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**Computer-Assisted Translation and the Evolution of Language
Technologies: The Case of SDL Trados Studio in the Translation of Fashion
Texts into English**

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Abstract (italiano)

L'obiettivo della presente tesi è analizzare come la pratica della traduzione professionale contemporanea non si fondi più esclusivamente sulle competenze linguistiche del traduttore, ma sia sempre più supportata dall'impiego di strumenti digitali, noti come CAT tools (Computer-Assisted Translation tools). In particolare, lo studio si concentra sull'analisi di alcuni estratti di testi di moda, nello specifico descrizioni di capi d'abbigliamento, elaborati nell'ambito di una collaborazione con uno studio di traduzione per un noto brand italiano del settore fashion. Dopo una consistente sezione di inquadramento teorico, nella quale vengono presentate alcune delle principali prospettive sviluppate nell'ambito dei Translation Studies, la tesi si focalizza sui criteri metodologici adottati e sull'utilizzo del software Trados Studio, scelto come strumento CAT per l'analisi. Vengono inoltre riconosciuti i limiti della ricerca, dovuti alla ristrettezza del corpus analizzato e al fatto che le traduzioni sono state realizzate da un'unica traduttrice (la sottoscritta). I risultati evidenziano come l'utilizzo di memorie di traduzione e banche terminologiche contribuisca a garantire coerenza terminologica, uniformità stilistica ed efficienza nel processo traduttivo. Al contempo, emerge il ruolo fondamentale dell'intervento umano del traduttore nel preservare le caratteristiche espressive e comunicative proprie del linguaggio della moda.

Abstract (English)

This thesis was developed with the aim of illustrating how, nowadays, professional translation practice is no longer based exclusively on translators' linguistic knowledge, but is also supported by the use of digital translation tools, commonly referred to as CAT tools (Computer-Assisted Translation tools). Specifically, this study focuses on the analysis of selected excerpts from fashion texts—particularly descriptions of clothing items—which were produced during a collaboration with a translation agency working with a well-known Italian fashion brand. After a substantial theoretical background section, which examines the perspectives highlighted within Translation Studies, the thesis focuses on the methodological criteria adopted and on the use of the software Trados Studio, which represents the CAT tool selected for this analysis. The limitations of the study are also acknowledged, since the analysed corpus is relatively small and the translations are the result of the work of a single translator, namely the author of this thesis. The results show that the use of translation memories and terminology databases promotes terminological consistency, stylistic uniformity, and efficiency in the translation process. At the same time, the importance of the translator's intervention emerges in maintaining the expressive and communicative characteristics typical of the language of fashion.

Abstract (Deutsch)

Diese Arbeit wurde mit dem Ziel verfasst, aufzuzeigen, dass sich die professionelle Übersetzungspraxis heutzutage nicht mehr ausschließlich auf die sprachlichen Kenntnisse der Übersetzer stützt, sondern auch durch den Einsatz digitaler Übersetzungswerkzeuge

unterstützt wird, die als CAT-Tools (Computer-Assisted Translation Tools) bezeichnet werden. Konkret konzentriert sich diese Studie auf die Analyse ausgewählter Auszüge aus Modetexten – insbesondere Beschreibungen von Kleidungsstücken – die im Rahmen einer Zusammenarbeit mit einem Übersetzungsbüro entstanden sind, das mit einer bekannten italienischen Modemarke zusammenarbeitet. Nach einem umfangreichen theoretischen Hintergrundteil, der sich mit den Perspektiven der Translation Studies befasst, richtet sich der Fokus der Arbeit auf die angewandten methodischen Kriterien sowie auf die Nutzung der Software Trados Studio, die als CAT-Tool für diese Analyse ausgewählt wurde. Darüber hinaus werden auch die Grenzen der Studie aufgezeigt, da das analysierte Korpus relativ klein ist und die Übersetzungen das Ergebnis der Arbeit eines einzelnen Übersetzers sind, nämlich der Verfasserin dieser Arbeit. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass der Einsatz von Translation Memories und Terminologiedatenbanken die terminologische Konsistenz, die stilistische Einheitlichkeit und die Effizienz im Übersetzungsprozess fördert. Gleichzeitig wird die Bedeutung des Eingreifens des Übersetzers deutlich, um die für die Sprache der Mode typischen expressiven und kommunikativen Eigenschaften zu bewahren.

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Introduction

Throughout recent years, an impactful transformation of the translation process has been easily observable. The changes in this field have suffered the influence of technological development in digital tools for translation. The introduction of Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools, of translation memories and more recently of machine translation (MT) systems, has not only modified the operative modes of translators, but also the way in which translation has been conceptualized from a theoretical and methodological point of view. In such a context, it can be easily stated that translators do not act exclusively as authors of a text, but they interact with a complex technological ecosystem - made of “archives” that have been previously produced - in a professional way. Moreover, translators have to take into account terminological databases and quality control systems.

The present thesis is thought to analyse this framework of transformation, and is aimed at highlighting the relationship between translation technologies and the decisional process of the translator, focusing particularly on the use of SDL Trados Studios as a CAT tool in the translation of fashion texts from Italian into English. The general goal is to understand how translation memories and other tools used by this software influence the lexical, syntactical and stylistic choices of the translator, contributing at the same time to guarantee terminological coherence and communicative accuracy in the target texts.

From a methodological point of view, this research adopts mainly a qualitative and descriptive approach. In other words, the analysis is based on examples that I collected from my work as a translator during the present year and the previous one, all regarding real descriptions of garments and materials thought for the fashion sector. The attention does not want to measure quantitatively the production of the technological tools, but rather to observe the interaction dynamics between the translator (me) and translation memories. In this way it can be seen how these dynamics orient the decisional process.

The research is based on a wide theoretical framework that draws on Translation Studies, on corpus linguistics and on studies in translation technologies. Among the main theoretical sources that I chose, authors such as Bowler, Bassnett, Toury, Nida and Cook stand out. They have all contributed to the development of the reflections on translation as a cognitive and cultural process. At the same time, the work is based on contributions dedicated to the impact of digital technologies in translation and on the use of tools such as translation memories, corpora and post-editing systems. Corpus linguistics research as well, mostly the one of Baker, constitutes a fundamental reference in order to understand the role of authentic linguistic data as a support for translation choices.

The thesis is structured in three main parts, which all combine theoretical reflection, methodological definition and practical application.

The first part (Chapter 1, 2 and 3) presents the reference theoretical background.

In Chapter 1 translation is analyzed as a cognitive and decisional process, delving into

fundamental concepts such as equivalence, translation loss, translation norms and the role of the human translator in the contemporary context. Furthermore, the main theoretical models developed by Translation Studies will be taken into account, as well as several different perspectives on the analysis and evaluation of translation quality.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the relationship between translation and technology. In this section I will reconstruct the development and the evolution of digital tools used in the translation sector, particularly referring to CAT tools, to translation memories and machine translation systems. In addition, the chapter analyses how these kinds of technologies have eventually modified the workflow and the professional role of the translator.

Chapter 3 faces the theme of corpus translation studies. It will be shown how the development of corpus-based translation and the contributions of corpora as support tools have influenced translation choices: in fact, they are able to provide authentic examples of linguistic use and to guide the translator in the choice of appropriate stylistic and lexical solutions.

The second part of the thesis introduces the methodological criteria of the research.

Chapter 4 defines the type of study that I conducted and describes the object taken into consideration, e.g. the interaction between the translator and the tools (mainly translation memories and termbases) in the context of SDL Trados Studio. In this section I will also elicit the limits of the research and the criteria used for a qualitative evaluation of the translations.

The following chapters (5 and 6) delve deeper into the function of SDL Trados Studio, analyzing its historical development, the main functions and the role of translation memories and termbases in the translation process. The analysis will show how these tools contribute to guarantee terminological coherence and quality assurance in professional translation processes.

The third and final part of my work is dedicated to the practical application and results of the analysis.

Chapter 7 describes the texts that will be later analysed, which consist in materials thought for shop assistants of the brand and characterized by a semi-specialistic language regarding the description of garments, materials and technical characteristics of the products.

Finally, Chapter 8 is the most practical one: here I will provide concrete examples of translations of the type that have been previously introduced, all accompanied by an analytical comment of the translation choices. The analysis highlights how the use of translation memories and termbases influences the selection of equivalences, favors terminological coherence and contributes to keep balance between technical accuracy and promotional style, typical of fashion language.

Overall, this thesis wants to demonstrate how language technologies in translation not only represent simple technical support tools, but also contribute actively in the construction of the translation process. The analysis of the case of SDL Trados Studio applied to the translation

of fashion texts shows how CAT tools can function as an archive made of previous solutions, and also as a real tool that guides the translator in his/her choices. In other words, these tools can integrate terminological coherence, operative efficiency and communicate accuracy.

PART 1 - THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter 1

Translation as a Process: Theoretical Perspectives and Contemporary Developments

1.1 Translation as a cognitive and decisional process

In everyday discourse, translation is frequently perceived as a relatively straightforward act consisting in the transfer of meaning from one language to another. This view is deeply embedded in both common sense and etymology, as the term "*translation*" derives from the Latin *translatum*, from *transfere*, meaning "to carry across," a root shared with the English word "*transfer*" (Cook 2010). Such an understanding presupposes that meaning exists as a stable entity that can be transported intact from a source text to a target text. Within translation studies, however, this assumption has been extensively problematized, and translation is instead conceptualized as a complex and dynamic process involving linguistic, cultural, and cognitive dimensions.

A first step towards understanding translation as a process lies in clarifying its scope. As Bowker observes, although the term "*translation*" is sometimes employed as an umbrella concept to refer to any form of interlingual transfer, in its narrower professional sense it specifically denotes "the transfer of a written message from one language to another" (Bowker, 2010, p. 10). This definition distinguishes translation from interpretation, which concerns the transfer of spoken or signed messages, and firmly situates translation within the domain of written texts. Translation thus entails movement between two languages, conventionally referred to as the source language and the target language, and between a source text and a target text. These notions extend beyond language alone, since "source is used to describe the various elements associated with the starting point of the translation, while target is used to refer to those things associated with the end point" (Bowker, 2010, p. 11), including audiences, purposes, and cultures.

Central to the relationship between source and target is the notion of equivalence. At its most basic level, equivalence may be defined as "the relationship between the original text and its translation" (Bowker, 2010, p. 10). Although source and target texts are generally assumed to be equivalent in some respect, such equivalence is neither automatic nor absolute. Translators do not simply replace individual words in one language with their counterparts in another. Rather, as Bowker emphasizes, "translators are not really translating words. Instead, they are translating the underlying ideas that are being expressed by the words" (Bowker, 2010, p. 16). As a result, equivalence is typically understood at the level of meaning and, in certain cases, at the level of effect, rather than as a strict word-for-word correspondence.

It is precisely this departure from a purely transfer-based conception of translation that allows for a more nuanced understanding of what is commonly referred to as translation loss. As Cook (2010) observes, the idea that translation involves carrying meaning across from one

language to another inevitably entails the recognition that not everything can be transferred unchanged. This awareness has often been articulated in negative terms, most notably through the Italian maxim *Traduttore, traditore*, which frames translation as an act of betrayal. Cook challenges this characterization, arguing that since translation is indispensable for communication between languages and loss is unavoidable, portraying translation as treachery is both “unfair and inaccurate” (Cook 2010). Rather than indicating failure, loss should be understood as an inherent feature of the translation process itself.

Furthermore, loss is not a single or homogeneous phenomenon. It may arise from linguistic factors, such as differences in sound patterns, word order, or grammatical structures, as well as from divergences in the connotations of words that are conventionally treated as equivalents. In other cases, loss results from lexical gaps between languages, as illustrated by the frequently cited example that Russian lacks a direct equivalent for the English word *privacy* (Pavlenko 2005, cited in Cook 2010). Beyond these linguistic constraints, loss may also stem from broader cultural and contextual differences. As a text moves from one cultural environment to another, its significance may shift, and readers of the translation often do not share the same background knowledge as readers of the original text.

If translation were defined strictly as the complete transfer of meaning, Cook concludes, “all translation is doomed to failure, as no translation is complete” (Cook 2010). This apparent impossibility, however, does not undermine the legitimacy of translation. On the contrary, it underscores the necessity of conceptualizing translation as a process of negotiation, interpretation, and adaptation. This process requires translators to balance faithfulness to the source text with sensitivity to the expectations, knowledge, and cultural framework of the target audience. Translation thus unfolds along a continuum ranging from more literal to more free approaches, with translators making informed and context-sensitive decisions at every stage.

