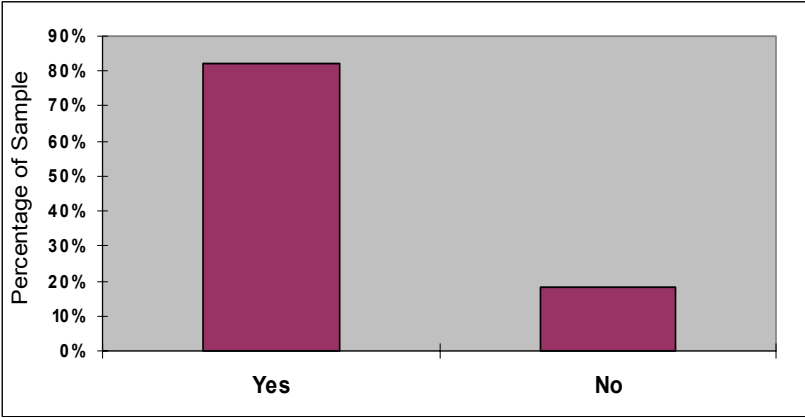


Figure 2: Amount of work subcontracted

3) What are the reasons for subcontracting work in such cases?

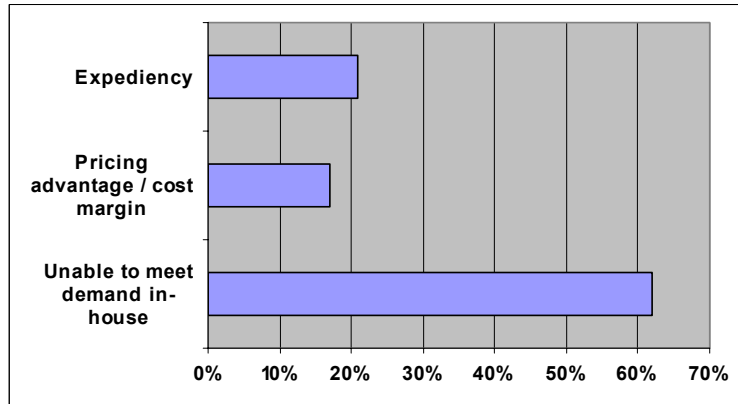


Figure 3: Reasons for subcontracting

In addition to the inability to meet the high demand for some languages, another reason cited is that organizations dedicate substantial in-house resources to quality assurance and control of outsourced work. This is increasingly the case for documents that are made available to a wider audience.

4) What percentage of your total output is subcontracted?

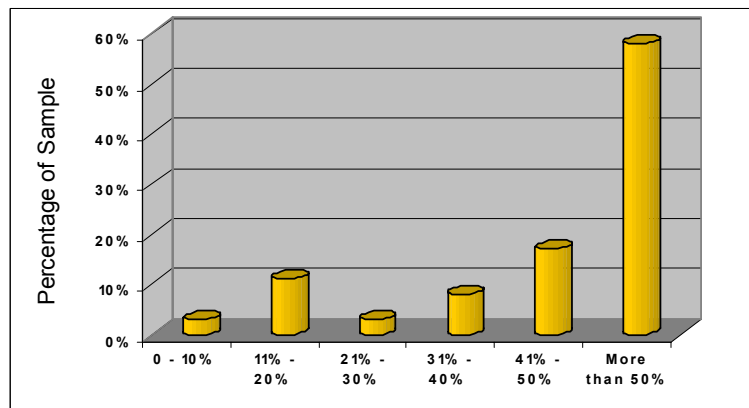


Figure 4: Total output subcontracted

5) Do you subcontract work in language combinations for which you do not have in-house resources?

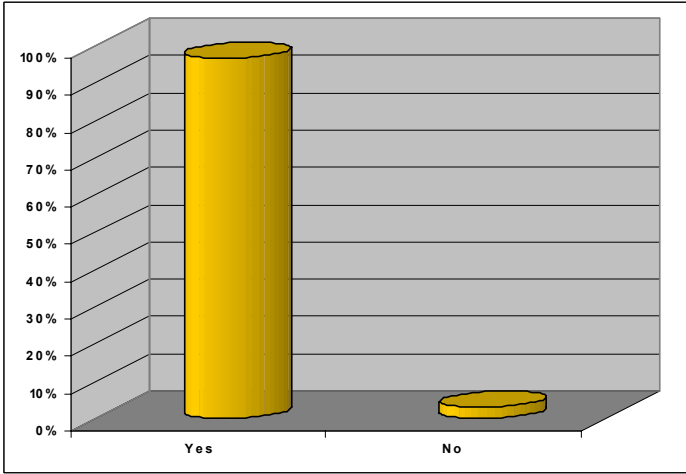


Figure 5: Work subcontracted

Some companies/organizations stated that since they do not have much demand for certain languages, it is viable for them to outsource translation as well as QA and QC.

The languages combinations requested most, according to the respondents, are English into Chinese (simple and traditional), German, Portuguese, Italian, the Scandinavian languages, Japanese, French, Spanish, Korean, Dutch, Greek, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Slovenian, Ukrainian, and Serbo-Croatian.

6) Are most of your subcontractors freelance translators or translation agencies?

