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**Master's Dissertation/
Trabajo Fin de Máster**

**THE POTENTIAL OF MACHINE TRANSLATION IN
FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND ITS
PERCEPTION AMONG TRAINERS.**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the perceptions of English language trainers regarding the use of machine translation in the teaching of English as a foreign language. This mixed research methodology is made up of a questionnaire plus an in-depth interview to obtain a general understanding of educators' perspectives. The study aims to uncover the prevailing attitudes, challenges, and insights of English teachers towards the integration of machine translation technology in English language classroom. The results presented here are intended to shed light on the current situation and the level of stigma traditionally attached to machine translation. In this way, this study may serve also as a starting point for teachers so as to engage classroom work and view machine translation as useful tool to enhance the students' communicative competence when used appropriately.

Key words: pedagogical translation, machine translation, trainers' perceptions, English as a foreign language

RESUMEN

Este TFM se centra en las percepciones de los profesores de inglés sobre el uso de la traducción automática en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera. La metodología de investigación es mixta, por lo que consta de una encuesta y una entrevista exhaustiva para comprender de forma general las perspectivas de los educadores. El estudio pretende descubrir las actitudes predominantes, los retos y los puntos de vista de los profesores de inglés respecto a la integración de la traducción automática en el aula de inglés. Los resultados que aquí se presentan pretenden arrojar luz sobre la situación actual y el nivel de estigma que tradicionalmente acompaña a la traducción automática. De este modo, este estudio puede servir también como punto de partida para que los profesores se comprometan con el trabajo en el aula y consideren la traducción automática como una herramienta útil para mejorar la competencia comunicativa de los estudiantes cuando se utiliza de forma adecuada.

Palabras clave: traducción pedagógica, traducción automática, percepción de los profesores, inglés como lengua extranjera

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1. INTRODUCTION

Technology is inevitably in every field of our life. The advent of the technological era and the rapid developments which have brought with it have introduced numerous changes in the way that people exchange information (Tuzcu, 2020). In fact, these dramatic changes have not only affected fields such as business and medicine, but have also changed indelibly the course of education. Thus, when it is appropriately applied in classroom, technology affects how instruction is delivered, how learners access and process information, and how learning process is assessed (Otero et al., 2005 cited in Luke & Britten, 2007).

Having turned our attention to the sphere of education, it must be pointed out that the rise of the Internet and proliferation of computers in schools and home settings has revolutionized the way we interact with languages, and so it has led to a notable increase in the use of technology in foreign and second language instruction (Hubbard & Levy, 2006).

Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) has emerged as a powerful tool, offering diverse opportunities for language students to engage with authentic materials, receive immediate feedback, and practice their language skills. CALL is often understood as an approach to language learning and teaching in which the computer is employed as an assistance to the presentation, reinforcement and assessment of materials to be learned, usually comprising a significant interactive element (Davies, n.d.). In a more succinct and general way, Levy (1997:1) suggests that CALL is "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning". In addition, the field of CALL has been growing rapidly in both size and importance. This success is largely due to the fact that the integration of technology in language learning has proven to be very effective in enhancing learners' motivation, engagement, and overall language proficiency.

Nevertheless, despite the vast potential of technology in language learning, the application of CALL in the classroom does not seem to be very clear, as it turns out that many second-language teachers recognize that they have partial and fragile knowledge in the area of CALL, which generates them anxiety and uncertainty about what and how to teach (Hubbard & Levy, 2006). The same applies to our subject of study, machine translation (MT).

MT is one prominent technological advancement that has shown great potential, so it has gained increasing attention lately. It refers to the automated procedure of translating speech or text from one language to another without human involvement, just using computer

algorithms (Memoq, 2023). However, its use in language classrooms remains limited, given that many teachers express reluctance to incorporate this tool into their teaching practices due to concerns over its impact on language proficiency, the development of translation skills, the potential over-reliance on MT (Lacruz & Jääskeläinen, 2018) and its perception as a way of academic dishonesty (Urlaub & Dessein, 2022), among other reasons.

Therefore, the paradigm in the conception of the use and exploitation of MT in the professional environment does not keep pace with the reality of the language classroom (Vazquez-Calvo & Cassany, 2017). Language learning distances itself from the use of translation and the linguistic resources associated with it despite the fact that teachers are aware that learners employ this variety of resources to complete the tasks proposed in class (Pym et al., 2013).

This dissertation seeks to explore the benefits of MT in learning new languages and to address the underlying reasons behind teacher's unwillingness to use MT in the classroom setting. In order to achieve our goal, this paper first reviews previous literature on the issue. Second, the research methodology carried out is explained. Finally, it provides the results obtained in the study of teachers' attitudes and perceptions of MT and a conclusion to broadly overview our present study. The appendixes containing the questionnaire and the transcript of the personal interview.

1.1. Rationale

The grounds to carry out a study about the potential of MT in language learning and the actual opinions from language trainers is motivated by several reasons. Firstly, it has arisen as a consequence of my academic background, as someone who has been graduated in Translation and Interpreting, I have a high awareness of how MT has evolved and improved over the years and how accurate translations have become. Such is the case that this tool is not limited to the field of translation, but has crossed this barrier and has found an application even in language learning (Centro de Documentación Europea, 2023). In this connection, it should be mentioned that even though my background is in translation, my real vocation is language teaching, this is why I have decided to merge these two fields so that I can transfer all my knowledge into my current and future profession.

From my English teaching experience, I have observed that many learners face difficulties in accessing authentic language resources and they even feel overwhelmed when it comes to learning a new language. Indeed, this occurs not only at basic levels because of the large world that is opened up to them, but also at higher levels. For this reason, more and more students, taking advantage of the rise of technology, resort to it to solve their doubts. On this point, MT has to be highlighted, which is an easily accessible tool that many learners employ frequently and spontaneously (González Pastor, 2021).

Furthermore, the advancements in MT technology have allowed the accuracy of MT to have significantly improved, which makes it a precious instrument for language learning. Thus, language students immediately have at their disposal real-time translations of unfamiliar words and sentences which can be utilized as instant feedback to develop their writing, reading and speaking skills (Niño, 2009) or even for self-correction. The advantages of MT will be discussed later, but it is already clear that it has a direct impact on strengthening communicative competence.

Another reason prompting this work is the fact that in last decades there has been a strong focus on the learning process being directly related to the world around us, so that what is learned has a real application. This entails updating materials and educational practices on a day-to-day basis. In this sense, we cannot reject the use of technology in the classroom, as not only is it part of our lives, but also digital competence is a key competence that is included in the curriculum and needs to be worked on (Order of 30th May, 2023). Therefore, in the context of the language classroom it is of utmost importance to pay attention to MT rather than continue to ignore it. In addition, MT is becoming one of the most promising technological tools that can transform the whole language learning outlook. By conducting this research, we would be contributing to the ongoing discussion about the role of technology in language learning as well as providing insights into how MT is perceived and its usefulness into language learning to support learners' language acquisition process.

Moreover, I consider that understanding the potential of MT in language learning can enable me to better assist my students' language learning process. By exploring how other teachers have integrated effectively MT into their language learning practice, I may discover new procedures on how to develop more engaging and effective language learning materials and activities.

This dissertation is therefore an opportunity to develop valuable research skills (including data collection, analysis, and interpretation) as well as to enrich my teaching practice.

1.2. Objectives

Before setting out the objectives intended to be achieved by conducting this dissertation, it is necessary to mention explicitly the hypotheses from which we have started and which have motivated this study. Thus, some of the suppositions we intend to investigate are:

- MT has little acceptance in the language classroom because teachers often hold a negative view of it.
- Teachers do not know how to apply MT in the classroom to boost English language learning, and there is a lack of training in this respect.

In order to determine to what extent these assumptions are met, the following objectives will be addressed:

- First of all, in order to have an objective and in-depth view of the subject, we aim to find out what is the current situation of translation in foreign language teaching through the scientific literature. We will therefore examine the phases undergone by MT over last years until a renewed image has been offered. We also focus on the benefits of its implementation in the classroom, as well as its limitations.
- To investigate the perceptions that language teachers hold about MT. This main objective involves investigating the views, opinions, and expectations of language teachers regarding the integration of MT in the language classroom. For this purpose, a questionnaire and an interview will be carried out, so by analysing the collected data the study aims to identify common patterns or variations in teachers' perceptions, providing valuable insights into their attitudes towards MT as a language teaching tool.
- Finally, it is also one of our objectives to discover whether teachers have received training in how to introduce MT in the English classroom and how willing they would be to learn and try to implement it if they have not yet done so.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Pedagogical translation

It is well known that humankind has always needed to communicate and establish links with other cultures and peoples, which has required to learn other languages. The beginning of language teaching dates back to the time before Christ, so from that time onwards it was recognised that learning a language was highly appropriate, necessary and useful (Richards & Rodgers, 2003). However, it was not until the 17th century that the teaching of foreign languages reached its peak and became a very common field of study (Hernández Reinoso, 1999).

In this line, translation emerged as one of the methods for language teaching as we shall now see. It has been an integral part of language learning throughout history, serving as a powerful tool for comprehension, comparison, and cultural exchange. Hence, pedagogical translation, in particular, has played a significant role in language education, enabling learners to develop linguistic skills, cultural understanding, and intercultural competence (Laviosa, 2014).

As far as the grammar translation method is considered, the main features of this method according to Richards and Rogers (2003:15-16) will be discussed as follows:

- a) The main aim of foreign language learning is to enable the learner to understand the literary works of the target language and to contribute to his intellectual development as a direct result of the learning process. For this purpose, the focus is on learning a series of grammatical rules (morphological and syntactic) by translating sentences in order to practise these rules. Stern (1983:455) thus stated that "the first language serves as a reference system in the acquisition of a second language".
- b) Oral skills, namely listening comprehension, oral production and pronunciation receive no attention as emphasis is placed on the written skills, that is to say, reading comprehension and written production.
- c) Aspects of lexical competence are exclusively drawn from the texts and sentences used in the classroom. Vocabulary is therefore taught through the memorisation of isolated word lists with their respective equivalents, and such lists are only based on the texts and sentences used for the various grammatical aspects.
- d) Grammatical accuracy became very important as a way of assessing the learners' knowledge of the foreign language. It was seen as a way of checking whether learners had acquired an adequate degree of grammatical rule assimilation.

- e) Grammatical rules are introduced to learners and then implemented by means of translation exercises consisting of sentences. So, the teaching of grammar is essentially deductive.
- f) The whole process of foreign language teaching and learning is conducted in the students' mother tongue. As mentioned above, a grammatical rule was presented, memorised and then practised through translation activities. This dynamic limited the learner role to memorising, reading and translating (Lois Lugilde, 2012), which meant that active participation had no place in the classroom.

There are several reasons why the grammar-translation method is seen as an effective way to learn the grammar of a foreign language. It focuses on the written form of the language, which is often more accurate than the spoken form, making it an ideal way to learn the grammar of a language (Kaharuddin, 2018). The grammar-translation method is a systematic way of learning the grammar of a foreign language. In fact, this systematic approach can be efficient for language learners as it helps them understand the language's grammar step-by-step (Pintado, 2020).

Nevertheless, due to the absence of opportunities to work on communicative ability, as well as the prevalence of accuracy over fluency (García-Medall, 2001), this method became ineffective and was relegated to the background with the advent of more innovative and modern methods, such as the direct method, among many others until the communicative approach became the mainstream (Zafar, 2008).

The direct method refused completely translation, as it only focuses on oral language and promotes monolingualism in the classroom, eliminating the mother tongue from the process of learning a foreign language (Lázaro, 2005). However, other methods accepted the use of translation such as humanistic approaches including community language learning or suggestopedia. Yet it was lexical approach which revalued translation thanks to the lexical chunks that learners had to identify and record (Castro Moreno, 2015). This method gained ground in the 1990s as a post-communicative approach and its principles are based on the study of a language through lexis rather than grammatical structures (British Council, n.d.).

On the other hand, we will underline the audiolingual method which denied the use of translation, but in its approach we can identify similar characteristics to those mentioned in the lexical approach and in the grammar-translation method. It was popular throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Its maxim is mastering linguistic competence, comprising the four skills,

listening, speaking, reading and writing. The learning process is based on memorising and repeating drills (sounds or sentence pattern), without any intellectual analysis. This is similar to the mentioned methods, since like them, it focuses on learning language structures. In the classroom, the target language is the one which prevails, the mother tongue is discouraged (Lázaro, 2005).

After having mentioned some language teaching methods, we desire to point out that pedagogical translation is not synonymous with the grammar-translation method in order to overcome the stigma attached to pedagogical translation (Ekoç, 2019). Additionally, in contrast to grammar-translation method, pedagogical translation does not place as much emphasis on memorizing grammar rules and it allows students to practice speaking the target language (Milawati, 2019).

Hence, during the late twentieth century, in defence of pedagogical translation, several authors began to reflect on its role in language learning. In Spain, the contributions of Hurtado Albir (1999), who was one of the pioneers in introducing pedagogical translation as a discipline within the field of language learning, are particularly relevant. Also in the 90s, De Arriba García (1996, cited in Pintado Gutiérrez, 2012, p.329) distinguished three types of phenomena under the name of pedagogical translation:

- First, translation in a FL setting, where learners mainly work on writing and reading skills as well as comparing grammar structures and other aspects between two different languages, namely L1, L2.
- The second type —what she refers to as ‘internal translation’—involves the learner accessing the meaning of an utterance produced in the L2 by translating it to his/her L1.
- Lastly, a third kind of translation— ‘explicative’ or ‘explanator translation’—is typically used as a resource by the teacher, when clarifying some words and/or grammar content. In short, to make students immediately understand certain statements or to check whether particular explanations have been understood.