From this perspective, translation emerges not as a mechanical operation or a flawed act of transfer, but as a purposeful communicative activity. As Bowker suggests, the translation process may be broadly divided into two main stages: comprehension and production (Bowker, 2010, p. 16). During the comprehension stage, translators decode and interpret the source text, drawing on linguistic competence, subject-matter expertise and research skills. In the production stage, they re-encode the message in the target language, producing a text that is meaningful, coherent and natural for its intended audience. Viewed in this way, translation is best understood as an ongoing process of meaning construction shaped by linguistic choices, cultural contexts and communicative goals.

Building on this understanding of translation as a complex and dynamic process, contemporary translation theory has increasingly moved away from the idea of translation as the mere transfer of stable meaning and towards a view that foregrounds decision-making, cultural embeddedness and functional purpose. One of the earliest and most influential formulations of this shift is offered by Levý, who conceptualizes translation explicitly as “a process of decision-making” in which the translator is “confronted at any moment with a number of possible solutions” and must select one under linguistic, cultural and pragmatic

constraints (Levý 1967/2000). Levý's model highlights the fact that translation unfolds over time and consists of a series of continuous choices, thereby calling into question the notion of a single correct or fully equivalent translation.

This process-oriented perspective is further developed within Descriptive Translation Studies, particularly in the work of Toury, who rejects prescriptive definitions of translation in favour of empirical observation. Toury famously argues that translations should be regarded as “facts of the culture which hosts them” (Toury 1995), emphasizing that they are governed by norms specific to the target culture and historical context. According to Toury, equivalence is not an abstract or universal property, but a relational concept that emerges from actual translational behaviour, as translators operate within a system of expectations that determines what is considered acceptable or appropriate in a given context. This descriptive approach reinforces the view that translation is shaped by external constraints and social conventions rather than by the simple goal of reproducing source-text meaning.

A related reorientation can be identified in functionalist approaches to translation, most notably in Vermeer's Skopos theory. Vermeer places the purpose of the translation at the centre of the process, asserting that “the prime principle determining any translation process is the purpose (Skopos) of the overall translational action” (Vermeer 1989). From this perspective, translation is understood as a form of intentional human action carried out to fulfil a specific communicative function in the target context. Consequently, fidelity to the source text is no longer treated as an absolute requirement, but as one possible priority among others, subordinate to the intended function of the target text. This view closely aligns with the notion that equivalence is not fixed, but variable, depending on the goals and conditions of the translational task.

The increasing emphasis on culture within Translation Studies further supports a process-based conception of translation. Bassnett argues that “translation is not just a linguistic act but a cultural one” (Bassnett 2014), highlighting the fact that texts are embedded in cultural systems and that translation necessarily involves the negotiation of cultural meaning. Similarly, Lefevere conceptualizes translation as a form of rewriting, maintaining that “translation is the most obviously recognizable type of rewriting” and that all rewritings are “manipulated in the service of power” (Lefevere 1992). From this standpoint, translation is shaped not only by linguistic factors, but also by ideological, institutional and literary constraints, which influence both the translator's choices and the reception of the translated text within the target culture.

Earlier theoretical work had already begun to challenge narrow notions of equivalence, most notably in Nida's distinction between formal and dynamic equivalence. While formal equivalence focuses on preserving the form and content of the source text, dynamic equivalence aims at producing “the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message” (Nida 1964). Crucially, Nida defines equivalence in terms of the target audience's response, arguing that a successful translation should elicit a similar effect in the receptor as the original text does in its original audience. This emphasis on naturalness and receptor

response anticipates later developments that prioritize function, effect and audience over strict formal correspondence.

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives converge in challenging the traditional view of translation as a transparent transfer of meaning. Instead, they present translation as an interpretive, goal-oriented and culturally situated process in which meaning is actively constructed rather than passively transmitted. Translation thus emerges as a form of mediated communication shaped by linguistic systems, cultural norms, functional purposes and the translator's cognitive and interpretive activity. Within this framework, concepts such as equivalence, loss and fidelity are no longer understood as absolute or binary, but as relative and context-dependent, reinforcing the view of translation as an ongoing process of negotiation and adaptation rather than a finished and invariant product.

1.2 Translation and norm

I believe it is of extreme importance to understand, in this context, the notion of “norm” in translation, which occupies a central place in the theoretical reflection on translation, particularly as the descriptive and systematic approach - developed starting in the 1970s - is concerned. Among the most influential contributions in this field, those of Gideon Toury have provided a theoretical framework that allowed overcoming prescriptive visions on translation, accentuating the sociocultural and historically situated dimension. According to Toury (1995), in fact, translation cannot be meant as a purely individual or technical activity, but instead as a behavior regulated by shared social bonds. As he affirms, “translation is subject to socio-cultural constraints [...] anchored between two extremes: general, relatively absolute rules on the one hand and pure idiosyncrasies on the other. Between these two poles lies a vast middle-ground occupied by intersubjective factors commonly designated norms” (Toury, 1995, p.54). In this perspective, norms are collocated in an intermediate position between rigid rules and purely individual choices, constituting a group of intersubjective expectations that guide the translational behavior within a specific community.

Toury defines norms as an operative translation of shared values and beliefs of a collectivity. In more specific terms, he observes that sociologists and social psychologists have long considered norms as “the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community - as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate - into performance instructions appropriate for particular situations” (Toury, 1995, p. 55). Applying it to translation, this definition implies that what is perceived as a “good” or “acceptable” translation does not depend exclusively on abstract linguistic criteria but is the result of cultural, professional, and historical conventions that vary in time and space. As a consequence, the act of translation cannot be separated either from the context in which it takes place or from the expectations of the target cultural system.

A fundamental aspect of the theory of norms is their role in the construction of the professional identity of the translator. Toury underlines, in fact, that the acquisition of norms is a necessary condition to be recognized as translators within a determined culture: “Translatorship amounts first and foremost to being able to play a social role [...] The

acquisition of a set of norms... is therefore a prerequisite for becoming a translator within a cultural environment” (Toury, 1995, p. 53). In this sense, norms not only orient translation choices, but contribute to the definition of what it means to be a translator in a given historical and professional context. They act as legitimization mechanisms, establishing boundaries between practices considered professional and practices considered marginal or unacceptable. Toury also distinguishes between different types of norms that operate at different levels of the translation process. On the one hand, preliminary norms regulate questions such as the selection of the texts that have to be translated and the degree of acceptance of the indirect translation; on the other hand, operative norms influence the decisions taken during the actual translation process, determining, for instance, the degree of adherence to the source text or the degree of adaptation of the conventions of the target system (Toury, 1995, pp. 58-60). This articulation allows one to analyze translation not only as a static product but as a dynamic process in which systematic choices take place, often unknowingly, guided by internalized norms.

In a later contribution, Toury again gives importance to the variable and historically determined character of norms, affirming that “translating as an act and as an event is characterized by variability; it is historically, socially, and culturally determined; in short, norm-governed” (Toury, 1998, p.14). Such affirmation highlights how norms are not fixed or universal entities, but flexible structures subject to transformations. They can be confirmed, negotiated, or even subverted, most of all in moments of cultural or technological change, making translation a privileged field to observe the evolution of values and communicative practices in a society.

The concept of norm has been further developed and problematized by other experts; Malmkjaer (2007), for instance, has highlighted the bond between norms and equivalence, believing that “it is norms that determine the (type and extent of) equivalence manifested by actual translations” (Malmkjær, 2007, p. 61). This observation is particularly relevant in moving the attention from equivalence as an abstract principle and its concrete realization in effective translations. The equivalence is not an objective or universal data, but the result of normatively oriented choices that reflect the expectations and the priorities of the target system.

Overall, the theory of norms allows one to understand translation as a socially situated practice, in which the translator operates within a complex system of boundaries, expectations, and shared values. Far from being a neutral or invisible figure, the translator emerges as an agent that internalizes, applies, and sometimes questions the norms of his own cultural context. In this sense, the study of norms not only offers analytic instruments to describe and explain the regularities observable in translations but also contributes to a deeper reflexion on the role of the translator as cultural mediator and social actor.

1.3 Role of the human translator

What is the true role of the human translator today? It is now undeniable that in 2026 translators must necessarily coexist with artificial intelligence. At first glance, this coexistence may suggest a progressive marginalization of human activity in favor of machines, fostering the idea that the art of translating, interpreting, revising, and reworking texts from one language to another is destined for an inevitable decline. However, such a perspective risks oversimplifying a process that is, in reality, deeply complex and intrinsically human.

As André Gide observes, as quoted by Walter Benjamin in his essay *Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers* (*The Task of the Translator*), “when learning languages, the most important thing is not which one you learn; what is decisive is knowing how to abandon your own.” (1923, p. 9) This statement highlights a fundamental aspect of translation: it does not consist of a mere mechanical transfer of words, but rather requires an act of detachment, negotiation, and openness toward linguistic and cultural otherness. From this, one can infer that the translator is not a simple, neutral intermediary between two languages, but an active agent who exercises a conscious influence over the text, its semantic and pragmatic nuances, and the effect it will ultimately have in the target context. In this sense, the value of the human translator lies precisely in their interpretive, critical, and creative capacity—elements that continue to distinguish human translation from that produced by artificial intelligence.

This reconfiguration of the translator’s role is not a recent phenomenon. As early as 2010, Gouadec (2010) proposed redefining the translator through the notion of “multilingual multimedia communication engineering,” a term intended to encompass the wide range of activities carried out upstream and downstream of what had traditionally been understood as translation proper (Gouadec, 2010, pp. 105, 123). Such a reconceptualisation already anticipated the progressive expansion of translators’ responsibilities beyond text transfer alone, highlighting their involvement in content creation, adaptation, management, and quality assurance. Against this backdrop, it becomes evident that human translators are not disappearing from the language industry, but are instead being repositioned within evolving sociotechnical environments. As van der Meer aptly notes, “the role of language mediators is simply evolving, as it has always done, through technology” (van der Meer, 2020, p. 308). In a similar vein, Way emphasises that “the human-in-the-loop will always remain the most important link in the chain” (Way, 2020, p. 326), underlying the remaining centrality of human agency even in technology-driven workflows. While MT systems have made remarkable progress in terms of fluency and speed, closing the gap between raw MT output and publishable, user-ready translation still requires highly developed human skills. As the Slator Language Industry Market Report observes, “a competitive edge in the market comes from how effectively LSPs (language service providers) can complete the last mile – the gap between MT output and enterprise/end-user-grade translation quality” (Slator, 2022, p. 82). Importantly, as this gap narrows, the level of sophistication required to bridge it increases, further reinforcing the value of human translators precisely where MT reaches its limits.

At the same time, a broader shift is taking place in the professional identity of translators, who are increasingly moving away from the role of text processors towards that of adaptive

experts, consultants, and strategic partners. Van der Meer notes that “the changes taking place in the industry are also creating spaces for adaptive experts, capable of identifying, delivering, and advising on the added value of translation and language service provision beyond the scope of automation” (van der Meer, 2020, p. 288). He further argues that “the potential role of translators at the strategic level of the organisations they work for adds a further layer of complexity to the flexibility, adaptability, and hard skill-sets demanded of professionals” (ibid.). This strategic dimension highlights the growing expectation that translators contribute not only linguistically, but also analytically and ethically, to organisational communication processes.

Among the contributions that most clearly differentiate human translators from machines are creativity, ethical judgment, and responsibility. As Katan argues, “to compete with machines, trained professional translators must take advantage of an already assigned professional recognition of their creative role [...] and make the transcreational turn” (Katan, 2016, pp. 377–378). This emphasis on creativity aligns with observations by Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow (2017), who identify a growing shift in demand for human translation towards the added value of (trans-)creativity, as well as towards risk management and ethical awareness. This happens because demographic developments and socio-ethical requirements are extending the mediatory roles and responsibilities expected of human translation, making human translators remain indispensable in sensitive or high-stakes contexts.

In 2025, Acolad conducted a translator survey at the industry level, which showed that 79% of translators are familiar with AI tools, but only 42% use them daily, which implies a level of variability in adoption among professionals. Neural machine translation (NMT) was the most widely adopted AI tool (59% adoption), while 53% of linguists said they are seriously concerned about AI’s impact on the profession, even though 84% anticipate decreased demand for human translation alongside increased need for post-editing workflows. Acolad affirmed that “AI has entered the translation industry and is here to stay, but it’s clear that familiarity varies significantly depending on tools and individual experiences.”.

In addition, the 2024 Translator Work-Related Quality of Life (T-WRQoL) report, based on 381 responses, found that professional translators report moderately high work satisfaction overall, but aspects such as control at work, career sustainability, and perceived utility of machine translation scored below neutral, indicating some unease with how technology affects professional identity and work value.

1.4 Quality of translation

The theme of translation evaluation, although central in translation studies, has often been neglected in favor of other issues, such as the development of a general theory of translation, the study of equivalence, or the analysis of the translation process (Horton 1996, p. 41). According to Bowker (2000, p. 183), this reluctance does not stem from a lack of interest, but from the inherent complexity of the problem, which has been described as a significant obstacle. In other words, experts who evaluate translations, both in teaching and professional

practice, understand the main difficulty lies in the subjective element, which remains present in every evaluation despite efforts to minimize it.