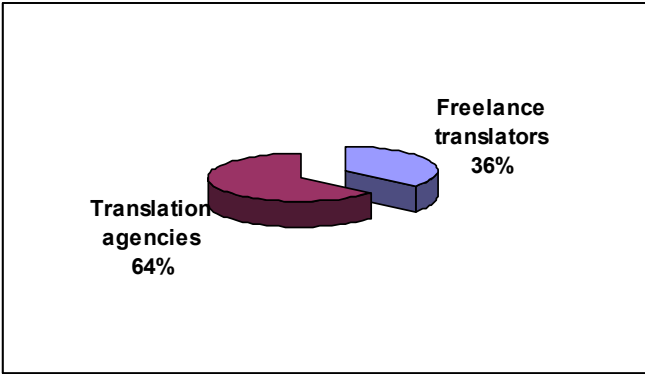


Figure 6: Types of subcontractors

7) If translation agencies, the size is:

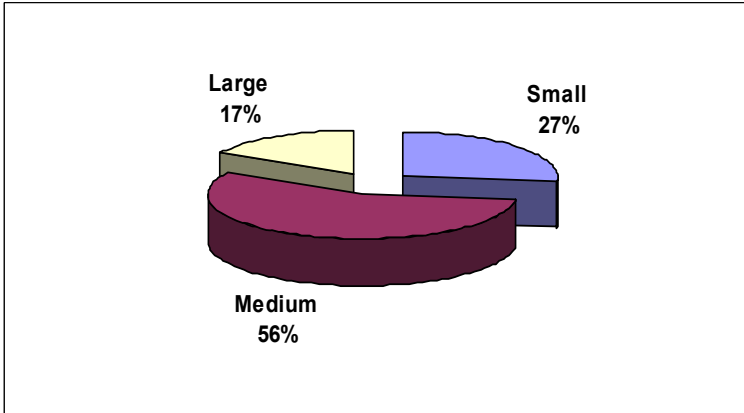


Figure 7: Size of translation agencies

8) What qualifications do you require of your freelance translators?

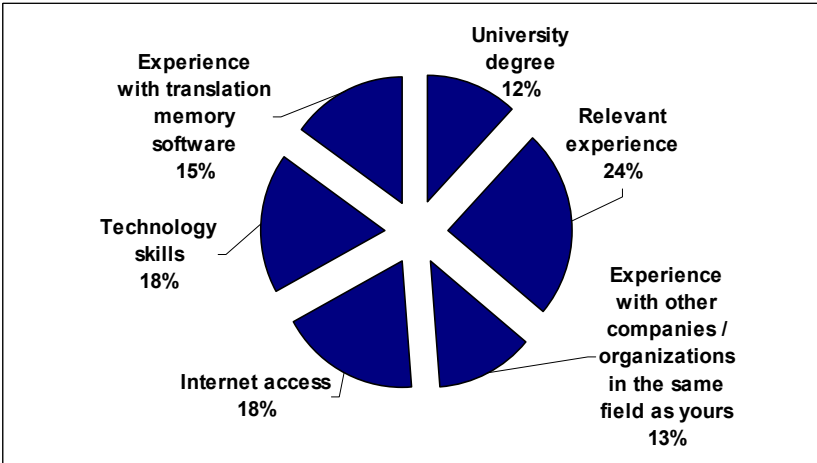


Figure 8: Required qualifications

Additional qualifications listed by survey participants are that candidates must have an advanced degree in translation, pass their tests, demonstrate enthusiasm for the organization’s work, and have experience with additional software.

10) Is supplier diversity a consideration for your company/organization when you outsource translation work?

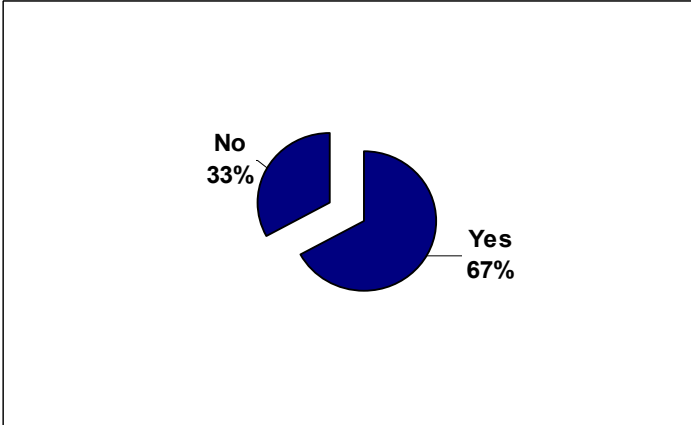


Figure 9: Supplier diversity

11) How do you recruit your freelance translators?

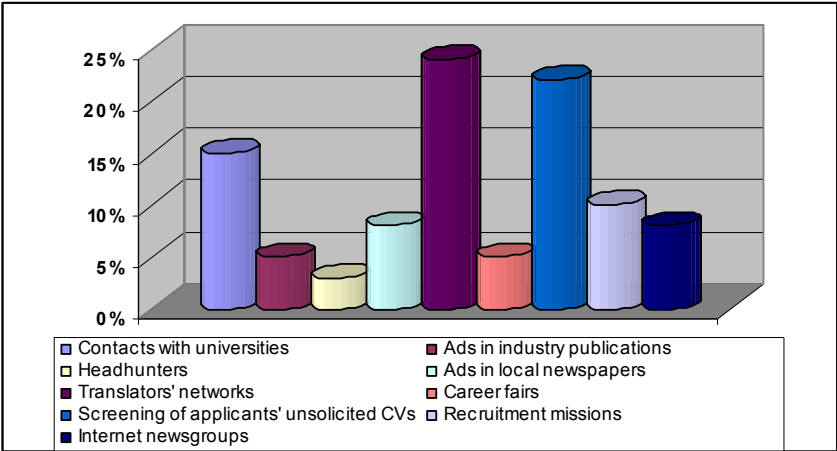


Figure 10: Recruitment methods

12) Which recruitment methods yield the highest success rates?

