

Investigating specialized translators: Corpus and documentary sources

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Abstract

This paper describes research carried out through electronic surveys of three groups of translators working in different areas of expertise (legal, medical and technical) that aimed to discover their socio-professional profile, their opinions both on corpora and other documentary sources, and the use they make of them. Certain characteristic features emerged from the analysis of data on the three population groups, regarding years of experience, documentary sources used and most usual clients. For example, even if legal translators seem more satisfied with the documentary sources available, medical translators never use translation memories, and technical translators often refer to thesauri. In any event, regardless of their area of activity, most subjects feel the need for a specialized corpus combining formal, terminological-lexical, macrostructural and conceptual aspects, as well as contextual information. That is the reason why the GENTT 3.0 Corpus is believed to meet the expectations and needs of professional translators.

Keywords: specialized translation, qualitative research, surveys, textual genres, documentary sources.

Resumen

La investigación sobre traductores especializados: corpus y fuentes de documentación

El presente artículo da cuenta de una investigación con encuestas electrónicas llevada a cabo con tres grupos de traductores que trabajan en distintas áreas de especialidad (legal, médica y técnica) y cuyo objetivo es descubrir distintas facetas de su perfil socio-profesional, su opinión tanto acerca de los corpus como de

otras fuentes documentales, así como el uso que hacen de estas. El análisis de los datos ha puesto de relieve rasgos característicos en los tres grupos de población, concretamente en relación con los años de experiencia, las fuentes de documentación utilizadas y los clientes habituales. Por ejemplo, los traductores jurídicos parecen más satisfechos con las fuentes documentales disponibles; los traductores médicos no utilizan nunca las memorias de traducción, mientras que los traductores técnicos a menudo recurren a los tesauros. En cualquier caso, y con independencia del área de especialidad, la mayoría de sujetos valoraría positivamente un corpus especializado que combinara aspectos conceptuales, macro-estructurales, terminológicos y léxicos, y que incluyera asimismo información sobre el contexto. Por todo ello, creemos que el Corpus GENTT 3.0 respondería bien a las expectativas y necesidades de los traductores profesionales.

Palabras clave: traducción especializada, investigación cualitativa, encuestas, géneros textuales, recursos documentales.

Introduction¹

The new information society requires translators – especially those working in fields of specialist expertise – to be familiar with a range of documentary tools. Many of these tools, however, do not meet real needs and expectations.

On this premise, the GENTT research group (Textual Genres for Translation, www.gentt.uji.es) at the Universitat Jaume I of Castellón (Spain), conducted qualitative research to find out the perception that translators from different areas of expertise (legal, medical and technical) have about the documentary resources available today, and what features they would like to see in a tool designed to meet their expectations.

The present article presents the results of this research and proposes the use of electronic corpora, specifically the GENTT 3.0 management program, as a solution to the specialized translator's needs.

Background

As noted above, the ultimate goal of GENTT is to build a document management tool, the GENTT 3.0 management system, which can serve professional translators as a knowledge management system (García-

Izquierdo & Borja, 2009) and allow them to consult a variety of aspects: terminological-linguistic, documentary (actual templates of documents), conceptual and contextual (communicative situation). However, any investigation of this kind should involve professionals working in these areas that may use the tool in the future; in other words, major “stakeholders” in its potential advantages and benefits.

As a result, the team felt that the quantitative investigation carried out with corpora should be complemented with a qualitative method that would enable us to approach professionals and incorporate their views and concerns.

One of the aspects affecting the development of research is its design; it was therefore essential to determine the working hypotheses, which were:

1. The disparate origins of the three groups of subjects, as well as their professional background and the topics of their translations imply differences in their socio-professional profile, their knowledge of textual genres, and their predisposition towards the tools used to manage them.
2. The lack of resources available leads to a demand for new, more comprehensive tools, regardless of the field of expertise.

The second step was to limit the study area, to define the universe and population sample and to choose the best data collection method. Bearing in mind that the ultimate goal of the study was to obtain information from professionals in the fields analysed in order to help us improve the design of the GENTT 3.0 document management program, a qualitative method (usually more flexible) was used to help define certain patterns and to allow observation that would provide a better picture of reality (inductive procedure). Therefore, a quantitative investigation with corpora was used, reinforced with a qualitative design; however this did not imply that the latter was considered to be less important.² We finally decided to conduct a survey.

According to Sierra Bravo (1994), the survey is the most important and most frequently used sociological research procedure. Indeed, Malhotra (2004: 169) states that the direct structured survey is the most popular data collection method and has the advantage that the data tend to be reliable. Of the possibilities the author describes (Classification of survey methods, page 170), the present research takes the form of an electronic survey (available

online), which many scholars consider to be a method with some of the lowest response rates and yet, the quickest and most economical.

In this paper, the term “survey” not only refers to a data collection instrument, but also to a research method (Castejón, 2006), which involves formulating a problem, setting a goal, selecting subjects and designing and analysing data. In this second sense, and according to this author, the survey is a non-experimental method, a variant of the correlational or selective method, which has a predominantly descriptive (observational) nature and requires a sampling process to ensure representation.³ In this instance, the main objective was to compare subgroups within the same population: specialized translators. In short, the focus was not on the subjects, but on the population group to which they belonged.