Based on this, we can approach translation in a number of different ways, since it offers many possibilities for work. Therefore, pedagogical translation is a combination of translation strategies focused on a series of activities, which could be either written activities, oral activities or even a combination of both (Nik Mohamed et al., 2021).

Besides, there has been a shift in the way language teaching evolves as a consequence of globalisation and new demands for intercultural communication. Thus, acknowledging that language learners need to develop specific skills, new practices such as translation have begun flourishing again (González-Davies, 2020).

This is why Leonardi (2011) states that translation as a language teaching tool has become widespread in the classroom. She also argues that translation is one of the many ways in which the L1 can be used in the classroom and shows the relationship between an L1 and an L2 following the model of common underlying competence developed by Cummins (1979). This model is intended to demonstrate that the skills or competences that a learner has in one language can also be applied to the learning of a second language. This is possible because at a cognitive level, a learner who has extensive linguistic knowledge of a given language will be able to acquire a second language more easily.

Moreover, apart from the one already mentioned, it is worth pointing out further advantages of pedagogical translation (Vermes, 2010). There are many reasons for using pedagogical translation when learning a new language. Perhaps the most obvious benefit is that it can help to improve one's understanding of the target language. By seeing how a word or phrase is translated into one's language, individuals can often better understand its meaning which is especially helpful when learning a language that is very different from their own (Ducar & Schocket, 2018).

Another benefit of pedagogical translation is that it can help students to learn the target language more quickly because they are constantly exposed to the target language while they are translating (David, 2019). This exposure can facilitate them to pick up new words and phrases swiftly. In addition, pedagogical translation can contribute to increasing confidence when using the target language, as well as helping the learner to build up a bank of useful phrases in the foreign language. This can be extremely convenient when students need to use the target language in a real-life situation, as by having a range of useful phrases on hand, they can be sure that they can communicate effectively in the target language.

We are aware that there are more tools and ways of teaching a language than translation, but all the above leads us to affirm that translation should be considered as a good method to boost learning. Indeed, this idea is reinforced by the fact that any person initiates a translation process at a cognitive level when learning an L2. In this sense, taking into account Alan

Duff's (1989) proposal which suggests that translation is present in any context and therefore, the classroom should not be the exception, we could consider that there is a solid theoretical basis on which to underpin the benefits of pedagogical translation. In fact, for some authors such as Ayachia (2018), Naimushin (2002) it comes to be considered as a fifth linguistic skill.

As a result, by recognising that language learners need to develop specific skills, new practices such as mediation and translation have begun to emerge (Laviosa et al., 2020). There is no doubt that the inclusion of mediation as a new assessable skill in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (2001) and later in the Companion Volume (CV) (2020) has been a step forward in the change of vision regarding the use of translation as a pedagogical resource.

Given the importance of this aspect in the resurgence of pedagogical translation, it must be stressed that the CEFR acknowledges translation and offers some methodological guidelines for the teaching and learning of modern languages, in connection to the use of translation as a pedagogical resource. Some of them are the following: using translations for students to process and produce texts; translating into and from students' L1 (to convey lexical, grammatical and pragmatic meaning); memorising lists of words with their corresponding translations to develop lexical competence; translating texts of increasing complexity into L2 (to develop pragmatic competence); and assessing contrastive factors between similar languages, since their learners usually tend to translate word-by-word.

Regarding mediation, when students learn languages, they do not acquire two totally disconnected ways of acting and communicating, but become multilingual and develop interculturality. In this way, the linguistic and cultural competences of each language complement each other and contribute to intercultural awareness (Council of Europe, 2001). In addition, the Council of Europe has recently expanded the CEFR concept of linguistic mediation claiming that it must be regarded at cultural, social and pedagogical levels.

In the light of the above, plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PCC) is a key concept to redefine translation in the language classroom according to newly facets and in line with the latest trends in the field and an appropriate practice. The PCC is defined as 'an appropriate use of natural plurilingual practices (e.g. translation, code-switching or an informed use of the L1) to advance interlinguistic and intercultural communication'. (González Davies, 2018, p. 2)

This is also present in the secondary school curriculum, we show below what is expressed in the Andalusian curriculum:

La competencia plurilingüe implica utilizar distintas lenguas, orales o signadas, de forma apropiada y eficaz para el aprendizaje y la comunicación. Esta competencia supone reconocer y respetar los perfiles lingüísticos individuales y aprovechar las experiencias propias para desarrollar estrategias que permitan mediar y hacer transferencias entre lenguas, incluidas las clásicas, y, en su caso, mantener y adquirir destrezas en la lengua o lenguas familiares y en las lenguas oficiales. Integra, asimismo, dimensiones históricas e interculturales orientadas a conocer, valorar y respetar la diversidad lingüística y cultural de la sociedad con el objetivo de fomentar la convivencia democrática. (Order of 30th May, 2023: 29)

Finally, if we combine the appreciation of pedagogical translation at the teaching level with later advances in artificial intelligence (AI) in the form of MT technology and neural machine translation (NMT) the result is an expansion of the potential of translation. This unveils new possibilities for integrating MT into language learning environments.

2.2. Machine translation in foreign language learning

MT, also known as automated translation, is “the process of automatically translating content from one language (the source) to another (the target) without any human input” (Memsources, 2022). The translation is not done by a person but by a computer software instead. This task was in the beginning one of the main purposes of computing power and according to Anderson (1995), MT has existed since the 1960s. However, it didn’t become a reality until the early 2000s, when the new software and hardware allowed to “teach” computers on how to translate texts. Nowadays, there are three types of MT: rule-based (RBMT), statistical (SMT) and NMT (Sánchez Ramos & Rico, 2020). The last one uses artificial intelligence (AI) to help the software to learn languages, even considering context in translation, using a neural network, and due to its success, it is fast gaining ground as the standard in MT engine development (Memsources, 2022).

Nowadays, many MTs are hybrid. For instance, Google Translate, one of the most popular MT engines, combines rule-based and corpus-based systems: by identifying patterns in documents that have already been translated by human translators, Google Translate can smartly guess what an appropriate translation should be (Google, 2022). In fact, a MT engine is multilingual; it can translate to multiple language pairs, being English and Spanish the most common language pair in online MT (Gaspari & Hutchins, 2007).

Next, in the following pages of this paper, we will go through some research about MT use in the learning context, explaining which language learning competences are more likely to be improved through MT and the kind of activities that should be put in practice in the classroom. Some of the advantages which come of the inclusion of this tool in the classroom as well as some cons will be pointed out. Finally, some space will be devoted to the challenges that the language trainer has to face in the classroom and his/her role itself.

MT is a tool frequently used by language learners. In this technological era, a MT engine is very accessible, the user just needs Internet access so students can use it both in their PCs and smartphones. Garcia and Pena (2011) discovered the reasons why students used Google Translate by a user feedback survey made by Google at that time and the answers were as follows:

To understand a foreign word or short phrase; to read a foreign webpage, email or article; to learn how to write/say a word or phrase in a foreign language; to write a long piece of text (e.g. an email) in a foreign language; to verify that the text I wrote in a foreign language is correct. (Garcia & Pena, 2011, p. 472).

However, in the classroom the use of MT is often considered taboo, given that it could discourage language learning by promoting a mentality in which little or no effort is put into learning a language and, as such, can lead to plagiarism or cheating (Yoo-Jean, 2021). Most language teachers are concerned that learners can achieve better results with less effort and have information translated instantly rather than thinking and analysing on their own (Borsatti & Blanco, 2021).

According to the study carried out by Clifford, Merschell & Munné (2013), instructors have a very negative perception of MT. Most of the teachers who participated in the survey strongly disapproved the use of MT by students. They claimed the restricted benefits of this tool: “if they become dependent on them, it will not help them LEARN the language... I highlight the importance of the cultural contexts for accurate translation” (Clifford et al., 2013, p. 113). They maintained the idea that the use of MT should not be allowed for graded assignments as it equates plagiarism, and so cheating, and goes against the Honor Code: “it is not allowed when completing a graded writing assignment” (Clifford et al., 2013, p. 113). Instructors were aware that MT use cannot be a substitute for learning a foreign language and told students “that the process of learning a language in a course setting is based on practice (coming to

class, doing homework, engaging in real self-effort). I compare using a MT to asking a friend to do their work for them” (Clifford et al., 2013, p. 113).

Nevertheless, not only is the perception of cheating documented in this work (Clifford et al., 2013), but it has also been identified by some other researchers such as Lee (2021) and Jolley Maimone (2022) (cited in Carré et al., 2022). In view of the increasing spread of free online machine translation (FOMT) among language learners, despite the fact that teachers may not agree, these researchers identified this as an area to be explored. Therefore, they review the scientific literature on the use of MT in language learning and discovered that seeing the use of MT as synonymous with cheating was a very common perception among teachers. Indeed, such is the concern that they found information suggesting how to distinguish when a student had used MT. Spotting when a learner used MT was easy when MT quality was poor as the tool produced errors. However, nowadays with the improvement of these tools this trick is no longer valid and it is easier to identify MT use because of the perfect output rather than mistakes (Ducar & Schocket, 2018 cited in Carré et al., 2022).

2.2.1. Advantages and drawbacks of machine translation in the learning context

In her research, Niño (2009) noted a few positive aspects that explain why students feel encouraged to use FOMT: its wide availability online, its immediate output, its availability in several language pairs and it is good with lexical translation as well as with repetitive, simply-structured texts (for example, technical manuals). MT is found to be very effective for lexical choices, even more useful than a dictionary, as the latter is not able to select a word based on the context. This is why students stated that through TM they had been exposed to many expressions currently in use and had been shown an alternative way of expressing the same meaning (Sangmin-Michelle, 2020).

Language learners make use of this tool mostly for reading comprehension, lexical reference (Niño, 2009) and writing assignments (Sangmin-Michelle, 2020). Clifford, Merschell and Munné (2013), with a survey about the role of MT, explained that students found it helpful mostly to increase vocabulary, followed by the improvement of the grammatical knowledge, among other uses as exposed in the following graphic:

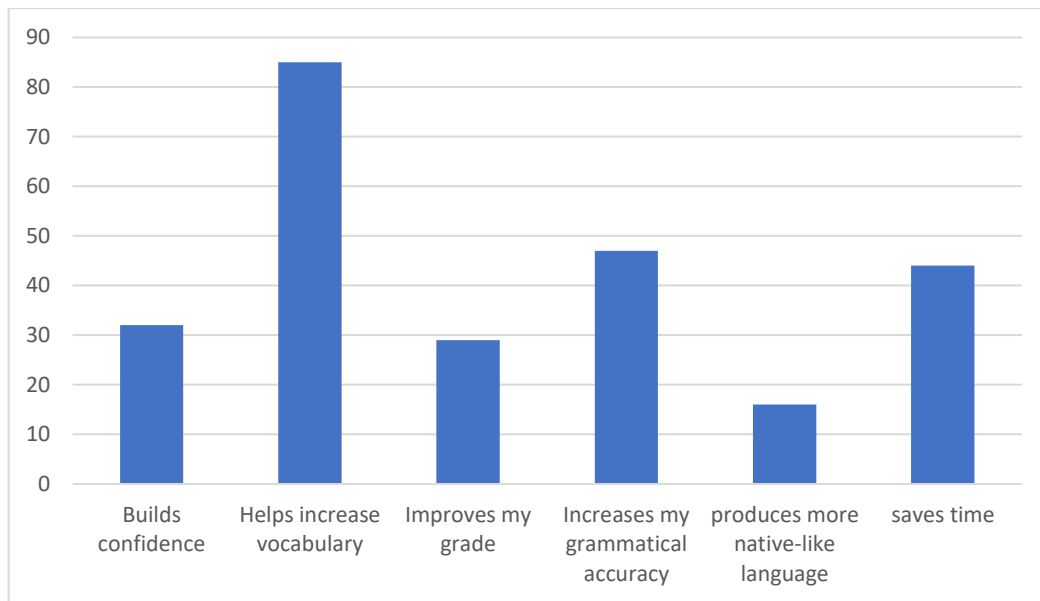


Figure 1. Students' perceptions of using MT (Clifford et al., 2013, p. 111)

On the other hand, as Niño (2009) points out, free MT engines also have weaknesses:

- Literal translation: their target texts often contain many errors and their translations are often structure-preserving, if not word-for-word.
- Grammatical mistakes: prepositions, determiners, agreement, pronouns...
- Discursive inaccuracies: mostly connectives and co-reference.
- Spelling mistakes: for example, punctuation.
- Unable to translate cultural references: it is also unable to account for other extralinguistic issues like context or register.

In addition to these weaknesses, Vermer's review (2010) about what other authors have reported should also be noted. First of all, he comments that the objections to implementing translation in the classroom are due to the shortcomings and rejection of the grammar-translation method.

Thus, one of the reasons presented by authors such as Bloomfield or Malmkjær (cited in Vermer, 2010) is that translating into the mother tongue can mislead the student because the semantic units differ from one language to another and consequently, the learner is bound to forget the target form under the stimulus of the native one.

