Interviewer: The first thing I wanted to ask you was, and to tell us, each one of you, a story or something that you remember that it was impactful for you as a sort of warm up about technology or automation or machine translation. It can be an anecdote it can be an experience that you can remember that is in a way memorable for you. Don't think too much about it just spontaneously, if you can.

Noah: I have something I can start if you…

Interviewer: Yes, please.

Noah: One thing that always comes back to my mind is when I did my masters in the Netherlands in 2016. It was a masters relatively close to computer science. But since I came from the language site I couldn't get into computer science. So I did what was most related to it, because, as everyone told me, it will not be good to just have studied languages, so you need to have a computational background as well. So I did the studies called Information Sciences, which was quite heavily IT actually. And there I was at the Symposium in Tilburg, in the Netherlands once, and someone told me very clearly that translation and translators will not be needed in 5 years. So that was 2016. And that would have been yeah, 21, basically. And that was really impactful for me because I was about to start as a freelance translator. And this person basically told me you have 5 years to do that. And I was not sure whether I believe him, but I thought then, even if that's true, then I will still at least have done for 5 years. But I really like to do so. I still gave it to go, and to this day I'm very happy that I did make that decision and not abandon ship back then, and it's still going strong. I'm just in my most successful year this year. So I'm very happy. But just this anecdote really made an impact on me, and it gave me also kind of more critical thinking for the future to not believe just what anyone is saying.

Antonio: Yeah, I could say the same thing. But if you just rewinding a few years back, even when statistical machine translation was in place I did a training ship on the European Commission back in 2002 and that was the first time, actually, I had just finished my degree, that was actually the first time that I did some real work with my hands and put on some actual translation projects. And that's what I met Trados for the first time. So saw how it worked everything, and we happened to have the mastermind behind Systrans, and in place, he was working there at the time and there was. He was developing machine translation, and since I was of the geek side on the geeky side of translators, my head of unit when I was working, took me to meet this guy and just started showing me how they did that, how they fed machine translation engine with rules and with language algorithms. And this trying to make, to put some sense out of the output. It was only between French and Spanish back in the day and I believe that he, even himself, he was really enthusiastic about it. But the question he also replied to my question, even if I didn't give it, say will these eventually replace translators? Yes, don't be afraid that I mean, no matter this technology, Systrans, or very early stages, and this will, of course, be perfected. It will improve beyond anything we can imagine, as it has, now. But there was still some reading between the lines that no machine will be ever able to understand about language, about this untouchable side of the language, the cognitive process that goes behind it, that will. And that was 21 years ago, 22 years ago. The same motif is still valid today, but that really gave me some assurance on the path that I was starting to follow as a translator and as a language professional. So this was the first impact. Then I really tried to, not because I was afraid, because I was curious about the technology. I started to dig deeper into it. And I started to truly understand how CAT tools and how machine translational work, how technology apply to language works, and that has granted me different level of curiosity towards my profession and that has allowed me to do some really interesting stuff. Right now, besides being a localizer, I'm also a technology trainer. But I'm on different sites of the game. I enjoy a privileged view of it. But again, I'm sure that this will take us to different places, but I'm confident that we will still be there, regardless of the hype about technology and the different stakeholders involved. We are still here. We are still required.

Martín: Laia, do you want to go ahead?

Laia: Yeah. Well, mine is actually trying to go back to... what Ana was requesting, how it resonates. I mean I think I was still a student or my student year in Dublin that a teacher said that machine translation I remember that stuck in my head, that machine translation would only work if in a very tailor made context as in a very specific context, and as in the weather and news for French Canadian TV, where they had to switch from English French constantly, maybe it's a topical thing. Maybe it was a stereotype that cannot that gave me faith, or, as you know, some kind of confidence in. And this is very old a very old memory that I'm probably all that come up later on. But now this thing about the weather channel was kind of, okay, yeah, it's Canadians, you know. And because that's so specific and sentences. And are, you know, so repetitive. So I don't know if it was machine translation, or they were really dealing with translation memory, really, you know. But they were talking about machine translation all the time. So you know, that was the real kind of and the question in the class. And we were still working on paper, you know, like we still translated on paper. So that kind of spontaneously, you know.

Martín: Okay, so what comes from our mind is something similar to what Noah said, but from a different perspective. I remember, was like 2010 or 11. And there is this technologist here in Argentina that is always predicting what is going to happen in the future. And so, during an interview for television, he said, he placed a translation like in the in the first place of professions that you don't say your children to study you, and because those are going to disappear. And so at the time I was head of the technology, the translation technology committee at the Buenos Aires translation association, so we challenged him to. Okay. So in how many years, do you think we have left? 10 years, he said, back then, and so we challenged him, and he didn't accept our challenge. But what this got me thinking. And I always think about this is the fact that we, as a profession in general, we need to be more clear about what we do, because there is a I think this is general idea of what translation is, which is not true. So that's why you always have people say, now you're going to disappear, because now, if I go to another country and I need to order something in Starbucks, I don't need a translator. Well, you never needed a translator or interpreter to do that. So, and that is not going to be the case. But I think that is also our fault, and I have two small things, if I may. One is very, very recent, and is that I was at a Conference, a student’s conference, here in Argentina and I asked there were like 350 students, and I asked them if they ever heard in class that the translation was going to disappear, and almost 200 students raised their hands. Because that's what their teachers are telling them in the classroom. So that's weird and for my presentation there I showed them 250 a question that I asked ChatGPT about our future, and ChatGPT itself said, that It doesn't know if it's actually going to replace us and we're always going to play a role. Maybe so it after reading ChatGPT answer, I was like, Hmm! This guy knows more about a feature than we know. Because he was giving me a reply that is like a credible reply, because there is no really way of knowing how this is going to be in the future, but it when you go and check with professors at the classroom. They all, many of them already say, no, you're going to disappear. You're going to become a teacher, which is actually weird, because if translators disappear, I think that language teachers will disappear also. So but that's I think it has to do with the fact that we don't. And we're not very good as a profession telling everyone what we do, actually. So that's what this is. Like, I have this idea of. Yeah, you're going to disappear. But you don't really know what we do. So how can you say that we're going to disappear? So that's what came to mind.