One of the key issues of the investigation was precisely the selection of the sample. According to Sentis, Pardell and Cobo (1995), population refers to all elements sharing certain properties, among which a particular phenomenon is to be studied. And again, the appropriateness of the sample will depend on its representativeness. In this study, however, a complete list of members of the analysed population (translators from the legal, medical and technical fields) was not available. Hence the sample was divided into three independent subgroups (see next section for a description), and a proportional, random selection was made that endeavoured to mirror the sampling framework with the observed population.⁴

Ensuring validity poses problems for most research, and the present study is no exception. According to Ibáñez (1985), neither empirical-inductive nor theoretical-deductive means (or any combination or articulation between the two), are sufficient to determine the truth. Ruiz Olabuénaga (2007) considers that this is particularly true in the case of qualitative studies. Precisely because these studies must keep close to specific and real issues, the option to extrapolate them turns out to be even more risky.

Materials and methods

As noted above, this paper is based on empirical-descriptive research with surveys conducted on three population groups of professional translators working in different fields. This section describes the structure of the surveys, the subjects’ general profile, the research stages and the software used to manage and display the data. Data were collected in the second

semester of 2009 and analysed during the first half of 2010. A total of 90 subjects completed the questionnaire; all were based in Spain, and were divided into three groups⁵:

- Legal translators: A sample of 321 subjects was taken from a list of 1961 translators published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of whom 54 completed the survey.
- Medical translators: Contact was made through the Master's Degree in Medical and Health Translation at the Universitat Jaume I⁶. A total of 18 subjects completed the survey.
- Technical translators: This group was contacted through a list of specialized technical and scientific translators, with Spanish as either a source or target language, belonging to the Spanish professional translators association Asetrad⁷ (see García-Izquierdo, forthcoming). A total of 18 subjects completed the survey.

As the three groups varied in size, results are mainly given in percentages. Researchers contacted the subjects via email, and also made use of the corresponding tool included in the LimeSurvey software. LimeSurvey, used to design and manage electronic surveys, has several useful functions for this type of research. For example, the program automatically sends messages to users who have previously been entered in the system. It also sends periodical reminders and monitors (at any time) the number of people who have begun or completed the survey. However, the main function of the system is to create surveys; it also maintains the integrity and consistency of the data, so no other statistical analyses are required to estimate reliability.

Three surveys were designed, one for each subject group (see the legal one in the Appendix as an example). Most questions were common to all groups, although in some cases (for example, genres and fields) categories had to be adapted. While not identical, the three surveys were entirely equivalent, all consisting of three parts, which in turn included several questions on the following areas: personal profile, professional background in the corresponding field (legal, medical or technical) and corpora. In total, 18 or 19 questions were included (depending on the group), which provide the basis for the results shown and discussed in the next section.

About 5-10 minutes were required to complete the survey. Additionally, in order to encourage subjects to participate, generous deadlines were set and

several reminders were also sent. A further useful feature of LimeSurvey was that it exported the data directly to a CSV file once the deadlines had passed, and created a matrix for the statistical analysis of the data with the SPSS v17 software package. Hence, although most figures and tables in this paper were designed with Office 2007, data were previously ordered, filtered, and managed with SPSS: frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, bivariate correlations and box plots (to identify atypical values) were the most common procedures applied to the results.

Results and discussion

The data from the surveys were statistically analysed to test the hypotheses outlined in the previous paragraphs. The sections below discuss, first, the subjects' personal profile; second, certain issues regarding their professional background; and third, their attitude towards corpora and their usage.

Personal profile

Women outnumbered men in all three subject groups (Figure 1). However, the percentage of male translators was lower among the technical and legal translation specialists than among the medical translation specialists.

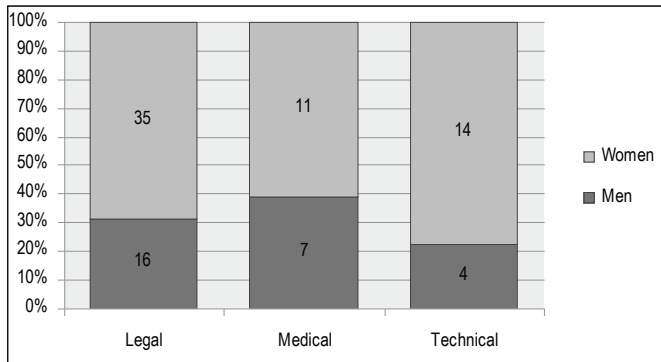


Figure 1. Sex.

The number of translators included in each group does not appear to have affected the proportion, since distribution among the largest group, legal

translators, is similar to the other two groups. Table 1 shows the highest and lowest ages of the translators in each group, together with the average age and the age range.

	Legal	Medical	Technical
Minimum	24	28	25
Maximum	68	69	58
Range	44	41	33
Average	36	42.2	37.8

Table 1. Age.

Legal translators were the youngest subjects (average age 36), while medical translators were the oldest (42.2). The average age of the technical translators (37.8 years old) is closer to that of the legal translators than to the medical translators. Moreover, the range (the difference between the highest and lowest ages) is significantly lower among technical translators: the number of older translators in this group appears to be lower, which could be related to generational circumstances.

The following questions asked respondents to report the highest qualification they held and enabled us to learn the average educational level required to translate documents within each field. Three options were given, in this order: undergraduate degree, bachelor's degree and master's degree (see Question 17 in Appendix). Figure 2 shows the percentages for these levels in each group.