Apart from the disadvantage already described, Malmkjær (cited in Vermer, 2010) contends the following ones:

- 1) Translation misleads students into thinking that expressions in two languages coincides word by word.
- 2) It causes interference between the L1 and the foreign language.
- 3) It prevents students from thinking in the foreign language.
- 4) It is totally different even independent of the four linguistic skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) which characterise language competence.
- 5) As it is not considered a language skill, the time devoted to it in the classroom is time taken away from the other 4 skills.

Furthermore, Lado (cited in Vermer, 2010) argues that translation is a much more complex process than the four language skills, as it is something that involves mental abilities. Therefore, this author postpones the use of translation until the four language skills are mastered, which means proficiency in the foreign language. However, this reasoning does not seem well-founded given that according to modern cognitive theories, the processes of speaking, listening, reading and writing are carried out in a form of mental translation, which indicates that translation is inherent and not a separate skill as both Lado and Malmkjær suggested.

Despite the acknowledgment of MT pitfalls, its potentially positive applications in the field of language learning and teaching are undeniable. Williams (2006) suggested that MT obliges learners to think about language as a communication tool, not as a collection of decontextualized vocabulary words or phrases. MT engines can also help students who are not familiar with terms such as polysemy, lexical ambiguity, and structural ambiguity; hence, examples using MT in English can demonstrate that polysemy can generate lexical ambiguity, and word order can determine the level of structural ambiguity in a sentence (Borsatti & Blanco, 2021).

One of the investigations that showed the positive impact of MT in language learners is the one carried out by Niño (2009). In the survey of the investigation, a group of students argued that they use MT as a quick, user-friendly tool and “it can be very useful with vocabulary, especially with terminology [...], it may be useful as a comprehension tool to read texts in other languages” (Niño, 2009, p. 249). This investigation deals with post-editing (PE), so in order to understand the results obtained, we must first present what this concept refers to.

PE is a practice which implies the editing and correction of the raw MT output to convert it into a text acceptable for a given purpose (Borsatti & Blanco, 2021), so the student proofreads the mistakes and polishes the text made by the MT engine.

Nevertheless, one aspect to bear in mind is that the rate of adoption of PE processes differs from one country to another and from one language pair to another. In the case of English-Spanish pair, MT systems have been offering high quality MT for a long time, which ensures a higher degree of success in the PE results. Contrarily, in some other language pairs PE has not experienced the same development and it is not feasible (Koponen, 2015).

Returning to Niño's research, students had to post-edit a MT text into the foreign language. In the results, students explained that this task "had promoted their error detection and correction skills, had made them reflect on their own errors, had fostered their comprehension skills, and it had also made them focus on language use and on accuracy" (Niño, 2009, p. 249). They also acquired "more self-evaluation strategies, [...] more language awareness, more accuracy and more fluency in their FL written production" (Niño, 2009, p. 249). In the study there was also a survey for language tutors, who mentioned many advantages of MT for teaching purposes: "it entails error detection and correction practice, it involves written production practices [...], it generates first drafts to work on [...], it fosters contrastive analysis" (Niño, 2009, p. 251).

According to prior literature, MT not only benefits from the linguistic perspective, but also from the affective one, as it lowers language anxiety and heightens motivation, participation and confidence, at the same time that it creates a nonthreatening language learning environment (Sangmin-Michelle, 2020). MT use could lead students to a self-directed and independent learning method (Garcia & Pena, 2011).

In fact, MT can be used as a tool for self-directed language learning. According to Du (2013), this kind of learning fosters critical thinking, motivation, self-evaluation skills and cultivates appreciation for lifelong learning, which is essential in a global economy and an information-centred society (Van Lieshout & Cardoso, 2022). In the CALL context, MT can serve to increase learner autonomy, a concept that, for Chik (2018), can be defined as the ability of learners to know what they should master in terms of language learning and their potential to achieve these goals with the aid of technology.

Therefore, the use of MT in language teaching should be promoted for many different purposes, such as the development of critical thinking and the promotion of electronic literacy and language awareness (Williams, 2006). It is then a useful pedagogical tool for teaching grammar and vocabulary (Borsatti & Blanco, 2021). Two major benefits are identified with MT, according to Yoo-Jean (2021). The first one is the enhancement of metalinguistic awareness, which relates to the capacity of students to correct, describe and explain faulty sentences. The second one is the acquisition of metalinguistic knowledge.

2.2.2. Competences and methods

As the results of prior studies state, the two skills that could be improved better with MT use in the classroom are writing production and reading comprehension. Garcia and Pena (2011 cited in Sangmin-Michelle, 2020) discovered that MT played a key role in enabling learners to write faster and also helped to produce more fluent and natural writing, with fewer errors. Amaral and Meurers (2011) claimed that MT can provide linguistic modelling, raise linguistic awareness, and boost syntactic, lexical, semantic and pragmatic knowledge of L2 during L2 writing. For the development of these two skills, writing and reading, MT can be used through two kinds of activities: post-editing and contrastive analysis. MT postediting allows students to pay attention to the process of writing (Sangmin-Michelle, 2020). With the contrastive analysis, language learners also can realise the kind of mistakes MT made and therefore learn the differences in language structure, collocations and idioms.

A third activity that was found to be useful is peer-editing or peer-feedback, according to Yoo-Jean (2021), whose research pointed out that the help of both the teachers and the peers truly aided language learners in approaching in a more critical way to their writing. This is mainly because the peer review of MT production increased metalinguistic awareness and demonstrated that the implementation of MT alone, lacking the peer editing process, would not be useful even for advanced learners (Yoo-Jean, 2021). Peer feedback also helps in big classrooms, where the teacher is not able to provide an effective amount of feedback to each student due to time constraints. If small groups of students are given specific guidelines, results will be much better.

With peer-editing, students could develop into critical and independent writers. As mentioned before, working with MT is not only beneficial for the language skills, but also for the

learner's self-confidence and motivation, as the support of the teacher and peers motivated them not to give up (Yoo-Jean, 2021). A student's reflection exposed in the research is a good instance of that:

I was actually indifferent to writing because I've never been good at writing in English. But you asked us to use the translator as much as possible. This was really shocking! I soon became interested in working together with my friends. All discussions stimulated me to think more deeply about improving my writing. And you gave us much encouragement and clear guidelines. I would have given up halfway if all the writing tasks were done individually. (Student 32, Reflective Note 4) (Yoo-Jean, 2021, pp. 438-439).

A representative example of how to use MT postediting to improve students' language skills is the study carried out by Sangmin-Michelle (2020). Participants were English learners and they compared their own English writing with another writing which was the result of MT postediting. They realised that their lexico-grammatical mistakes decreased noticeably in the second version, so they could improve the quality of their writing with the help of MT. They had the chance to select more appropriate and contextualized vocabulary, as well as choose more authentic expressions. Moreover, students used a variety of writing strategies when editing with MT, such as double-checking, using prior knowledge, paraphrasing, inferring and rewriting (Sangmin-Michelle, 2020). They also improved their metalinguistic awareness and their ability to choose critically and strategically between alternatives offered by the machine translation engine. This allowed learners to improve their writing skills and leads to improved learner autonomy and self-directed learning strategies, which are vital for successful writing (Sangmin-Michelle, 2020). This study demonstrated what Carroll and Swain (1993) had already emphasized: "error detection and correction enhances grammatical accuracy in FL writing and promotes interlanguage development" (Sangmin-Michelle, 2020, p. 170).

Another study focused on writing skills improvement by MT was presented by Garcia and Pena (2011). They also stated that MT was useful for training in revision techniques and that it encourages independent learning. Learners had to post-edit within a MT's interface and analyse the output produced. Although some MT drawbacks were demonstrated in the study (such as negative dependence on MT, use of the tool because of laziness and inability to getting used to thinking in the foreign language), participants explained that in general MT assisted them to write faster and with fewer mistakes, saved them time searching for the adequate words and helped them to acquire new ones (Garcia & Pena, 2011). The conclusion was that MT introduction in the classroom could help the learner to write better and so it can

be considered a motivating tool used to design communicative activities (Garcia & Pena, 2011).

Conclusions of Shu-Chiao's study (2019) are very similar to these already explained. In this one, the contrastive analysis technique is used. When students had to compare the difference between a Google Translate made text and a self-written text, they realised Google Translate texts were of a higher writing quality as they presented more advanced-level words and fewer spelling and grammar mistakes. Hence, by comparing both versions, students were able "to learn the use of new vocabulary, grammatical patterns and sentence structures [...] and then try to discover differences between the texts, understand their usage, and even propose possible solutions to better express their thoughts in English" (Shu-Chiao, 2019, p. 520). That definitely serves to improve writing skills.

As for the reading competence, Borsatti and Blanco (2021) published a study about the efficiency of MT as a support for reading texts in a foreign language. The authors claimed that reading consists of a dynamic, complex process of meaning construction in which the limited capacity of working memory can be reached easily in the case of less-skilled students or beginners, as they generally have a restricted vocabulary and they are unlikely to be familiar with cultural and extralinguistic knowledge. In this case, the use of MT can be valuable for beginning FL learners, as it offers an overview of the text so that the reader can hypothesise about it (Borsatti & Blanco, 2021). It is also important to note that FOMT will work best with scientific texts as its language can be quite predictable. Thus, the conclusion of this research is that MT can be a suitable support for reading strategy.

Pronunciation is another skill able to be improved with MT. The participants of the study carried out by Van Lieshout and Cardoso (2022) could learn Dutch phrases and their associated pronunciation thanks to Google Translate's help: "after roughly one hour of practice using Google Translate and its speech capabilities, the participants became intelligible and comprehensible, with a low degree of accentedness" (Van Lieshout & Cardoso, 2022, p. 12). This investigation showed that Google Translate could become an effective tool for long-term learning with suitable activities that included sustained practiced and spaced repetition. One of the conclusions was that FOMT could be considered a flexible tool that can cater to various kinds of learners.

2.3. The role of the language trainer: challenges and constraints

All mentioned research about this topic allows us to think that MT can be definitely a good resource for language learners. Nevertheless, teachers do not seem to agree with its implementation. Despite trainers' refusal, students often use it, but with zero awareness of its potential and without effectiveness. Students look for an immediate output, not an excellent one (Klekovkina & Denie-higney, 2022). As Vazquez-Calvo and Cassany (2017) explained, when using the translator, the student does not edit the output text by making the necessary linguistic changes (spelling, morphological, grammatical, etc). The learner conceives the MT engine as the only linguistic resource to support his/her writing and then he/she makes an uncritical use of it. This ineffective result is due to the lack of knowledge of the limitations of MT, as well as the absence of metalinguistic awareness about linguistic transfer (Vazquez-Calvo & Cassany, 2017).

However, this problem can be solved if deep training about MT limits and potentials is provided in the classroom. The role of teachers with knowledge of online linguistic resources is crucial to offer MT literacy (Bowker, 2021). The level of knowledge required for this purpose is still unknown. Borsatti and Blanco (2021) defend that foreign language tutors have no reason to know much about how MT software works, but they should be aware of its availability, how to use it and its strengths and weaknesses. The challenge is the incorporation of technology in the classroom without compromising learners' practice.

Although they may be a minority, there are teachers who support the integration of MT engines in the language teaching classroom and who claims the acknowledgement of its existence by the rest of trainers. The above-mentioned survey in Clifford, Merschell and Munné's research (2013) is an example of that because it shows that MT has great potential and despite the possible difficulties it may present, trainers must know how to make the most of its potential. In fact, accepting this commitment could even lead to a change in the teacher's point of view, from a more restrictive stance to a more receptive and innovative one. In addition, instructors claim that denying its existence is not an option, so MT as another learning tool needs to be taken into account. In view of this scenario, Clifford, Merschell and Munné (2013) compare the introduction of MT to the arrival of the calculator:

When the calculator was introduced it was viewed as a tool that would destroy the development of students' math skills. The prevalence of the calculator could not be denied, and therefore educators had to create best practices that integrated this new

tool into the learning process—this is what needs to be done within second language acquisition in regards to MT. (Clifford et al., 2013, p. 116).

MT technology should also be included by instructors to increase student's autonomy. Trainers should teach learners how to make use of autonomous learning strategies and how to assess if these strategies are effective through feedback (Zimmerman, 1990). According to Van Lieshout and Cardoso (2022), educators must deliberately choose technologies that can be employed autonomously so that students can maximise their motivation to learn, develop learning strategies and apply the feedback provided in their learning process. One way to impact autonomous learning is direction: if instructors give explicit guidelines to follow, students will feel more motivated (Mutlu & Eroz-Tuga, 2013).

In order to demonstrate that MT use together with teacher feedback could be a suitable tool for self-directed language learning, Van Lieshout and Cardoso (2022) created in their study a semi-self-directed learning setting. It consisted of a mixture of purely self-directed learning, in which students were responsible for their own learning, and teacher-based instruction, in which the teacher took charge of some of the learning decisions (Van Lieshout & Cardoso, 2022). The inclusion of MT in language-discovery activities allows the students to continue learning on their own and makes them responsible for their own learning, promoting then a learner-centred learning environment (Kassem, 2019).