Antonio: Yeah, I think we had practically the exact same words at the panel we had I had with Noah a few weeks ago we were talking about this exactly, and we are very poor at selling ourselves at explaining what we do. We have a poor elevator pitch, and we really need to improve that we have a better understanding of what we do.

Martín: Totally agree, totally agree with that.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. In this focus group, I wanted to talk about how automation has modified several aspects of the profession: the work environment, the person, the people that work, the actual product that we work with. And so the first question I wanted to ask is, you all have a lot of experience in translation, so you have seen the development of automation with CAT tools to machine translation and neural systems ChatGPT. Can you explain how this automation has changed the work environment. Anything from now people work remotely, I'm just giving a very simple example. But in your opinion, how the work environment, in comparison to when you started, has changed if we compare it to now.

Antonio: Okay, if I may start, I think that several years ago things were done in a more straightforward manner. There was more artisanal way of doing things where you know the usual email thread just exchanging files and doing your process. Each translator or each project have its own process. And over the years translation technology has not entirely taken over, but has a very relevant place in all translation processes and the trend. And that's clear to all of us that the trend is trying to centralize all the different services and tools into a single platform. The TMS, translation management systems, are now offering well file management their assignments to translators, the pool of translators is managed from within the TMS. Very often more often than not, the TMS offers an online editor, so the CAT tool actually is embedded in the in the TMS, the QA checks. All of these things were done separately were with using different tools and different processes, and now everything is mostly provided, especially by big agencies and corporate LSPs. They're providing all the tools. The downside to it is at the most noticeable thing from a freelancer's perspective is that the translator self is no longer the owner of their own work. So everything lies on the LSP side and technology is facilitating this swift towards the middleman. So actually, it's not on the client side, the material. So all the repository of information, knowledge, and tools is more often, more and more often on the LSP side particularly when they buy or they develop their own translation management systems. The long-term fear is that you rely too heavily on a single tool or a single platform, combining all these tools whenever the owner of that tool decides to switch off or anything, you are no longer allowed to access your own work, access your… something that should be your property. That's one of the things that we spoke, not really often when it comes to technology, the ownership of the work, and that's one of the most significant things that's the solid the elephants in the room that nobody talks about when talking about all the advantages that technology brings, and all the how productivity boosts and so on. But yeah, but in the end, the end of the day, how do I demonstrate what I've been working on the last few years. We usually keep copies physical offline copies of our own work safety when, especially at early stages since we have to demonstrate to new LSPs we want to work with what we've done, even if there are some parts under a non-disclosure agreement. But I find myself we often right now I have a steady line of pipeline of projects and collaborations happily, but if I might said that I no longer do offline copies of my work because everything is stored online. And if that providers that technology provider decides to switch off block me from accessing my own work, I can no longer demonstrate what I've done over the last few years, and that's something that really should be brought on.

Martín: Yes, I can say from my part. As I'm especially thinking about direct clients, so I can offer a different approach to this. I also work with LSPs as well, but I think it might be better if I focus on this, at least on this question. I think there is a much more automation in the whole process, not only during the translation itself, but what I've noticed from when I started back in 2007 and today is that all, all software that I use starting from the OCR software to come to change PDFs into Word and the I don't know the quality assurance software, the terminology software, everything has improved as in a way that has made things much easier you can actually make now much more with your time. And I find that I'm always… in the past I would I would spend, I don't know, maybe a whole day or two days preparing a Word document, because it wasn't a really good original and I had to work with that, and I would spend like a whole day or two days working with the with the OCR. And now I think that's the most valuable part, because what I do is those things are already much more prepared even in subtitling. No, I also work a lot of with subtitling. I think that this software itself has improved a lot. I also, I use Ooona now. But I've been working in subtitling since subtitle workshop, so I think that there's been a great improvement. And now you can actually focus more on the translation itself. And that's what I always teach to my students that you need to be like a technologically savvy. So you can focus most of your time translating, researching and that's what I what I found the most interesting part about the automation that has been going through these last years.