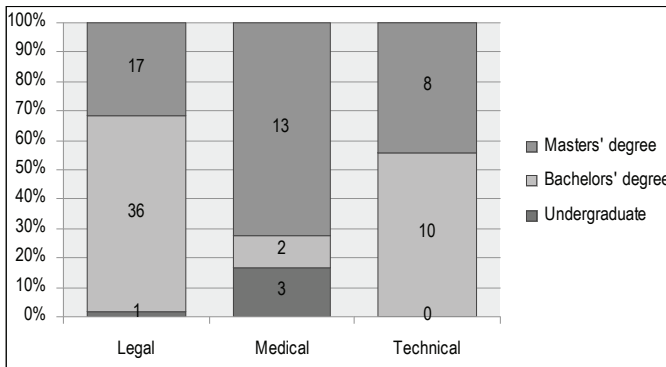


Figure 2. Level of studies.⁸

The percentage of subjects who had completed a Master’s degree is significantly higher among the group of medical translators, probably because most of them were contacted through the Master’s Degree in Medical and Health Translation, coordinated by the Universitat Jaume I. The legal field shows the lowest percentage of translators with a Master’s degree, which could be due simply to a matter of quantity, as the population of this group is three times that of the other groups: that is, more subjects are required in this group to reach the same percentage. The data on technical translators are less informative, but for a salient percentage (over 15%) of the medical translators the highest level of studies is an undergraduate degree: in other words, they might enter the professional master’s degree without completing a Bachelor’s degree.

The discipline of the subjects’ degrees was also taken into account. Figure 3 shows the percentage of subjects in each group who had either a degree in translation only, or in translation and a branch of their corresponding area.

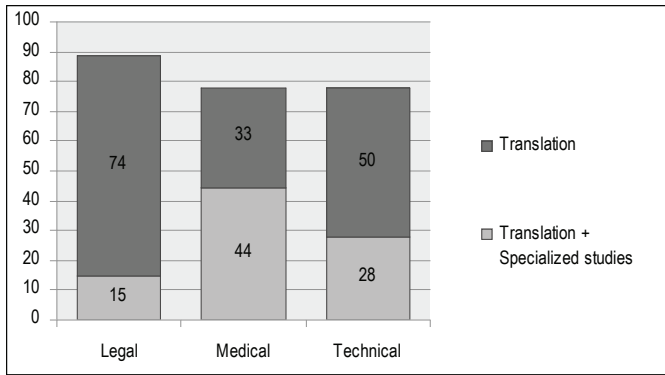


Figure 3. Nature of studies.

The percentage of subjects with a degree in translation is obviously very high in all three groups, although somewhat higher amongst the legal translators. Nevertheless, the percentage of legal translators who also studied law or economics to degree level is lower (about 15%) than that of the technical translators with another degree in a related field (almost 30%); the percentage of medical translators with a biomedical qualification was particularly high (nearly 45%). But these are percentages, and the group of legal translators was more numerous, which again could explain – at least to some extent – these differences. The reason for the high percentage of

medical translators with a combination of degrees (translation and from the biomedical field) may lie in the fact that they were enrolled on a master's degree, which could indicate their concern for continuous training.

The surveys also included a question about the number of years of professional experience the subjects had (Question C18 in Appendix). Figure 4 summarizes the results.

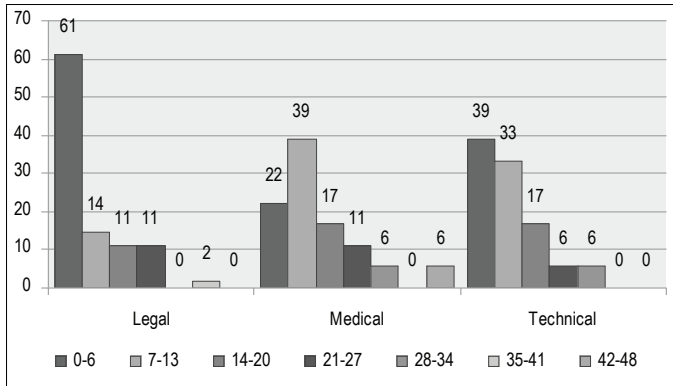


Figure 4. Experience.

The least experienced (those with 0 to 6 years of experience) are the most numerous in two of the three groups (legal and technical translators). The difference is especially significant amongst the legal translators, where the least experienced translators represent over 60% of the total. In contrast, medical translators tend to have more professional experience: between 7 and 13 years.

To conclude this section, Figure 5 shows the type of work carried out by the subjects during the previous six months, starting with the first population group in alphabetical order (legal translators).

By far the most frequently mentioned task across all groups is that of translation. Curiously, medical translators are the only group in which not all the subjects claim to have performed this task in recent months (as indicated by the fact that the column for this group does not total 100%). The second category, also across all three groups, is that of corrector or reviser. Thereafter, certain differences are apparent: running a business is quite common among medical and technical translators, but not legal translators, perhaps because, unlike the others, they usually work as freelancers.

Nevertheless, over 30% of the legal translators had worked as interpreters and language teachers in recent months, about twice as many as the other groups. The role of terminology manager was hardly ever performed by legal and technical translators, whereas over 20% of medical translators had undertaken that task some time in previous months. The remaining activities were more or less anecdotal in all groups.

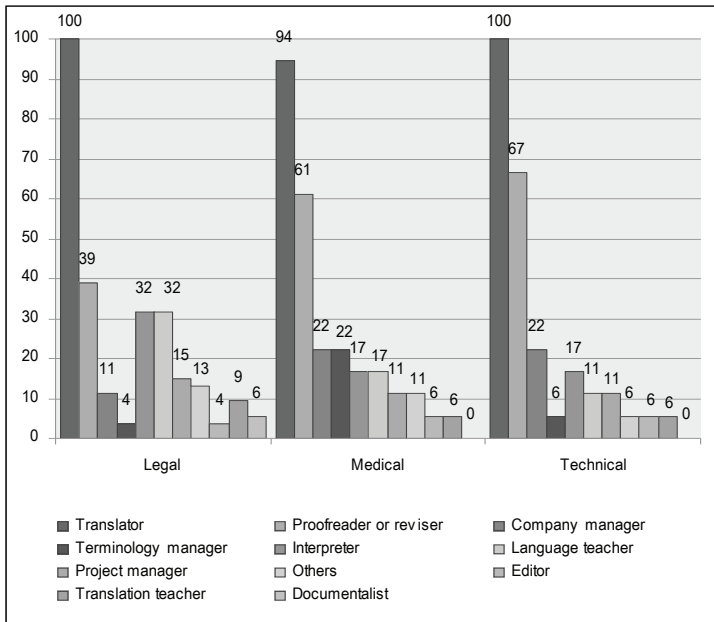


Figure 5. Profiles of work undertaken.