All in all, active role of teachers as mediators of knowledge in FOMT use is essential. They are in charge of warning the students about the possible misuses or pitfalls of this electronic tool. Therefore, teachers should enumerate the drawbacks of MT, such as grammatical imprecision, literal translations, the interference of L1 in writing styles and mistranslations of words with ambiguous meanings (Sangmin-Michelle, 2020). When post-editing or revising, teachers should actively invite learners to concentrate on issues that go beyond lexical-grammatical change (Sangmin-Michelle, 2020). Lastly, when translating with MT's help, teachers should suggest that they recheck the translation of the MT with additional resources (Sangmin-Michelle, 2020). This training necessity is also explained by Yoo-Jean (2021, p. 433): “participants also experienced difficulties in judging the correctness of complicated grammatical structures and desperately sought the teacher's feedback. It is clear that guidance is indispensable”.

By providing adequate guidelines, teachers will promote an adequate use of MT as a language resource. For that kind of training, teachers need to be informed and to keep updated about

these electronic tools already used by learners. Besides, given the growing demand for TM, teachers must find ways to incorporate it to their practices rather than ignore it (Sagmin-Michelle, 2020). Considering that MT systems were not originally created and designed for language learning, but its main purpose was to eliminate or reduce as much as possible the linguistic barrier between languages (Ortiz, 2015, p. 3), it is imperative role of teachers to prepare students adequately to cope in a language learning context (Sagmin-Michelle, 2020).

Once the students use MT in a proper way, they will learn that they cannot always rely on these systems, for example in their writings. Learners will stop seeing free online engines as the only online resource for their foreign language learning. They will understand that learning is much more than copying and pasting, that is, only if they are as intellectually involved as possible and add some creativity to their tasks, they will succeed in communicating themselves in the target language (Niño, 2009).

To achieve MT inclusion in the classroom, Niño (2009) explained in her research some practical examples of using MT for language teaching purposes, also presented as examples of good practice:

- Use of MT output for limited tasks, such as summarising for reading comprehension.
- Use of parallel corpora.
- MT post-editing.
- Enter words or grammatical information into an MT dictionary.
- MT output evaluation.
- Use of FOMT with closely related languages (for instance, Italian/Spanish).

Similarly, Niño (2009) presents some useful examples of bad practice in using free online MT that instructors should definitely avoid:

- Use of MT for writing or translating without having a good command of the foreign language and previous knowledge about the type of mistakes produced by MT.
- Lack of information about the different stages of analysis, transfer, generation and post-editing and so taking MT output as a product itself.
- Introducing beginners MT output without a clear purpose or indications.
- Working with creative source text full of idiomatic expressions or with complex literary vocabulary, which is not suitable for MT as it generates inadequate outputs.

- Lack of a proper MT introduction to students, for instance, outlining a brief history, its main objectives, advantages, disadvantages.

Then in the classroom, when working with FOMT, teachers can perform PE, contrastive analysis and peer-editing activities to teach about this tool: producing first drafts, practising error detection and correction, comparing the MT output with the students' own output.

The final purpose would be to promote a critical use of resources, to partner with students in the exploration of MT and to foster awareness of its potential and limitations. That way technological innovations could be incorporated in the classroom without compromising academic performance. The result would be a conscient dialogue between MT and critical language learning (Vazquez-Calvo & Cassany, 2017).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

First of all, following the instructions of one of the subjects covered in this master's degree, we consider of utmost importance to contextualise and specify the type of research to be carried out in order to have an overview of what the study is going to entail.

The main aim of this investigation is to explore language teachers' views and perceptions regarding the integration of MT in the English as a foreign language classroom. Thus, our project is an applied study as it directly addresses a practical issue, in this case, the application of MT in language teaching and some considerations of its use from teachers' perspective. We consider it key to remember that this action research is built on the hypothesis that MT has little acceptance since teachers still hold a negative view of it, so the goal is to verify this principle through surveys and an interview.

In order to be able to trace a pattern of general attitudes and to obtain data that provide an overall picture of the current situation, conditions will not be manipulated, but we seek to explore phenomena in a natural manner, that is what is called a non-experimental investigation. Moreover, a considerable number of participants will be studied, thereby giving the research a group study character.

Furthermore, regarding data collection time, we do not intend to observe any kind of evolution or change in teachers' perceptions, hence the data are collected at one point in time from a large number of subjects, which means it is cross-sectional research.

The research design for studying the perceptions and attitudes of secondary school teachers in using MT for language teaching employs a mixed-methods approach, namely surveys and interview as we have already mentioned. Therefore, given the duality of research this approach combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the method of analysis to be applied is statistical in the first case and interpretative in the second one.

3.2. Sample

Language teachers play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness and appropriateness of integrating MT into language learning practices. Hence, understanding their attitudes toward MT is essential for both researchers and educators aiming to optimize language learning experiences.

In this section, we will set out the criteria for selecting participants for our research, so as to enable us to unravel the perceptions regarding the integration of MT in the language learning process. The meticulous selection of respondents is pivotal to gain insights that are both relevant and reflective of the specific context of English language instruction.

As far as the inclusion criteria are considered, those are designed to select participants with specific qualification to provide a targeted and insightful dataset. In this respect, it should be noted that the first screening is that our study only focuses on English language teachers. Thus, participants must be actively engaged in teaching English, ensuring that the insights garnered are directly relevant to the language in question and provides a unified focus for the study. A second reason for targeting only one language is to simplify variables. As it is not a dense study, by selecting just one language we can obtain more detailed and comprehensive information of it, rather than a lot of general and insignificant information on more languages.

The rest of the criteria established to determine the type of profile being sought in the sample are educational background, professional experience in the world of teaching, and the level of education at which they teach. The following is a description of each criterion:

- Educational Background. There are several different degrees or pathways available through which one may teach English as a foreign language. However, we will only

pay attention to two of them, namely, English philology and translation with English as a first language, so the teachers in our investigation will be philologists or translators, although it is also valid if they have both degrees.

This criterion is intended to capture the perspectives of educators with a specialized knowledge base relevant to our study. The intentional inclusion of participants with backgrounds in philology or translation ensures that the study's findings will offer a nuanced understanding of the complexities surrounding the integration of machine translation in English language education.

- Teaching Experience. Participants are required to have a minimum of two years of teaching experience. This criterion ensures that the participants have a basic knowledge of teaching methodologies, both traditional and more innovative ones, which will provide them with a basis for assessing the potential impact of MT on their practices.

Another reason why we are not interested in someone in their first year of teaching experience is because it is a chaotic year in which teachers have to develop a lot of materials, test which dynamics work for them, which don't, and perhaps at this early point they have not given MT a chance.

Furthermore, another condition that must be fulfilled in this section is that our respondents are working in the current academic year.

- Educational level in which they work. We will only target those teachers who teach in secondary and upper secondary education (“Bachillerato”), or both, irrespective of the type of school, i.e. public, private. The reason for this selection is that at these levels students have a higher degree of maturity than in primary education and therefore, it is assumed that they are more likely to use this type of tools responsibly. In addition, it should be considered that the secondary curriculum includes digital competence, which makes it even more likely that teachers will have implemented these technologies from this level onwards.

On the other hand, the geographical area in which the high school is located will not operate as a discriminatory criterion, as it would have been the case in the first approach to this study (this issue is mentioned in the limitations section of the study);

now we will simply ask what the centre is in order to have more information about our sample and contextualise the findings.

If our attention is turned to the sample size, it should be stressed that our minimum target was 30 teachers. However, with the aim of obtaining as much data as possible, once that number was reached, the survey would remain open for a week just in case we managed to recruit more participants. As we didn't, the sample consists of 30 teachers. We were clear that a diverse sample should be emphasized, encompassing teachers from various educational settings, levels of expertise, and geographical locations to ensure a comprehensive representation of English language educators.

Finally, we must point out that ethical considerations are paramount in our research. Before participating, English language teachers will be provided with comprehensive information about the study's purpose, procedures, and the intended use of data. Offering this type of information ensures transparency and upholds the ethical standards governing research involving human subjects.

3.3. Instruments

Firstly, we will conduct this study using two instruments, which are presented in Spanish, as this is the mother tongue of most of the participants. On the one hand, we will design a questionnaire, from which we will obtain answers that will reflect the conception that a representative group of teachers hold about MT. On the other hand, we will carry out an interview to a teacher, whom I consider to be a reference in the teaching of English, both for his level in the English language and for his teaching practices.

With regard to the interview, we would like to clarify that it cannot be taken as an instrument from which solid conclusions can be drawn, as it represents the thoughts of a single person. It will serve as a support to better understand some of the results of the questionnaire. Thus, by employing both questionnaire and interview, we aim to capture the depth of English language teachers' perceptions regarding MT in the language learning process.

The questionnaire instrument is meticulously designed to capture the diverse facets of teachers' perceptions. It has been elaborated using Google forms since this tool is easy to use and includes different types of questions. The questionnaire is structured to cover key areas such as familiarity with machine translation tools, any experience on the subject, perceived

advantages, disadvantages, effectiveness and overall willingness to integrate MT into their future teaching practices. Hence, we differentiate three distinct sections: section A, teacher profile; section B, familiarity and perceptions of MT; section C, training on MT and future perspectives (see [Appendix 1](#)).

Furthermore, self-administered questionnaire is used, given that this format has a notable advantage in that it both allows a large amount of information to be collected and gives respondents more time to complete the survey and control the pace at which they complete it, thereby responding in a calm environment which makes it easier for them to read the questions and choose their election or fully develop their idea (González Pastor, 2021). In addition, participants respond without the assistance of an interviewer, so as not to bias the questions asked.

Another measure we will implement in order to collect as objective data as possible is to offer anonymity in the self-administered questionnaires, as this should further minimise social pressure and thus may also reduce social desirability bias.

Regarding the type of questions, it is varied, ranging from single choice, multiple choice, open-ended questions to Likert scales, as included in previous similar research (Niño, 2009). Open-ended questions are strategically included to allow for in-depth responses, enabling participants to express their thoughts freely. As these are not fixed answer schemes, such questions can lead to answers that would not have been considered in a closed-ended questionnaire (González Pastor, 2021). Conversely, Likert scales are frequently employed to measure views and attitudes when researchers need answers more revealing or deeper than a "yes" or "no" (Batterton & Hale, 2017).

The second instrument is an interview of approximately 25 minutes, which is complementary to the questionnaire as we have mentioned before. It serves to further explore some of the questions that were asked in the survey and try to explain some of the responses. The participant to be interviewed is a teacher with more than 20 years of experience who is constantly updating his knowledge, speaks objectively and justifies his point of view. Finally, we note that it will be carried out exclusively in the presence of the interviewee and recorded so that it can later be analysed with the due attention it requires.

3.4. Data collection

The data collection process for investigating teachers' perceptions on the implementation of MT in the English language classroom was a meticulously planned task. We were aware that the success of the study rested heavily on the selection of a diverse but specific pool of participants. Therefore, one of our maxims was to reach as wide a range of teachers as possible, so dissemination was a key part of the recruitment strategy to target qualified educators.

The first step in recruiting a representative group of respondents involved contacting high schools. Thus, this direct contact with the secondary schools made it possible to reach teachers who are currently working as English language teachers, so this approach ensured that the selected participants possessed the required profile, including teaching experience and knowledge of English language teaching.

Beyond the contact with schools, a broader recruitment effort was initiated through social media, specifically Twitter. A link to the survey was posted on the platform (https://x.com/saram_cp/status/1713099450007146999?s=48&t=s5JoxkmnyQcNKwIgxboWJQ), accompanied by a clear description of the profile sought for participation, that is, English secondary school teachers. Given that Twitter has character limit, it was impossible to write all the requirements in the tweet, so these were detailed in the description of the questionnaire, i.e., they were displayed once the link to the survey was clicked and of course, before starting to complete it. This transparency was essential to prevent responses from individuals who did not meet the specified criteria, ensuring the integrity and relevance of the collected data. By leveraging the expansive reach of social media, we aimed to cast a wider net and engage with educators beyond the high schools within my geographical area.

Furthermore, Twitter offers a rich setting for the investigation of social practices in the digital sphere. One of the characteristics that makes it a great potential dissemination channel is its structure based on a logic of virality, which facilitates to reach many people (Stewart, 2016). Thus, the decision to publish on Twitter was strategic, considering its popularity and the potential for information dissemination within the educational community. This approach allowed for the inclusion of teachers from diverse geographical locations and educational backgrounds, enriching the study with a variety of perspectives.

The use of social media, however, comes with its own set of considerations. Given the public nature of the platform, it was imperative, as we have mentioned, to be transparent about the

research's goals and criteria to attract responses from educators who genuinely fit the study's profile. Additionally, efforts were made to share the questionnaire link through educational groups or networks in the platform where teachers actively participate.

Upon accessing the questionnaire, participants were presented with a clear outline of the study's objectives, which ensured their informed consent. The questions were designed to capture nuanced insights into teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding MT in English language teaching. For this purpose, the combination of closed-ended questions, Likert scale and open-ended ones was crucial, as this allowed quantitative data to be extracted for statistical analysis (Taherdoost, 2019) and qualitative information to provide depth and context to the findings.

Finally, although in the previous section we have detailed the type of questions that the questionnaire consists of, we cannot disregard the rigorous documentation prior to the drafting of the questions. We have made use of various publications (Álvarez-Gayou, 2003; Loayza, 2020) that dealt, among other aspects, with the design and elaboration of questionnaires to extract qualitative information. In that sense, questions must be well thought out, but they must have a methodological basis which ensures a solid foundation. Therefore, some of the insights we have drawn from and applied to this research are, firstly, qualitative research can only be conducted in a survey if open-ended questions are used. Secondly, these questions can be coded by recording the frequency of occurrence of each response to the question and also by choosing the most frequently occurring responses.