As Horguelin (1985, cited in Hurtado Albir 2001, p. 157) notes, for a long time the evaluation of translations was highly subjective: it was often limited to determining whether the translator had successfully rendered the appropriate tone, respected the spirit of the original, or maintained fidelity to the text. Only relatively recently have more systematic approaches been developed. Horguelin identifies the starting point of this evolution as 1959, when the FIT organized a conference on translation quality. From that moment, different branches of translation studies have proposed very diverse evaluation models, reflecting, as House (1997, p. 1) observes, that evaluating translation quality presupposes a theory of translation: different conceptions of translation lead to different definitions of quality and, consequently, to different methods for its assessment.

Nevertheless, according to Horton (1996, pp. 41-42), there is a high degree of consensus on the fundamental principles, that is, on the general criteria used to measure a translation's effectiveness. These criteria appear to be broadly shared across approaches:

the evaluation of a translated target text seeks to measure the degree of adequacy of that text with regard to the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic givens of the source text on the one hand and to the cultural frame and expressive possibilities of the target language on the other, always with a view to the function ascribed to the target text.

The differences between various approaches concern, for example, which features of the source text (ST) should remain unchanged in the target text (TT) and the possibility of conducting a systematic and objective analysis of the ST. In this regard, for instance, the neo-hermeneutic school adopts a rather critical stance. However, the main point of divergence lies in the relative importance attributed to the source text versus the analysis of the translation as an autonomous text.

Approaches that prioritize the source text have attempted to develop models for evaluating translation quality based on a series of parameters indicative of equivalence, that is, the relationship between the translation and the original text. A well-known and widely discussed model in the literature is House's (1997) framework. Here, however, the focus will be on the equivalence-based system proposed in the German-speaking area by the group led by Geryzymisch-Arbogast. The underlying assumption is that evaluation should take into account not only microstructural criteria but also macrostructural and content-related criteria, which may reflect the idiosyncratic aspects of a text (Blum et al. 1996: 11). Consequently, the proposed system combines both analytical and holistic evaluation.

In the first phase, each sentence of the source text and its corresponding sentence in the TT are listed in a matrix, where values related to the various aspects considered for evaluation are recorded (e.g., linguistic register, reader orientation, temporality, ellipses, etc.). This list of aspects should be regarded as open-ended, to be supplemented as needed with additional criteria that account for the text's individuality. A feature of the ST may be preserved or

altered in the TT, and this will be evaluated positively or negatively in terms of justification. For example, in a promotional text analyzed by the authors, a shift is observed from the English text, which in certain passages addresses the reader directly, to the German translation, which avoids direct address; this variation is justified by cultural differences between the two contexts. This approach thus allows for a systematic assessment of variations in the constitutive aspects of the text, avoiding the random listing of potential translation “errors.”

The second phase considers, on the one hand, macrostructural aspects such as isotopy, thematic organization, and coherence, and on the other, the conceptual systems “evoked” by the text, also making use of computerized analysis tools.

As can be seen, this is an interesting but highly complex model. On the one hand, it contributes to the systematization of the criteria to be considered in translation evaluation; on the other hand, it inevitably allows for deviations that cannot be fully justified in an entirely objective way. This paradox, common to other equivalence-based systems, can be summarized by two statements by Chachibaia:

We assess the degree of correspondence between TT and ST, as equivalence is the fundamental criterion for translation quality. [...] Translation equivalence cannot be fully achieved. No translation is perfect. Though we often think that a translation is as good as the original. In a very general sense it is so, but when it comes to the detailed comparative analysis of the meaning in SL text and in TL text we discover mismatches on various levels of the text. (Chachibaia 2003: 38, 48)

Functionalist approaches, on the other hand, prioritize the concept of purpose and function in translation, evaluating the translation as an autonomous text that must meet specific norms and expectations in the target language (TL). The source text assumes a secondary role, becoming a sort of “information offer” on which the translator can operate with a high degree of freedom. For “pure” functionalists, quality assessment is not based primarily on a detailed comparison between ST and TT, but rather on verifying how well the translation functions when it is received by the reader.

Hönig (in Schäffner 1998: 49), for example, refers to tests aimed at evaluating text readability and places great hopes in recent developments in readability studies and text optimization. He argues that these research areas, still in their early stages, may in the future provide empirical answers as to why certain texts function better than others, thus offering a basis for evaluation. However, House (1997: 5) notes that equating overall translation quality with the degree of intelligibility and informativeness is overly reductive. Similarly, Malmkjær (1998: 73), responding to Hönig, emphasizes that the needs of the target audience rarely end with mere readability: the reader must usually be able to perform certain actions—linguistic or material—as a result of reading, and therefore an assessment of a translation’s acceptability should also take these requirements into account.

Even when the aim is not merely to verify readability but, more generally, the equivalence of effect on the reader, the issues remain complex. In this regard, House (1997: 4) points out that, if one assumes that a translation should elicit an equivalent response, it remains to be determined to what extent such equivalence can be empirically verified: if it cannot be verified, it is pointless to postulate it as a requirement. A weakness of functionalist models lies precisely in the lack of definite reference points for evaluation; due to the variety of extratextual factors involved, no clear procedure exists for assessing translations.

There are also more moderate functionalist models, which seek a compromise between equivalence-based approaches and radical functionalist approaches, starting from the assumption that neither the original text nor the norms of the target language or culture alone determine the appropriateness of the translator's choices. What matters is the tension exerted by both aspects on the translated text, in relation to the needs and values expressed by the commissioner of the translation (Larose 1998: 172).

An example of a moderate functionalist model is that of Christiane Nord (1988). While attributing great importance to the function of the translation, Nord does not neglect the source text. Her model is based on an analysis of both the ST and TT according to eight intratextual factors (theme, content, presuppositions, text structure, non-verbal elements, lexis, sentence structure, and suprasegmental features) and eight extratextual factors (initiator, intention, recipient, medium, place, time, motive, and textual function). Evaluation is focused on translation problems: Nord proposes a three-column scheme (ST, translation problem, and TT) and seventeen rows, one for each intra- and extratextual factor plus one for the general category of effect. Although the author states that it is normally unnecessary to examine all factors in detail, since the assignment brief limits the scope of the analysis, this model also proves to be rather complex.

Chapter 2

Technology and Translation: Development and theoretical impact

2.1 Impact of digital technologies on the translation process

2.1.1 Background

Throughout human history, translation has been a constant and essential element of interlingual communication, enabling the exchange of knowledge and culture across linguistic boundaries. From the ancient world to the industrial era and into today's globalized society, translation has facilitated the circulation of information in all its forms. In the contemporary "global village," however, technological developments tend to obscure the role of translation, while the dominance of English as a lingua franca may create the illusion that all relevant knowledge exists in a single language. As Cronin (2013) argues, no form of global interaction can occur without interlingual activity; globalization itself therefore presupposes translation. Nevertheless, many individuals are either unable or unwilling to overcome linguistic barriers and must consequently rely on translations produced by others in order to access information beyond their own linguistic reach. Traditionally, this mediating role has been fulfilled by professional translators and interpreters, who act as interlingual and intercultural communicators, enabling access to knowledge that might otherwise remain unknown. Due to its very nature, translation often goes unnoticed even when it is directly in front of us (Kenny, 1996). Moreover, with the exponential growth of digital content and the consolidation of participatory online practices associated with Web 2.0 technologies (O'Reilly, 2005), traditional human translation is increasingly unable to keep pace with the translation demands of the present—and future—information landscape.

2.1.2 Computer assisted translation tools

Recognizing the need to translate their products in order to succeed in international markets, software companies in the 1990s, along with other technology-related industries, sought ways to increase translation productivity while maintaining linguistic consistency across a growing number of languages and countries (Esselink, 2000). As a result of this demand, together with factors such as the increased availability and affordability of computing power and the expansion of the Internet, computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools marked the first major technological shift in the modern translation industry, making their commercial debut in the 1990s.

At the core of CAT tools lies the translation memory (TM), a software system that stores translated segments alongside their corresponding source segments, allowing them to be reused wholly or partially when similar texts are translated in the future. For example, if a translator has previously translated the English sentence "*Click the Save button to store your*

changes” into Italian as “*Fare clic sul pulsante Salva per memorizzare le modifiche*”, the TM will automatically retrieve this translation when the same or a similar sentence appears in a subsequent project. This reuse not only increases efficiency but also ensures terminological and stylistic consistency across related documents.

In addition to their core functionality, translation memories are typically packaged with, or integrated into, supplementary software that enables translators to manage specialized terminology in formats comparable to bilingual glossaries (e.g. medical terminology or company-specific branding), search for keywords within TM databases, and share linguistic resources through project management features commonly found in contemporary IT systems.

While Translation Studies as a discipline has undergone several paradigm shifts over time (Snell-Hornby, 2006), it has been relatively slow to incorporate translation technologies into its mainstream research agenda. This delay has contributed to the emergence of a somewhat segregated subdiscipline (O’Hagan, 2013), which many scholars and industry stakeholders regard as a field in its own right (Alcina, 2008), given its distinctive characteristics and its strong affinities with computational linguistics and computer science—areas that extend well beyond the traditional scope of Translation Studies.

In the translation industry, practical and commercial imperatives further marginalize theoretical models and approaches, which are often set aside in favor of the immediate and measurable benefits offered by technological solutions. The widespread adoption of CAT tools in both professional and academic contexts has led to the rapid accumulation of large collections of linguistic data, commonly referred to as corpora, across numerous language pairs and textual genres. For instance, the English–French sentence pairs discussed above could form the nucleus of a small corpus, which can be progressively expanded as new translations are added.

The development of CAT tools has thus enabled translators, for the first time, to easily create, store, and reuse their own collections of translated texts, not only for individual productivity gains but also for collaborative sharing and for commercial and academic research purposes. The widespread uptake of translation memories among professional translators has been consistently documented over the past two decades (Christensen & Schjoldager, 2010; Reinke, 2013), with near-saturation levels reported among translators working in large organizations and highly specialized domains.

2.1.3 Machine translation

In parallel with the development of CAT tools, machine translation (MT) has followed its own technological trajectory. Early forms of MT can be traced back to the 1930s, when mechanical multilingual dictionaries were first conceived. However, it was not until the 1950s that MT gained broader public attention as a limited, controlled, yet arguably automated translation process (Hutchins, 2010). This period, widely covered by the media in

the postwar years, saw MT research primarily influenced by the disciplines of cryptography and statistics.

With the increasing availability of computing power, linguistic data, and a growing demand for automation, tangible advances in MT began to emerge during the 1980s and 1990s. These developments were largely driven by rule-based approaches, in which linguists and translators manually encoded extensive sets of linguistic rules for each language pair (Arnold, Balkan, Meijer, Humphreys, & Sadler, 1996).

A further paradigm shift occurred in the late 1990s, fueled by the growing availability of large volumes of human translation data stored in translation memories. MT research moved away from prescriptive, top-down, rule-based systems toward descriptive, bottom-up, data-driven approaches, most notably statistical machine translation (SMT). This shift represents the second major technological transformation in contemporary translation. As increasingly large and diverse collections of professional human translations became available across multiple languages, directions, genres, and text types during the 1990s and 2000s, SMT made significant advances in translation technology research and development.

These developments were soon followed by the widespread adoption of MT not only within the translation industry but also among the general public, particularly through freely available online systems such as Google Translate and Microsoft Bing. Both platforms benefited from the substantial computational and financial resources of established IT corporations, enabling large-scale investment in MT research, development, and deployment.

Fundamentally, statistical MT systems rely on complex algorithms to analyze vast quantities of bilingual data in order to construct monolingual language models for each language and a translation model that maps words and phrases between them. A decoding component then calculates the probability of possible translations, selecting the most statistically likely word or phrase combinations as output (see Hearne & Way, 2011; Kenny & Doherty, 2014). One of the principal advantages of this approach is its scalability: new languages can be incorporated without the need for manually crafted linguistic rules, provided sufficient parallel data are available.

However, these systems are constrained by their limited incorporation of explicit linguistic knowledge and their dependence on the quality and coverage of their training data. As a result, novel terminology or previously unseen formulations can be difficult to translate accurately if they are absent from the underlying datasets. Since MT systems are trained directly on human-produced translations, they increasingly blur the boundaries between human and machine translation. Contemporary systems typically contain millions of human-translated sentence pairs, with some freely available platforms drawing on data produced by thousands of translators over many years.

As infrastructures improve and higher-quality translation data become available, MT systems continue to advance in terms of efficiency and output quality. Ongoing challenges concern the quality of the TM data used for training and the trade-off between data volume and

processing time: while larger datasets can improve translation quality up to a point, they also increase computational demands, extending processing times from seconds to hours or even days, depending on available resources.