Professional background

Comparison of the areas and genres translated by subjects as diverse as those represented in the three groups studied is not an easy task. For this reason, here we analyse the extent to which the subjects specialize; more specifically, whether the subjects in each group tend to specialize in one area of expertise or, conversely, work in several areas at once. The extent to which subjects specialize in textual genres is also explored.

Figure 6 compares the percentage of subjects from the same group that translate documents from one single area with those who translate documents from between 2 and 4 areas, between 5 and 7 areas, and over eight areas. Figure 6 shows that technical translators more frequently

specialize in one single area (over 20%), whereas medical translators rarely do so (5%). The tendency is, however, to work on an average of between 2 and 4 areas, but it is also quite common for medical translators to translate documents from between 5 and 7 areas. This is also the group in which more subjects translate documents from over 8 different areas. In short, medical translators, compared with other groups, are characterized by a greater diversification of areas, whereas technical translators tend to specialize in one or just a few areas.

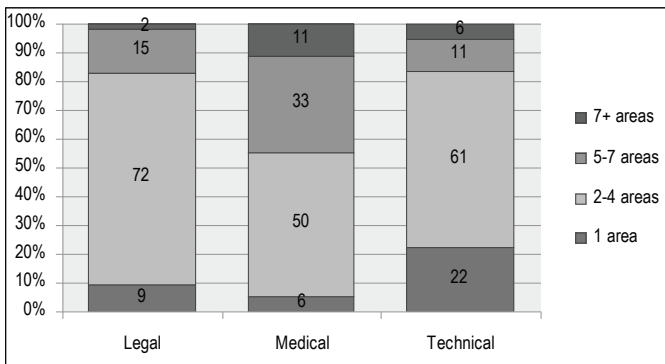


Figure 6. Number of areas translated.

The analysis also examined textual genres. Figure 7 shows the percentage of subjects from each group that work with one single genre, with 2 to 4 genres, 5 to 7 genres and 8 or more genres.

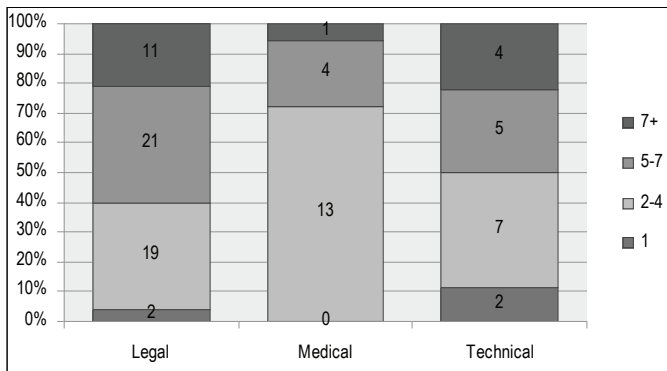


Figure 7. Number of textual genres translated.

Figure 7 shows that most subjects translate between 2 and 7 genres; however some differences emerge among the three groups:

- Legal translators mentioned more textual genres translated, which clearly contrasts with Figure 6. It appears that they either translate genres from more than one area, or translate specific genres from different areas.⁹
- Over 70% of the medical translators work with only 2 to 4 textual genres. This also contrasts with the previous figure, for the abovementioned reason.
- Finally, technical translators usually work with between 2 and 4 different genres, which is in line with Figure 6.

The unexpected and (apparently) contradictory results for the legal and medical translators could be due to the abstract nature of the concepts “genre” and “area”, since many issues surrounding genre characterization are still undefined. This effect could be highlighted in the case of medical translators, who may well consider medical translation to be a branch within the broader area of scientific translation and, as a consequence, it would not make sense to talk about areas within their professional area, but families or systems of genres (Bazerman, 1994). Another possible explanation for this result is that these subjects do not believe the distinction between genres depends on areas or fields and therefore understand them as two separate categories. In fact, some authors consider genre classification by discipline to be irrelevant (Aragonés, 2009).

Unlike the previous questions, the next item was practically identical¹⁰ in all three surveys, thus making comparison between the groups more straightforward (Question A5 in Appendix). Table 2 lists the clients the subjects state they have worked for and the average for the three groups. Data that do not coincide with the tendency are shaded.

Among the medical translators’ typical clients, there is a higher percentage of “companies”, and the same applies to “individuals” in the case of legal translators. The results suggest that somehow the field affects the type of clients addressed; consequently, the legal translators’ principal addressee is the individual, whereas medical translators tend to work for private companies, and technical translators for translation agencies. Percentages for the three groups are similar, as there are no other differences besides those already mentioned.