Laia: That’s very interesting that you brought that up. I find that these platforms from LSPs and everything is… the glossaries and everything is connected saves you a lot of time, maybe doing the research, maybe… paradoxically. Sometimes there's not much time devoted to updating a glossary and you end up doing more side. You do a lot of side jobs that are still quite rudimentary sometimes, to my surprise, and even though it's highly, dense, you know. Then, you know, you get this platform where you actually have all, supposedly all the materials you need to work on a text on a specific file. Having said that we went through now, before we had 3 step translation, editing, proofing, or quality control everything inside, on-site or in-house as it was my case, and we tend to reproduce that on a freelance basis for a few years and I notice now that there's a lot of paperwork at least on my end. I find a lot of checklists and I find a lot of automated stuff that you know. I get a report afterwards which I will usually run myself [..] So there's a lot of because it's less personal cause we don't talk to the translator directly anymore, or with that translation lead, or because there's always the middleman, you know, in my case I find that there's a loss of control sometimes in quality, which at the end of today is what these LSPs you know hope to have control on, and so that the costs are increasingly, you know, over time. So the small reports there's more back and forth. Sometimes the paperwork is exhausting. So I have a mixed view, as you said, you can focus more on language, but sometimes you have to pay so much more attention to reports and to paperwork, that what you wish to have sometimes is a quiet day with a small translation and a small, you know a short conversation with the reviewer which has happened to me translating a small piece, and being an email with a with the reviewer or with the reviewer or translator, and discussing a term, like a medical term that still happens with some small clients. Now they don't work, and they offer you a license they do offer you a glossary. But you still have some traditional, you know, work to do with the text. So it is nice to have. You know, the small scale and also the typically super control. You know everything in one platform environment. But nothing is perfect. You know. Low scale is always has more control. You have more control on the final outcome when it's a small scale. That's my… at the end of the day. That's my conclusion, really. But of course we work with large files or with large projects with lots of handouts, you know, and so every case is different. Every case is special and every part of work has its own reality. So I find that less personal and a bit less control sometimes, even though the small technology more supposedly helping us to work better and faster.

Martín: Yeah, can I say something? Yes, related to what you were saying, Laia. I what I see in in subtitling when working for media localization companies. What you say is very, very true, because now that technology has evolved and you can pay attention to every single detail, every single frame, every single shot, change everything. It seems like you are spending when you are working for them, more time in having, like a perfect subtitle coming right in after the shot change that than the translation itself. It appears that it's more valuable, more valuable to have that than have a good translation. Luckily it doesn't happen, or it doesn't happen to me with direct clients. I mean, when you are working directly with a production company and all that. In the case of translation or with a legal firm. In the case of legal translation, those things doesn't happen. That's why I focus on that in my answer.

Noah: so interesting to listen to all of you. I purposely wanted to go last, because I think I do have the least experience, and I must say not that much. Honestly, this year with GenAI is the first time that technology really changed my work flow. Beforehand everything I learned at University now 7 years ago is still the workflow that I use today. We studied how to use the CAT tools I use now, how to use the subtitle tools I use now MT literacy, when to use MT when not, so my workflow now is still the same as in the beginning. The only thing that I do now incorporate is GenAI with for very specific use cases where I'm very careful with confidentiality issues. But it can be super useful just this week, I, to give you a concrete example, I was working for a for a Swiss ski brand, and they developed this new powder that you can wax your ski with and it's quite innovative, because it's in a powdering form and then they marketed it, that it's very good for powdery snow. So I thought there must be some kind of pun there that you can use for a headline with the powder wax in powder snow, and I use ChatGPT to come up with 5 creative headlines, I mix them together, you know, like Frankenstein style, took the best options of all of them, and became an amazing headline that I would never have thought of myself. So I think these use cases. Now is the first time that my workflow really changed, and I'm still not sure when exactly I should incorporate that, and when I even think of it, you know, because usually, when I'm just in my day-to-day workflow, I don't really think of stuff like this, and I would have gone, probably for a generic headline last year, but this year this came out. So there I see a lot of benefits. But my usual workflow still the same.

Laia: Just one small thing about…I'm sorry have you finished, Noah?... about the ownership. I think you are right, Antonio, and we have less ownership as but data safety. I mean that umbrella, you know safety, and you know, protection and all, that kind of gives them LSPs, or big companies an excuse, you know, to retain that job that we spent so long working on especially when you are creative, you know, I know most of us do more technical work you know, well subtitling is creative, sometimes I wonder when you have to delete everything when you hand over files and that that goes under the umbrella of safety protection and the fear of you know…

Antonio: yeah, taking away stuff in the name of safety. Where have I heard that. Right? Yeah, it's a different, completely different scenario. But that's right. And you mentioned the key word for these control, losing control of the process. That's something we need to give a deep thought about.

Interviewer: I was trying to unmute myself. So thank you very much, and for that I was curious now to in line with some of the answers here how the industry in your experience of course, first of all, how it uses machine translation and post editing? Do you get a lot of requests? It's is the bulk of your work, or how is it used? How this use affects the timing, the time pressure, and the pricing. If used.

Noah: Sorry someone go ahead. Someone is speaking.

Laia: When on occasion

Interviewer: Can you come closer to the microphone?

Laia: Okay? Yes, I was so close to the camera.

Interviewer: It is a bit far.

