

Professional Translators' Attitudes towards MT and AI Translation Tools in Romania

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Abstract: The past few years have seen unprecedented development in machine translation (MT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). This has led to fundamental changes in the profession of translation and in the processes carried out by human translators. According to a recent study conducted on a publicly available generative AI system, translation and interpreting are the occupations with the highest AI applicability score (Tomlinson et al. 2025), meaning that these professions are the most likely to be assisted or performed by Artificial Intelligence. Thus, translators and interpreters are faced with an ongoing radical transformation of the industry and their workflow. Our paper discusses how professional translators working in the Romanian translation market are trying to make sense of these changes in terms of job security and the future of the profession. We present and analyse the results of an online questionnaire that aimed to explore the attitudes of translators regarding computer-assisted translation (CAT), MT and AI-generated translation. We point out that although most of our respondents claimed to use new technologies, they expressed concerns regarding the future of the profession and the changing role of human translators.

Keywords: machine translation, attitudes, new technologies, Romanian translation market, resilience

1. Introduction

Previous studies have shown that the idea of machine translation has its intellectual roots in the 17th-century search for a universal language (Schwartz 2018). Its recent development has resulted in a particularly close human-machine partnership, and translators are becoming increasingly aware of the impact new technologies have on their job, especially since the advent of Neural Machine Translation (NMT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). As a result, there is a growing body of research within translation and translator studies discussing how such new technologies may impact the profession (Alonso and Nunes Vieira 2020), to what extent these innovations

are accepted and used by language service providers (Nzuanke and Chinaka 2018), as well as translators' and translator trainers' attitudes towards automation (Saduov et al. 2025). For example, Nunes Vieira's (2020) analysis of blog and forum posts between 2010 and 2017 addresses the so-called "automation anxiety discourses" that stem from perceiving machine translation as a threat. The author points out that the criticism levelled by contributing translators was mostly aimed at the (then-current) limitations of the new technologies, but also at the resulting business practices. Pym and Torres-Simón (2021) explore discourses on automation by analysing the various positions taken by actors in the translation profession.

Several studies have been carried out in international contexts, focusing on the impact of new technologies on language, language use and language services. For example, the European Language Industry Survey, launched in 2013 by EUATC (the European Union of Associations of Translation Companies), "covers market trends, expectations and concerns, challenges and obstacles, as well as changes in business practices" (ELIS 2026), including the role of and attitudes towards technology in the industry as a whole. Seresi et al.'s 2022 survey among Language in the Human-Machine Era COST-action members analysed their habits and attitudes regarding the use of Machine Translation, while the Human in the Translation Loop (HITTL) study conducted with the participation of translators working for the European Commission's Directorate General for Translation explored aspects of workflow and attitudes in the context of automation (Eszenyi 2023; Eszenyi and Robin 2024).

Drawing on our previous work on the topic (see Fazakas and Barabás 2024), we focus on how translators interpret and understand the way technology is affecting their profession and its future, and how they try to navigate the ensuing challenges. We also explore the "discourses of resilience" they formulate in connection with this transformation. Our study presents the responses of professional translators working in the Romanian translation market to an online questionnaire administered in January and February 2025.

2. Becoming and working as a translator in Romania

Before discussing our findings, we outline some relevant aspects of the Romanian translation market and the process of becoming a translator in Romania, from both the legal and translator training perspectives.

According to Law no. 76/2016, which governs the licensing and authorisation procedures for translators, anyone with a high school diploma is eligible to take a translation exam organised by the Ministry of Culture of Romania in several domains, including law, arts, chemistry, philosophy, informatics and mathematics, economics, literature, medicine and pharmaceuticals, agriculture, history, and technical sciences (FAQ Examen Traducatori 2021). Upon successful completion of the exam, candi-

dates may start working as specialised translators after choosing a legal form (limited liability company, micro-enterprise or self-employed) (Vulpoi 2025). Only those who pass the exam in the field of legal translation may apply for a license from the Romanian Ministry of Justice and become authorised (or sworn) translators, providing translation and interpreting services for all legal institutions, including the courts. It is important to mention that the professions of translation and interpreting are not differentiated in the Classification of Occupations in Romania: those who receive any type of certification in translation will also be able to offer interpreting services (Classification of Occupations in Romania 2022).

The database of authorised Romanian translators and interpreters is owned and maintained by the Ministry of Justice of Romania. The activity of sworn translators is defined by law; for example, Law no. 36/1995 governs the profession of notary public. The law applicable to authorised or sworn translators—Law no. 178/1997 (as amended by Law no. 281/2004 and Law no. 76/2016)—regulates how they can obtain their licence, as well as their fees when translating for public authorities.