	Legal	Medical	Technical	Average
Translation agencies (service companies)	74.1	44.4	72.2	63.6
Individuals	92.6	33.3	55.6	60.5
Companies (industrial)	61.1	50.0	55.6	55.6
Institutions	24.1	33.3	22.2	26.5
Doctors/Civil servants/Engineers or experts	7.4	33.3	16.7	19.1
Publishing companies	5.6	33.3	16.7	18.5
Hospitals	3.7	27.8	0.0	15.7
Journals	1.9	11.1	5.6	6.2

Table 2. Clients

A specific question concerned working languages, primarily because of the potential implications not only for academic organization, but also for the professional expectations of future translators. The surveys therefore included questions about source languages (Question A6 in the Appendix) and target languages (Question A7). All questions contained several categories, but languages such as Catalan, Portuguese, Romanian, Arabic and Italian were barely mentioned. Therefore, for comparison among the three groups of subjects, only the four most cited languages were taken into account: English, French, German and Spanish. Figure 8 shows the languages in alphabetical order, including the percentage of subjects that mentioned them in each group.

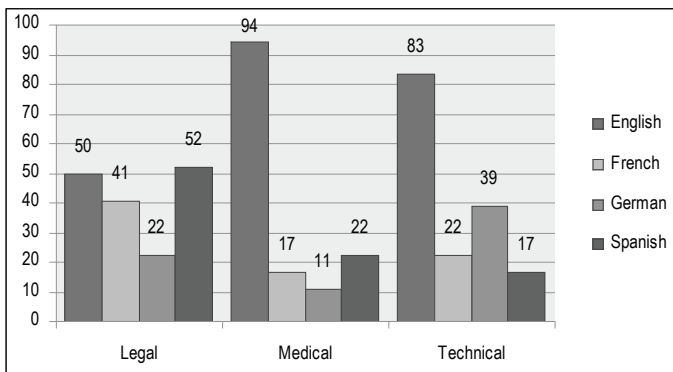


Figure 8. Source languages.

In two out of the three groups (medical and technical), the most frequently mentioned language was English, which could be explained by the type of subject participating in the study (since direct translation is supposedly the

most widespread): professional translators working in Spain. However, in the legal translators group, the most common activity was translation from Spanish, not English. This might indicate a different type of business that requires translations of documents for foreign markets; that is, when the market requires reverse translation. The highest proportion of translations into French within this group seems to support this interpretation. Moreover, this result is consistent with the results for translators' client bases (see Table 2), which showed that legal translators frequently work for individuals. Finally, the importance of German in the work of technical translators is probably due to the text content, which frequently involves products developed or designed in Germany.

The information in Figure 8 is complemented with that of Figure 9 on the most common target languages in the three groups. Spanish is by far the most cited language, followed by English. French and German fall some way behind, except in the case of legal translators, where French and English are practically on a par.

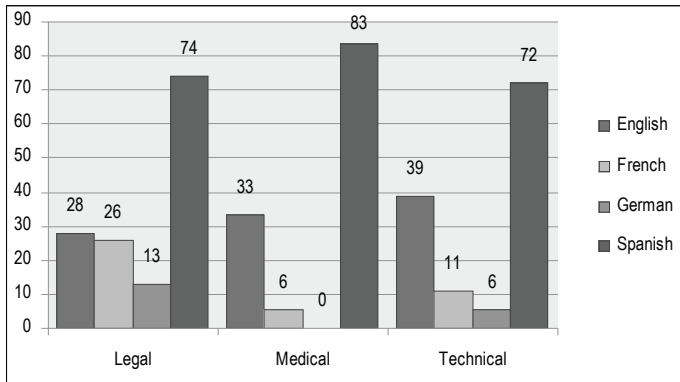


Figure 9. Target languages.

Figure 9 therefore confirms the particular profile of the legal translators with respect to their colleagues. It should also be noted that the importance of German among technical translators decreases somewhat when reverse translation is considered: German is an important language for technical translators, but its relevance is limited to the field of direct translation into Spanish. In fact, the percentage of legal translators working from German is higher. Finally, no medical translator participating in this survey claimed to translate texts from German.

Attitude towards corpora

The final set of questions covered the subjects' attitude toward documentary sources, especially corpora. The first question asked subjects to report the documentary resources they use for their work (Question B9 in Appendix). Table 3 displays the percentages for the three fields (legal, medical and technical), from the most to the least used resource according to total usage (last column).

	Digital/Virtual			Analogue/In person/Non-digital			Total
	Legal	Medical	Tech	Legal	Medical	Tech	
Bilingual dictionaries	90.7	88.9	94.4	81.5	88.9	83.3	527.7
Monolingual dictionaries	90.7	94.4	94.4	74.1	88.9	83.3	525.8
Manuals and conceptual works	42.6	83.3	77.8	50	77.8	66.7	398.2
Terminological databases	75.9	88.9	88.9	18.5	27.8	27.8	327.8
Thesauri	35.2	72.2	66.7	22.2	38.9	33.3	268.5
Corpora or text compilations	75.9	77.8	66.7	18.5	16.7	11.1	266.7
Translator communities	70.4	72.2	88.9	1.9	0.0	5.6	239.0
Expert communities	57.4	88.9	66.7	5.6	0.0	11.1	229.7
Translation memories	48.1	66.7	83.3	9.3	0.0	5.6	213.0

Table 3. Documentary sources.

The results reveal that technical translators are perhaps the most diverse in their use of documentary sources: they tend to mention a greater variety of resources and make greater use of thesauri and translation memories, but they do not use corpora as much as the other groups. In turn, medical translators are the only ones who never consult experts (on the subject matter or professional translators) personally, or use non-digital translation memories, a result which also differentiates them from other groups. Finally, legal translators mentioned manuals and conceptual works and thesauri less frequently, although in this case, the actual percentage may be influenced by the difference in the number of subjects in this group: there were three times as many legal translators (54) as medical (18) or technical translators (18).

Subjects were asked what information they would like to find in the corpora (Question B10 in Appendix). As above, Table 4 orders the categories according to the total sum of percentages.