Laia: Yeah, yeah. My voice is… I don't think the bulk of my reviewing jobs is machine translated usually to jump, just not allowed even to touch some of the some of the machine translated because it's already reviewed beforehand. But if you do, you have to be extra careful as such. What I when I get those, it's usually for medical devices and well, you find stuff still, you know, that fits in. In in terms I don't. Well, in terms of timing is never enough, you know, cause it's quite well designed in my experience from this particular client and they tend to be you know they take into consideration that we may need to spend a bit longer. But I have space for queries and all that. But it I don't think if you work extensively in machine translation post-editing, this happens, and it goes to translators or reviewers disadvantage. I listened to Grogan yesterday talking about copywriting and AI generation in terms of literature and stories and all that, and they were mentioning: Oh, we were so worried about music a few years ago, about pirating people, you know, downloading music free and all that, and then Spotify, came up. And all these platforms. So we music survives because of concerts and because of Spotify and similar platforms, but they're getting very little. So they're getting paid less than when they used to sell CDs and all that. So would that be the future of translation. Now I don't know the future of translation, but they were saying. Okay, if it has to be at the very low and flat price is sad. So I wonder sometimes if translation would survive, and by being undervalued or underpaid. And that's what I tend to see. Big, big companies probably not paying what they use what used to be considered a not a good rate very reluctant to. So maybe they spend more time or more resources and more money fixing things afterwards. But that's an eternal question, you know, I'm more in favor of streamlining, so, I mean, translation and recycling. And but you know. So sometimes paying less, it's gonna cost you more. You know, eventually. So a lot of paperwork, as I said again, and less control and less communication, you know, one to one, and that depersonalizes the process of it. So yeah. Economically, it's not part of my income, you know, to talk about, yeah, machine translation post-editing is really giving me, you know, I'm not, I mean, I'm not, it's not relevant. But it could be 10 or 20% of what I read, and sometimes you're not even touching it. It's just locked content. So no, it's good […]

Noah: But I feel like I feel like medical devices is not a good use case for machine translation. How is the quality there?

Laia: No, yeah, clinical trials even. […]

Antonio: Press the wrong button [He laughs]

Noah: But that is, you know, that is where we sometimes have to educate the clients as well. Like has happened many times forward that I got an offer for. Well, I do it for two clients machine translation post editing, one for a direct client and one for an end client through an agency, and the one with the agency, it happens quite often. Well, happen a few times this year that they would send me a request for a machine translated text, and I wrote them back that this use case is definitely not suited for that. So I highly recommend for them to order proper translation, and they always did so in that case, they understood why me, as the expert, would advise them to go otherwise and if they still want it, I always charge it by the hour, same as a normal proof reading job and then, in a way, it doesn't matter for me whether a translator did it or a machine. For me. It's a normal proof reading. It takes me as long as it takes. I charges them as much as it takes, and for the direct client actually, it was sort of based on my recommendation, because I realized that they came to me, and they said, we need another workflow, we spend too much on localization. So I realized either I propose a solution to them and keep them as my client, or I will lose them. So there is… I advise them on a, on a good tool to buy and to implement and make very custom for them. And now I'm still there referred service provider just as a as an editor now. Still charge my direct lines rate. So in that case it worked out. But of course it's by far not the same quality that I can provide with the translation from scratch.

Laia: Hmm.

Antonio: Same happens in. I think that there's a big difference between those, even if you work within an LSP, I mean a given account we call, so you've been working for a certain project for an end client through an LSP for some time and for years and they apply machine translation to it, but they are more receptive to changes. They will not change the model. Okay? And obviously, the bigger the end client, the more resources they devote to perfecting the machine translation output and to listen into the feedback. They have a bigger language team to take care of it there is a polishing, rounding the edges, but the long term, the danger, which is very real now, is that the default move for many LSPs, for small clients for small stand-alone projects, for you know, the small clients and the small companies that they require language services and those LSPs, they offer by default the machine translation as a solution. But those untrained machine translation engines are more times than not suitable or at least they offer a very poor output and then the translator or the reviewer, post editor, or the reviewer are in charge of correcting the machine. That is something that even it on one side the rates are lower, and that's I mean that’s the truth. That's the case for 98% of the cases they use that as a business model to save some pennies on their side. You might be able to work faster, but the output is more mechanical. The solutions, the corpus of the linguistic solutions you deploy into an output into a text are way more limited, if you use machine transition as a base because creativity is just limited to just fixing stuff, I mean, even if it's just fairly understandable. But for the rate you're getting you just go with it. So you do not push your creativity to the places where you would if it is you were to translate from scratch and for a proper rate. That's obviously one of the I mean, that's a 2 tail snake. So one side to get the default business model that requires you to work faster for lower rates, and that forces you to provide per output because you do not enjoy the process on one side and because I think, even if it's the trending business model right now, because it's being pushed by the bigger LSPs. And now most of the competing. I mean the competing LSPS, particularly those smaller, are forced to embrace the same business model machine transition percept team to do that which leads to hiring translators who do not have such a discerning eye for quality, for detail, because those who have it, they require that they demand higher rates and they say, okay, my the end client is now used to pay to pay these rates, so we will no longer be able to offer those rates to in translators. So that's a never-ending loop which ends up profiting the middlemen actually, because the translator is asking to perform more even if the poorer the in qualitative terms, that part of the language, the quality of the language output is not measurable, that they are the non-measurable parts are not relevant today, and clients because they only think about the money they will save with one solution or the other. That's not the case for many and clients. And that's not the case for smaller LSPs or well-educated corporations that really listen to it, okay? I'm not making a general case out of all big companies or corporations are evil, and they just trying to squeeze every penny out of the out of the this business model. But there is an impact on the quality. There is an impact on the default business model that is being applied by your average translation company. And that's something that we are seeing the consequences. And that's something that we also discussed in the panel in Brussels that the average quality of the output is feeding the same machine translation engines that. So it's impoverishing the quality that we will use as the baseline in the near future for future machine translation post editing jobs. That's there is a decreasing degree of quality of language and the financial element to it is it's really key to it, because otherwise, when, in the rare cases where an end client is willing to use machine translation, but they really listen to you, and they cater and say, okay, that's not suitable for this use case, I mean medical device, I mean, if you really mess up with the translation on one button, you can have dire consequences. But sometimes they just want a quick translation. They just need to comply with some ISO norm that forces them to publish their material in all the languages where they have a market for and they really do not care. So there are two degrees of quality degrees and two levels of requirement. And unfortunately, machine translation is pushing a few clients, not all of them, by pushing some end clients who were previously on the quality side of things, towards the quick side of the quick way of doing business and that's detrimental to the profession of translation and to the language industry model that…