Romania's only official language is Romanian, and all authorised translators are required to work to and from Romanian; nevertheless, there is a significant Hungarian ethnic minority of around one million people who live in the north-western region of Transylvania and whose mother tongue is Hungarian (National Institute of Statistics Results 2023).¹ As a result, the multiethnic composition of the country's population is also reflected in the translation market.

In Romania, translators and interpreters usually perform their work as a secondary activity rather than as their main occupation. Only a few organisations and institutions employ full-time official translators and community interpreters. Moreover, even interpreters and translators who work in the courts do so on a contractual basis. The same is true for local administrative institutions, which must provide interpreting during local council meetings into the language of a national minority, according to the Act on Public Administration of Romania (Law no. 215/2001).

As a result, there are three important categories of actors on the Romanian translation market. The largest group is that of freelance translators; translation companies represent the second significant segment, while the least common form of activity among translators and interpreters in Romania is in-house work (Cobliş 2008: 5). This is supported by the data available on the website of the Romanian Ministry of Justice and in the register of Romanian companies. These show that most translators and interpreters in Romania currently work as freelance translators who have obtained their license from the Ministry of Justice (see European Commission. n.d.). There are also companies that are registered as small and medium-sized companies with translation and interpreting as their main activity (Lista Firme 2025).

¹ According to the National Institute of Statistics, Romania's total population was 19,053,815 in 2021. 15,153,198 individuals stated that their mother tongue was Romanian, while 1,038,806 indicated Hungarian as their mother tongue.

As far as translator and interpreter training is concerned, according to the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (Evaluari Licenta 2026; Evaluari Master 2026), 15 universities provide translation and interpreting training programmes. The only Romanian higher education institution offering translator and interpreting training in Hungarian is the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania. The legal framework allows for two types of study programmes at BA level: one is the applied foreign languages programme (*limbi moderne aplicate* in Romanian), and the other is the translation and interpreting programme (*traducere și interpretare* in Romanian). While translation and interpreting programmes include specific subjects related to general and specialised translation (e.g. computer-assisted translation, terminology, consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting), in the case of applied foreign languages programmes, translation subjects are included but are less specialised or less prominent. Also, a much greater emphasis is placed on foreign languages, communication and practical applications (e.g. computer science, economics, etc.) (Standarde Specifice 2024).

3. Methods and data

Our study aimed to explore the attitudes of translators working in Romania towards new technologies in the translation industry, more specifically, towards translation memory-based computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, machine translation and AI-based translation. The target group consisted of professional translators whose working languages include Romanian and/or Hungarian. We devised and administered an online questionnaire consisting of 29 questions, including closed-ended, open-ended, multiple choice and rating questions, allowing for both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of the data. In developing the section that investigates translators' attitudes, we drew on the methodology and question types from the above-mentioned HITTL project (Eszenyi 2023; Eszenyi and Robin 2024).

The questionnaire was distributed using the snowball sampling method. To ensure anonymity, respondents were not requested to provide any personally identifiable information. The questions and responses were formulated in English, and the questionnaire was filled in by a total of 43 respondents. The survey was not intended to be representative; we aimed to outline tendencies and trends that could serve as a starting point for large-scale research on the topic. Due to space restrictions, we only analyse the data that highlight our respondents' attitudes towards and acceptance of new technologies. When discussing the responses given to the open-ended questions, we quote them verbatim, without any editing or proofreading; they may therefore contain typos or other types of errors.

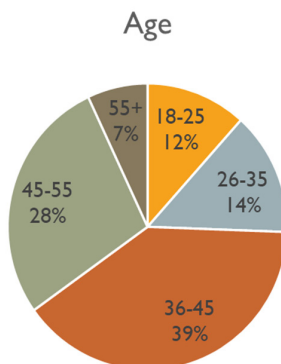
4. Analysis

4.1. General data

The first set of questions was designed to explore the sociodemographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, place of residence, mother tongue, working languages, training, job profile and professional experience. We present our detailed findings below.

39.5% of the participants in the survey ($n = 17$) belong to the 36-45 age group, 27.9% ($n = 12$) to 45-55, 14% ($n = 6$) to 26-35, 11.6% ($n = 5$) to 18-25, and only 7% ($n = 3$) were above 55 (see Figure 1). This shows that young adults working in the industry are underrepresented, but so too is the older generation of translators.

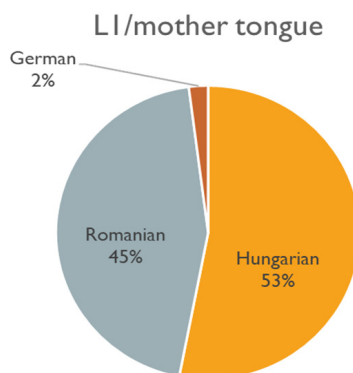
Figure 1
The age of the respondents



76.7% ($n = 33$) of the participants identified as female, 18.6% ($n = 8$) as male, while two respondents (4.7%) preferred not to say. All respondents reside in Romania, and in terms of place of residence, 58.1% ($n = 25$) chose the category of large town, 20.9% ($n = 9$) that of small town, 16.3% ($n = 7$) the capital city, while only two participants indicated that they lived in a rural area.