Most respondents indicated that the best way to recruit freelance translators is through translators’ networks, followed by screening of unsolicited CVs and referrals from universities. Other methods mentioned include Internet advertisements and using the services of former or retired employees

13) Do you provide your freelance translators with assistance or resources when you send them work?

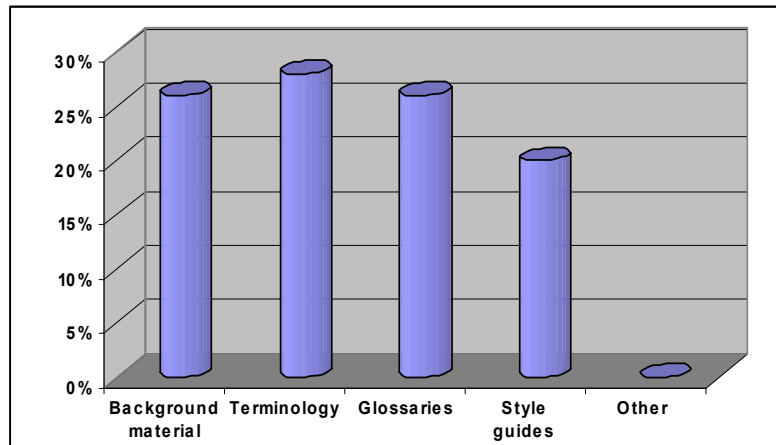


Figure 11: Assistance to freelance translators

Eighty-seven percent of vendors who responded to the Vendor Satisfaction Survey named terminology and background material as the primary tools needed to prepare high-quality translations. There is a strong discrepancy between freelancers’ needs and vendor support practices. Only 28% of the organizations provide terminology to their translators, and only 26% provide background material.

Other materials provided to translators include translation memory, machine translation output, previous versions of documents to be translated, and access to job-specific software.

14) Do you find it difficult to identify qualified freelance translators for specific language combinations?

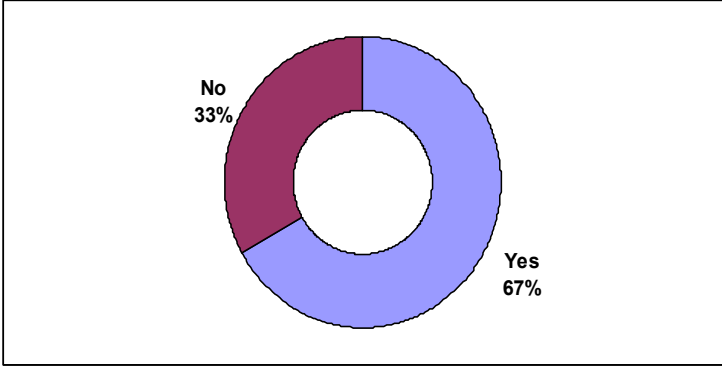


Figure 12: Difficulty finding translators

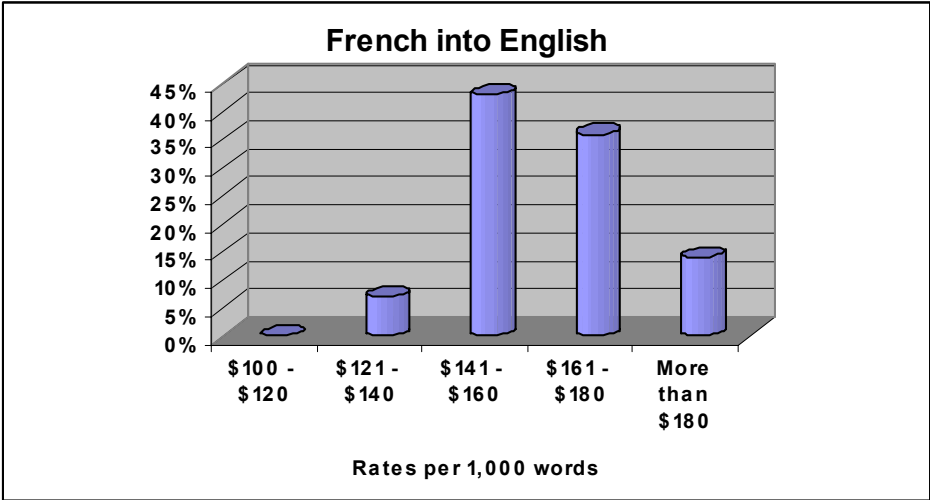
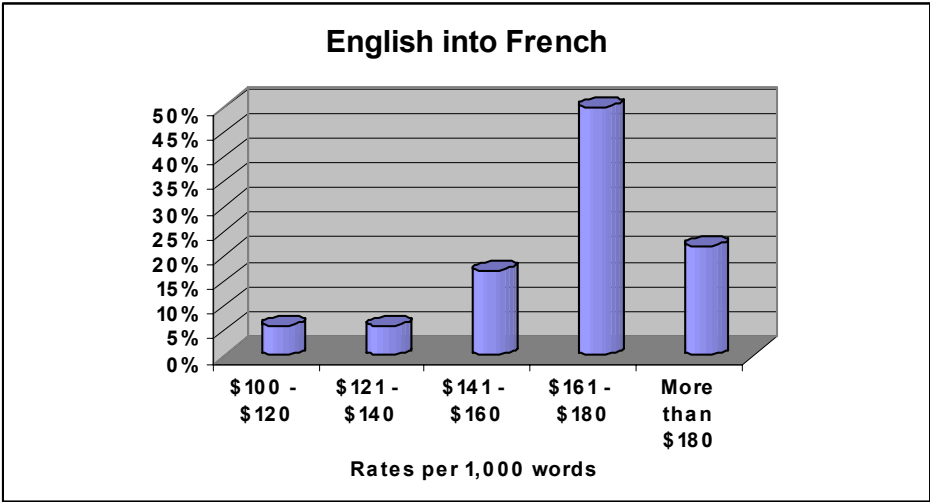
If so, which ones?