With regard to hard copy information accessed, medical translators differ from the other two groups in that they place greater importance on the field of expertise, above terminology and phraseology: although the differences

are not large, this type of professional – in contrast to others – might consider the content (field of expertise) to be more significant than linguistic accuracy (terminology and phraseology), which does not mean they do not consider terminology to be important; in fact, proportionally more medical translators claim to search for terminological information than legal or technical translators. Moreover, technical translators seem more concerned about issues related to textual organization and level of formality; this holds for the information consulted both on paper and in digital format. As for the other two groups, medical translators considered grammatical aspects less important, though this feature is only noticeable in the first few columns, i.e. with respect to the information searched through electronic means. In both instances, the answers given by legal translators may be considered standard, since they do not deviate from the tendency.

	Digital/Virtual			Analogue/In person			Total
	Legal	Medical	Tech	Legal	Medical	Tech	
Terminology & phraseology	90.7	94.4	88.9	46.3	55.6	33.3	409.2
Field of expertise	83.3	94.4	77.8	44.4	66.7	27.8	394.4
Grammatical aspects	61.1	44.4	61.1	33.3	38.9	33.3	272.1
Production context	59.3	55.6	66.7	33.3	33.3	22.2	270.4
Textual organization	57.4	61.1	38.9	33.3	27.8	16.7	235.2
Level of formality	55.6	50.0	44.4	35.2	33.3	11.1	229.6

Table 4. Type of information for corpus.

Subjects were then asked to respond to an open question about other works of reference that they considered significant or particularly useful for their work (Question B11 in Appendix). The responses of the technical translators differed from the other two groups in that they cited very few other sources. Why they provided so few responses to this optional question is not clear. The following question concerned the purpose of the terminological consultations subjects made, namely whether they aimed to find the specific term in the target language, or discover its meaning. Three possible answers were provided for each of these options: “never”, “often” and “always”. Figure 10 shows that most subjects chose “often”, except in searches to find the equivalent term in which the answer “always” was chosen by almost 70% of the medical translators.

Generally speaking, the translators who responded to the survey acknowledge the importance of searching for the appropriate term, which might be taken to indicate that they are concerned about the accuracy of

their writing. On the other hand, they often look up the meaning of the words they translate, but do not consider this task to be as paramount as that of the production stage. As for the differences between groups, medical translators show a greater concern for the search terms in the production stage, which may be due to the lack of standardization in this area, or to the extent to which translators take responsibility for their work, a factor which is in turn motivated by their greater experience (see Figure 4). In contrast, legal translators seem to consider the stages of production and understanding as equally important, whereas a higher percentage technical translators responded with the “always” option to the question about terminological searches to find the equivalent term. This may indicate a greater concern for terminology among this group.

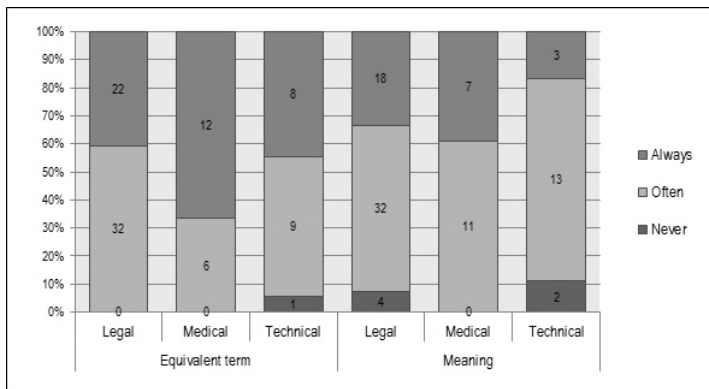


Figure 10. Reason for terminological searches.

The next question asked what kind of information the subjects found lacking in the corpora they were familiar with. What is most striking is that although it was an open question, there was widespread agreement among the three groups: all mention the lack of contextual information in particular. It must be said, however, that there are significant differences between the groups; for example, legal translators seem more content with the existing corpora, as indicated by a total of nine (only) positive opinions, which contrasts with the only two positive opinions expressed by technical translators, and with only one from a medical translator.

The final question (B14 in Appendix) in this set was: “Would you find useful a (medical / legal / technical) corpus from which you could extract the information referred to in this questionnaire?” Most answers were positive

in all groups, but the percentage is especially high among the technical translators (100%), compared to that of the medical (94%) and legal (91%) translators.

Conclusions

The data presented above show that, despite their common profession as specialized translators, the three subject groups in the study differ in several respects. Table 5 summarizes the main characteristics of each group for each of the three sets of questions in the survey. The plus and minus signs refer to atypical behaviour by excess (+) or by default (-), respectively, i.e. departing from the average (marked by the subjects' general behaviour) as significantly higher or lower.

Table 5 enables us to sketch a complete profile of the average translator for all groups included in this pilot experiment. Given the low number of responses, it goes without saying that these results are only an initial approach, which needs to be confirmed through larger studies.¹¹ Future studies should also take account of possible misinterpretations that subjects may have made in some of the questions (especially those related to the number of fields and genres translated) in order to avoid ambiguity in the design of new surveys and to better reflect the translators' views and experiences. However despite its drawbacks, the methodology of the study allows it to be reproduced (because the instrument used, i.e. the survey, is made public), it is measurable (the information has measurable parameters), and it is applicable and scientifically economic (it is designed to involve minimum effort for respondents); in short, it broadly respects the most significant criteria for empirical research (Neunzig, 1999; Orozco, 2001).

Our analysis may be taken as inspiration for future studies: it throws some light on the differences, sometimes slight, among translators specialized in different fields. First, legal translators excel in language skills, but are also noted for their limited experience in both translation and in issues relating to the translations that they carry out. They usually work directly for individual clients, and are more likely to translate from Spanish into other languages. In general, they tend to be more satisfied with the existing corpora and do not make great use of certain documentary tools, such as manuals or thesauri and conceptual works.