Martín: I think there's a big question for the future, Antonio, with the fact that are people going to accept that bad quality of translation and take it as a norm in all, I think it applies to all areas. In my case, regarding this question, I wanted to say, that I haven't had any cases of direct clients asking for a discount, or whatever, or using or correcting or post-editing machine translation. I would like to talk about that with Noah in the future. Maybe, because he mentioned that he has some clients that did that. And it's very interesting. I do with. When I work with LSPs, I work mostly with small companies. I work. My most of my clients are in the United States, and those are local companies serving local clients. So in those cases, I've never had, to this day, a one single project in when they would ask for machine translation. I know many companies do, but in my case they did not offer. And here, in the case of Argentina, at the at the price that they're offering some companies like, Antonio said, I would never accept a project for machine per stating for one cent the per word. So I think that even if offered that I would never accept it. But I think that I can reject such a project because I do have an a lot of years of experience, and I live well doing translation, and I have many clients so, and but what I see here, Argentina mostly is that there are very large companies here we have the case of local companies working for another LSP and then working for the end client. So in that case there is lots of machine translation projects and people accepting those projects, projects with one cent of a dollar per word, are students and people, students or translators who have just recently got the degree, and they just wanna make some money with translation and all that. So I think that that is another thing that might probably make quality even worse, just taking the case that Antonio was saying, because if most of the work on machine translation is being done by students here in Argentina or by newbies, so that is going to be, it is going to have a great impact on quality. So that's the situation. My personal situation, also the situation in Argentina. That's what I what I see here and there. And the companies are doing this. Obviously what I see is that there's one thing that is very weird to me, and is that when you check on I don't know the Nimzi top 100 companies, and you see that every year all the tech companies make more money and they pay less to translators. So I don't think that what they're paying to translators correlates with the fact that maybe end clients are paying less for translation. I don't. I don't. Maybe there are some cases in which that happens, and I know. But there is even one company in Argentina that not did not make it to the list, but it's on the watch list 2022, and you know, here in Argentina our currency is very devaluated, so for a company in Argentina to make it to $10,000,000 of revenue in 2022. That's a lot of money. So I think that they're paying way less to translators. But I don't know if that correlates with what they're charging to the client.

Laia: What's what? Now you mentioned that, Damian. What seems to be happening as well is that and you. You get high in volumes, you know, these companies get huge projects, and they can make so much more by just reducing a cent per word or a cent per hour, a dollar per hour if you pay in hours, and that is so tempting. So yeah, I suppose we are confronted with something, I'm sorry about using metaphors, but it's like low cost fashion, or low cost or fast food, or something. You know, when you're eating a hamburger in a given place. It's not gonna taste the same as if you buy meat on your local butcher. So it's the same, it's the same for translation. I mean, they only adjust things, I suppose, and it will take them another 5 to 10 years to realize that if you're a smaller company and you really specialize on curating, you know, as they often use this word for art, and you know, for really looking after a certain group of clients and other people are asking you for fast, quick and super. You may work for Microsoft, or you may work for you know, big Hardware Company, who only cares about having a good marketing text, and the rest is just according to why, yeah. So as Antonio has mentioned, you know, because that gives you money to sustain yourself and to be on top of things. First, you have to, as you said, is not ethical, you know, pay less and less and less every year to learn more and more. That's how capitalism works, anyway, in other aspects. So maybe in translation and those companies who are the middleman they have to rethink what the priorities are, because we have to sell ourselves, as you said better, but we also have to see where we want to spend more time, or how we how creative, we want to be, what percentage of our day or of our month is for literature or for being creative and what percentage for reviewing something someone else is translated. Would some, it might reduce machine translation, post-editing experience way. I think it's faster to work with memories. But I am quite old-fashioned. So I'm probably not I still haven't really seen first place translation machine translated, or it was machine translated and I didn´t realize it. So you know. But I am in favor of hearing translation memories and obviously we always, you know, I'm raised on Trados. I mean, we wouldn't live without any, you know segments I mean segment based CAT tool nowadays. But quality at the end of the day is the answer. And but everything that Martín said is really is sad and tragic. Because it's happening in all levels of society in all companies, and, you know, walks of life.

Antonio: Yeah, that's again just getting back to what Martín said. I mean, what if McDonald’s becomes the standard quality for meat. That's it. That's what machine translation raw output becomes the standard quality level for any language user. That is any average citizen everyone.

Martín: what I think that we come back with this with to the market side of translation as a profession because if you can say Hey. you don't you? Not all translators do McDonald’s. There are translators, and in that cases in which translation is needed, and that's I loved what Noah said before about educating the client and saying, Hey, you cannot, you need you should not do machine post-editing for this case because of this, and because of that. And even in some cases talking about the legal problems that may arise because some clients might not know it might not know that if you put some text in Google or DeepL or ChatGPT, whatever they would take that information. So I think that that's also a challenge for us as professionals…

Noah: To market your services right? Because it's there's it's a supply and demand. That's that says it's all. They only offer these 2 cent jobs because people accept them right, even though it's not feasible. But it's also not feasible to fly from Brussels to Madrid for €30, but it still exists. Right? So you get what you buy. So if I pitch to a client, and at this project obvious myself to show credibility to be the expert, so they are willing to pay premium for a premium service, and I get that's hard. But I try to communicate as much as possible on my channel, and I think it's starting to work out for more people as long as people accept rates that the jobs offers will come in.