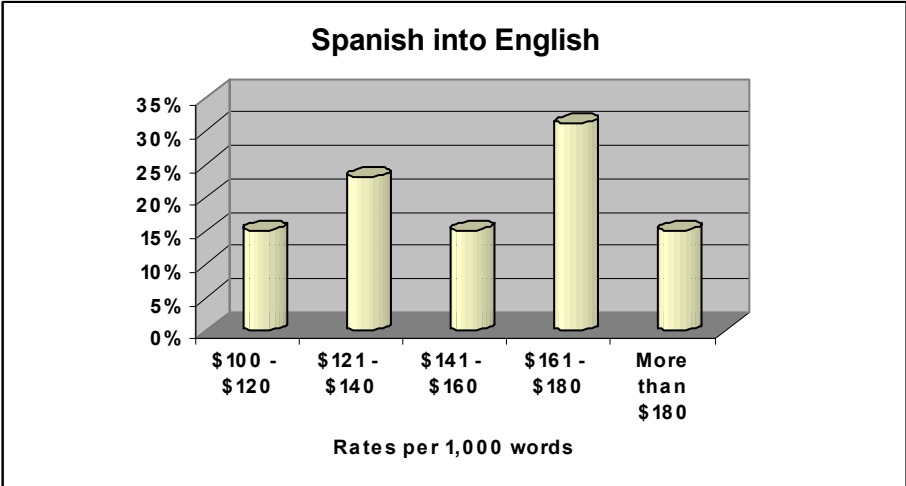
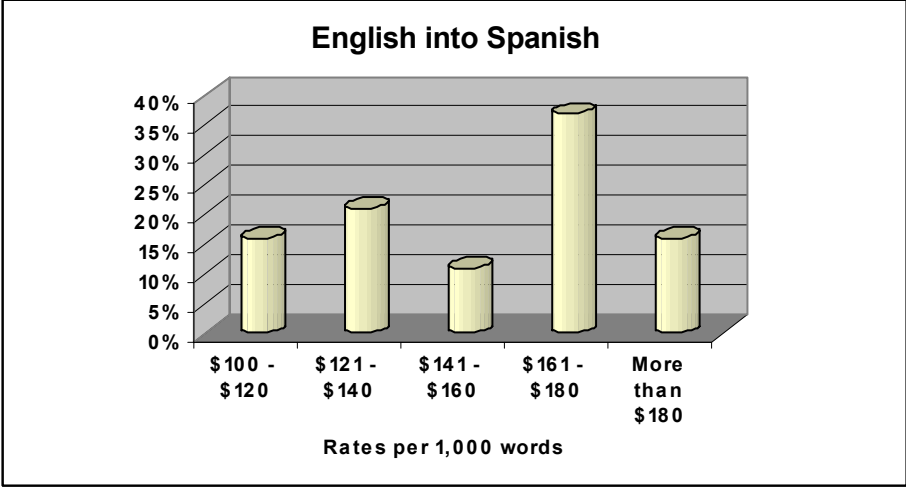
Most organizations reported difficulty identifying qualified translators who are familiar with their general subject matter and terminology, particularly for the following language combinations: English into French and Dutch; English from/into the following languages: Asian languages, Scandinavian languages, Arabic, Russian, Bengali, Turkish, Hungarian, Romanian, Tigrinya, Italian, and Portuguese.

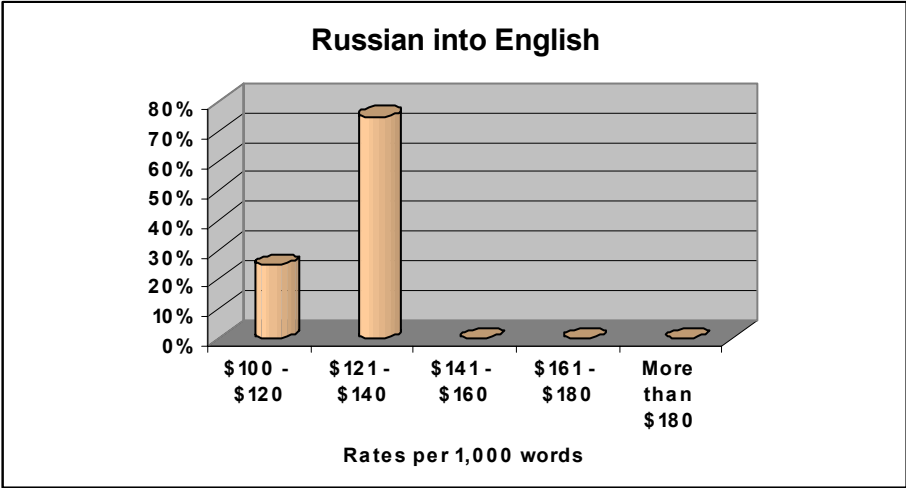
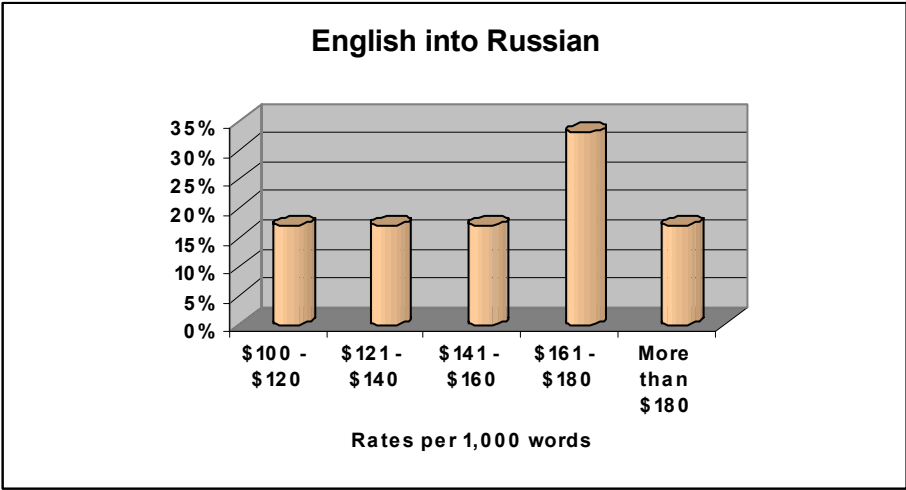
In the case of the less common languages, because there is not much demand for these languages, it is difficult to be able to count on finding qualified translators available when their services are needed.