Within the increasingly technology-driven translation workflows of the 2000s, MT has become a standard component of many translators' toolkits alongside TMs and other CAT tools—sometimes adopted voluntarily, and at other times imposed by institutional or market pressures. As with TMs, MT performs best when applied to controlled, repetitive language within consistent genres, domains, and text types. Advances in manual and semi-automatic domain and genre classification have nonetheless demonstrated improvements in MT performance (Petukhova et al., 2012; Sharoff, 2007).

Because MT systems lack human reasoning and contextual understanding, successful implementations have typically occurred within carefully designed workflows. Notable examples involve organizations that integrate MT into structured content creation pipelines, supported by controlled authoring guidelines, linguistic preprocessing, domain-specific glossaries, and human translators responsible for post-editing MT output to publishable quality standards (Roturier, 2009). Such workflows reflect a broader shift toward increased automation not only in translation technologies but also in the project management systems required to coordinate large-scale, multilingual translation operations.

2.1.4 Changing the process of translation

While CAT tools and, more recently, machine translation have been widely accepted by practitioners and researchers for the productivity and consistency gains they offer, many translators continue to adapt to the profound changes these technologies have introduced into the translation industry and into the translation process itself. Given that the majority of translators are freelancers or work for small language service providers employing between two and five people (DePalma et al., 2013), acquiring and effectively deploying translation technologies represents a significant challenge. Despite longstanding calls for enhanced technological competence dating back to the 1990s (O'Hagan, 2013), and the more recent inclusion of MT in formal translation curricula (Doherty & Kenny, 2014; Kenny & Doherty, 2014), technological proficiency remains an underdeveloped component of translator education. This persists in spite of extensive industry surveys highlighting the necessity and value of such competencies (Gaspari, Almaghout, & Doherty, 2015).

As outlined above, the basic principles underpinning translation memories and MT systems are relatively straightforward. Their integration into translation workflows, however, has significantly altered traditional ways of working with text. One well-documented consequence of TM use is the phenomenon described by Bédard (2000) as “sentence salad,” whereby excessive recycling of sentences or sentence fragments—often without sufficient regard for broader textual cohesion—can negatively affect translation quality. A focus on sentence-level processing also complicates the production of fluent and coherent target texts, as key cohesive devices such as anaphora and cataphora typically operate at paragraph or document level. In some cases, translators may deliberately resort to lexical repetition in

order to increase TM match rates, a strategy known as “peep-hole translation” (Heyn, 1998), which poses significant risks to both translation quality and consistency (Moorkens, Doherty, Kenny, & O’Brien, 2014).

Despite these risks, Bowker (2005) identifies a tendency among translators toward a form of “blind faith” in TMs, whereby previously stored translations are assumed to be of high quality and are therefore scrutinized less critically than newly produced translations. This tendency is exacerbated by prevailing remuneration practices, which are often based on the assumption that higher TM match percentages correspond to reduced translator effort. Empirical studies, however, challenge this assumption (e.g., O’Brien, 2006), yet remuneration rates for translation carried out using CAT tools have continued to decline. Furthermore, in many developed markets, clients increasingly require the use of CAT tools and frequently supply their own proprietary TM data.

To facilitate such data sharing, TMs support both local and remote access through networks, servers, and cloud-based platforms. In addition, numerous large-scale TM repositories are available for commercial and non-commercial use, such as those provided by the European Commission and the Translation Automation User Society. While shared TMs offer substantial potential for leveraging existing translation data and increasing productivity, they also raise critical concerns relating to ethics (Kenny, 2011), quality assurance (Moorkens et al., 2014), and data security—issues that warrant particular attention.

The increasing availability of large bilingual corpora derived from TMs and exploited by MT systems has also facilitated the rise of corpus-based and empirical approaches within Translation Studies, responding to calls made in the 1990s to investigate translated texts as mediated communicative events (Baker, 1993; Bowker, 2002; Holmes, 2000). Corpus-based methods have since been applied to translation quality assessment (Bowker, 2001) and translator training (Bowker, 2003), offering more objective and transparent evaluation frameworks by grounding translation decisions in authentic language data.

Access to bilingual corpora has further enabled research into both universal features of translation and language- and direction-specific phenomena (e.g., Bowker, 2003; Olohan & Baker, 2000). Such studies have identified recurring patterns, including lexical simplification (Laviosa, 2002), explicitation (Klaudy, 1998), increased standardization, and the influence of source-language structures on translation choices (Toury, 1995). These datasets have also supported multidimensional approaches to translation quality evaluation, encompassing readability and comprehension (Doherty, 2012), diagnostic assessment (Gaspari et al., 2014), usability (Doherty & O’Brien, 2014), and cognitive effort (Doherty, O’Brien, & Carl, 2010).

In parallel, translation process research has emerged with a focus on the translator and the act of translation rather than solely on the final product. Drawing on qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches, these studies aim to map the cognitive and psycholinguistic dimensions of translation, including the use of TMs and MT, while striving to maintain ecological validity. Although further methodological refinement—particularly through the adoption of practices from more mature empirical disciplines—is still required (Doherty, in

press), translation process research has demonstrated clear advantages over traditional psycholinguistic and cognitive studies, which often rely on highly controlled experimental settings and limited textual units with reduced relevance to real-world translation contexts.

2.1.5 Translation Technology and Quality

Despite the widespread and increasingly diverse adoption of machine translation in both research and professional practice, the majority of machine-translated content still requires some form of human intervention. This intervention may involve editing MT output to achieve a required level of quality or verifying its adequacy prior to publication, dissemination, product release, or legal compliance. The issue of translation quality, to which this discussion now turns, has long been central to Translation Studies and has gained renewed prominence within the translation industry as machine-generated translations become more prevalent.

Throughout longstanding debates on what constitutes a “good” or “bad” translation, a recurring dichotomy between accuracy and fluency can be identified across translation theory, translation technology, and professional practice. Accuracy generally refers to the extent to which the meaning of the source text is faithfully conveyed in the target text, whereas fluency relates to the naturalness of the translated output in accordance with the norms of the target language. The primary aim of translation quality assessment is therefore to ensure that a specified level of quality is achieved, maintained, and delivered as part of the translation product. Debates on translation quality (e.g., House, 1997; Nord, 1991; Reiss, 2000) were far from resolved prior to the advent of CAT tools and MT, and the widespread adoption of these technologies has further intensified discussions surrounding quality assessment, MT pricing models, and potential risks to end users.

In the context of MT evaluation, industry practice diverges notably from traditional academic debate, partly due to the gap between research and real-world application and partly because of the need for resource-efficient evaluation methods. While human evaluation of MT output is frequently conducted within the adequacy–fluency paradigm (Koehn, 2010), such evaluations are time-consuming and costly. This has led to the development of automatic evaluation metrics, which assess MT quality by comparing machine output to human reference translations, typically by counting matching words or estimating the number of edits required to transform the MT output into an acceptable human translation. Although these metrics fall well short of the nuanced judgment of human evaluators, they provide a rapid and practical solution that is particularly valuable in research and development contexts.

Automatic evaluation metrics have increasingly been incorporated into industry workflows, including cloud-based MT systems such as KantanMT. However, a critical challenge lies in ensuring that users understand the limitations of these metrics and do not misinterpret what they are capable of measuring. The absence, misuse, or overreliance on automated quality indicators can lead to poorly informed decisions regarding the suitability of machine-translated content for dissemination. This issue is evident in the abundance of

publicly documented examples of low-quality MT produced by everyday users who, constrained by language barriers and a lack of reliable quality indicators, may be forced to place unwarranted trust in MT output. While some errors may be amusing in low-stakes contexts, MT is increasingly employed in high-stakes environments such as education, healthcare, and public services, where inaccuracies can have serious consequences and where MT is often used as a cost- and time-saving substitute for human translation (e.g., Randhawa et al., 2013; Turner et al., 2014).

Although the quality of commercial MT systems has improved substantially, even the most advanced contemporary systems continue to produce errors that necessitate human intervention. The process of correcting MT output, commonly referred to as post-editing, has therefore become a central focus of both translation research and professional practice (DePalma, 2013). Much like the gradual adoption of CAT tools in earlier decades, translation buyers have tended to introduce post-editing incrementally, driven by budgetary constraints, shorter turnaround times, and a broader trend toward the casualization of translation labor.

Post-editing is typically remunerated at rates lower than those for translation using CAT tools, often by as much as 60%, depending on market conditions and geographical context (DePalma, 2013). At the same time, post-editing encompasses a wide range of applications and quality requirements. Different levels of post-editing are commonly distinguished, ranging from light post-editing for gisting and basic comprehension, through medium-quality output for internal communication and information sharing, to full post-editing aimed at producing high-quality, publishable content. In addition to adapting to these varying quality thresholds, translators are required to acquire new linguistic, technical, and procedural competencies specific to post-editing—skills that are not always adequately addressed in existing training pathways and that contribute to the steep learning curve associated with effective MT post-editing.

2.2 An insight on MT and CAT

2.2.1 The first MT system

In its early stages during the 1950s, machine translation (MT) research was necessarily limited in scope and ambition (Hutchins, 1986, 1997). These constraints were largely imposed by technological limitations, including insufficient computer memory, slow access to storage for dictionaries and texts, and the absence of high-level programming languages. Equally significant was the lack of input from linguistics: syntactic analysis was still underdeveloped, while semantics was largely neglected as an area of study. Early MT researchers were well aware that the systems they were developing would produce low-quality output, and they therefore anticipated extensive human involvement in both the pre-editing of source texts and the post-editing of machine-generated translations. In an effort to mitigate ambiguity—identified as the principal challenge in MT—they also advocated the use of controlled languages and the restriction of systems to narrowly defined subject domains.

Within this context, the first public MT demonstration system was developed in 1954 through a collaboration between IBM and Georgetown University. Although based on limited vocabularies and carefully selected texts, the translations produced appeared remarkably fluent and idiomatic. As a result, both the general public and potential funding bodies were led to believe that high-quality fully automatic translation was achievable in the near future. This optimism was reinforced by rapid advances in computer hardware, the emergence of early programming languages, and significant progress in syntactic theory, particularly in formal grammar research associated with scholars such as Chomsky.

Throughout the following decade, MT research expanded in ambition, driven by the widely held assumption that the ultimate objective of MT was the development of fully automatic systems capable of producing high-quality translations. Human involvement was generally viewed as a temporary necessity rather than a permanent feature of translation workflows. Consequently, research efforts focused on developing theoretical models and methods aimed at achieving “perfect” translation. This assumption, however, caused considerable concern within the professional translation community and was famously criticized by Bar-Hillel (1960), who argued forcefully against the pursuit of the unattainable goal of fully automatic high-quality machine translation.

Despite these criticisms, most MT researchers in the 1960s continued to regard existing systems as provisional solutions that would soon be superseded by more advanced technologies. Little attention was paid to the practical and economic use of imperfect MT systems, and the expertise of professional translators was largely disregarded. This neglect fostered growing anxiety and resistance among translators, who feared that MT would render their profession obsolete—a belief shared by some MT researchers at the time.

Progress, however, proved far slower than anticipated. Translation quality showed no meaningful improvement, and repeated predictions of imminent breakthroughs failed to materialize. In this context, the Automatic Language Processing Advisory Committee (ALPAC), established by U.S. government sponsors, published a report in 1966 concluding that MT research had failed to meet its own objectives. The committee found no evidence of fully automatic systems capable of producing translations of acceptable quality, nor any realistic prospect of such systems in the near future. Furthermore, it argued that existing human translation resources were sufficient to meet U.S. governmental and military needs for Russian–English translation.

Although the ALPAC report effectively brought an end to many MT projects in the United States and beyond, it did not dispel the widespread perception of MT as a quest for fully automatic translation. Much of the subsequent history of translation technology can therefore be understood as an effort to correct this early misconception. Over time, the exclusion of professional translators was addressed through the development of translation tools and translator workstations, and MT research increasingly shifted toward practical systems in which human involvement at various stages of the translation process is explicitly acknowledged as an essential component of system design.

Since the early 1970s, progress in translation technology has continued along three main trajectories: the development of computer-based tools to support human translators, the implementation of operational MT systems incorporating human assistance in different forms, and ongoing theoretical research aimed at improving MT methodologies more broadly.

2.2.2 MT in large-scale operations

Despite the negative conclusions of the ALPAC report, machine translation systems continued to be installed and deployed in cost-effective operational settings from the 1970s onward, initially in the United States and increasingly in other parts of the world. In multilingual regions such as Canada and Europe in particular, the demand for translation far exceeded the capacity of the professional translation workforce, making some form of computational support not merely desirable but essential.