The question referring to the participants' L1 (native language or mother tongue, see Figure 2) allowed the respondents to select more than one option, and several of them did. 26 (60.5%) chose Hungarian, 22 (51.2%) Romanian, and one (2.3%) chose German. Five participants selected both Romanian and Hungarian as their L1s, and one participant chose both Hungarian and German. This may indicate that several respondents see themselves as having two first languages or being highly competent in more than one language.

Figure 2
Mother tongue of the respondents



In terms of working languages, almost all participants (95.3%, $n = 41$) indicated Romanian, which—as stated above—is the country’s official language, and which all certified translators are required to work from and into. The second most frequent working language was English (86%, $n = 37$), followed by Hungarian (58.1%, $n = 25$), German (25.6%, $n = 11$), French (18.6%, $n = 8$), Italian (16.3%, $n = 7$) and Spanish (9.3%, $n = 4$).

4.2. Training and job profile

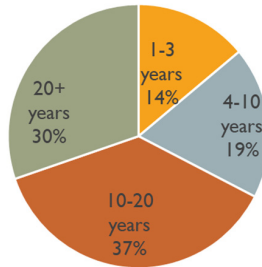
All participants reported that they possessed some type of degree in higher education: almost half of the respondents (48.8%, $n = 21$) had an MA/MSc, 15 (34.9%) had a BA/BSc, and seven (16.3%) a PhD. Moreover, 76.7% ($n = 33$) indicated that they had some type of professional training in translation or interpreting, with 10 (23.3%) participants stating that they did not. When asked about the type of training they received, the respondents mentioned BA programmes (18 respondents) and MA programmes (14 respondents) in translation or interpreting, certification courses and online training programmes (5 each), but also postgraduate programmes (1) or even courses focusing on translation within other BA programmes (1).

When asked about their job profile, an overwhelming majority—a total of 88.4% ($n = 38$)—of the participants stated that they worked as freelancers, with 19 (44.2%) as full-time and 19 (44.2%) as part-time freelancers. Only five respondents indicated that they work as in-house translators or interpreters, of which only two (4.7%) work as full-time in-house employees. This is in line with the above-discussed dynamics of the Romanian language service market.

In terms of experience (see Figure 3), 37.2% ($n = 16$) have been working as professional translators or interpreters for 10-20 years, 30.2% ($n = 13$) for more than 20 years, 18.6% ($n = 8$) for 4-10 years and 14% ($n = 6$) for 1-4 years. This indicates

that most of our respondents have been on the Romanian translation market for an extensive period of time, and as such, they have experienced the transformations that have defined the past couple of decades.

Figure 3
Professional experience of the respondents
Experience



The respondents' domains of expertise include working with specialised texts (93%, $n = 40$), literary texts (18.6%, $n = 8$), audiovisual translation (7%, $n = 3$), but also conference interpreting (23.3%, $n = 10$), courtroom interpreting (20.9%, $n = 9$) and community interpreting (9.3%, $n = 4$). When asked about the types of specialised texts they work with, the participants mentioned legal, administrative documents (74.4%, $n = 32$), technical texts (48.8%, $n = 21$), medical/health care documents (34.9%, $n = 15$), media and advertising texts (32.6%, $n = 14$), financial documents (27.9%, $n = 12$), but also patents and texts related to the food industry. This highlights another significant aspect of the Romanian translation market: the fact that just three respondents chose only one type of specialised text when describing their work demonstrates that there is little room for specialisation, and translators need to work with a wide variety of documents if they want to make a living.

4.3. Use of CAT tools, MT and AI

When asked whether they had received any type of formal training in CAT tools or MT (as part of or outside their university or postgraduate studies), 65.1% ($n = 28$) of the respondents stated that they had not, while 34.9% ($n = 15$) reported that they had. We can see that although 33 of the participants studied translation and interpreting in some form, only 15 (less than half) were formally taught to use the new technologies. If we cross-reference this data with the professional experience of the respondents, we can see that the ones with less than 10 years' experience ($n = 8$) are overrepresented in this group, meaning that the translators who participated in translation training in the past decade are much more likely to have received some