4. RESULTS

This section presents the empirical results derived from the questionnaire on language trainers' perceptions concerning the use of MT for EFL teaching and learning purposes, as well as the qualitative data extracted from the interview on the same subject.

First of all, we will show the data obtained from section A, which is the section relating to the contextualisation of our sample. These data therefore do not reveal decisive information about the study, but simply help us to outline the participants' profile.

Question number 1, which is about age, is essential since teachers from different generations converge in the education system and we assume that they may have learned by different

methods, which can be reflected in the way they teach. This is because the methodology by which an individual learns significantly shapes an individual's teaching style.

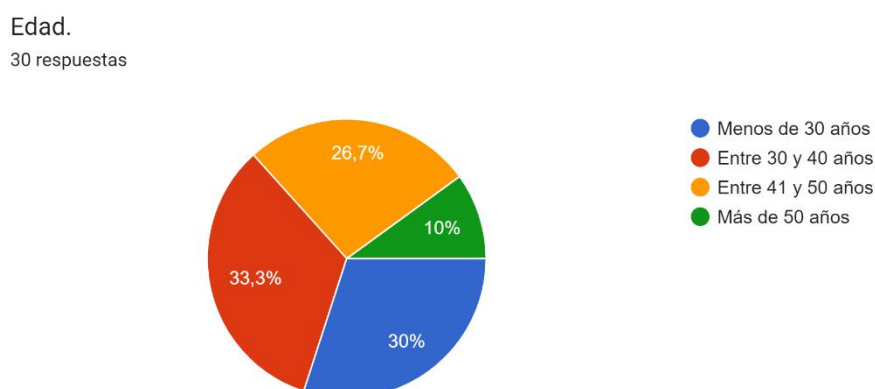


Figure 2. Question 1. Age.

Even though the proportion is apparently spread across the established ranges, the reality is that the teachers who have participated in the questionnaire are young, exactly 66.3% of respondent, that is 19 teachers are under 41 years old.

Next question to analyse is number 3 as it is closely related to number 1. They are intrinsically connected with each other, but they obviously provide different information. Years of experience do not reveal the age of the subjects as well as the type of education they may have received. However, knowing the years of teaching experience offers valuable context for interpreting responses and understanding about how teaching philosophies may influence perceptions of tools like MT.

So, observing the data derived from age we can assume that if the respondents are relatively young, they will have few years of experience. In fact, this is shown in the following chart, where it can be seen that almost half of the sample has between 3 and 5 years of teaching experience.

Años de experiencia docente.
30 respuestas

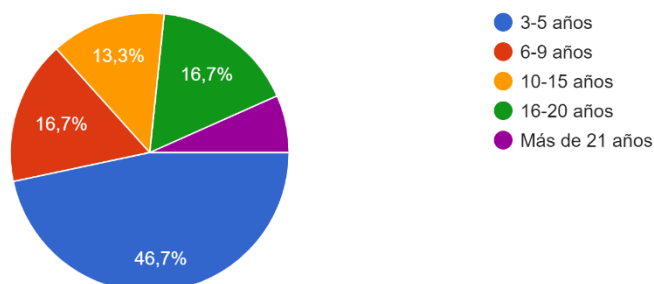


Figure 3. Question 3. Years of teaching experience.

If we move on to a new variable, which corresponds to question 2, we must remember that one of the conditions we established to select the sample was that they had to be philologists, translators, or a fusion of both. Although there are also English teachers at primary level, we would not accept their contribution in any case, as their background is different and they would not be able to provide the kind of data we are looking for. So, as it can be seen from the graph, with a 66.7% or in other words, 20 people, the percentage of philologists is vastly higher, which might suggest, if we make some assumptions, that the support for MT might not be very strong.

Perfil profesional.
30 respuestas

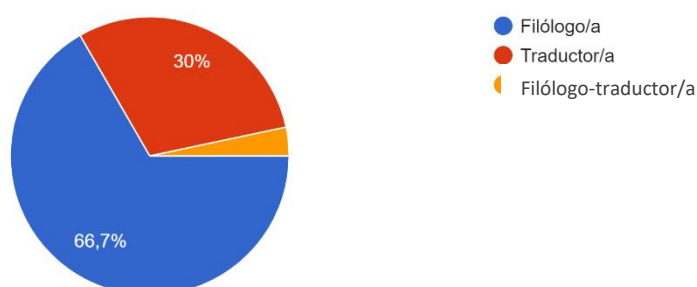


Figure 4. Question 2. Professional profile.

In order to gather more information about the participants, we also inquired about the type of centre (public, private or subsidised) where they work, as contextual information. Nevertheless, very noticeably, almost all of them (83.3%) belonged to public high schools.

Tipo de centro en el que imparte clase.
30 respuestas

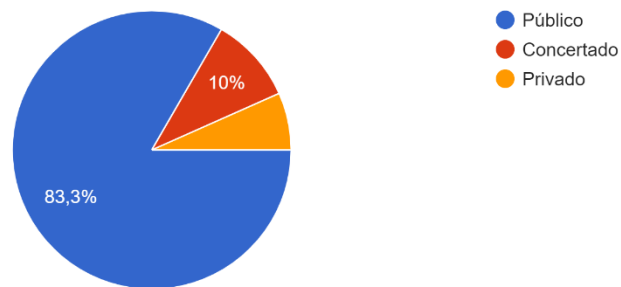


Figure 5. Question 4. Type of school where they teach.

Question 5 was an open-ended question asking about the specific centre where they work and in which province it is located. These data have been organised in the following graph:

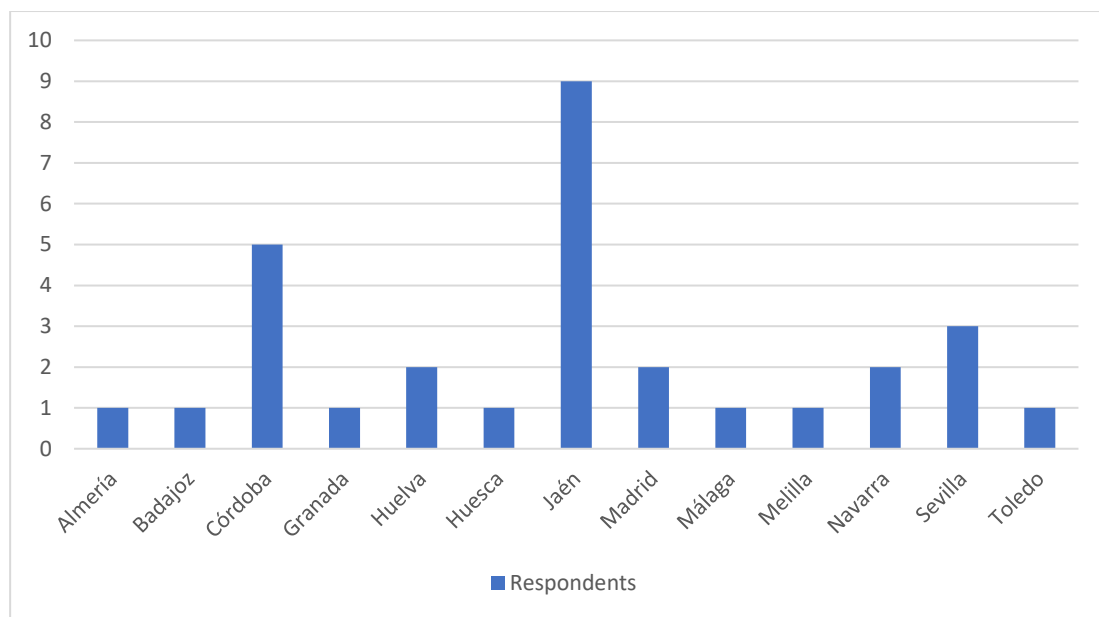


Figure 6. Question 5. Provinces in which the teachers work.

The last question in section A, question 6, was displayed on a Likert scale. The purpose of this question is to find out their self-perception in terms of the skill level they have in implementing technology in the classroom. This point brings valuable information about their level of familiarity and comfort with the use of technological tools, including MT. Responses may reveal possible biases or resistance to implementing technology in the classroom. Thus, teachers who perceive themselves as less technologically competent may experience greater challenges.

¿Cómo calificaría su destreza implementando la tecnología en la enseñanza de inglés?

30 respuestas

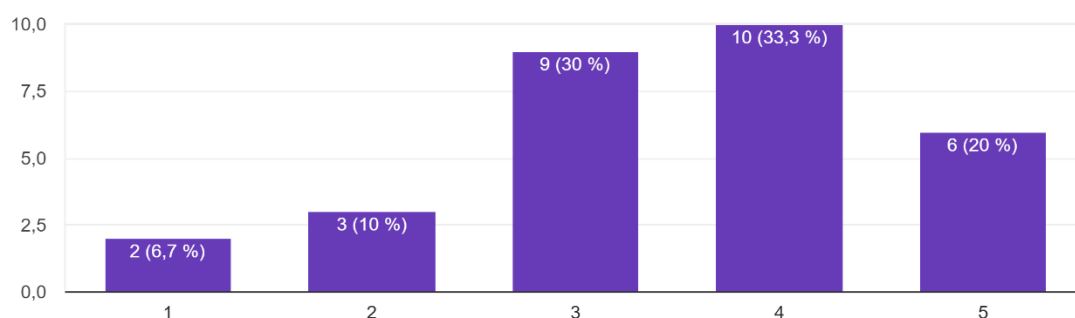


Figure 7. Question 6. Skill level in implementing technology in the classroom.

The results obtained are varied, although they all point in the same direction, more than half of the teachers consider that they have a good or very good level of technological tools, compared to 16.7% who report technology as a weakness.

Regarding section B, in which we analyse familiarity with MT and trainers' perceptions, the first question we had to ask (question 7) was whether they knew what this tool is. To our surprise, 20% of them, which corresponds to 6 teachers, did not know about the existence of such tool, which seems strange to us because MT is no longer a novelty, but something that is present in everyday life.

Nevertheless, a theory we hold is that they did know what it is, but because of the term used they did not know what it referred to. However, in this question we did not want to clarify information in order to obtain as objective answer as possible.

¿Sabe qué son las herramientas de traducción automática (TA)?

30 respuestas

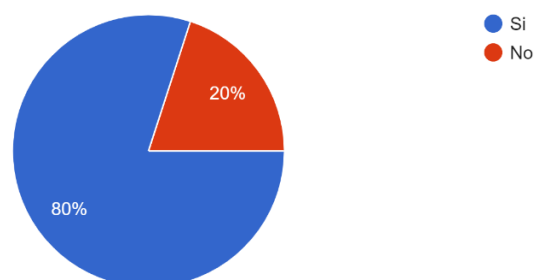


Figure 8. Question 7. Basic knowledge about MT.

Therefore, in the next question (question 8), which was to determine whether they had ever used it with their students, we did explain briefly in a description what translation tools are.

¿Ha usado la traducción automática* con su alumnado alguna vez?
30 respuestas

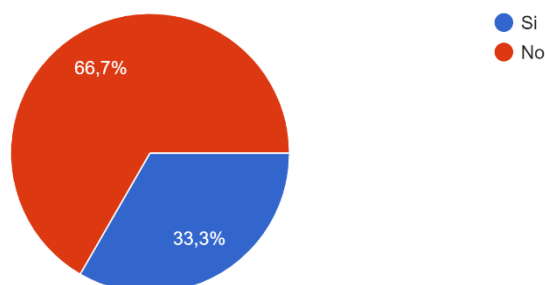


Figure 9. Question 8. Implementation of MT in the English classroom.

The dominant trend is more than evident, we find that 66.7%, i.e., 20 teachers have not used this tool in the English classroom. And those who have, have used it mainly for reading and comprehension activities as explicitly stated by teachers:

- “Con grupos de alumnos específicos (desdobles) en el que tanto la motivación como el nivel eran muy bajos. Sobre todo en actividades de comprensión escrita (reading)”.
- “Sobre todo en actividades de comprensión lectora en los que había palabras desconocidas para los alumnos y fue útil para desarrollar su autonomía y ver las capacidades del alumnado utilizando las herramientas digitales para su aprendizaje”.
- “Utilizamos Google translator y vimos cómo de eficaz era su uso con textos periodísticos”.

Furthermore, we inquired by means of a multiple-choice question what kind of language skills they thought could be developed or whether they thought that no language skills were developed at all (question 9).

Marque según su opinión. ¿Cree que mediante la traducción automática el alumnado puede desarrollar alguna/s destreza/s lingüísticas en inglés?