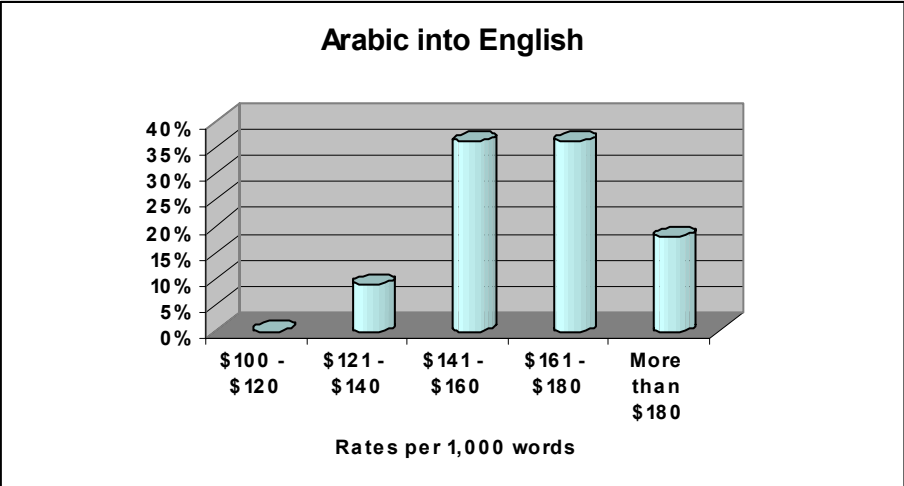
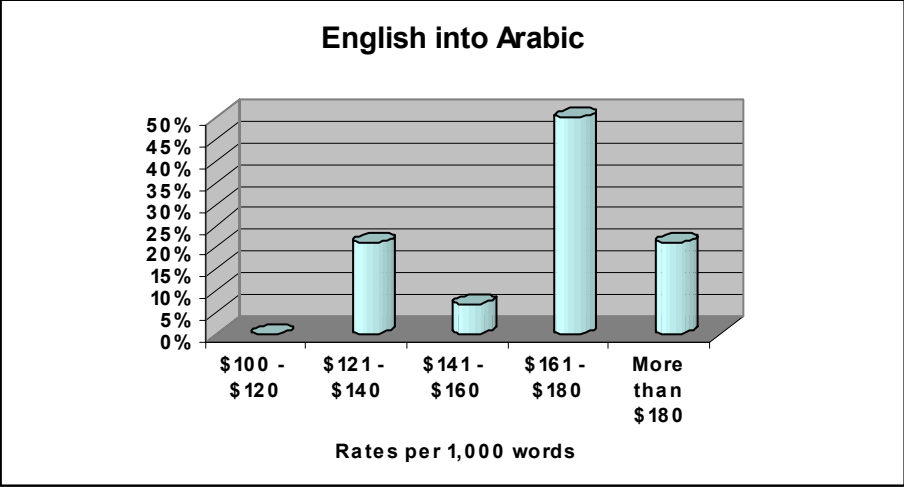
RATES

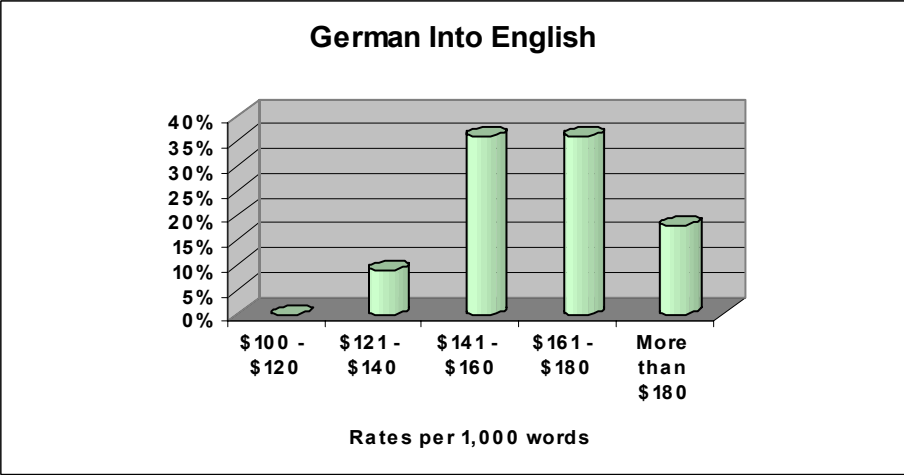
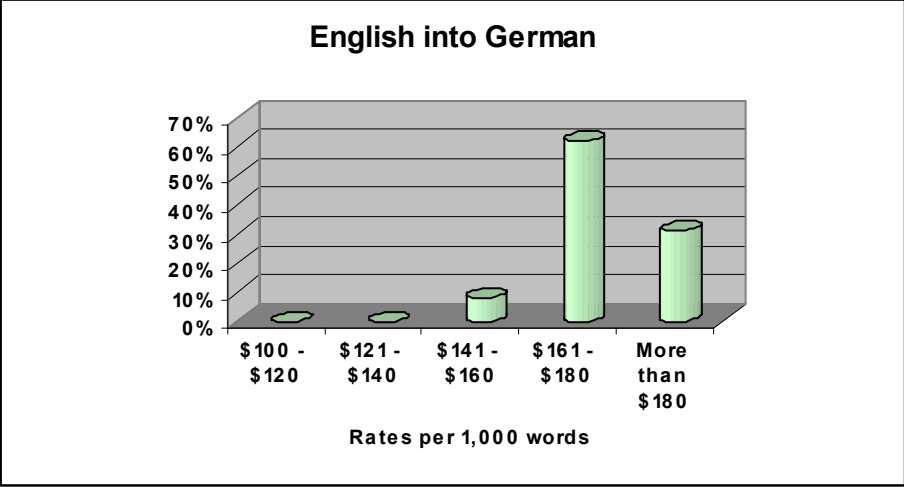
15) For the following language pairs, what are the freelance translators’ rate ranges per 1,000 words (i.e., how much do you pay most of them?)