Second, medical translators are characterized by their greater experience, which generally translates into a more advanced stage of expertise. They are

well versed in terminology (they are more likely to look for the right word), tend to work for private companies, hardly ever translate into German and neither make use of translation memories nor personally consult experts in the field.

		Legal	Medical	Technical
Personal profile	Men			-
	Age, average		+	
	Age, maximum			-
	Master's degree		+	
	Translation studies	+		
	Combined studies	-	+	
	Work experience	-	+	
	Company management	-		
	Interpreting	+		
	Language teaching	+		
	Terminologist		+	
Professional background	Fields, number		+	-
	Genres, number	+	-	
	Individuals	+		
	Private companies		+	
	Translation agencies			+
	SL, Spanish	+		
	SL, German			+
	SL, French	+		
	TL, German		-	
	TL, French	+		
Corpora	Thesauri	-		+
	Translation memories		-	+
	Corpora			-
	Resources, variety			+
	Experts, in person		-	
	Translators, in person		-	
	Manuals	-		
	Textual organization			-
	Level of formality			-
	Extra sources			-
	Equivalent term		+	
	Corpora, happy with	+		
Corpora, usefulness			+	

Table 5. Outstanding aspects.

Finally, the average technical translator is most often a young woman working for translation agencies and sometimes translating from German. She is more clear than her colleagues about the usefulness of corpora (although she does not use them much, perhaps because they are still considered “imperfect”) and is not as concerned about the level of formality and organization of the documents she must translate. She is relatively expert in the use of documentation tools, and stands out for the variety of resources she uses, *inter alia*, thesauri and translation memories.

At this point, the initially established hypothesis (see the section on Materials and methods) might be confirmed. Indeed, data from our survey show that the differences in translators' background, professional experience and the topic of their translations affect their socio-professional profile, and their attitudes towards information resources, including corpora. But, regardless of their field, most respondents agree that one of the drawbacks of existing corpora is the lack of contextual information. Over 90% agree that an electronic corpus combining formal, terminological, lexical, macrostructural, conceptual and contextual aspects would be very useful.

In conclusion, the 3.0 management software that the GENTT research group is currently developing might therefore provide a welcome response to the expectations of professional translators working in different areas of expertise.

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NOTES

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² See Olabuénaga Ruiz (2007) for a review of the debate between quantitative and qualitative methods of research.

³ In fact, Montero and León (2002: 505) define it as a “descriptive study with survey”.

⁴ See Alaminos and Castejón (2006) for a review of the problems that the theory of probabilistic sampling can pose.

⁵ See also García-Izquierdo (Forthcoming).

⁶ See URL: <http://www.tradmed.uji.es/seccio.php?idseccio=3> for more information.

⁷ See URL: <http://www.asetrad.org/index.asp?op=25> for more information.

⁸ Although educational systems have different structures in different countries, here the term “undergraduate degree” refers to the Spanish *diplomatura* (3 years); “bachelor’s degree” is understood as an operative translation of *licenciatura* (4-5 years) and a master’s degree is studied after an undergraduate or bachelors’ degree.

⁹ We should also consider the possibility that they did not fully understand the difference between area and genre.

¹⁰ Technical translators were asked about “service companies” rather than “translation agencies”, about “industrial companies” rather than simply “companies”, and the category of “hospitals” was not included.

¹¹ In any event, empirical studies in translation, not only in Spain, but also in other countries, rarely have truly representative samples (Orozco & Hurtado, 2002), probably due to the difficulty of finding subjects willing to participate in such research.

Appendix: Sample survey for the legal profession

El grupo GENTT (Géneros Textuales para la Traducción, <http://www.gentt.uji.es>), del Departamento de Traducción y Comunicación de la Universitat Jaume I de Castellón de la Plana (España), desarrolla su actividad investigadora en el ámbito de la comunicación especializada, con especial énfasis en su vertiente socio-profesional.

Desde el año 2000, trabajamos en la creación de un corpus especializado (médico, jurídico y técnico) multilingüe, con la intención de construir una herramienta de trabajo dinámica e integradora, un *Sistema de gestión de conocimientos* que resulte útil para profesionales de los ámbitos implicados, traductores y redactores de textos de especialidad.

En la actual fase de la investigación, pues, nos proponemos analizar las demandas documentales de los profesionales de la traducción y la redacción especializadas, con la finalidad de incorporar las necesidades detectadas al programa de gestión de corpus GENTT. Y para ello es fundamental la participación y la ayuda de estos.

Por tanto, solicitamos su colaboración, en calidad de experto, mediante la cumplimentación de esta encuesta. Esta se puede responder en 5 minutos, pues la mayoría de preguntas son de opción múltiple. Asimismo, le pedimos que responda con total sinceridad, ya que la información introducida será tratada de forma anónima y confidencial.

La fecha límite para cumplimentar la encuesta será el jueves, 17 de diciembre de 2009.

Agradecemos de antemano su colaboración y quedamos a su disposición para cualquier duda o sugerencia.