Until the late 1980s, the use of MT systems was largely dominated by a single paradigm inherited from the earliest stages of MT development. Under this model, systems produced large volumes of low-quality translations that were either used directly for information assimilation or subjected to extensive post-editing in order to achieve publishable quality. To improve output quality, many organizations introduced controls on vocabulary, syntactic structure, and stylistic conventions prior to processing texts through MT systems. This approach has characterized the long-standing use of systems such as Systran and Logos in multinational corporations and other large institutions and, in many cases, continues to do so.

All contemporary commercial and operational MT systems generate output that requires revision if it is to meet publishable standards. Only in cases where rough, indicative translations are sufficient can MT output be used without post-editing. Commercial MT developers now explicitly emphasize to users that fully automatic, high-quality translation remains unattainable and that MT output is inherently imperfect. Accordingly, modern MT systems are typically integrated into comprehensive documentation workflows that provide sophisticated tools for text formatting, input preparation, revision, and final publication, encompassing the entire lifecycle from authoring to dissemination.

It is now widely acknowledged that MT performs most effectively in controlled and domain-specific environments. One of the earliest and most notable examples of successful domain-specific MT is the Météo system, which has been used continuously since 1977 by the Canadian broadcasting service to translate weather forecasts from English into French. The use of controlled language was further adopted in the late 1970s by Xerox in its implementation of the Systran system. In practice, nearly all large-scale MT deployments are domain-specific, largely because the extensive dictionaries required must reflect the specialized and often organization-specific terminology of the institution concerned. Such terminological usage is frequently unique and may not be transferable even to other organizations operating within the same industrial sector.

More recently, rather than adapting general-purpose MT systems to controlled environments, it has increasingly been recognized that in certain contexts it is preferable to design MT systems from the outset for use with controlled language. Several independent companies operating outside the traditional academic MT research community have pursued this approach in recent years, including Volmac. The most significant contemporary example is the Caterpillar project, which builds on research conducted at Carnegie Mellon University and represents a large-scale effort to integrate controlled language principles into MT system design from inception.

2.2.3 MT on personal computers

As Blekhman (2001) notes, when the first machine translation (MT) systems became available for personal computers in the early 1980s, they were generally expected to be used in much the same way as earlier mainframe-based systems. Their primary function was assumed to be the production of approximate translations for informational purposes or preliminary draft translations intended for subsequent revision and improvement. In both scenarios, it was widely believed that the main users of MT output would be translators, or at least individuals with a solid command of both the source and target languages; in large organizations, these users were typically expected to be professionally trained translators.

From the late 1980s onward, and with increasing momentum throughout the early 1990s, this model and its underlying assumptions were significantly challenged by developments in several areas. First, translator workstations specifically designed for professional use became commercially available. These systems function primarily as computer-assisted translation tools rather than as fully automatic translation solutions. While many professional translators adopted PC-based systems with considerable success, others preferred dedicated workstations, which gradually became more accessible even to freelance translators.

At the same time, PC-based MT systems were increasingly purchased by users with little or no interest in translation as a professional activity. For these users, MT served mainly as a communication aid, where high translation quality was not a primary concern. In addition, the expansion of global telecommunications networks and the Internet enabled immediate multilingual communication, creating a growing demand for translation systems and services capable of processing large volumes of electronic text quickly and in real time. Finally, the broader availability of multilingual databases and information resources generated the need for cross-lingual search and access tools incorporating built-in translation capabilities.

2.2.4 CAT tools in the translation process

This section aims to provide a professional contextualisation of CAT tools by situating them within the computer-assisted translation process. Drawing on the Cologne Model of the Situated LSP Translator, the discussion focuses on how different phases of the translation process are supported by specific CAT tools or tool components (Reinke 2004: 109). Rather than offering an exhaustive technical description, this overview seeks to establish a functional

link between translation sub-tasks and CAT tool support, thereby laying the groundwork for the subsequent discussion of usability.

From a situated perspective, CAT tools are not neutral technologies but artefacts embedded in specific professional workflows. Their relevance becomes apparent across multiple phases of the translation process. During project initiation and preparation, the choice and ownership of a particular translation memory (TM) system may influence job allocation and workflow compatibility, especially in institutional or networked translation environments (cf. Reinke 2013a: 30). Project management and analysis components integrated into contemporary TM systems support file handling, workflow coordination and capacity planning by providing statistics on match types and text volumes.

In the translation preparation phase, CAT tools support tasks such as file import and segmentation, configuration of system settings, alignment of legacy texts, and the creation or integration of translation memories and terminology databases. Most current TM systems rely on standardised exchange formats, such as XLIFF for localisable content and TMX or TBX for translation memory and terminology data, which facilitate interoperability across tools and workflows (cf. Arntz/Picht/Schmitz 1989/2014; Drewer/Ziegler 2011).

The core translation phase is characterised by segment-based source text reception and target text production, supported by the editor component of the TM system and, where available, by integrated machine translation. Additional functions such as terminology recognition, concordance search and writing aids (e.g. AutoSuggest or AutoCorrect) contribute to efficiency and consistency, while simultaneously shaping the translator's cognitive and interactional processes (cf. Reinke 2013a: 20).

Quality control and final administrative tasks are likewise partially supported by CAT tools, for example through automated QA checks, terminology consistency verification, file export, delivery workflows and invoicing based on match statistics. Finally, the incorporation of customer feedback can be facilitated by review workflows and TM attributes that allow revised translation units to be reused in future projects.

Overall, CAT tools permeate the entire computer-assisted translation process and actively structure professional translation practices. However, it deliberately refrains from evaluating these tools in terms of effectiveness or user experience. The usability of CAT tools and their impact on translators' situated interaction with technology will therefore be addressed in the following sections.

2.3 Post-editing and redefinition of the translator's role

2.3.1 Post-editing in practice – some history and current state

While the current surge of interest in machine translation (MT), CAT tools and post-editing workflows may appear to be a recent phenomenon, post-editing is in fact among the earliest applications envisioned for MT systems. In his historical overview of post-editing and related research, García (2012: 293) observes that “post-editing was a surprisingly hot topic in the

late 1950s and early 1960s.” One of the earliest proposals for an MT system incorporating a post-editing stage was outlined by Edmundson and Hays (1958), who described a workflow developed at the RAND Corporation for translating scientific texts from Russian into English. In this early model, post-editors were expected to work on machine-translated output annotated with detailed grammatical codes indicating parts of speech, case, number and other linguistic features. Consequently, post-editors were required to have a strong command of English grammar and technical terminology, although knowledge of the source language was not considered necessary (Edmundson and Hays 1958: 12). According to García (2012: 294), this first documented post-editing programme was discontinued in the early 1960s.

Despite the fact that early MT and CAT systems and post-editing practices failed to meet initial expectations, development in both areas continued. During the 1960s, post-editing was also employed by institutions such as the US Air Force’s Foreign Technology Division and Euratom. However, funding in the United States was significantly reduced following the publication of the ALPAC report in 1966, which concluded that post-editing was not cost-effective in terms of time, quality and effort when compared to human translation (García 2012: 295–296). Nevertheless, from the 1970s onwards, MT systems and post-editing workflows were implemented in large organisations such as the European Union and the Pan-American Health Organization, as well as in certain commercial contexts (García 2012: 296–299).

More recent empirical studies indicate that MT and CAT have reached a level of quality that can be viable in professional and business environments and can lead to productivity gains for translators, at least for some language pairs. As a result, post-editing workflows have become increasingly widespread (see, for example, Plitt and Masselot 2010; Zhechev 2014; Silva 2014). Gaspari et al. (2015) provide an overview of several surveys conducted in recent years and report the results of their own survey of 438 stakeholders in the translation and localisation industry. According to their findings, 30% of respondents were already using MT, while 21% considered it certain or likely that they would adopt MT in the future (Gaspari et al. 2015: 13–17). Among MT users, 38% indicated that MT output was always post-edited, 30% reported never post-editing MT output, and the remaining 32% applied post-editing with varying frequency. Taken together, these surveys point to a growing adoption of MT and post-editing, increasing demand for post-editing services, and expectations that this trend will continue.

Productivity gains are frequently cited as a key motivation for the adoption of post-editing workflows. For example, Robert (2013: 32) claims that post-editing MT output can increase a professional translator’s productivity from an average of 2,000 to approximately 3,500 words per day. Guerberof Arenas (2010: 3) notes that a figure of 5,000 words per day is often quoted, while also emphasising that actual productivity gains vary considerably depending on the project and the post-editor. García (2011: 228) further cautions that such figures presuppose specific conditions, including experienced professional post-editors, domain-adapted MT systems and source texts that may have been pre-edited for MT, conditions that are not always met in practice.

The use and usability of MT and post-editing also vary substantially across language pairs. Drawing on a survey conducted among translators at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation, Leal Fontes (2013) highlights differing levels of MT uptake depending on the language combination. Translators working with French–Spanish, French–Italian and French–Portuguese generally rated MT output as largely reusable, whereas for language pairs such as English–German, English–Finnish and English–Estonian, MT output was often considered suitable only for generating ideas or not usable at all (Leal Fontes 2013: 11). Certain linguistic features, such as rich morphology in languages like Finnish, are known to pose particular challenges for MT systems, while language pairs with smaller markets may attract less development effort. On the user side, productivity studies conducted in large companies, such as Autodesk, similarly report substantial variation in productivity gains and required post-editing effort (Plitt and Masselot 2010; Zhechev 2014).

Although post-editing is primarily used in professional translation contexts, it has also been explored in crowdsourced settings, including disaster relief scenarios (Hu et al. 2011), website localisation (Tatsumi et al. 2012) and online discussion forums (Mitchell et al. 2013). As post-editing workflows become more prevalent, the need for both organisation-specific and general post-editing guidelines has grown (see, for example, Guerberof 2009, 2010). The TAUS guidelines (2010), designed to support both clients and language service providers, offer recommendations for reducing post-editing effort and define two levels of post-editing quality. The first level, termed “*good enough*,” refers to translations that are accurate and comprehensible but not necessarily grammatically or stylistically polished. The second level, “*publishable quality*,” corresponds to the standards typically expected of human translation. Similarly, a draft International Standard (ISO/CD 18587:2014) aims to establish standardised requirements for post-editing processes and post-editor competences and distinguishes between two levels of post-editing, light and full (ISO/CD 18587: 6). An earlier classification distinguishing three levels of post-editing—rapid, minimal and full—was proposed by Allen (2003).

2.3.2 Post-editing research

Extensive research has investigated the productivity, quality and effort associated with post-editing machine translation (MT) in comparison with manual translation. Several large-scale industry studies have reported notable productivity gains. In a well-known study conducted at Autodesk, Plitt and Masselot (2010) found an average throughput increase of 74% for professional translators post-editing MT compared to manual translation, although substantial variation between translators was observed. A continuation study by Zhechev (2014) confirmed that productivity gains vary considerably across language pairs.

By contrast, other studies have not found significant productivity improvements. Carl et al. (2011) and García (2010) reported no clear advantage for post-editing over manual translation, although both studies acknowledge that their participants lacked experience in post-editing or were trainee translators, which may have influenced the results. More generally, research indicates substantial individual variation among post-editors: differences in speed, number of keystrokes and editing strategies suggest that productivity gains are not

uniform and depend on both individual working styles and familiarity with post-editing workflows (Plitt and Masselot 2010; Sousa et al. 2011; Tatsumi and Roturier 2010; Koponen et al. 2012).

In addition to productivity, several studies have examined the quality of post-edited translations. Concerns that post-editing might lead to lower-quality output have not been consistently supported by empirical evidence. Fiederer and O'Brien (2009) found post-edited translations to score slightly higher in clarity and accuracy, though lower in stylistic quality, compared to manual translations. Other studies report comparable overall quality between post-edited and manually translated texts, and in some cases even fewer errors in post-edited output (Plitt and Masselot 2010; García 2010). These findings suggest that post-editing can achieve quality levels similar to those of human translation, depending on the evaluation criteria applied.

Beyond productivity and quality, research has increasingly focused on the concept of post-editing effort. Krings (2001) distinguishes three interrelated dimensions of effort: temporal effort (time spent), technical effort (the physical editing operations performed), and cognitive effort (the mental processing involved in detecting and correcting errors). Studies show that post-editing time and technical effort do not always correlate directly with the number of textual changes made (Tatsumi 2009; Elming et al. 2014). While post-editing time is often used as an indicator of effort, it is influenced by multiple factors, including the quality of MT output, the characteristics of the source text and the nature of the errors involved.