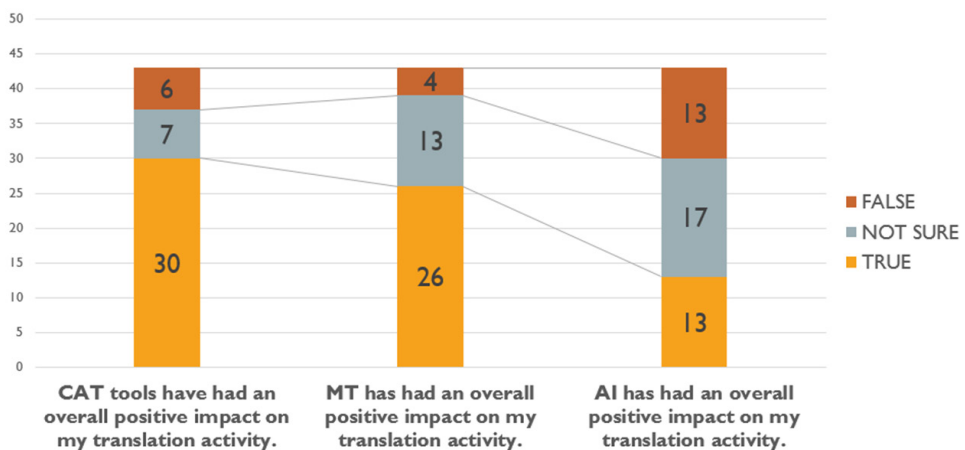
type of education in CAT tools and MT as opposed to those who completed their studies before that time.

Nevertheless, 60.5% ($n = 26$) reported using CAT tools (RWS Trados Studio, memoQ, etc.) in their work, while 39.5% ($n = 17$) reported not using them. Machine Translation platforms (Google Translate, DeepL, etc.) were much more popular: 88.4% ($n = 38$) stated that they used them, with only five participants (11.6%) claiming the opposite. In terms of AI (ChatGPT, DeepSeek, etc.), 67.4% ($n = 29$) reported that they do not use them, and 32.6% ($n = 14$) that they do. Almost all respondents (95.3%, $n = 41$) reported that they use online dictionaries, databases and parallel corpora in their work.

4.4. Perceived impact of new technologies

Our next set of questions explored the perceived impact of CAT tools, MT and AI on the workflow and on the profession itself. We focused on the overall impact of new technologies and how their role was understood in terms of speed and translation quality by our respondents. We also wanted to investigate whether the participants interpreted such tools as a threat to the occupation.

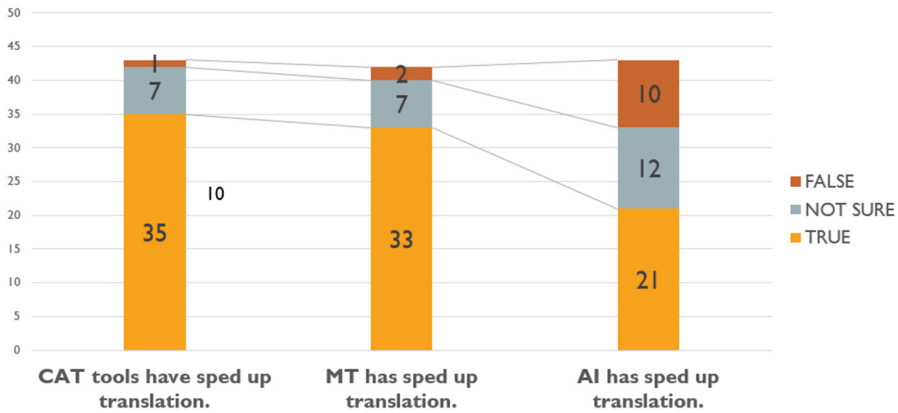
Figure 4
Perceived overall impact



As shown in Figure 4, most of our respondents reported that CAT tools have had an overall positive impact on their work. The same is true for MT, although 13 stated that they were not sure. We can detect a high degree of scepticism regarding the overall impact of AI: 17 respondents reported that they were not sure whether AI has had a positive impact on their translation activity. When cross-referenced this with the subgroup of translators using AI ($n = 14$), nine such respondents agreed with the

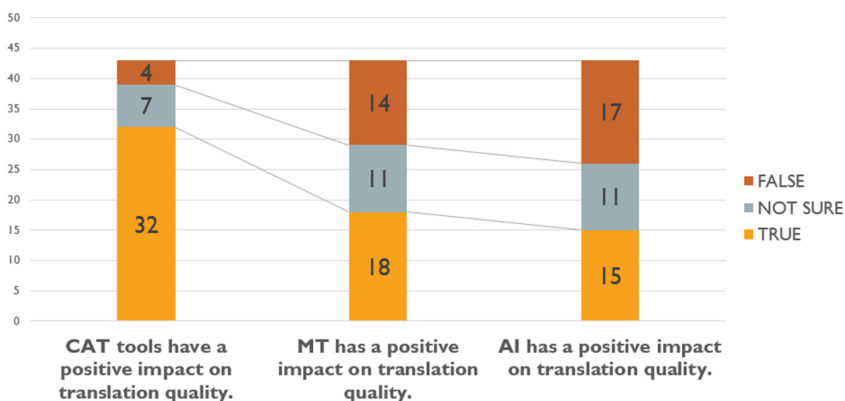
statement, four were not sure, and only one disagreed. This indicates a high degree of caution and uncertainty when it comes to evaluating the usefulness (and trustworthiness) of AI-based translation tools among those who have not tried them, and a much more positive attitude among those who have.