30 respuestas

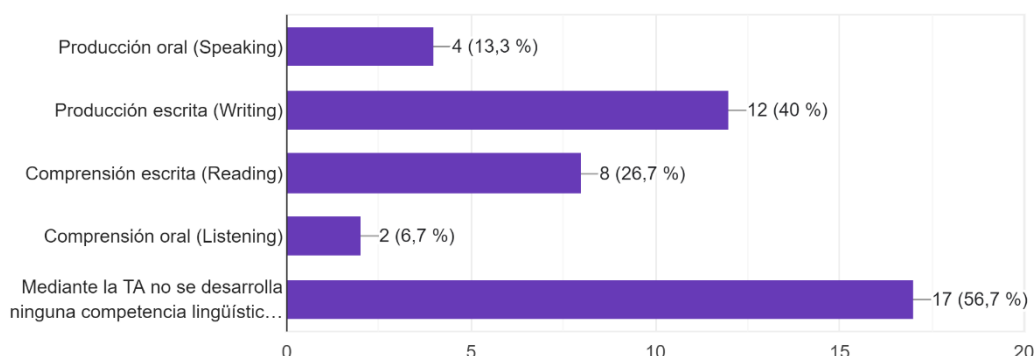


Figure 10. Question 9. Linguistic skills that learners developed through MT.

From this question, we can draw that the majority of respondents (56,7%) agreed that no language skills are developed through the implementation of MT in the English classroom; on the other hand, 40% of respondents considered written production to be the skill that can be most developed by working with this tool.

If we continue with question number 10, even if they have not used MT in class, it is possible that teachers at some point have recommended their students to use it to carry out a certain activity.

¿Alguna vez le ha hablado a su alumnado de la existencia de este tipo de herramienta para aprender/mejorar en inglés?

30 respuestas

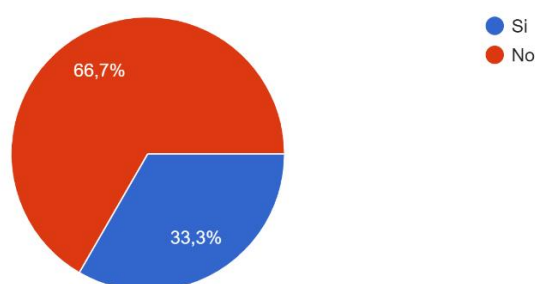


Figure 11. Question 10. Introduction to students about the existence of MT to improve their English.

According to the data, there are more teachers who have not mentioned the existence of MT to their students than those who have. Among those who have recommended it, the main reason that has led them to take this step was that they consider that it increases the vocabulary of the students (60%) and with a lower percentage, specifically 40%, there are

three reasons, such as it is more useful than a bilingual dictionary; teachers have used it in their daily lives; and thirdly, the fact that any skill can be worked on it. On the other hand, those who have not commented anything agree at 85% that it reduces the students' effort. Additionally, a 60% of them consider that this tool can induce errors because of lack of context.

Furthermore, with the intention of adding a qualitative data question to the research, we decided to include an open-ended question describing a very common situation in the classroom (question 11). This corresponds to the context when an essay is sent out and the students do it using the NMT system. All the answers, except one which I will indicate below, admit that this student cheats because he/she just copies what the computer tells him/her. Also, teachers claim that this student does not learn anything new in this way and that students who do this, resort to NMT because of lack of effort or laziness. Here we have the one which is different and very enlightening:

Me enfrento en mi día a día a esta realidad y por ello, según el nivel, los writings los hacemos en clase. Producir directamente en lengua inglesa requiere poseer unas nociones mínimas de gramática y vocabulario que muchos alumnos y alumnas no tienen. De igual forma, por mucho que en el mundo del aprendizaje de segundas lenguas quiera negarlo, para el alumnado, el resultado de su producción escrita conlleva un proceso de traducción mental desde su lengua materna, [...] Es decir, la creación literaria existiría en cualquier caso al usar los TAs. Sin embargo, en pruebas oficiales (Selectividad / acreditación de idiomas) no se permite el uso de ningún tipo de soporte físico, electrónico o digital. Por tanto, no se trata de "hacer trampas", sino de preparar al alumnado para contextos en los que estas ayudas no están a su disposición. Muy diferente es el uso de las inteligencias artificiales que, por el contrario, destruyen ambos procesos: el de creatividad y el aprendizaje de segundas lenguas.

Para el caso de alumnos más avanzados en el dominio de segundas lenguas, los TAs pueden servir para pulir errores gramaticales o aprender nuevos términos. Entonces, podría entenderse incluso como un proceso de autoevaluación o self-assessment. Para alumnos de nivel medio-bajo no tiene el mismo impacto porque no cuentan con las herramientas necesarias para discernir por qué han cometido o no esos errores (Testimony of a teacher in the questionnaire of this MA).

Having prompted teachers to reflect a little on this issue, the next question (number 12) was intended to find out to what extent they were in favour or against their students using MT to do their homework. In order to collect the responses we used a Likert scale. As we can see below, a 43.3% of respondents would completely disagree and 30% would disagree, which indicates a complete refusal to let students use MT.

Marque en qué medida está a favor o en contra de que sus estudiantes empleen la traducción automática para la resolución de las tareas mandadas.

30 respuestas

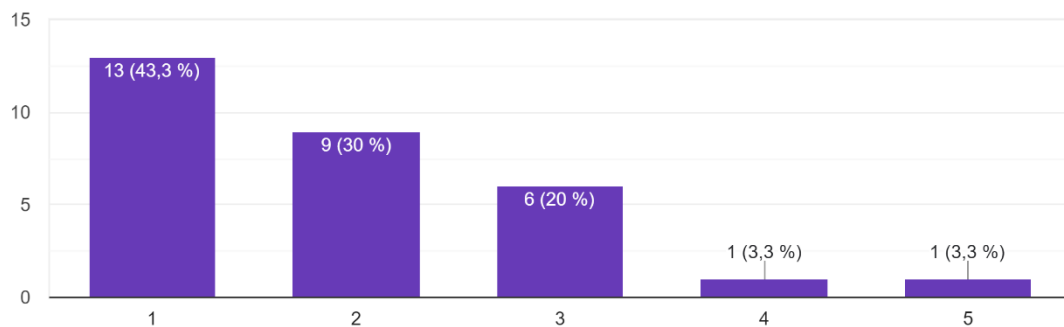


Figure 12. Question 12. Level of acceptance of learners' use of MT for homework.

Other key questions we had to pose were about the main advantages and disadvantages that teachers observe in this technology (questions 13 and 14 respectively). Regarding the advantages, there are 17 trainers who emphasise the improvement of vocabulary as well as syntax, however we also identify some others who see none. Contrarily, as far as disadvantages are concerned, these can be summarized as lack of effort in both learning and performing tasks, technological dependence and lastly, MT is seen as inaccurate and can lead to permanent errors.

To conclude this section and give way to block C, we formulated a last question to trainers about their perceptions in order to know how effective they saw MT in language teaching. The results were rather negative, since the vast majority of respondents rated it as not effective.

Marque el grado de efectividad que cree que tiene la traducción automática en el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera.

30 respuestas

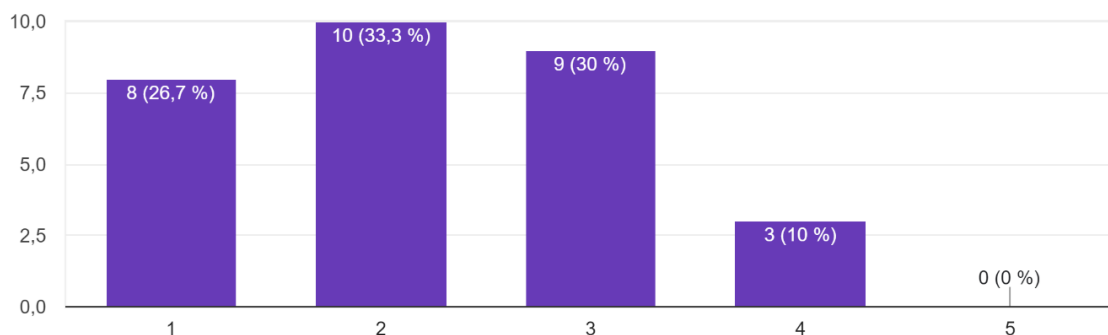


Figure 13. Question 15. Perception about the effectiveness of MT in English language learning.

Next, we look at the section on training which begins by asking teachers whether they have received any training in this field.

¿Ha recibido algún tipo de formación sobre la implementación de la traducción automática como herramienta en la enseñanza de inglés?

30 respuestas

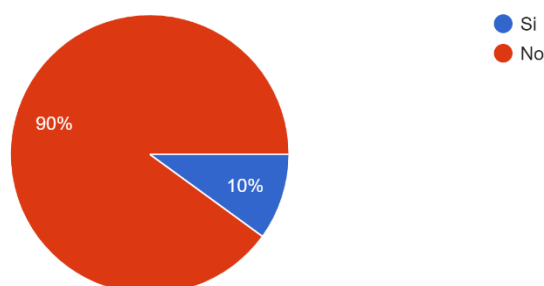


Figure 14. Question 16. Training on how to implement MT in the English classroom.

This result suggests that there is a major lack of training among teachers in relation to the implementation of MT in English language teaching. So, this gap in teachers' preparedness to effectively use this technological tool in their pedagogical practice may represent an obstacle to the successful adoption of MT in the educational context. Likewise, they are unaware of the benefits and limitations of this resource.

Hence, those who responded that they had not received any MT training were asked in question 17 about their willingness and eagerness to be trained in this area in order to be able to apply MT to English language teaching.

¿Le gustaría recibir formación para saber cómo aplicar la traducción automática a la enseñanza de inglés?

27 respuestas

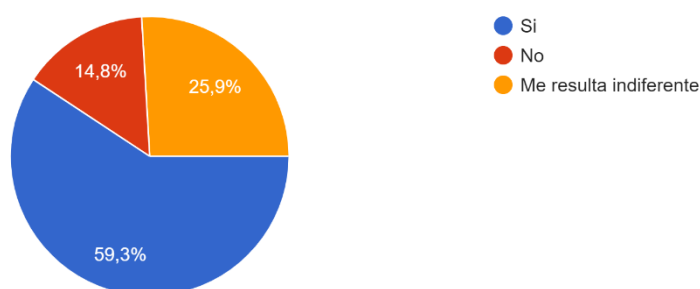


Figure 15. Question 17. Interest in receiving training.

In view of these findings, we note that a total of 11 teachers out of 27 (40.7%) are not interested or are indifferent to learning this technology, perhaps due to opposition to changing the way their classrooms work, their belief that MT is ineffective as a large percentage indicated in section B, among many other possible reasons.

Finally, we wanted to know to what extent they felt that receiving training would help them to implement MT in their classes. In other words, question 18 is another way to find out what their willingness to change is. We assume that those, who are opposed to introducing this tool even when they receive information about its potential uses, advantages, etc., will mark 1 or 2.

Marque con el valor que mejor refleje su opinión. Recibir formación en este ámbito podría animarle a introducir la traducción automática en sus clases de inglés.

30 respuestas

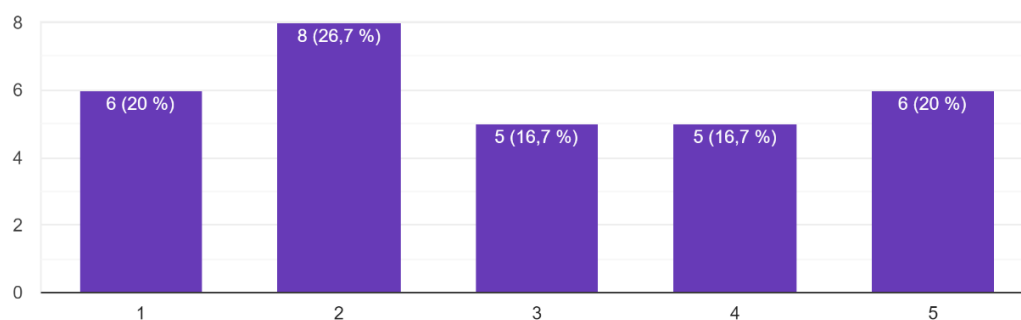


Figure 16. Question 18. Willingness to implementing MT in the classroom if they receive training.

The responses reflect a duality, as we find 14 teachers who remain against, 5 who, by marking 3, do not end up positioning themselves, and 11 who believe that by receiving training they could implement MT in their classes. Ultimately, the absence of obvious trends is the result of the uncertainty surrounding this scenario.

Now that we have analysed the results of the questionnaire, we will reflect on some of the data with the help of an interview to an English teacher. This interview represents the thoughts of a single teacher, so it cannot be taken as a conclusive result.

Before commenting on some aspects, it is necessary to provide information about the interviewee. He is a 52-year-old English philologist with a considerable teaching experience of 25 years. Currently, he works as an English teacher in IES Nuestra Señora de Alharilla, where teaches on the levels of compulsory secondary education and *Bachillerato*. For him, learning a language not only opens doors to new cultures, but also serves as an essential

instrument of communication. Hence, the language teaching method he most identifies with is the communicative approach. He also tends to use collaborative learning as he thinks that it is easier to learn between peers.

Moving to the interview, firstly, we felt it necessary to ask him whether he uses MT in everyday life, as we assume that if he does not employ it outside the educational context, hardly ever will he employ it in the classroom. The answer was that he does use it, although not very often. He considers it a useful tool and has no qualms about consulting this type of tool when he does not know the meaning of an expression.

Moreover, he claims that MT offers very natural translations and despite some errors produced by lack of context, he believes that it is possible to extract patterns, which is very helpful to work on written production and, consequently, learning a language. In this respect, his opinion coincides with the skill that teachers believe is the most developed through MT.