Research has identified certain source text features and MT error types as being associated with increased post-editing effort. Longer or structurally complex sentences, as well as errors involving word order, syntax and mistranslated idioms, tend to require more time and cognitive effort to correct than simpler morphological or lexical substitutions (Tatsumi 2009; Temnikova 2010; Koponen 2012; Koponen et al. 2012). While technical and temporal aspects of effort can be measured using metrics such as HTER (Snover et al. 2006) or keylogging data, cognitive effort remains more difficult to capture reliably. Experimental approaches such as pause analysis and eye-tracking have been explored to address this issue, but results so far indicate that cognitive effort is complex and multifaceted (Krings 2001; O'Brien 2005, 2006; Carl et al. 2011; Vieira 2014).

Overall, existing research presents a nuanced picture of post-editing. Productivity gains are possible but depend on factors such as MT quality, language pair, text type and the post-editor's experience. Post-edited output can reach quality levels comparable to manual translation, while the effort involved in post-editing varies widely and cannot be explained by a single measure. These findings highlight post-editing as a situated practice shaped by technological, linguistic and human factors.

Chapter 3

Studies on corpus-based translation

While machine translation and post-editing primarily support target text production through automated suggestions and revisions, they do not fully account for the translator's need to explore usage, conventions and variation in authentic language data. In this respect, corpus-based translation approaches address a different but equally relevant dimension of the translation task: informed decision-making. By enabling translators to consult large collections of real texts, corpora support lexical, phraseological and stylistic choices in a way that is particularly compatible with a situated view of translation.

3.1 Corpus-based translation studies

3.1.1 The dawn of corpus-based translation studies

Mona Baker published her influential article *Corpus linguistics and translation studies: Implications and applications* in 1993, included in a collection of essays honouring John Sinclair (Baker et al. 1993). In this work, Baker anticipated that “the availability of large corpora of both original and translated text, together with the development of a corpus-driven methodology, will enable translation scholars to uncover the nature of translated text as a mediated communicative event” (Baker 1993: 243). This foundational idea was further elaborated two years later in *Corpora in translation studies: An overview and some suggestions for future research*, published in *Target*, where Baker proposed concrete research agendas based on the design and analysis of parallel, bi-/multilingual and, above all, monolingual comparable corpora.

This marked the beginning of a new and productive partnership that would soon develop into a distinct conceptual paradigm within translation studies—one of several that animated the discipline throughout the 1990s. That decade was characterised by the coexistence of competing and complementary theoretical frameworks, shaped by interaction with emerging fields such as pragmatics, critical linguistics, postcolonial studies, gender studies and globalisation. At the same time, established approaches including polysystem theory, skopos theory, poststructuralism and feminist translation studies remained highly influential (Venuti 2000).

The emergence of corpus-based translation studies coincided with an unprecedented expansion of corpus linguistics. Sinclair and Leech famously described corpus linguistics as, respectively, “a new perspective on description” (Sinclair 1991: 2) and “a new way of thinking about language” (Leech 1992: 106). During this period, large-scale English corpora containing over 100 million words were compiled, such as the British National Corpus (BNC), the Cambridge Language Survey, the Longman Corpus Network and the Bank of

English, the latter exceeding 300 million words. New corpus types were also developed; for example, the interactive *Corpus of Spoken American English* enabled the simultaneous display of visual and auditory data within concordance lines (Chafe et al. 1991). By 1990, sixteen corpora representing European languages had already been created, amounting to a total of 365 million words, and the Council of Europe had begun funding large-scale initiatives aimed at building reference corpora for the languages of the European Union.

Insights and methodologies from corpus linguistics were rapidly influencing numerous areas within applied linguistics, including lexicography, educational linguistics, neurolinguistic programming, machine and computer-assisted translation, contrastive analysis, terminology, forensic linguistics and critical linguistics. Given this extensive record of achievements, the conditions were favourable for corpus linguistics to establish a significant presence within translation studies as well.

Although corpora were not entirely new to the discipline when Baker advanced her proposals in 1993 and 1995, earlier work had largely focused on practical applications. As early as 1986, Gellerstam at the University of Lund had compiled a monolingual comparable corpus of Swedish novels to investigate translationese, and in 1989 Lindquist, also in Lund, used a parallel language database to study Swedish translations of English adverbials. These studies primarily aimed to support translation practice and thus belonged to applied translation research.

What emerged in the early 1990s, by contrast, was a comprehensive research programme situated within descriptive translation studies (DTS). Building on the work of polysystem theorists such as Even-Zohar, Toury and Lefevere, DTS had developed substantially, to the extent that Toury (1995) assigned it a central role in the evolution of translation studies into a fully empirical discipline. As Toury argued, “no empirical science can make a claim for completeness and (relative) autonomy unless it has a proper descriptive branch” (Toury 1995: 1).

The strong connection forged between corpus linguistics and DTS during this period—grounded in shared empirical concerns—can be seen as a key factor in the success of corpus-based translation studies. Both approaches prioritise the analysis of authentic language data rather than idealised or introspective evidence, and both conceptualise linguistic regularities as probabilistic norms of behaviour rather than prescriptive rules. Furthermore, language patterns are understood as inseparable from socio-cultural variables, in that they both reflect and reproduce cultural practices.

Both corpus linguistics and DTS adopt a comparative research framework in which descriptive hypotheses concerning the probabilistic generality of linguistic phenomena are tested across different corpora. These may represent, for example, translated versus non-translated texts, source texts and their translations, different text types, or distinct modalities within the same language. In this way, the empirical paradigm underlying Toury’s target-oriented, historical-descriptive approach and Baker’s corpus-based methodology converges.

Finally, corpus-analytic techniques and corpus design principles proved highly compatible with Toury's "discovery procedures", which involve an inductive progression from observable translational phenomena to the underlying norms governing translators' choices. By the mid-1990s, both DTS and corpus-based translation studies were actively developing and testing their methodologies, emphasising the need for coherent descriptive frameworks that would enable comparison, replication and the systematic expansion of knowledge about the nature of translation.

3.1.2 Descriptive corpus-based translation studies

The first systematic analysis within corpus-based translation studies (CTS) was conducted in 1996 at UMIST, Manchester, through the creation of a multi-source-language, monolingual comparable corpus of English (Laviosa-Braithwaite 1996). This study combined corpus-based methodology with earlier descriptive translation studies (DTS) research on simplification, revealing recurrent patterns of lexical use in translated English that appeared largely independent of source-language influence. Importantly, it addressed methodological limitations of previous work, such as small datasets and insufficient control over text type and source language.

During the late 1990s, CTS expanded through a series of innovative methodological syntheses. Munday (1997), for instance, integrated systemic functional linguistics, corpus analysis, cultural studies and reception theory to investigate translation norms in a parallel corpus of Spanish literary texts and their English translations, identifying a prevailing orientation towards acceptability. Around the same time, the notion of the "third code" (Frawley 1984) inspired corpus-based investigations into normalisation. Scott (1998) and Kenny (1999) demonstrated that while translated texts often show tendencies towards conventional lexical and syntactic patterns, these coexist with instances of creativity, particularly depending on text type and translator choices.

Research on explicitation further contributed to the exploration of translation universals. Øverås (1998), testing Blum-Kulka's explicitation hypothesis (1986) using the English–Norwegian Parallel Corpus, found that explicitating shifts generally outnumber implicitation strategies in literary translation. However, explicitation was shown to be influenced by multiple factors, including systemic differences between languages, stylistic preferences, and culture-specific norms, which may vary historically (Weissbrod 1992). These findings suggest that proposed universals of translation often overlap and interact rather than operate in isolation.

More broadly, CTS research highlighted the complexity of distinguishing between norm-governed and potentially universal features of translated language. While Toury (1995) argued for the identification of probabilistic laws of translational behaviour, such as the law of growing standardisation, others questioned the pursuit of universality as a primary goal of CTS (Tymoczko 1998). Rather than representing mutually exclusive positions, these perspectives can be reconciled by viewing universals as open-ended, descriptive hypotheses rather than absolute laws.

Toury's laws are conceived as probabilistic tendencies shaped by a wide range of linguistic, cultural and contextual variables (Toury 1995). In this respect, parallels have been drawn between Toury's law of growing standardisation and Sinclair's idiom principle (1991), both of which describe dominant but non-absolute patterns of language use. Corpus-based studies have shown that creative or non-standard features in source texts are often replaced by more conventional patterns in translation, although this tendency is influenced by factors such as text type, translator experience and the status of translation within the target culture (Scott 1998; Kenny 1999).

Overall, CTS has contributed significantly to advancing DTS by providing a coherent empirical methodology, explicit hypotheses and a comparative research model grounded in authentic data. By building on and refining earlier descriptive work (e.g. Blum-Kulka and Levenston 1983; Toury 1991; Vanderauwera 1985), corpus-based studies have played a central role in investigating the relative autonomy of translated texts and in deepening our understanding of translational regularities and variation.

3.1.3 Theoretical corpus-based translation studies

At a theoretical level, Baker remained a key figure in shaping corpus-based translation studies during the late 1990s. In a series of influential articles published between 1996 and 1999, she strengthened the theoretical links between CTS and target-oriented approaches, offering guidelines for refining hypotheses and methodologies in order to render abstract concepts—such as translation universals—operational and empirically testable. Baker argued that the identification of patterns characterising translation as translation should be accompanied by an assessment of the relative status of source and target languages, particularly in terms of prestige and power relations.

Crucially, Baker emphasised that translated texts should be viewed as distinctive communicative events, shaped by specific purposes, constraints and contexts of production. As a result, descriptive research should not be limited to corpus-internal evidence but should also take into account extra-linguistic data, such as historical information, publishing practices, critical reception and translators' professional environments. This position distinguishes CTS and descriptive translation studies (DTS) from corpus linguistics in the narrower sense, which, following Sinclair's position, tends to regard the corpus itself as the sole legitimate object of linguistic analysis (Sinclair 1991; personal communication 1994). By contrast, DTS and CTS adopt a pluralistic methodological stance, allowing the integration of linguistic, psycholinguistic and contextual approaches, provided they are theoretically grounded within the discipline (Toury 1995).

Further theoretical developments addressed the definition and representativeness of the object of study in CTS. Halverson (1998) proposed a prototype-based model of translated texts, reconciling Toury's inclusive definition of translation (Toury 1985) with evidence suggesting that professional translations occupy a central position in many cultural contexts. In this view, translated texts form a prototype category whose centre consists of professional translations, while peripheral members include trainee translations or translations produced in a foreign

language. This approach has important implications for corpus design, suggesting that representative corpora should consist of multiple subcorpora reflecting different degrees of prototypicality.

Issues of representativeness, balance and comparability have since been recognised as recurrent challenges in CTS corpus design. Studies have shown that differences in translation practices and publishing traditions across cultures and languages significantly affect the feasibility of constructing balanced and comparable corpora (Johansson and Hofland 1994; Johansson 1998; Kenny 1998; Magalhães 2001; Zanettin 2002). As a result, CTS research has increasingly acknowledged the need for transparent design principles and methodological compromises, such as combining balanced core corpora with additional subcorpora to enhance representativeness.

Corpus design has therefore been a central theoretical concern in CTS. Alongside Halverson's contribution, other scholars proposed innovative corpus models aimed at capturing specific aspects of translational phenomena. Shlesinger (1998) suggested monolingual comparable corpora to investigate the distinctive features of interpreting, while Malmkjær (1998) advocated parallel corpora containing multiple translations of the same source text to shed light on translational choices and equivalence. Together, these proposals underscore the close relationship between theoretical reflection and methodological innovation in the development of corpus-based translation studies.

3.1.4 Applied corpus-based translation studies

Applied corpus-based translation studies (CTS) developed slightly later than descriptive CTS but expanded rapidly from the late 1990s onwards. Although early foundations can be traced back to studies by Gellerstam (1986) and Lindquist (1989), it is from 1998 that applied CTS emerged as a distinct subfield focusing on translation practice and translator training. This area established strong connections with neighbouring disciplines such as contrastive analysis, language for special purposes, terminology, lexicography and computational linguistics.

Unlike Toury's model, which conceives applied translation studies as an extension of the descriptive branch, applied CTS is characterised by a relationship of interdependence between theory, description and application. Research driven by pedagogical or professional needs often employs the same corpus-based methodologies used in descriptive CTS, and descriptive analysis and practical application frequently overlap. While experimental methods may complement corpus-based approaches (Bowker 1998), the core of applied CTS lies in the design and use of corpora not only as tools for retrieving translation equivalents or improving efficiency, but also as empirical resources for investigating translation processes and language behaviour from both monolingual and contrastive perspectives.

Applied CTS also shares important affinities with corpus-based language teaching and data-driven learning, particularly the pedagogical model proposed by Johns (1997a; 1997b), in which learners actively engage in hypothesis formulation and testing. Studies in translator

training have shown how corpus design and analysis can support the acquisition of domain knowledge, textual competence and specialised language use (Gavioli 1997; 1999; Zanettin 1998; Bowker 1998), further illustrating the close integration of descriptive and applied objectives within CTS.