Figure 5
Perceived impact on speed



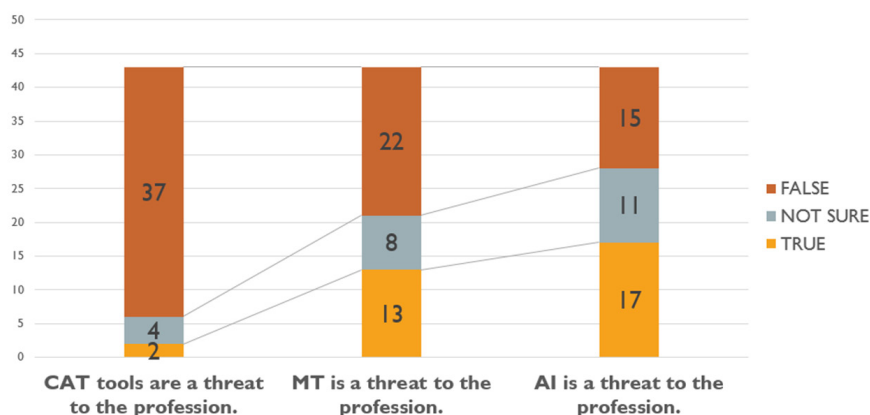
As seen in the data in Figure 5, participants agree that CAT tools and MT have sped up translation. Nevertheless, we see the same trend as above in the case of AI-based translation: less than half of the respondents agree, 12 are not sure about whether such tools speed up the process, and 10 disagree. However, if we look at the respondents who actually use such tools ($n = 14$), 12 state that AI has sped up translation (one participant disagreed and one was not sure). Again, we can detect a much more negative attitude towards AI-based tools among those who do not use them.

Figure 6
Perceived impact on translation quality



When it comes to translation quality, the responses are much more varied: CAT tools are seen as the most useful in terms of quality, while MT and AI are much more controversial. When comparing the data with the group of translators not using AI ($n = 29$), we see that the percentage of those who disagree with the statement *AI has a positive impact on translation quality* is much higher (44.82%) than in the case of the group which does (14.28%). This is in line with the above results: those who do not work with AI-based tools tend to reject them and downplay their usefulness.

Figure 7
Perceived threat to the profession



When it comes to new technologies threatening the profession, and consequently, the livelihoods of translators, AI-based tools are seen as the most dangerous. It must be mentioned that 13 of the 17 respondents who agreed with the statement *AI is a threat to the profession* come from the group that reported not using such tools. It is also noteworthy that six of those who do use them ($n = 14$) responded that they were not sure whether AI was a threat or not. Thus, it can be stated that those who do not use AI tools are more inclined to view them as a danger to the future of the occupation.

4.5. Attitudes towards new technologies

As mentioned above, in exploring the respondents' attitudes towards new technologies, we drew on the methodology and questions of the HITTL survey conducted by Robin and colleagues in 2023 (Eszenyi 2023: 104–105; Eszenyi and Robin 2024). In our case, the participants were asked to indicate which of the 11 statements listed in the questionnaire they agreed with; thus, several answers were possible. Table 1 summarises the results, from the most agreed-with to the least agreed-with statements.

Table 1
Attitude statements including the number and percentage of respondents
who agreed with them

STATEMENT	No.	%
MT/AI-based translation without human assistance is not reliable.	40	93%
MT/AI has made translation easier overall.	27	62.8%
Human translators always produce higher quality translations than MT/AI.	25	58.1%
MTPE requires a higher degree of concentration than translation.	23	53.5%
There is a higher probability of errors in texts translated by MT/AI.	22	51.2%
MT/AI-based translation has a negative impact on the prestige of the profession.	20	46.5%
MT/AI results in less creativity in the translation process.	19	44.2%
MTPE is difficult.	14	32.6%
I appreciate that MT/AI does most of the work for me.	11	25.6%
MT/AI will replace human translators.	10	23.3%
MT/AI-based translations are always reliable.	1	2.3%

The fact that almost all respondents agreed with the statement *MT/AI-based translation without human assistance is not reliable* may be the direct result of the importance translators ascribe to their own work. They consider that MT and AI-based translation in particular may not be reliable without human intervention, as technology alone cannot guarantee professionally and culturally adequate texts. This explanation is underlined and supported by the majority of respondents agreeing with the statement *Human translators always produce higher quality translations than MT/AI* (58.1%).