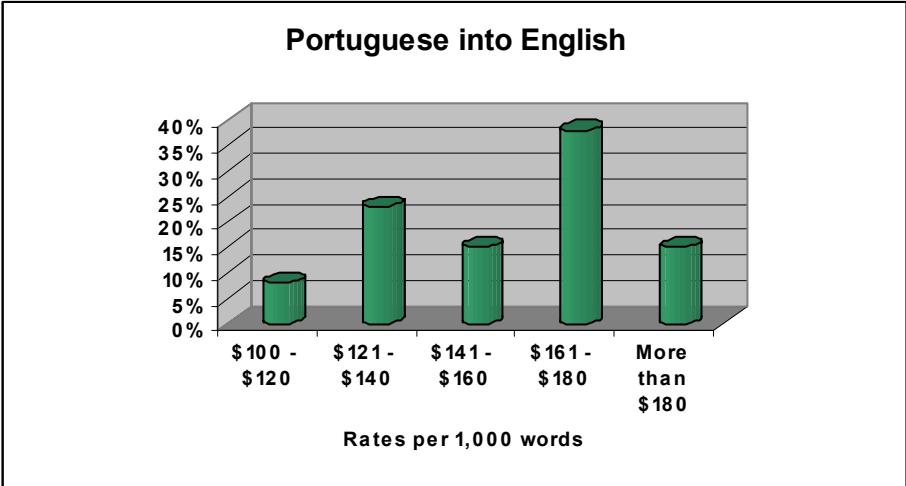
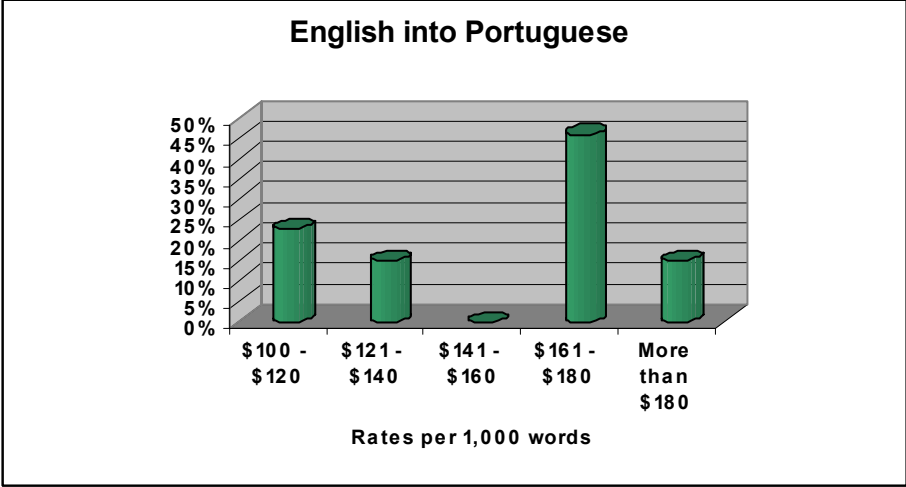












TERMINOLOGY

16) What translation memory technology does your company/organization use?

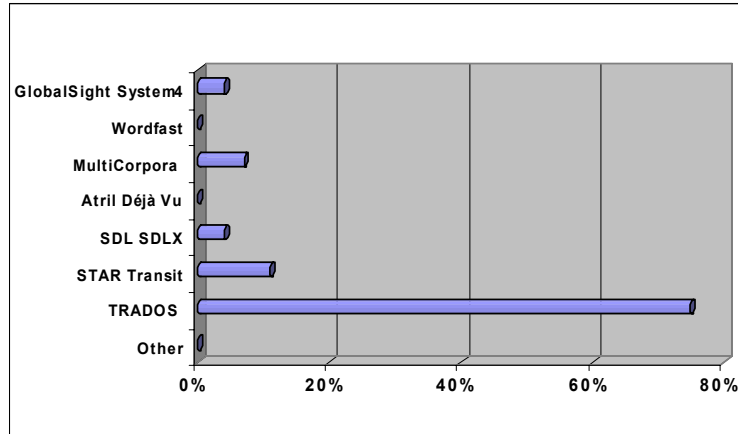


Figure 13: Translation memory technology used

Alchemy Catalyst, RC WinTrans, and tools developed in-house were also mentioned.