By the end of the 1990s, CTS—both descriptive and applied—had become firmly established within the broader empirical paradigm that, according to Chesterman (1998), represents a defining trend in translation studies. The approach was widely recognised as a major force in the discipline, although scholars emphasised that corpus-based research should not overlook the cultural and ideological dimensions of translation (Tymoczko 1998; Hatim 1999).

At the same time, theoretical tensions emerged regarding the relationship between corpus-based approaches and cultural studies. Baker's (1996) proposal to view linguistic empiricism and non-essentialist cultural theories as complementary rather than incompatible was met with criticism from scholars working within a cultural studies framework (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998; Godayol 2002). While these debates highlighted unresolved epistemological differences, they also underscored the vitality of CTS as a field engaged in ongoing dialogue with adjacent paradigms.

Overall, by the turn of the millennium, CTS had consolidated itself as a “paradigm within a paradigm,” encompassing theoretical, descriptive and applied branches. Its future development was seen to depend on three main directions: the continued dialogue between linguistic and cultural approaches, increased attention to ideology in translation, and the ongoing refinement of methodologies in response to technological advances (Tymoczko 1998).

3.2 Parallel and comparable corpora

3.2.1 What are comparable corpora?

Comparable corpora are generally understood as collections of original texts in two or more languages selected according to comparable criteria, rather than linked through translation. The definition provided by the EAGLES – Expert Advisory Group on Language Engineering Standards – Guidelines (1996) describes a comparable corpus as one that selects “similar texts in more than one language or variety,” while explicitly recognising the lack of agreement on what constitutes such similarity. This deliberate vagueness highlights one of the central theoretical and methodological challenges posed by comparable corpora: similarity must be negotiated across languages, cultures, genres and communicative situations, and cannot be reduced to a single set of formal parameters. Despite the progress made since the mid-1990s, the literature on comparable corpora remains relatively limited, and such corpora are often regarded as methodological ideals rather than fully standardised resources. Nevertheless, their growing relevance within corpus-based translation studies reflects a sustained interest in exploring language use beyond the constraints imposed by translated texts.

One of the primary motivations for constructing comparable corpora lies in the possibility of comparing languages or varieties in analogous circumstances of communication while avoiding the inevitable distortions introduced by translation, a point already emphasised in the EAGLES report (1996) and in Baker's (1996) influential distinction between parallel and comparable corpora. Translated texts, even when produced by experienced translators and guided by genre awareness, tend to bear traces of source-text influence at multiple levels, including textual organisation, information structure and discourse conventions. While lexical and terminological problems can often be resolved with relative ease, adapting broader patterns of textual and rhetorical organisation to target-culture norms is far more challenging, particularly in professional contexts where clients frequently expect close adherence to the original and where translation memories encourage structural similarity (Munday 2001; Maia 1996, 1997, 1999). As a result, translations often reflect the conventions of the source language rather than those of the target language community, a phenomenon clearly observable in domains such as news reporting, academic writing and institutional discourse.

Comparable corpora address this issue by providing access to authentic target-language texts that function independently within their own cultural and communicative environments. They are therefore especially valuable for investigating genre- and culture-specific conventions in legal, academic, scientific and journalistic writing, as well as in a wide range of socially conventionalised text types that require adaptation rather than direct translation. From a practical perspective, comparable corpora also offer significant advantages in terms of availability and scalability: original texts on a given subject are generally easier to obtain than pairs of source texts and high-quality translations, making it possible to compile larger and more varied datasets, which in turn enhances the reliability of empirical findings. Moreover, while parallel corpora are particularly suited to the study of translation processes and products, comparable corpora are more versatile and can be applied to a broader range of research areas, including discourse analysis, pragmatics, terminology extraction, information retrieval and knowledge engineering (Pearson 1998; Bowker & Pearson 2002).

At the same time, the construction of comparable corpora raises complex questions concerning the degree to which texts can be considered 'similar' and corpora 'comparable'. Decisions must be made regarding corpus size, balance and format, as well as, more crucially, regarding content-related criteria such as text type, function, register and sociocultural context. Similarity must be assessed in relation to structural features, communicative purpose and patterns of language use, often drawing on Hallidayan notions of field, tenor and mode. These challenges are particularly acute in the case of literary corpora, where comparability must be negotiated across historical periods, genres, schools and individual authorial styles, whereas most successful applications to date have involved specialised corpora in technical or scientific domains, where subject matter and terminological density offer clearer selection criteria (Laviosa 1997).

In spite of these difficulties, comparable corpora have come to occupy a central position within corpus-based translation studies, especially in applied and contrastive research and in translator training. Their use reflects a broader empirical orientation within the discipline and

a growing awareness of the need to study translation against the backdrop of non-translated language. At the same time, ongoing challenges such as the homogenising effects of globalisation, the Anglicisation of scientific discourse and the increasing circulation of internationally standardised text types continue to problematise the notion of linguistic and cultural comparability. Comparable corpora thus remain both a powerful methodological tool and a site of theoretical tension, whose development continues to shape research agendas in corpus-based translation studies.

3.2.2 And parallel corpora?

Parallel corpora constitute the corpus type most directly suited to the study of translation, both in the domain of language for special purposes (LSP) and in that of general language (LGP). As outlined earlier, they consist of original texts in one or more source languages and their corresponding translations into one or more target languages. This structural alignment makes parallel corpora a particularly powerful resource for investigating translation-specific phenomena, as it allows researchers to observe systematic correspondences and divergences between source and target texts at lexical, grammatical, stylistic and discourse levels. At the same time, parallel corpora also enable contrastive analyses across text types and genres included in the corpus, thus offering insights into how different communicative purposes and conventions are negotiated in translation.

Beyond their research-oriented applications, parallel corpora have considerable pedagogical potential. They can be effectively employed as didactic tools for teaching and learning foreign languages, especially in contexts where genre awareness, stylistic variation and register sensitivity are central objectives. As noted by Pinna (2004/2007: 19), “corpora can be exploited to study given language phenomena in order to show the connection between text and context in both cultural and functional-rhetorical dimensions.” Through carefully selected aligned texts, learners can be exposed to authentic language use and guided to observe how specific linguistic choices encode cultural connotations and rhetorical functions in both general and specialised discourse (Pinna 2004/2007). In this sense, parallel corpora support a data-driven approach to language learning that fosters analytical skills and enhances learners’ awareness of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural variation.

From a translation studies perspective, the construction of parallel corpora is primarily motivated by their value for empirical research. They provide a solid basis for detailed linguistic analyses aimed at identifying recurrent translation strategies, genre-specific norms and patterns of translational behaviour. Such analyses make it possible to assess the strengths and limitations of particular translation practices and to pinpoint areas where improvements may be required, both in professional contexts and in translator training. For these reasons, the compilation of parallel corpora intended for research or pedagogical use must be guided by clearly defined objectives and informed methodological choices. Issues such as corpus design, text selection, alignment procedures and textual encoding play a crucial role in determining the reliability and explanatory power of the analyses carried out on the corpus, and must therefore be carefully considered in relation to the aims of the project.

3.3 Conventionality, creativity, and norm

Within Descriptive Translation Studies, and more specifically within the framework of Corpus-based Translation Studies (CTS), increasing attention has been devoted to the notions of conventionality, creativity and norm, particularly in relation to the stylistic imprint of professional and literary translators. Early corpus-based research concentrated on identifying recurrent features of translated texts and on making visible the translator's discursive presence, often through the analysis of large translation corpora (Baker 2000). However, studies explicitly linking descriptive translation studies to stylistics remain relatively limited in both number and scope, and are predominantly centred on English.

Against this background, CTS has provided the methodological and theoretical foundations for investigating translator style as a dynamic interplay between conventionality and creativity (Baker 2000; Saldanha 2011; Walder 2013). Building on Baker's pioneering work on the style of translators in comparable corpora (Baker 2000), Saldanha (2011) proposes a combined approach that examines both the style of the translator and the style of the translated text through the complementary use of comparable and parallel corpora, with the aim of disentangling translator-driven choices from those attributable to the source author. Baker (2007) further introduces the concept of conventionality as a key dimension of translator style and, to some extent, of translator creativity, arguing that creativity in translation does not necessarily manifest itself in deviation from norms, but may also emerge through the selective and strategic use of conventional expressions.

From a different perspective, Munday (2008) identifies a degree of standardisation in the translated voice of different authors when translated by the same translator, thus highlighting the complex relationship between norms, conventionality and creativity in translated texts. His findings suggest that creativity operates within, rather than outside, established conventions. Other studies, such as Magalhães and Barcellos (2015), have explored translator style in parallel corpora, although without explicitly focusing on conventionality or its relationship with creativity. This leaves an important gap in the literature, which recent research has sought to address by examining how conventionality functions as both a constraint and a resource in the construction of translator style.

An illustrative example is the corpus-based investigation of the Brazilian literary translator Paulo Henriques Britto, which draws on parallel and comparable corpora to analyse patterns of conventionality, creativity and translational shifts (Catford [1965] 1978; Pekkanen 2010; Blauth 2015). Using WordSmith Tools (Scott 2012), the study compares translated and non-translated texts by the same translator, alongside control corpora such as COMPARA and ESTRA, in order to identify stylistic regularities attributable to the translator rather than to language-pair constraints. The findings indicate that Britto's translations tend to display an increased use of conventional expressions, often resulting in a higher degree of colloquialism in the target texts, while at the same time preserving a strong creative engagement with the source texts. Notably, frequent shifts such as addition and amplification are shown to reflect stylistic preferences rather than systematic explicitation, and instances of sanitisation are outweighed by creative solutions. These results corroborate Munday's (2008) conclusions

and partially challenge earlier claims by Baker (1999, 2000), reinforcing the view that translator creativity is best understood in relation to norms and conventionality, rather than in opposition to them.

PART 2 - METHODOLOGICAL CRITERIA

Chapter 4

Methodology of the study

4.1 Type of research

Throughout this year I have had the possibility to confront myself with the translation of fashion texts using the software Trados Studios, which has provided the material to analyse some excerpts of my work that show how CAT tools influence the decision making of a translation. As argued by Anthony Pym (2011), translation consists of a sequence of decisions made under conditions of uncertainty, within normative and functional constraints. From this perspective, the focus of the present study is not on the quantitative measurement of software performance or statistical productivity rates, but rather on the interpretative analysis of the decision-making dynamics emerging from the interaction between translator and translation memory. The investigation therefore concentrates on the qualitative dimension of lexical, syntactic, and textual choices, examining how these are shaped by the presence of previously translated and archived segments within the system.

This approach is further supported by the position articulated by Lynne Bowker (2002), according to whom translation technologies cannot be regarded as neutral tools but function instead as structuring agents within the translation process. Trados operates mainly through translation memories, which not only enhance the coherence and consistency of terms, but also help to choose what is more appropriate to guarantee a successful result for those who have commissioned the translation.

This study can be seen as descriptive, since I will identify regularities and emerging tendencies in the parts of texts that I found most intriguing: in other words, the examples will be sustained by other occurrences found in the translation memories, highlighting how these can be interpreted as a dynamic archive of previously adopted solutions. The theoretical reflection on translational norms, discussed in the previous chapters, allows the occurrences stored in translation memory to be read as traces of consolidated practice. The automatic retrieval of prior segments tends to reinforce the conventionality of specialised discourse, encouraging the reiteration of recurring formulae and structures. In this sense, translation memory can be conceptualised as a form of operational parallel corpus whose function is not merely documentary but actively orientational with respect to the translator's decision-making process.

As previously mentioned, also corpora play an important role in this type of translation. Trados itself does not primarily use real extended corpora, but it is advisable to consult texts that are similar in content and form to the ones that have to be translated. Bowker (2002) for instance, has underlined how corpora function as a way to access systematically authentic

linguistic data, which as a consequence lead translators to choose a word or a linguistic pattern rather than others. Going back to Trados, it is the very translation memory that operates as an internal corpus. The present study therefore seeks to observe the extent to which this mechanism promotes processes of normalisation or, conversely, allows space for translator intervention and stylistic adaptation.

The exploratory dimension of the research is justified by the specificity of the textual domain under examination. Although the impact of translation technologies has been widely discussed in the literature, the application of CAT tools to fashion texts remains relatively under-systematised. As noted by Joss Moorkens and Sharon O'Brien (2017), the integration of digital tools significantly reshapes the translator's role, which increasingly involves managing, evaluating, and revising pre-existing output. Within the context of fashion communication — characterised by both high terminological density and a marked stylistic component — this transformation is particularly significant and warrants focused empirical investigation.

4.2 Object of the study

The object of the present study is the mediating function of translation memory within Trados Studio and its impact on the construction of equivalence in specialised fashion texts. The focus is therefore not the software as a technological artefact per se, nor fashion discourse as an isolated genre, but the interaction between translator and translation memory as a situated, decision-oriented process.