Interviewer: I was going to ask about quality, but I think you have all mentioned this in the last question, so I am aware of the time. And so I wanted to ask you what in your experience are the new emerging roles that you have seen because of automation in translation or emerging roles or even workflows.

Noah: You mean. Hmm. One thing for me specifically, that I that I started to implement. I said this at the Forum as well. I start to work now with a few of my clients, even pre copy creation. So in the in the creation of the copy workflow because then I can already tell them you know, when they write the copy, how they should address the Swiss audience, because, especially in winter sports, which is one of my closest, my biggest area. It's very different how you speak to Swiss people or to German people, even though it's the same language. But there's a different emotion in the language. So I market myself now as a language consultant as well, in a way that I can collaborate with my direct lines before they even write the marketing copy. So that's a… I'm not sure how this it's is tied to technology. Maybe it isn't. It's just an evolution that I have I am going through this.

Antonio: Yeah, I think that's a key part to what we do now. Some… even you. You can even leverage the job request to use machine translation or even to use this uneducated requests to for you to show your actual skills. And, for example, if you structure your feedback, you provide feedback in an educate it in a structured way to your end client or to the LSP, to your project manager, and show that you're really willing to help from mere translator or post editor, you can become a proper language consultant and that may involve even glossary making, just writing down instructions for a project for other linguists that might involve just polishing the QA process and saying what's useful and what's not and you can wear different hats. And it's really difficult to put a name on these. But even just leave aside all the labels. But obviously we're going beyond the one task, the one man task translator and go into [..]. I I'd like to tag myself as a translator. But obviously, a translator nowadays, does a lot more things that translator used to do but to 20 or 30 years ago. And that's again, opportunities. These are not empty words. Because on one side, yeah, the capitalism is always selling the word opportunities have these opportunities for them means now, productivity means cost cutting solutions to get more money in spite of the quality more often than not, but from our humble side what we can do is just take advantage of how poorly some of these solutions are devised or how careless the end client approaches the translation process and help them understand better and help them structure the way you would like to see things or things are done. So I find myself just instead of complaining. I work for some big corporations, corporate LSPs. Luckily I have been working several years for some accounts which are very stable, and I received work on a regular basis, and they listen to you. They really want to, of course, they have the usual corporate pressure on rates and prices. And so, but if you show yourself that you're providing value to them. And again, these are not empty words, that you are helping them improve their public image, improve the way they do things, and improve the way your colleagues do their part, they will ask you to for additional tasks which are better paid, and a translator magically becomes a language consultant and starts doing the more interesting stuff, because again I do occasionally some post-translating, I try to avoid it. But I do a lot of review on post editing and I try to provide feedback on it. Obviously you do not do that for a €30 job. Let's just say it's for a quick for a quick job. But if you're involved, if they're actually involved in a long term project you have a unique chance to just show what's working and what's not, and try to perfect the process went for yourself because that's going to get back to you and help you raise your professional profile, become a more useful piece of the of the whole workflow and the whole process. And that's something that obviously you will not be able to do if you simply sit and complain about technologies taking over, you just do something about it. The corporations are always going to push, try to push and squeeze. So I mean, that's history. And that's capitalism at the best. So we need to play a part but do it from an educated way, meaning that we have the tools, we have the knowledge to show what's working and what's not that I think that's our chance to prove our value.

Laia: Yes, I agree with Noah and Antonio in that advising or providing advice consulting, I mean, language consulting, so consulting for how can we design these and quality control process, how can we improve it. Now I Find myself doing that, and more often than not, and in in a large for large projects or for large accounts that happens every now and again, you know, you get the odd query as well. And you think, Oh, this is, you know, a query, for you know something so and so they're not. They're permeable like they're not, you know. Yes, it's a lot of money, and because it specifically for big, big, big, big, huge accounts that have many divisions. Sometimes they do prioritize, they have level a category of quality 4. Then they have degree 5. Category 5. You can use neutral errors. You can improve that category 4. Just don't worry, don't waste your time improving the sentence. Don't, don't, don't make it sound nicer. It's not necessary, so they all have their own internally, and of course they asked us to do that, and you know, and that's why not? Because I suppose what I'm worried or what would be worried about, and, as Martín said, is, is who's at the end of the chain of the process, how we can of well as Noah is younger, and he had a jump start there. And you know sometimes when you get direct clients you have a completely different experience. But when you work in house, and you find a different account and you're you work with different texts. And things, it can get too big. So when from an old fashion point of view now I see how smaller companies sometimes provide data quality because they focus on different type of materials, and they will never work for Amazon, or they will never work for, you know, big hardware companies or phone companies, because that is not about quality only it's about volume, and they cannot handle that or ignore and the output every day. So I suppose there's a market… niche for everyone, and we have to find our place as well as providers of these experience and knowledge. But yeah, yeah, we have to be optimistic.