Isabel García Izquierdo
Coordinadora de GENTT

A) TRADUCCIÓN E INTERPRETACIÓN JURÍDICO-ADMINISTRATIVAS (I)

Ejercicio de la traducción y la interpretación en el ámbito jurídico-administrativo

1 Ámbitos jurídico-administrativos que ha traducido (o interpretado) en los últimos 6 meses *

Por favor, escriba su(s) respuesta(s) aquí:

- Derecho civil
- Derecho mercantil
- Derecho inmobiliario
- Derecho administrativo
- Derecho prop. industrial
- Derecho laboral
- Derecho medio ambiente
- Derecho médico
- Otros

Indique el porcentaje de volumen de trabajo en cada caso

2 Otros ámbitos jurídico-administrativos que ha traducido (o interpretado) en los últimos 6 meses

Por favor, escriba su respuesta aquí:

3 Géneros jurídico-administrativos que traduce (o interpreta) con más frecuencia*

Por favor, escriba su(s) respuesta(s) aquí:

- Testamentos
- Contratos
- Poderes
- Documentos societarios
- Documentos procesales
- Escrituras de compraventa
- Hipotecas
- Legislación
- Documentos académicos
- Documentos Registro Civil

Documentos fiscales
 Textos financieros
 Otros

Indique el porcentaje de volumen de trabajo en cada caso

4 Otros géneros jurídico-administrativos que traduce (o interpreta) con más frecuencia

Por favor, escriba su respuesta aquí:

5 Clientes para los que traduce (o interpreta) temas jurídico-administrativos *

Por favor, marque las opciones que correspondan:

- Particulares
 Funcionarios
 Hospitales
 Organismos oficiales
 Empresas
 Revistas
 Editoriales
 Agencias de traducción

Otro:

6 Lenguas DE las que ha traducido (o interpretado) temas jurídico-administrativos en los últimos 6 meses *

Por favor, escriba su(s) respuesta(s) aquí:

Alemán
 Árabe
 Castellano
 Catalán/Valenciano
 Francés
 Inglés
 Italiano
 Portugués
 Rumano
 Otro

Indique el porcentaje de volumen de trabajo en cada lengua

7 Lenguas A las que ha traducido (o interpretado) temas jurídico-administrativos en los últimos 6 meses *

Por favor, escriba su(s) respuesta(s) aquí:

Alemán
 Árabe
 Castellano
 Catalán/Valenciano
 Francés
 Inglés
 Italiano
 Portugués
 Rumano
 Otro

Indique el porcentaje de volumen de trabajo en cada lengua

8 Textos con temática jurídico-administrativa que traduce *

Por favor, escriba su respuesta aquí:

Indique el porcentaje que suponen respecto de su volumen total de traducciones

B) TRADUCCIÓN E INTERPRETACIÓN JURÍDICO-ADMINISTRATIVAS (II)

Documentación, terminología y utilización de corpus

9 Recursos de consulta documental (terminológica y no terminológica) que utiliza para traducir (o interpretar) temas jurídico-administrativos *

Por favor, seleccione la respuesta apropiada para cada concepto:

	electrónicos		en papel	
	Sí	No	Sí	No
Corpus o compilaciones de textos generales o específicos (por ej. CREA, corpus personales, IATE, Westlaw España, vLex, LexisNexis, CELEX, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diccionarios monolingües	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diccionarios bilingües	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tesauros	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Memorias de traducción	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Manuales y obras conceptuales	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bases de datos terminológicas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Respuestas en comunidades virtuales de traductores o lingüistas (Proz, Kudoz, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Respuestas en comunidades virtuales de expertos en la materia (como foros de profesionales del Derecho, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Conteste "Sí" o "No" para cada una de las opciones (corpus o compilaciones de textos, diccionarios, etc.) y para cada columna ("electrónicos"/"en papel")

10 En caso de utilizar compilaciones de textos (corpus), ¿qué tipo de información, de la siguiente, necesitaría obtener? *

Por favor, seleccione la respuesta apropiada para cada concepto:

	electrónicos		en papel	
	Sí	No	Sí	No
Organización textual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aspectos gramaticales	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Terminología y fraseología	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contexto de producción (situación de comunicación)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nivel de formalidad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ámbito de especialidad o cuestiones temáticas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Conteste "Sí" o "No" para cada una de las opciones (de organización textual, de aspectos gramaticales, etc.) y para cada columna ("electrónicos"/"en papel")

11 Obras de consulta destacables o de especial utilidad

Por favor, escriba su respuesta aquí:

12 Si las consultas que realiza son terminológicas, lo hace para: *

Por favor, seleccione la respuesta apropiada para cada concepto:

	Siempre	A menudo	Nunca
Encontrar un término equivalente en la lengua a la que traduce	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Saber su significado	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13 ¿Qué tipo de información echa de menos en las compilaciones de textos (corpus) electrónicas de ámbito jurídico-administrativo que conoce? *

Por favor, escriba su respuesta aquí:

14 ¿Le resultaría útil un corpus electrónico (sobre temas jurídico-administrativos) del que poder extraer toda la información específica señalada en preguntas anteriores? *

Por favor seleccione sólo una de las siguientes opciones:

- Sí
 No

C) SITUACIÓN PROFESIONAL

Perfil personal y profesional

15 Edad *

Por favor, escriba su respuesta aquí:

16 Género

17 Formación recibida *

Por favor, seleccione la respuesta apropiada para cada concepto:

	Diplomatura	Licenciatura	Máster	Ninguno
Traducción e Interpretación (y afines)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Filología (y afines)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economía (y afines)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Derecho (y afines)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Otro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18 Años de ejercicio como traductor o intérprete *

Por favor, escriba su respuesta aquí:

19 Tipo de trabajo desempeñado en los últimos 6 meses *

Por favor, escriba su(s) respuesta(s) aquí:

- Traductor
- Intérprete
- Gestor de empresa
- Corrector o revisor
- Redactor
- Director de proyectos
- Terminólogo
- Documentalista

Formador de traductores

Profesor de idiomas

Otro (abogado, etc.)

Indique el porcentaje en cada caso, que en total ha de sumar 100%