17) What terminology tools does your company/organization use?

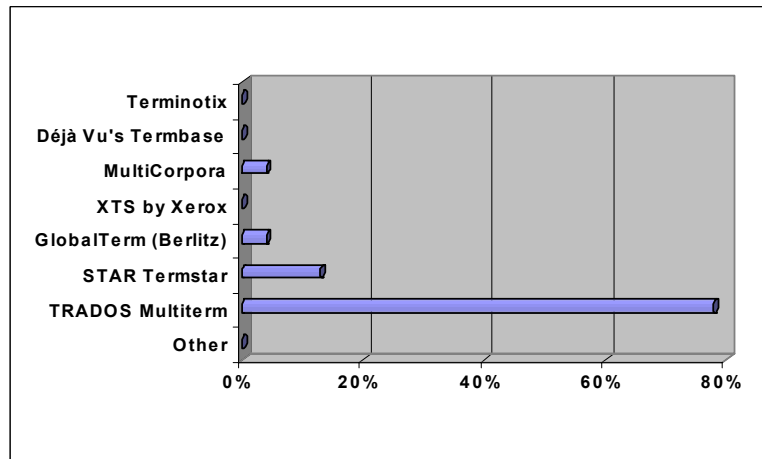


Figure 14: Terminology tools used

Alchemy Catalyst was also mentioned by a number of companies/organizations.

18) Are you interested in any of the above translation technology tools and/or do you plan to use any in the near future?

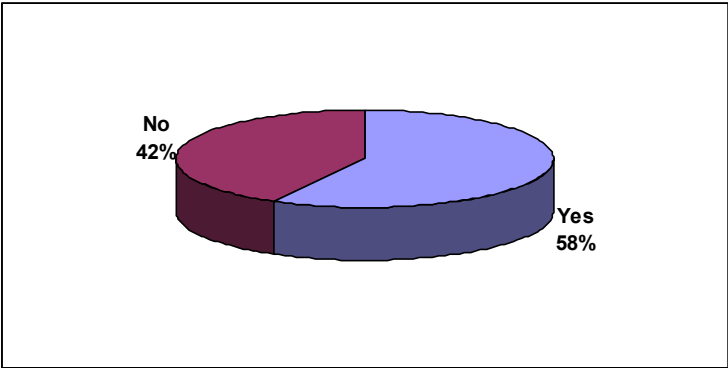


Figure 15: Interest in translation technology

Most of the companies/organizations stated that they will continue or would like to start using translation memory tools.

19) If your institution provides translators with more than one translation memory tool, is the decision to use a particular tool to complete a given job left to the discretion of the translator?

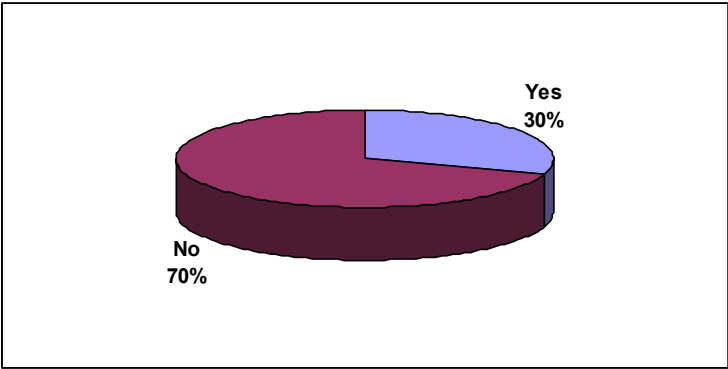


Figure 16: Decision to use a particular tool

QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA)

14) Does your company/organization revise all outsourced translations?

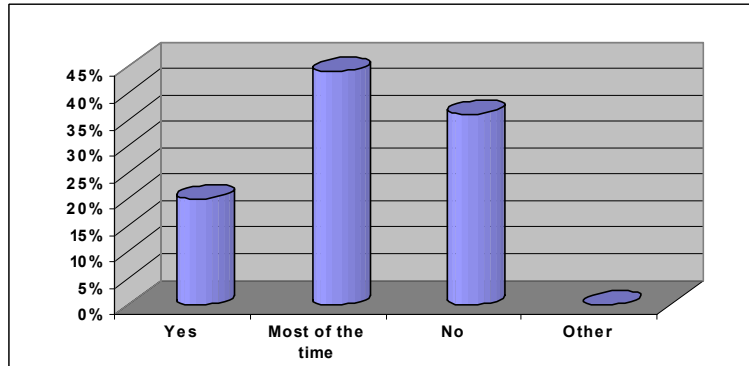


Figure 17: Revision of outsourced translation

Some companies/organizations said that the decision whether to revise documents depends on the level of importance of the material, while others spot check translation.

15) Does your company/organization proofread all outsourced translations?

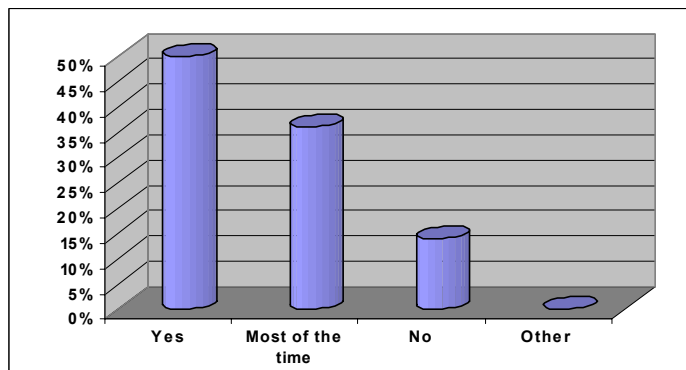


Figure 18: Proofreading of outsourced translation

Some respondents indicated that decisions whether to proofread a translation depend on the level of importance of the material. In other instances, portions of a translation are spot checked or proofreading is outsourced.