Martín: I don't know if I'm not going to talk about as new positions, new roles, in a way, but I do think there are 2 points that I want to make here. The first one is something that we always knew, and it was always there, the fact that you need to be a translator specialist. And I think that now, that is most relevant than ever. When I when I talk with my students, I say, okay, now, you need to need you need to be the best version that you could ever be of a translator, you know. I think that maybe 20 years ago, 30 years ago, you could go ahead and make a living of translation without having any specialization in any field. And I think that now that's just not possible, even if you are interested in audio visual translation. Maybe now you need to focus on dubbing, but not in subtitling at the same time, or in subtitling, but not in dubbing or game localization in particular, so maybe in the past you would do subtitling, dubbing and accessibility, or whatever. And now I think that the main point for the future is to have a specialization more than ever, and to be clear with what you are so now is not a matter of having many different roles. But if you, if there is a specific IT machine translation project in which there is post-editing needed, then people need to know that you are the expert in the subject, and that you can give the final word for what a good translation is, and what a good and what can be used in specific context, and that is only going to happen if you and if a translator, we move away from this glossary mind that we used to have in the past and become people who really know what they're translating in one or two areas. So that's one side and the other side is with them, with direct clients. And here I concur with what everyone was saying, with the fact that if you provide language solutions, and you are not just a translator of Spanish into English or whatever that client is not only going to rely on you for everything related with one specific project, but also it's going to recommend your services and it's going to ask you for translation, even when it's a translation from German to Spanish, and they know that you are not a German translator. But you can provide a solution for them, and not only with that in my field audiovisual translation, I've worked with film festivals, for instance, in which you do a translation, but you also need to go to the festival, be there, help them, give them some advice on, because sometimes movies come with subtitles, but they do not follow any rules. So yeah, you need to be able to say, Hey, those subtitles cannot be shown. And this is true for many other areas. So it's not limiting yourself to. Okay, I will do the translation. I would charge you this. But also this is like a translation is now more like a whole process, and you can offer many things solutions in related to the translation itself. So I think that's if you, if people are interested in working with direct clients that can be a way of having more clients in the future, too.

Interviewer: I don't know how you are doing for time. I have only 2 more questions left. If you need to go, let me know.

Antonio: Yes, actually, unfortunately, had to pick my kid from basketball So I need to leave in just 3 min or so.

Noah: So I have. I have 5 more.

Interviewer: Yeah. So I asked the 2 questions and you can address them quickly, or maybe you don't want to address them. One I think I ask him the questionnaire, which was, Where are the immediate challenges? In your view, with regards to automation and your profession and the other one, maybe more sideways is if gender because of the increasing technological advances. If you see that gender, because translation was traditionally a profession that women had, if these technological advances are changing, this gender construct and this it's not going to be only like a profession where mainly women were doing.

Antonio: To the first question, I think we have already addressed it. With regards to gender, luckily the society is changing the paradigm of gender and the gender bias is changing. And I wouldn't say that technology is enabling this, but it is just aligning with the current social trend. So everything, obviously, the big companies and the technology providers are aligning with that requirement from the whole society to address gender bias, not particularly because women have been predominant in this business, they still are. But I don't think that has anything to do with, because, I mean, the end users, language users are just are from every gender. So I mean we do not think about right now. We are more aware. Obviously, in the last few years we are way more aware of how we use language with regards to the language bias but as language professionals as those bridges between what the client intends to say and what the end user understands. It makes no difference whether technology has a role in it. They are fixing the bias, the gender bias, and that's something that you can see already in the different iterations of Google Translate, Microsoft machine translation and DeepL, they have a lot of goes to work trying to remove the gender bias because it's been so wretchedly denounced by and I'm putting the in the spotlight by different like by people, but end users and associations and everyone. But I don't think that's strictly related to the predominance of women in the language industry. Of course. that has been any enabler for the technology to be reviewed and fixed. But obviously in the long term the technology will become more equalitarian. But also does society. And this technology is just a piece of how we do things and how we live. Usually technology has a really big role in into what we do in our daily lives so happily we're working towards. So we're society where the use of language is now linked to these to this bias. I think that's the natural trend nowadays. We will see more changes in the future. But just like it's language and technology are always evolving in the same way along the way. So that's. I'm really sorry that I have to leave now. But thank you very much, Ana. Okay, well, enjoy the rest of the conversation. Bye.

Martín: I think you have like, 10 min. So yeah, go ahead.

Noah: Yeah, okay, yeah. I have to be somewhere at 30, so I will soon have to leave, because this event hold is huge. If you want to go somewhere, you have to work for 10 min at least. Yeah, in terms of gender. I mean, I'm used to it. I was one of the only man in my studies right? This system, women dominate this field. But it's also unique. And it's kind of it's fun, right? It's one of the few sectors that the pay gap is actually relatively equal. And there's still more women than men. So I don't think that will change. It also makes sense when you really think about it in terms of just generally, that women are more intuitive when it comes to emotion and reading nuances in text and also in language learning. I think I read once that women like use the language encoding brain when learning languages, whereas men use the more the oral functions at the visual functions. So there's just an innate difference which shows in the numbers. I can't see how that will change with technology, because technology affects every sector where the challenges that I see is more finding back to what's what sets you apart from the from the competition. I go through a lot with young, especially students or young translators when they approach me, and they can't figure out how they can, you know, break into the sector. I try to figure out the added value together with them, but they have what they can bring to the table that the client would be willing to pay for. And I think that is where you can set yourself apart when technology is making everyone kind of the same kind of more average you have to be a step, a step above, and that you can only do with something very specific. So I try to. When people ask me that and try to give them very clear examples like, I say, you know, I go to before I even do any cold email, I reach out to any client, I go on their website, I see if they have a German localized website, and if it's only in German and not for a Swiss audience, then I have an added value, and then I approach them, and I tell them, look, you have a great web shop. But do you know that if you have this localized for Switzerland, you could have way more sales, and that's an added value that I can. I can kind of communicate to the client that the services that they will pay me will kind of pay for themselves, because they will also generate more. So finding the added value is a big challenge has been, but is becoming even more with technology. And with that I leave you. I will send you all connection on LinkedIn, so we can keep in touch.