Almost half of the respondents (46.5) believe that MT and AI-based translation has a negative impact on the prestige of the profession: this can be interpreted as moderate anxiety among translators regarding their status in society. As 44.2% of the respondents agree with the statement *MT/AI results in less creativity in the translation process*, we can conclude that in their opinion, creativity is an inherent part of human translation.

When it comes to post-editing, which can also be seen as the stage in which humans are still required, the majority of our respondents (53.5%) agree that it requires a higher degree of concentration than translation, while only 32.6% say that it is a difficult process. This suggests that most of the respondents consider post-editing as a natural part of translation.

4.6. Perceived limitations of MT and AI

An important aspect of translators' understanding of their changing profession and workflow is the texts translators deem not suitable or not appropriate to be translated using MT/AI. In this section, we analyse the responses given to the open-ended question *What types of texts should never be translated using MT/AI? Why?* Only one participant responded with "I don't know" (R34); all the others expressed a strong opinion on this topic (even the ones who reported never using such tools).

Four participants believe there should be no limitations to what types of texts can be translated by MT or AI: "In terms of genres, I do not think that there are texts in the case of which we should exclude the use of MT and AI (although the degrees to which we rely on them may vary), similarly to how there are no texts in the case of which we should exclude human supervision" (R2). They stress the importance of the translator's ability to decide whether using such tools is beneficial to that particular project. In their opinion, the client's specific requirements should always be taken into consideration, and post-editing needs to be used in every case: "Any text could potentially be translated by a machine as long as such translation is followed by a thorough and detailed MTPE by a human translator" (R35).

Upon examining the answers of the respondents who believe that there should be limitations to what can be translated using MT or AI, four text types were the most frequently mentioned: texts including sensitive data, legal texts, medical documentation and literary texts. In the case of legal texts and medical documentation, a recurring argument is the aspect of accuracy and precision, as seen in the following answer/opinion: "Legal texts require absolute precision in language. Even a slight misinterpretation can lead to serious legal consequences. AI can struggle with nuances and specific legal terminology, which might result in errors or misinterpretations that could affect the validity of contracts, agreements, or regulations" (R38). Several participants mentioned the "higher stakes" that legal and medical translations entail in terms of personal significance and quality assurance: "Literary, medical, legal. The last two have too significant impact on people's lives, thus it is too dangerous to let them in the 'hands' of MT/AI without the 'eye' of a human translator" (R16). Medical documentation also raises the issue of data protection and privacy, and so do other texts containing personal information: "First of all, I think that documents containing sensitive data should be treated accordingly, and as long as these platforms cannot guarantee the safety of the uploaded content, we should avoid their use in such cases" (R2).

The most frequently mentioned text type that the respondents believe should never be translated with MT or AI are literary texts: "Literature. There is no way a machine will ever be able to render the hidden meaning and the beauty of a literary work" (R18). Some type of reference to literary texts appears in 25 of the 43 responses. The arguments include the issue of creativity and style ("The ambiguous

and playful nature of language are both the most prominent in literary texts. They require careful construction and creativity, which should never be entirely entrusted on machines and AIs,” R25), as well as algorithms not being able to interpret the cultural context (“Literary texts. Because MT/AI does not have the cultural context,” R37).

These responses also help us pinpoint the aspects in which human translators will always outperform machine translation/AI: in our respondents’ opinion, humans are the ones with the necessary creativity, cultural/historical knowledge and stylistic abilities to translate literary texts. They are the ones who can ensure the accuracy and quality of specialised translations, and the ones who can responsibly handle personal information or sensitive data.

4.7. On the future of the profession

The last open-ended question that we analyse in this study addresses our participants’ views on how MT and AI will shape the future of the profession. Responses can be grouped into two broad categories: the vast majority express a mostly negative perception of MT and AI in this respect; there are, however, a few that evaluate the possibilities offered by new technologies positively. We also discuss a series of recurring topics that outline what we call “narratives of resilience.” Resilience is understood here as “the capacity of individuals, cultures and societies to withstand stress or catastrophe” (Cronin 2017: 17), and we focus our analysis on aspects that our respondents refer to as some type of protection or guarantee in terms of job security and social status that is currently threatened by automation.

Those who view the emergence and spread of MT and AI in the translation industry as a positive phenomenon focus on aspects of ease, speed and reliability: “It will make translation easier, and more reliable in the long run” (R43) or “As MT/AI gets more developed, translators’ job will speed up and it will become mainly post-editing” (R37). It is important to point out that these answers describe a future where technology does not replace human translators: they focus on a close human-machine interaction that can be beneficial for professionals and clients alike: “If we learn how to take advantage of this technology, it could/should make our life easier” (R7).