Nevertheless, when it comes to the educational context, he personally thinks that secondary school students do not fit the profile of students who can learn English using MT: “el problema que yo veo con el alumnado de secundaria es que no es lo suficientemente maduro en primer lugar, para hacer un uso responsable de la TA y en segundo, como para extraer patrones y aprender independientemente”.

Therefore, we note that the position he adopts when we asked about the use of MT in the classroom is cautious: “no voy a negar que me resulta muy interesante, pero la veo muy difícil de llevar al aula y que tenga éxito”. As a consequence of this perspective, he tells us that he has never implemented MT in the classroom, nor has he ever considered it: “no es algo que me haya planteado usar porque creo que como tal no es eficaz en este nivel”.

In these words, perhaps the interviewee is expressing the thoughts of many of our respondents, who have not used MT in the classroom and view it as ineffective for teaching English, at least in a secondary education context.

Turning to the negative perception articulated by the teacher: “pienso que la traducción automática tiene un impacto negativo en la enseñanza del inglés por el mero hecho de que nuestros alumnos dependen demasiado de la tecnología, parece que no saben hacer nada por ellos mismos”. This revolves around the idea that students prioritise looking for answers in technology rather than in their own knowledge.

Moreover, to some extent, because of their simplicity of use and easy accessibility, he states that learners tend to rely heavily on translation tools as a shortcut, bypassing the cognitive effort required for independent linguistic comprehension and expression. This fear is not merely speculative; the teacher cites cases where students opt for the ease of MT over the challenge of constructing sentences on their own. He mentions above all other tasks, written essays, in which he observes that students make use of linguistic structures and lexis at a higher level than they actually have. This observation echoes the concern of a great number of English teachers who compared the use of the translator to cheating.

However, beyond cheating, his concern is related to the impact of MT on learners' confidence, which he thinks is reduced because of technological dependence. Therefore, by discarding copying as the main focus of the problem, we could draw a comparison between the testimony of this teacher and the one we selected in question 11. Both of them try to express that copying in itself is not bad, as long as students can learn a structure that they can use in the future. This suggests that it is essential to promote autonomy in learning.

Regarding the issue of training, it was also present in the interview. It should be recalled that the teacher has not received any training in MT, and the same applies to 90% of the participants in the questionnaire.

He is aware that technology is present in our daily lives and therefore, it must also be present in the classroom: “Yo no soy partidario de que utilicen la traducción automática los estudiantes de secundaria, pero es una realidad que está presente. Entonces quizás deberíamos plantearnos su incorporación de una forma controlada y guiada”. He advocates a controlled and guided use of MT, suggesting that its incorporation as a complementary tool for specific tasks could strike a balance between harnessing technology and preserving the integrity of language learning.

However, he argues that for technology and in this case MT to be well received, teachers need to be trained: “Para que pueda tener una buena bienvenida sería necesario cierta formación en la que se exponga al profesorado cuáles son las ventajas de emplearla, los límites que habría que establecer y sobre todo cómo aplicarla correctamente en el aula”

In addition, he was told that in the survey we asked whether teachers had received training and, if they had not if they were interested in receiving it or not. We expressed to him our

surprise with such a considerable percentage showing no interest in receiving training. He was also surprised, although he admitted that there will always be naysayers.

To conclude, I would like to highlight the words of the interviewee's last intervention, which I fully share: "Lo ideal sería estar abierto a recibir formación y una vez que se tiene el conocimiento ya se puede decidir de forma objetiva si se quiere emplear en el aula o no". If teachers do not master MT, they will hardly want to apply it in their classes or, more importantly, they will apply it unsuccessfully.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This extensive research on the potential of MT in English language learning and its perception among trainers has provided an overview of the complexities and advantages inherent in integrating this technological tool into the EFL classroom. The objectives set out at the beginning of this dissertation have functioned at all times as a compass, guiding our steps. In this sense, it was also essential to determine what kind of information was relevant so as to get an overview of the whole panorama and lay the groundwork for the study. The questionnaire had to have solid theoretical basis, otherwise we would not have been able to extract enlightening results.

With regard to the potential of MT in English language learning, we have observed throughout the scientific literature articles that MT is a highly beneficial tool for language learners. The data reveal that there is a direct connection between this tool and the enhancement of language skills. These data are evidently the result of studies, experiments conducted where the evolution of some language skills was analysed by using MT in a controlled process. In short, MT allows students to broaden their knowledge of another language both lexically and syntactically, it also facilitates the comprehension of texts and, personally, what I found most interesting is that it is a support for self-correcting errors. Moreover, FOMT is contemplated as a flexible tool that can cater to various kinds of learners (Van Lieshout & Cardoso, 2022), which should completely draw our attention as nowadays attention to diversity in the classroom is a must.

Yet, when our sample was asked about their perception of the advantages and disadvantages of MT, we found that trainers pointed out many more pitfalls and were more explicit in talking about them and giving examples than when it came to positive aspects. This evidences

the inherent complexity of incorporating MT as a pedagogical tool that they perceive. In fact, as we shall indicate in due course, the lack of knowledge of MT they have is responsible for seeing more disadvantages than advantages.

Furthermore, one of the hypotheses we had before starting this work has been confirmed by the questionnaire we carried out. Concretely, we refer to the low acceptance of MT in the English classroom due to negative views held by teachers, which is supported by the results obtained. The empirical evidence shows that the reluctance of teachers towards MT is a relevant phenomenon, since almost all of them agree that MT minimises or eliminates academic effort on the part of the students.

Another point we have to comment is the other hypothesis we hold, that is, teachers do not know how to apply MT in the classroom because of a lack of training. This information resonates strongly in the questionnaire results. An overwhelming 90% of teachers admit not having received formal training in MT. This knowledge gap not only hinders the effective integration of MT into language instruction, but also contributes to maintaining this negative view of MT. Additionally, related to this matter, the percentage of 58% of teachers interested in receiving training reveals a potential openness to training, although it indicates that there is still a substantial percentage of teachers who do not consider such training as a priority.

In the light of these findings, it is clear that there is a need for training in this area so that teachers can broaden their vision and focus not only on the positive or negative side of this tool, but be aware of its full range and the possible uses that can be made of it in the classroom. Professional development opportunities can change perceptions and encourage the adoption of MT (Carré et al., 2022).

Another conclusion to be drawn from this extensive analysis is that the relationship between MT and English language learning is currently complex and may seem to some teachers to be unfeasible. Even though there are potential benefits, the prevailing scepticism and lack of training suggest the existence of considerable challenges that need to be addressed if the full potential of AI in language teaching is to be exploited (Hong, 2023).

On the way forward, while there will always be detractors and teachers who oppose its use even without knowing its potential benefits, the education community must embrace a more inclusive and collaborative perspective. The coexistence of divergent views highlights the need for ongoing dialogue, where teachers' concerns are considered and strategies are developed to overcome identified barriers.

There is no doubt that it is a challenging component in the evolution of language pedagogy, but technology is present in our daily lives and as a consequence, the educational community must integrate innovations that bring language teaching up to date with the times. Thus, MT will enrich the language learning experience and the result will be learners who are prepared for the multilingual and technological world they will encounter.

Finally, this dissertation provides a solid basis for future research and reflection in the field of language teaching. Therefore, we would not like to conclude without alluding to the limitations, challenges we have faced when analysing this critical area as well as some considerations for future investigation.

Firstly, it should be noted that the course of the investigation took a change of direction, as the initial approach was not successful. This initial idea intended to differentiate itself from previous studies on the perception of MT by limiting and focusing the study on a certain geographical area. Specifically, we were interested in the western area of the province of Jaén, simply because we wondered about the practices carried out in the area where I live.

For this purpose, a list was drawn up of the cities in the area and the respective public and private high schools that were located there, together with a contact e-mail address for each centre. So once the list was compiled, I drafted the message I sent to the schools for them to pass on the survey to the English teachers working in each of the centres.

At this particular stage I appreciated the collaboration of my tutor who embraced my work within one of her projects, DITAPE¹, in order to make it more relevant and appealing for the high schools to participate in my work. However, given the lack of participation from the schools, since almost none of them replied to my message, I was forced to redirect the research and look for other channels of dissemination. Therefore, we removed the geographical criterion, but continued to maintain the rest criteria of focusing only on teachers of English at secondary and baccalaureate level and not at others such as primary, university or language schools.

On the other hand, another aspect that has not been studied and that would be interesting to consider in future lines in order to go deeper into the subject is the following. We refer to the challenge posed by the heterogeneity of language teachers themselves. Language educators come from diverse backgrounds, teaching contexts, and possess varying levels of

¹ This Master Thesis is framed under the DITAPE Project, Docencia e Investigación en Traducción Automática y Posedición (Teaching and Researching Machine Translation and Postediting) and funded by the Conselleria de Innovación, Universidades, Ciencia y Sociedad Digital of the Generalitat Valenciana (2021/GV/080).

technological proficiency, this is why in the first section of the questionnaire we asked for this information. However, the reason for this consideration is that this heterogeneity introduces significant variability in their perceptions and attitudes toward MT. For example, younger teachers who grew up with technology may have more positive attitudes, while older teachers might be more sceptical or resistant to change. Therefore, capturing a representative sample that accounts for this diversity is challenging and may limit the generalizability of research findings. In our case we did not control that the number of low experienced teachers was proportional to the number of high experienced ones, yet we got responses from all the ranges of years of experience that we marked. This should, however, be reconsidered for future lines.

This study only has a meaning at the present date and in the context in which it has been created, in other words, the field of English in secondary education and exclusively in the Spanish territory. I emphasise this because if we wanted to know the situation of MT again in the future, we would have to carry out another study, since what English language teachers perceive today may not be representative of their perceptions in the future as this tool continues to advance. In the same way, what happens in the subject of English might differ from teaching another language. Therefore, although in the first instance it might be indicative, it is logical that it does not reflect the situation of MT in the teaching of other languages, and even less so the situation of MT in the teaching of English as a foreign language in other countries. In summary, what may be acceptable or effective in one culture or language learning environment may not be the same in another as language trainers' perceptions of using MT may vary widely depending on cultural and linguistic factors.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Questionnaire.

Bloque A: Perfil

1. Edad

- ☐ Menos de 30 años
- ☐ Entre 30 y 40 años
- ☐ Entre 41 y 50 años
- ☐ Más de 50 años

2. Perfil profesional.

- ☐ Filólogo/a
- ☐ Traductor/a
- ☐ Filólogo-traductor/a

3. Años de experiencia docente.

- ☐ 3-5 años
- ☐ 6-9 años
- ☐ 10-15 años
- ☐ 16-20 años
- ☐ Más de 21 años

4. Tipo de centro en el que imparte clase.

- ☐ Público
- ☐ Concertado
- ☐ Privado

5. Nombre del centro y provincia en la que se encuentra el mismo

6. ¿Cómo calificaría su destreza implementando la tecnología en la enseñanza de inglés?

Muy deficiente 1 2 3 4 5 Muy buena

Bloque B: Familiaridad con la traducción automática y percepciones

7. ¿Sabe qué son las herramientas de traducción automática (TA)?

- ☐ Si
- ☐ No

8. ¿Ha usado la traducción automática* con su alumnado alguna vez?

* Herramienta de traducción que transmite un texto de un idioma a otro sin intervención humana, sólo mediante algoritmos informáticos. Ejemplos: google translate; deepl. Hay que diferenciarla de cualquier diccionario en línea como puede ser wordreference.

- ☐ Si → Ir a 8.1
- ☐ No

8.1. Por favor, describa el contexto en el que usó la traducción automática (por qué, tipo de actividad, si resultó útil...)

9. Marque según su opinión. ¿Cree que mediante la traducción automática el alumnado puede desarrollar alguna/s destreza/s lingüísticas en inglés?

- ☐ Producción oral (Speaking)
- ☐ Producción escrita (Writing)
- ☐ Comprensión escrita (Reading)
- ☐ Comprensión oral (Listening)
- ☐ Mediante la TA no se desarrolla ninguna competencia lingüística en el alumnado.

10. ¿Alguna vez le ha hablado a su alumnado de la existencia de este tipo de herramienta para aprender/mejorar en inglés?

- o Si → Ir a 10.1
- o No → Ir a 10.2

10.1. Marque si alguna o algunas de estas razones coinciden con el motivo por el que consideró oportuno hablarle a su alumnado de la traducción automática como herramienta para aprender inglés.

- ☐ Usted lo ha utilizado en su día a día.
- ☐ Incrementa el nivel de vocabulario en la lengua inglesa.
- ☐ Ayuda a cometer menos errores gramaticales
- ☐ Resulta más útil que un diccionario bilingüe.
- ☐ Incrementa la confianza del alumno en la lengua extranjera.
- ☐ Es una herramienta sencilla para trabajar cualquier destreza lingüística.
- ☐ Ninguna de estas opciones refleja el motivo.

10.2. Marque si alguna o algunas de estas razones coinciden con el motivo por el que no ha considerado oportuno hablarle a su alumnado de la traducción automática.

- ☐ Puede producir errores en la sintaxis y cohesión.
- ☐ Inexacta con expresiones y frases culturales.
- ☐ Puede inducir a errores por falta de contexto.
- ☐ Genera dependencia tecnológica.
- ☐ Reduce el esfuerzo del alumnado.
- ☐ Reduce la confianza que el alumnado tiene en sus propios conocimientos.
- ☐ Ninguna de estas opciones refleja el motivo.