Martín: Nice to meet you. Bye, bye. Laia, go ahead. Yeah.

Laia: If you're in a rush. I don't have to rush, but in that last…

Martín: I do have another meeting in 10 min. But it's here. It's on Google meet. So I don't need to go anywhere. I just switch this off and go to the other platform. So it's okay.

Laia: Okay. Well, big challenge would be, do more exercise as usual. [She laughs] Don't be sitting for that long. No. I agree with Noah that just being more aware of value we offer with experience and being specialized, or being a specialist in translation would, you know, help us find that that space, that is that really creating in the industry and the last thing that was talked it just slipped out my mind. Oh, yeah, women, gender. Oh, we do not sell ourselves or we are not used to, not everyone, obviously, we tend to be more kind of… on the quiet side of things, I think, or marketing ourselves and to ask for more in term of salary, and the same in terms of rates. I've always quite, I have always stood quite strong on my rates, and I remember losing business because of that for a long time even I don't have any Spanish clients I don't have any Spanish clients anymore, mainly because of the way obviously the rates where I can afford it. A lot of people cannot afford it. So you know. It is not gender bias, it is industry bias. Well, oh, you're a woman. You work at home. You probably have a husband that you know or someone next to you brings more in, and which is totally false nowadays, that would be again gender bias as well. So it's a lot of work to be done there. As well as many other industries, I suppose, in terms of gender. In terms of working, I work with many PMs who I don't know whether they're female or male because of their names, because they write PhDs in their signature. So yeah, I think I don't know if that answers everything.

Interviewer: Yeah. It was more if there is technology place in this gender, because translation is mainly a profession dominated by women, especially in the translation side of things. So if technology will play a part or not.

Laia: Do you think women are less? In general, you tend to see that we are less adventurous or technical, or maybe we tend to be less, to be more reluctant, be more reluctant to recycle in terms of no, no, because technical. But still, yeah, no, I don't know. I wonder sometimes. Maybe it's a personal personality feature. I think, more than a gender bias aspect of a person I'm more technical by nature if I wasn't I like to messing around with. But I wasn't too keen on ChatGPT and all that. I suppose… I played around with technology as anyone, you know. Yes, that's what I that's what I said. I don't. I guess gender bias is because it's me. I'm like that. If I was a man I would I would be curious about it. But I don't know if that extrapolates to how that will affect the female translation, you know, section.

Martín: Okay. So I'm going to talk about this this last part and gender and tech and technology. So I been teaching 2 first year students since 2010. So what I've seen is actually a growth in the in the amount of men young men who want to study translation. I think that when I started I was the only man. But nowadays there are more men in in the classroom. If I think about my students. I don't think that they want to study translation because they I don't know they're super technological and all that. I think that maybe literary translation still plays a role in deciding to study translation and all that. I do have the just a personal case, the case of my nephew, who started studying translation this year because he loves video games and he's very in interested in game localization and all that. And I think that in that particular field translation is something that people talk about all the time when they're watching streamers and all that, and they deal with translation, some of them. So I think that there is maybe there could be a role there. And in the talking about the technological side of things nowadays, I cannot say this about my students 10 years ago or 2 years ago, but nowadays most of the women that study translation are very keen on technology. So and I, since I do have them. In the first year I try to tell everyone that they should, you know, be very focused on learning technology. And in many cases women know more than men about technology. That's what I'm seeing, especially with young students, you know, with a student like 18 year old’s, 19 year old’s, that those are the focus of my areas. And so I think everyone that is involved in translation nowadays knows that technology has a dominant role. So no one can say, okay, I do not like technology, I'm not going to use this or that because they would just be out of job. So I think that everyone, whether they're man or female need to know. That's something they need to master in order to make a living out of translation. So I think, everyone is starting to get aware of that, I believe. And regarding the challenges, what I'm really worried because I was part of a Translators association like 6 years ago, and I'm always with my network, my social networks, and all that. I'm always trying to defend translation. I'm very vocal. And so what I'm really worried about is something that I already said during this meeting is that the fact that I think that the biggest challenge is making a more in in the side of marketing for the profession itself, so that companies can know what's the work that's involved. What goes behind the curtain when you need to translate a movie, a video game, a book whatever it is that a technical device. I do medical translation as well. And I, actually, I just finished working in a biochemistry conference. And so in that case the client knows that they need to hire someone that not only knows English and knows how to make subtitles because it was a conference an online conference, but also that knows about this specific field but I don't think that society as a whole knows the role. I mean, we are in 2023, and people still can´t differentiate between a translator and interpreter. So I think that that's what one of the biggest challenges for and especially in this, is extremely connected with the advances of technology, because if technology moves forward and people start using it without thinking about the consequences, because we, as a profession, fail to communicate those consequences, I think that is not going to be good for anyone. So I think that's what worries me the most. Okay, I have to leave now. Thank you. And it was really nice to meet you.