Some of the respondents tend to downplay the significance or immediacy of the risks such technologies pose to the future of the profession: “it is just another tool, the profession will be fine” (R6); “It will bring some changes, and then the profession will adapt” (R35); “Translator work will be replaced by MT and AI, sure, but this will not happen overnight” (R18). Others simply refuse to even consider the possibility of new technologies taking over their jobs: “I’ve heard many times how AI is going to take our places in the work field. I don’t think it is true. However, I think that many companies are using AI nowadays, because it is easier and cheaper. You need both (i.e., humans and computers) to make sure that a translation/interpretation is good” (R23).

Those who see these developments more pessimistically worry that translators will become mere proofreaders and that translation services will become so cheap that the economic sustainability of the profession will be threatened: “It will slowly make us redundant because clients satisfy with lower quality for price concerns” (R20); “The problem is not AI, the problem is someone selling AI to your boss/client” (R10). Some respondents fear that clients will sacrifice quality in favour of cheaper, automatically generated translations: “More and more clients will send a MT/AI translation to professionals and ask for a review offer instead of the full translation price” (R31). Another recurring topic was the issue of data protection and professional ethics. Several respondents touched upon the risks such technologies pose: “If all the translators were aware of the ethical dangers of these technologies, they could never threaten our professions. But younger colleagues consider that these tools help them earn more money with less work and effort” (R39).

The narratives of resilience (identified in 19 of the 43 responses) are based on aspects interpreted as providing some type of job security as opposed to a future where all translations are performed by machines, and humans are no longer needed in the process. One recurring theme is that of the “return to the professional”: several respondents predict that clients and the general public will in the future become disillusioned with the performance of new technologies. They believe that as a result of extensive negative experiences relating to inconsistencies and errors of computer-based systems, clients will once again acknowledge the value of human translators and return to working with them:

MT and AI will obviously shape the future of the profession. In the very near future many clients will consider that they do not need any more professional translators, but as soon as they experience that MT and AI generated translations without human PE may have inconsistencies and, in some cases, even errors, they will once again demand our services (R28).

It is obvious that the demand for translators is radically decreasing due to these technological advancements. However, relying solely on MT and AI will lead to many errors, and once these will have dramatic consequences, the need for human translators will become more visible even if their tasks will transform (R2).

Another recurring theme that can be connected to resilience is the idea of “natural selection”: the translators who can cope with the new reality, who are willing to learn to use new technologies and who are excellent at what they do, will thrive, while others will not: “There will be a more challenging profession, with translators/interpreters who will have to adjust and to specialize in very precise fields” (R12); “I believe that the translation industry will change fundamentally. Translation will be much more about the post editing of machine and AI translations and only the truly professional translators can still work as translators in the original sense” (R25).

And, finally, several respondents stressed the role and significance of the human factor in these new ecologies:

Instead of seeing MT and AI as replacements for human translators, the future will likely involve more collaborative workflows where AI tools complement human expertise. Translators will work alongside MT, using it as a tool to improve speed and accuracy while ensuring the quality of the final product through human editing. Post-editing will become a key skill for translators, blending machine output with human refinement (R38).

The participants of the study recognise that although tasks and workflows change, there will always be a need for human translators working closely with machines.

5. Conclusions

Our paper explores translators' acceptance of and attitudes towards translation technologies and the future of the profession. Our online questionnaire aimed to provide a comprehensive profile of our respondents, that is, of the language service providers working on the Romanian translation market. One of our most significant findings is that, as opposed to a previous study conducted on the topic of Hungarian professional translators' perceptions of new translation technologies based on their social media comments written in 2017 (Fazakas and Barabás 2024), none of our respondents made any language-specific references. While in the 2017 comments, Hungarian was frequently portrayed as a "small" language that is structurally so different from large languages that it is "safe" from technological advancement (even from the evolution of NMT), this argument does not appear in any of the responses to our 2025 questionnaire. This demonstrates that our participants are aware of the rapidly improving quality of MT/AI-based tools (even in the case of Hungarian), and they tend to stress other aspects when reflecting on the future of the profession. These narratives of resilience include a foreshadowing of a return to the professional translator, the aspect of "natural selection" on the job market, but also the possible roles humans can play in the new translation ecologies defined by the rise of MT and AI.

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Appendix

Professional Translators' Acceptance of MT and AI translation tools

This questionnaire was designed to explore professional translators' attitudes towards and acceptance of Machine Translation and Artificial Intelligence in translation. We focus our research on professional translators with Romanian and/or Hungarian as one of their working languages.

The designers of the questionnaire, Noémi Fazakas and Krisztina Sárosi-Márdirosz, are professional translators/interpreters working at the Translation and interpreting programme of the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania.