16) Does your company/organization provide feedback to the translator for every job translated?

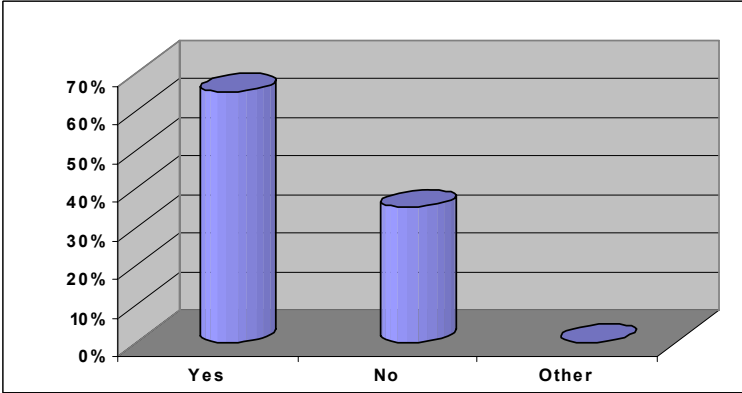


Figure 19: Feedback to translators

Some companies/organizations indicated that they give feedback only if there is a problem with the translation.

17) Does your company/organization create a master glossary for each client?

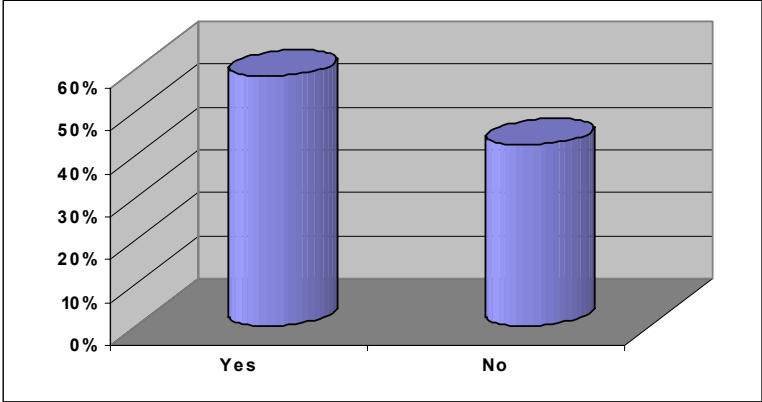


Figure 20: Master glossary

TRAINING

18) Does your company/organization provide training for freelance translators?

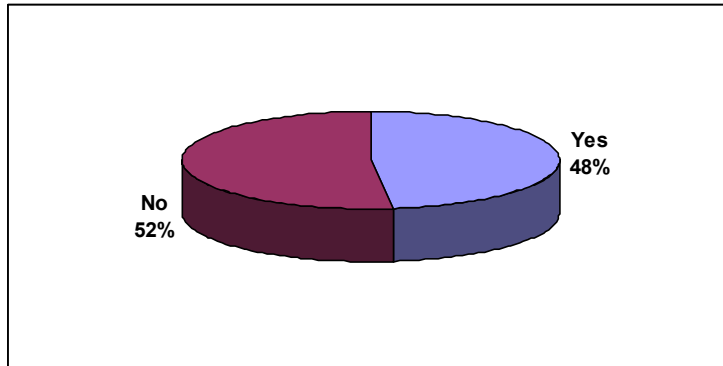


Figure 21: Training for freelance translators

19) What kind of training is provided?

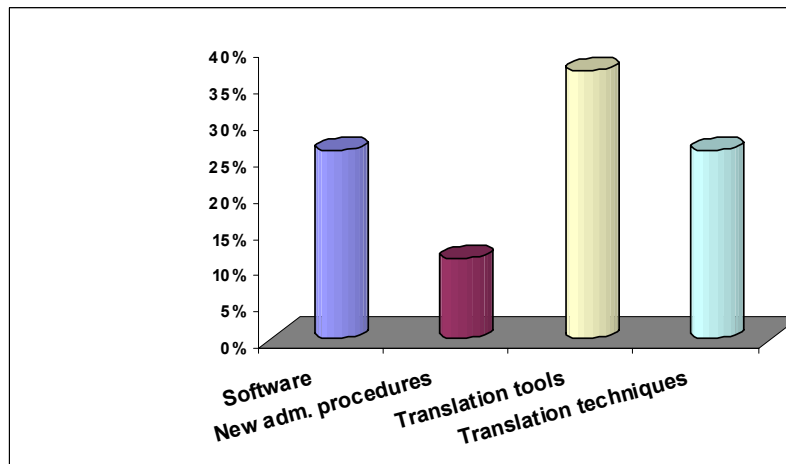


Figure 22: Types of training provided

In the Vendor Satisfaction Survey conducted by the Bank, many vendors showed an interest in learning more about various types of translation technology available on the market. They made it very clear that they are not interested in any type of traditional training, such as university courses. In addition, they stated that it is not easy to find training for translation tools and that they therefore have to spend an enormous amount of time training themselves. Assistance and training from the Bank would be very welcome. In addition, according to the majority of vendors, the preferred type of training is one-on-one feedback. According to these vendors feedback is a very important part of the learning process, and they would like us to routinely send them their revised translations. However, the survey results show that only one-fourth of the vendors surveyed receive any feedback.