11. Imagine que mandó un writing como tarea para casa. Al corregirlo identifica que fue redactado con ayuda del traductor automático. Explique cuál es su opinión al respecto. ¿Consideraría que este estudiante ha "hecho trampa" y no se ha esforzado?, ¿afectaría a la

idea que usted tiene sobre dicho alumno? O por el contrario, ¿consideraría que este sujeto ha aprendido algo nuevo?

12. Marque en qué medida está a favor o en contra de que sus estudiantes empleen la traducción automática para la resolución de las tareas mandadas.

Totalmente en contra de su uso 1 2 3 4 5 Totalmente a favor de su uso

13. En su opinión, ¿cuáles son las posibles ventajas de integrar la traducción automática en el aprendizaje de inglés?

14. ¿Qué inconvenientes piensa que plantea el uso de la traducción automática en la enseñanza del inglés?

15. Marque el grado de efectividad que cree que tiene la traducción automática en el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera.

Nada eficaz 1 2 3 4 5 Muy eficaz

Bloque C: Formación en TA y perspectivas de futuro

16. ¿Ha recibido algún tipo de formación sobre la implementación de la traducción automática como herramienta en la enseñanza de inglés?

- ☐ Si
- ☐ No → Ir a 16.1

16.1. ¿Le gustaría recibir formación para saber cómo aplicar la traducción automática a la enseñanza de inglés?

- ☐ Si
- ☐ No
- ☐ Me resulta indiferente

17. Marque con el valor que mejor refleje su opinión. Recibir formación en este ámbito podría animarle a introducir la traducción automática en sus clases de inglés.

Muy en desacuerdo 1 2 3 4 5 Muy de acuerdo

18. Antes de realizar esta encuesta, ¿se había planteado si la traducción automática se podía utilizar para apoyar el aprendizaje de inglés?

Appendix 2. Interview.

Yo: Buenas tardes, profesor. Gracias por dedicarnos tiempo para hablar sobre un tema tan relevante e importante para nosotros como es la traducción automática y la percepción que, en este caso, usted tiene sobre su implementación en el aula de inglés. Si le parece, comenzaremos con una pregunta general. ¿En su día a día, es decir, fuera del contexto educativo, utiliza herramientas de traducción automática?

Profesor: No es algo que yo use con regularidad, hay veces que lo uso mucho y días, semanas en que nada. El hecho de que emplee el traductor está marcado por la actividad que esté realizando. Por ejemplo, cuando leo un libro en inglés puede que recurra a él para buscar expresiones, palabras que no sé... igual con manuales de instrucciones; también cuando viajo a un país extranjero... Por eso digo que depende de la actividad.

Yo: ¿A qué herramienta recurre cuando lo necesita?, es decir, ¿cómo se llama el traductor que suele utilizar?

Profesor: Hace años utilizaba el traductor de Google, pero últimamente quizás desde hace cuatro años recurro siempre a *deepl* porque me parece más exacto, le da más naturalidad a las traducciones.

Yo: ¿Y le parece una herramienta útil?

Profesor: Para mis necesidades cumple con su función. Eso sí, aunque normalmente ofrece un resultado de calidad y coherente, otras veces da unas soluciones en las que mete la pata por completo. Hay errores sintácticos, traduce expresiones hechas de forma literal...

Yo: Ya, ya... Me acaba de surgir una pregunta derivada de la respuesta, ¿cree que es necesario ser conocedor del funcionamiento básico de una lengua para descubrir estos posibles errores? Me refiero a que si cree que es necesario por ejemplo saber un poco de sintaxis en inglés para identificar el error que el traductor automático está cometiendo.

Profesor: Si, si, por supuesto. Hay que conocer un poco de sintaxis de la lengua para saber si el resultado es correcto o no. También me atrevo a decir que hay que saber algo de traducción o al menos tener presente la idea de que un idioma no tiene una correspondencia de forma por forma con otro... Entonces sabiendo esto, si ponemos que nos traduzca una frase hecha y

observamos que el resultado que nos ofrece es un “forma por forma”, es más fácil saber que deberíamos dudar de esa respuesta.

Yo: Totalmente de acuerdo. En base a lo que acaba de comentar, ¿cree que alguien que no posea esa información o conocimientos, como por ejemplo el alumnado de secundaria, podrá aprovechar o sacarle partido a esta herramienta?

Profesor: Yo diría que saber eso te permite identificar los errores que comete el traductor de manera mucho más rápida, pero luego sacarle partido al traductor claro que se puede, independientemente de cual sea el nivel. A ver, realmente no sabría cuál es la forma más óptima de utilizarlo para aprender inglés porque no tengo formación en ello, pero lo que está claro es que hay que identificar patrones e ir asentando esas estructuras. Ahora bien, el problema que yo veo con el alumnado de secundaria es que no es lo suficientemente maduro en primer lugar, para hacer un uso responsable de la TA y en segundo, como para extraer patrones y aprender independientemente.

Yo: Mm, entiendo. Si le parece, voy a reconducir la entrevista y le voy a preguntar ahora si emplea la traducción automática en sus clases y cuál es su opinión respecto a que se implemente esta herramienta en la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera.

Profesor: Tengo conocimientos muy básicos o incluso mínimos sobre la traducción automática porque como ya sabes soy filólogo. En mis clases no la he incorporado. Si te digo la verdad, no es algo que me haya planteado usar porque creo que como tal no es eficaz en este nivel. Yo prefiero centrarme en el desarrollo de las habilidades lingüísticas de los estudiantes de una manera algo más tradicional, por así decirlo, o bueno, mejor dicho, con otro tipo de recursos.

Yo: Vale, entiendo [risas] Menos mal que se ha autocorregido porque usted tiene poco de tradicional... Bueno, aprovechando que ha mencionado las habilidades lingüísticas, ¿cree que la traducción automática tiene un impacto positivo o negativo en cuanto al desarrollo de estas destrezas en el alumnado?

Profesor: Antes de contestar aclaro que mis respuestas se refieren al alumnado de secundaria y bachillerato, a menos que especifique lo contrario y quiera hacer alusión al resto de estudiantes de inglés.

Bien, una vez dicho eso, personalmente pienso que la traducción automática tiene un impacto negativo en la enseñanza del inglés por el mero hecho de que nuestros alumnos dependen demasiado de la tecnología, parece que no saben hacer nada por ellos mismos y esto afecta a su desarrollo de habilidades lingüísticas. Luego, como idea no voy a negar que me resulta muy interesante, pero la veo muy difícil de llevar al aula y que tenga éxito. El alumnado no es maduro y no hace un uso responsable, lo que dificulta que se pueda implementar.

Yo: Vale. A ver si he entendido bien, tiene una perspectiva negativa porque piensa que el alumnado depende mucho de la tecnología y claro, por ende, también desarrolla dependencia hacia esta herramienta, ¿no?

Profesor: Sí, eso es.

Yo: De acuerdo, ¿Podría especificar cómo percibe o en qué nota esa dependencia que tienen los alumnos con este tipo de herramientas?

Profesor: Claro. He notado que el alumnado usa siempre que puede las herramientas de traducción automática para realizar tareas, como traducciones de *reading* (o sea algún párrafo que creo que puede ser problemático les pido que lo traigan traducido a clase), pero donde más lo identifico es en los *writing* porque utilizan un lenguaje de un nivel superior al que tienen, tanto en sintaxis, vocabulario... Bueno y eso en el mejor de los casos, porque luego también veo el típico alumno que redacta en español lo que quiere traducir de una forma tan desorganizada, tan inconexa e incoherente que es imposible que el traductor sepa lo que quiere transmitir y veo completos desastres...

La conclusión es que no aprende ni el que recibe un buen resultado porque no comprende una estructura de semejante nivel, ni el que no sabe redactar porque obtiene una producción con muchos fallos.

Yo: ¿Cuál diría usted que puede ser la razón principal por la que el alumnado confía tanto en el traductor?

Profesor: No creo que haya una única razón, sí alguna que tenga más peso que otras, pero no una sola. Mira, si entramos en generalizaciones, el tipo de perfil de alumnado que encontramos hoy día en un instituto normal, uno estándar, es un alumno vago sin mucha ambición por aprender. Si a esto le añadimos que todos disponen de móviles y que usando estos dispositivos en muy poco tiempo pueden tener una tarea hecha, el resultado está claro:

estudiantes que tienden a confiar en la traducción automática como un atajo fácil y que prefieren eso en lugar de esforzarse por entender y expresarse en inglés por sí mismos.

Yo: ¿Cree que esta dependencia afecta la autoconfianza de los estudiantes?

Profesor: Absolutamente. Al depender en gran medida de la traducción automática no conocen su potencial. Además, los estudiantes no se sienten retados a pensar por sí mismos y a afrontar los desafíos del aprendizaje de un idioma. Es que si lo analizas, les impide desarrollar la habilidad de pensar y comunicarse en el idioma de manera autónoma, lo que, a mi parecer, es esencial en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, así que claro que afecta a su autoconfianza.

Yo: ¿Piensa que esto podría influir en su desempeño académico a largo plazo?

Profesor: Creo que a largo plazo, el hecho de no tener estructuras interiorizadas y bien afianzadas por no haber trabajado de manera debida la expresión escrita les afectará en su expresión oral porque tendrán problemas para encontrar las palabras y estructuras que transmitan lo que quieren decir. El resultado no es otro que problemas para comunicarse eficientemente en situaciones del mundo real. Ni que decir tiene que no tener cierto nivel de inglés hoy en día podría impactar también en sus futuras oportunidades educativas y profesionales, ya que el dominio del inglés es esencial en muchos campos.

Yo: Volviendo a su metodología de enseñanza, ¿qué tipo de actividades desarrolla?

Profesor: Integro actividades que requieren el uso del idioma de manera práctica y creativa, como debates, presentaciones y proyectos, en los cuales se ven obligados a trabajar con la tecnología. También enfatizo la importancia de comprender el contexto y la cultura asociados con el idioma, que son aspectos que a menudo se pasan por alto si se depende únicamente de la traducción automática, para ello me apoyo mucho de material audiovisual. Mmm... muchas actividades en parejas para que haya cooperación, intercambien puntos de vista y aprendan unos de otros... Esto da buenos resultados porque en pequeños grupos sienten menos presión si se equivocan y participan más que cuando se trata de actividades de la clase entera.

Yo: ¿Anima a los estudiantes a confiar más en sus habilidades lingüísticas y menos en las herramientas tecnológicas? O ¿pone en práctica estrategias específicas para contrarrestar esta dependencia tecnológica?

Profesor: Trato de fomentar el uso de recursos tecnológicos de manera equilibrada, pero siempre hago hincapié en que ellos deben ser autosuficientes. Siempre les pongo el mismo ejemplo, les hago ver que al igual que un profesor no necesita de ordenadores, ni soportes para dar su clase porque con ellos mismos se bastan, lo mismo les ocurre a ellos, no necesitan de herramientas extras para redactar un texto porque en su interior tienen recursos.

Eso sí, en ningún momento adopto una postura detractora de la tecnología. Tiene sus ventajas y desventajas como todo, por eso es necesario saber emplearla.

Yo: De los resultados de la encuesta realizada, un mayor número de profesores piensan que presenta más desventajas que ventajas y que no tiene cabida en el aula. ¿Cree que hay alguna manera de mitigar las desventajas o este impacto negativo del que hablábamos y aun así aprovechar estas herramientas en el aula de inglés?

Profesor: Yo no soy partidario de que utilicen la traducción automática los estudiantes de secundaria, pero es una realidad que está presente. Entonces quizás deberíamos plantearnos su incorporación de una forma controlada y guiada. No se trata de prohibir la traducción automática por completo, ni de permitir carta blanca, sino que ante todo se trata de buscar un balance que garantice el aprendizaje del alumnado, o sea, tareas que fomenten el aprendizaje y la aplicación activa del idioma.

Por decir algo... a lo mejor podríamos utilizarla como una herramienta de apoyo ocasional... como para revisar un texto que hayan escrito y extraer diferencias entre ambas versiones.

Yo: ¿Cree que tendría acogida este planteamiento?

Profesor: Por lo que me comentabas, según la estadística, el número de profesores que ven o vemos más inconvenientes que ventajas es muy grande. Para que pueda tener una buena bienvenida sería necesario cierta formación en la que se exponga al profesorado cuáles son las ventajas de emplearla, los límites que habría que establecer y sobre todo cómo aplicarla correctamente en el aula.

Yo: Efectivamente. En la encuesta también se preguntaba si se había recibido formación en este ámbito y en caso negativo si se deseaba recibir. Las respuestas eran sí, no o me es indiferente. El “sí” representaba poco más del 50% y se habían marcado tanto el no como el me es indiferente. ¿Qué opina de estos resultados?

Profesor: Lo ideal sería estar abierto a recibir formación y una vez que se tiene el conocimiento ya se puede decidir de forma objetiva si se quiere emplear en el aula o no. Me sorprende que el porcentaje de “sí” haya sido tan bajo, pero para nada me extraña que haya profesores que tengan una postura firme en el “no”, porque este posicionamiento lo observamos en los departamentos en el día a día con profesores que no quieren hacer proyectos y que son reacios a la tecnología.

Yo: Entiendo. Bueno, esto es todo. Gracias por su tiempo y por la disposición para compartir su perspectiva conmigo. Ha sido bastante interesante escucharle y conocer su postura porque da voz a muchos de los profesores que han contestado la encuesta.