The questionnaire is anonymous and takes around 15-20 minutes to fill.

Thank you for your collaboration.

1. Age*

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 45-55
- 55+
-

2. Gender*

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

3. Place of residence*

- Capital city
- Large town
- Small town
- Rural settlement

4. Country of residence*

- Romania
- Hungary
- Other

5. What are your working languages?*

- ☐ Romanian
- ☐ Hungarian
- ☐ English
- ☐ German
- ☐ French
- ☐ Italian
- ☐ Russian
- ☐ Mandarin
- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Pashtu
- ☐ Ukrainian
- ☐ Croatian
- ☐ Slovakian
- ☐ Dutch
- ☐ Danish
- ☐ Finnish
- ☐ Serbian
- ☐ Portuguese
- ☐ Other

6. Which language or languages do you consider your L1 (native language/mother tongue)?*

- ☐ Hungarian
- ☐ Romanian
- ☐ Other

7. Highest level of education*

- Secondary education (high-school)

- BA/BSc diploma
- MA/MSc diploma
- PhD

8. Do you have any professional training in translation/interpreting?*

- Yes
- No

9. What type of professional training did you receive in translation/interpreting?

- ☐ BA-programme
- ☐ MA-programme
- ☐ Postgraduate programme
- ☐ Certification course
- ☐ Online training
- ☐ Other

10. What is your translator/interpreter profile?*

- Full-time freelancer
- Part-time freelancer
- Full-time in-house translator/interpreter
- Part-time in-house translator/interpreter

11. How long have you worked as a professional translator/interpreter?*

- 1-3 years
- 4-10 years
- 10-20 years
- 20+ years

12. What is/are your main domain(s) of expertise?*

- ☐ Specialized texts
- ☐ Literary texts
- ☐ Audiovisual translation
- ☐ Conference interpreting
- ☐ Community interpreting
- ☐ Courtroom interpreting
- ☐ Other: _____

13. What types of specialized texts do you most often work with?

- ☐ legal, administrative
- ☐ medical, health care
- ☐ technical

- ☐ financial
- ☐ media, advertising
- ☐ other: _____

14. Do you use Computer-Assisted Translation tools (CAT tools) in your translation activity (Trados, memoQ, etc.)?*

- Yes
- No

15. Do you use Machine Translation platforms (Google Translate, deepL, etc.) in your translation activity?*

- Yes
- No

16. Do you use AI (ChatGPT, DeepSeek, etc.) in your translation activity?*

- Yes
- No

17. How important is Machine Translation/AI-based translation Post-Editing?*

not important **1 2 3 4 5** very important

18. Why is Machine Translation/AI-based translation Post-Editing important/not important?

19. Do you use online dictionaries, databases, or parallel corpora (Glosbe, Linguee, etc.) in your translation activity?*

- Yes
- No

20. Did you receive any formal training in CAT tools or Machine Translation?*

- Yes
- No

21. Should professional translators disclose using CAT tools to the clients? Why?*

22. Should professional translators disclose using Machine Translation tools to the clients? Why?*

23. Should professional translators disclose using AI to the clients? Why?*

24. Finish the sentence.*

	is ethical	is unethical	does not have an ethical dimension
Using CAT tools in translation...			
Using MT in translation...			
Using AI in translation...			

25. Choose the options you agree with.*

	True	False	I am not sure
CAT tools have had an overall positive impact on my translation activity.			
MT has had an overall positive impact on my translation activity.			
AI has had an overall positive impact on my translation activity.			
CAT tools have sped up translation.			
MT has sped up translation.			
AI has sped up translation.			
CAT tools have a positive impact on translation quality.			
MT has a positive impact on translation quality.			
AI has a positive impact on translation quality.			
CAT tools facilitate terminological consistency.			
MT facilitates terminological consistency.			
AI facilitates terminological consistency.			

26. Choose the statements you agree with.*

- ☐ Machine Translation Post-Editing (MTPE) is difficult.
- ☐ MTPE requires a higher degree of concentration than translation.
- ☐ Machine Translation / AI-based translation without human assistance is not reliable.
- ☐ Machine Translation / AI-based translation negatively impacts the prestige of the profession.
- ☐ There is a higher probability of errors in texts translated by MT/AI.
- ☐ MT/AI have overall made translation easier.
- ☐ Human translators always produce higher quality translations than MT/AI.
- ☐ MT/AI will replace human translators.
- ☐ MT/AI-based translations are always reliable.
- ☐ I appreciate that MT/AI does most of the work for me.
- ☐ MT/AI results in less creativity in the translation process.

27. In your opinion, what types of texts should never be translated using MT/AI? Why?*

28. How do you think MT and AI will shape the future of the profession?*

*Compulsory questions

- Multiple choice questions
- ☐ Checkboxes