In line with the process-oriented view of translation proposed by Anthony Pym (2011), translation is understood as a series of risk-managed decisions made under conditions of uncertainty. Within a translation memory environment, however, these decisions are not made in a vacuum: they are mediated by previously validated segments retrieved by the system. The object of analysis, consequently, is the extent to which such retrieved segments influence subsequent translational choices, either by reinforcing established patterns or by prompting modification and adaptation.

The study conceptualises translation memory as a form of operational parallel corpus embedded within the working environment. The unit of analysis in this study consists of selected translation segments retrieved through translation memory with varying match percentages (e.g., full matches, fuzzy matches, and segments without matches), but here I will show which result appeared more appropriate. Because of some restrictions of privacy and copyright, I will not be able to provide actual screenshots of Trados, but I will share which were the most frequent occurrences in the translation memory. Particular attention is devoted to recurrent lexical items, domain-specific terminology, and syntactic patterns characteristic of fashion discourse. It will be seen how fashion texts at this level have a very specific terminology, which most of the times cannot be verified with the simple dictionaries or online dictionaries. The presence of recurring expressions makes this domain particularly suitable for examining the normalising and stabilising effects of translation memory.

The level of analysis is primarily textual, focusing on the translated product. This analytical orientation reflects the broader understanding of technology-mediated translation as discussed by Joss Moorkens and Sharon O'Brien (2017), who emphasise that digital tools reshape the translator's cognitive workflow and reposition the translator as evaluator and reviser of pre-existing output.

The examples will show how the product of translation goes way beyond the literal meaning of the texts, because thanks to translation memories I was able to amplify, modify, adapt and omit some information. Nevertheless, the product was highly approved and considered suitable for the publication of the texts.

Ultimately, the object of this investigation lies at the intersection of technology, discourse, and decision-making: it concerns how archived translational choices, retrieved algorithmically, participate in the ongoing construction of equivalence and in the negotiation between conventionality and creativity in specialised communication.

4.3 Evaluation criteria

Terminological Consistency

Terminological consistency is the first evaluation criteria that has led me to choose the segments to apply to the final product of the translation. Bowker (2002) had already observed the efficiency of translation memories to promote uniformity and coherence, and this is exactly the primary reason according to which the final product is what it is. In domain-specific communication such as fashion, where recurring references to materials, product categories, cuts, textures, and branding elements are frequent, terminological stability contributes not only to precision but also to professional credibility and brand coherence.. Translation memory can thus function as a technological mechanism that reinforces such norms by privileging repetition over reformulation.

In the present study, terminological consistency is assessed by examining:

- the recurrence of equivalent lexical items across segments;
- the degree of variation in the translation of identical or similar source terms;
- instances in which translation memory suggestions are modified to accommodate contextual nuance.

This analysis makes it possible to determine whether translation memory contributes to stabilisation or whether it allows space for context-sensitive lexical adaptation.

Decision-Support Function

The second criterion concerns the extent to which translation memory operates as a decision-support environment. Translation, understood as a decision-making activity under conditions of risk (Pym, 2011), involves the continuous negotiation between available alternatives. In a translation memory setting, however, alternatives are not generated exclusively by the translator but are partially pre-selected by the system through the retrieval of stored segments.

As discussed by Joss Moorkens and Sharon O'Brien (2017), digital translation tools reshape the translator's cognitive workflow by positioning the translator as evaluator and reviser of proposed output. In this sense, translation memory can be conceptualised as a cognitive scaffold: it reduces uncertainty by narrowing the range of immediate choices, yet it may simultaneously introduce constraints that influence stylistic and structural decisions.

The evaluation of this dimension is conducted through qualitative observation of:

- patterns of acceptance (verbatim reuse of retrieved segments);
- partial modification of fuzzy matches;
- rejection and complete reformulation.

These patterns allow for an assessment of the degree to which translation memory actively guides decision-making and how translators negotiate the tension between technological suggestion and contextual adequacy.

Efficiency

Efficiency is traditionally associated with productivity gains achieved through segment reuse. However, in the present study, efficiency is not measured in quantitative terms such as words per hour or turnaround time. Instead, it is conceptualised as procedural economy within the translation process.

Drawing on Bowker's (2002) discussion of translation memory systems, efficiency is here understood as the reduction of repetitive cognitive effort through the automated retrieval of previously translated material. In the context of fashion texts — which frequently contain repeated descriptions of product features and standardised formulations — the reuse of identical or high-percentage matches may reduce reformulation effort and streamline workflow.

At the same time, the study considers whether fuzzy matches require substantial revision, potentially offsetting anticipated efficiency gains. Efficiency is therefore evaluated qualitatively, through analysis of:

- the extent of revision required for fuzzy matches;

- the degree of alignment between retrieved segments and new contexts;
- the observable reduction of redundant reformulation in repetitive textual structures.

This approach allows efficiency to be examined not as a purely technical metric but as a functional dimension of translator–technology interaction.

Quality of the Final Output

The final and most comprehensive criterion concerns the quality of the translated text. Quality is not assessed through automated metrics or error-counting systems, but through functional and textual adequacy. As discussed in the *Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies* (2012), contemporary approaches to translation quality emphasise communicative effectiveness and contextual appropriateness rather than formal equivalence alone.

Accordingly, quality in this study is evaluated in relation to:

- lexical appropriateness within the fashion domain;
- syntactic naturalness in the target language;
- coherence and fluency of the overall text;
- preservation of stylistic features characteristic of fashion discourse.

Particular attention is devoted to the potential effects of segment reuse on stylistic variation. While translation memory may enhance consistency, excessive reliance on archived segments may also produce normalisation or stylistic flattening, especially in a domain that relies on expressive nuance and persuasive language.

The assessment of quality therefore considers whether the use of translation memory supports functional equivalence — understood as the successful fulfilment of communicative purpose — without compromising textual dynamism.

4.4 Limitations of the study

The target texts obtained from the translation can be surely analyzed as examples of the efficiency of CAT tools and TMs, but they cannot be considered as universal in the field of fashion translations. In fact, I had access to a limited part of the work, so the corpus (or the TM) was partially restricted. Furthermore, the texts are specialized in a particular kind of fashion (garments for women, possibly grown-ups), so they do not cover all the fashion sectors. The selected materials reflect lexical and structural characteristics which are typical of this field, but the fashion discourse is not homogeneous. Here advertisement campaigns, editorial articles, academic texts and digital contents, will not be covered, but only the

products descriptions. For this reason, the results of the study cannot be extended to every type of fashion texts. Furthermore, they cannot be generalized to specialistic research in its complexity, since other sectors - such as legal, medical or technical - operate according to limitations, conventions and different standards of terminology. As Translation Studies often underline, descriptive studies are aimed to analyze specific situations at a deeper level, instead of focusing on universally valid conclusions (Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies, 2012). The results presented here have to be interpreted as related to a determined corpus and a determined context, not as definitive affirmations on the use of translation memories in every field.

The technological scope of the study is also limited. The analysis focuses exclusively on the use of translation memory within Trados Studio, without comparing its impact to that of other CAT tools or machine translation systems. This choice was made in order to maintain analytical clarity and concentrate on a specific tool. This does not mean to undermine the importance or efficiency of other CAT tools, because surely a broader analysis would have led to a more accurate evaluation of the product or even its value. By concentrating on a single technological configuration, the study does not take these possible variations into account. The findings therefore describe a specific operational setting rather than the overall impact of digital technologies on translation.

A further limitation concerns the assessment of translation quality. In line with functionalist perspectives (Pym, 2011), quality was evaluated on the basis of communicative effectiveness, coherence, terminological accuracy, and appropriateness to the fashion domain. These criteria are consistent with the type of texts analysed; however, any evaluation of quality inevitably involves a degree of subjectivity, especially when stylistic nuances and tone are concerned. The study does not include external evaluators or inter-rater validation procedures.

Finally, the translated texts come from a single translator (me), which limits the possibility to see other solutions adopted from other translators, perhaps even more prepared and with a background knowledge that goes back to years of translation in this field. Professional experience, familiarity with CAT tools, domain expertise, stylistic preferences, and attitudes towards technology can significantly influence interaction with translation memory. A deeper study could have brought into light the differences adopted by more than one translator to see how translation memories and CAT tools are evaluated and influence the style, the accuracy and the choices of the final translations. Research on technology-mediated translation has shown that digital tools do not automatically determine outcomes; much depends on how they are used. An experienced translator may critically revise translation memory suggestions, whereas a less experienced user may rely on them more directly. The findings presented here therefore reflect a specific translator–technology interaction rather than an intrinsic property of translation memory itself.

Acknowledging these limitations does not diminish the value of the study. On the contrary, it allows the findings to be situated within clearly defined methodological boundaries. By clearly defining its corpus, methodology, technological focus, and evaluative criteria, the research provides a focused and context-sensitive analysis of translation memory use in the

translation of fashion texts. The aim is not to formulate universal claims, but to offer an in-depth examination of a specific case. Future studies may expand this perspective by analysing larger corpora, involving multiple translators, incorporating quantitative methods, or comparing different technologies, thereby contributing to a broader understanding of the impact of digital tools on contemporary translation practice.

Chapter 5

CAT tools as methodological tools

5.1 Definition of CAT tool

There are several definitions of CAT (Computer-Assisted Translation) tools in the literature. Bowker (cited in Alotaibi, 2014: 66) describes them as a range of computer-based tools that enable translators to work more efficiently and productively. Similarly, Garcia (2015: 68) defines CAT systems as software applications specifically designed to support human translators by increasing speed and consistency. In doing so, they help reduce the overall costs of translation projects while preserving translators' earnings and maintaining an acceptable level of quality.

Over time, translators have increasingly integrated CAT tools into their everyday professional practice (Parra, 2010). Most CAT tools are built around translation memories (TMs), which help reduce translation time and allow translators to handle different texts more efficiently. A translation memory is a sort of database, where translators can easily save original texts, or part of texts, and their corresponding segment in the target language, so that once they have to check a concordance or a sentence they can see if it had been previously translated.

CAT tools divide texts into smaller units called segments, and most of the time they correspond to the way the original text has been divided. If a segment reappears in the same or a similar form, the system recalls the previous translation. Translator can also consult the so-called Termbases, which are a sort of glossary that can contain all the possible translations of a word, even in more than one language. For instance, if I need to translate the word “capo”, I can search the termbase and I will probably find “garment” in English, “prenda” in Spanish, “Kleidungsstueck” in German and so on.

CAT tools can be divided into free and paid (or proprietary) software. As Lee (2010) points out, “free software” does not necessarily mean non-commercial, since users may still incur costs in order to obtain or use the software. Examples of free CAT tools include OmegaT, Transolution, and Across. However, free tools may have certain limitations, such as restricted functionality, limited memory capacity, or frequent updates that require user adaptation. Paid CAT tools, on the other hand, require users to purchase a licence (Polo, 2013). Examples of widely used proprietary CAT tools include Trados and Wordfast.

5.2 Translation Memory

5.2.1 Background

Translation memory systems (hereafter TMs) have been in use for several years and are now widely adopted not only by freelance translators, but also by language service providers (LSPs) and translation departments in public institutions and corporate settings. Their diffusion is largely due to the numerous advantages they are perceived to offer (Christensen

& Schjoldager, 2010, p. 2). Today, TMs represent one of the most widely used translation support tools available on the market.

Despite their benefits, TMs do more than simply assist translators: they also influence the way translators interact with texts and, to varying degrees, the way they carry out their work (see, among others, Garcia, 2007; Christensen & Schjoldager, 2010; Pym, 2011). In some contexts, translators may also experience what can be described as “external pressures,” since the TM is not always a tool fully under their control. This happens because the translation memory is often not put together by a single translator, but they can be accessed by numerous people, even of different mother tongues. Also agencies and clients can access the translation memory, and sometime they can add or modify some of the matches to better adapt the text to what they will want as a final product. In such cases, TMs reshape not only individual workflows but also broader translation practices that extend beyond the translator’s direct influence. For many experienced professionals, these developments represent a significant shift in established working methods.

These changes give rise to a number of important questions. What impact do TMs have on translators themselves, for instance in terms of professional satisfaction or status? How do they shape the evolving direction of the translation profession? How do professional translators actually use TMs, and how are they expected to use them? What are the perceived advantages and disadvantages of TMs from the translator’s point of view? To what extent do TMs transform translators’ control over their work and their texts? How do translators describe their own experiences with these tools? Finally, how has the widespread adoption of TMs affected the business models and administrative practices of translation companies and services, and what consequences has this had for translators?

5.2.2 TMs: Overview

As Christensen and Schjoldager (2010) note in their comprehensive overview of translation memories (TMs), a number of studies on TMs have been conducted over the past decade. Some of these investigations were carried out by tool developers or professional associations, while others were more empirical in nature and led by researchers focusing exclusively on TMs. For example, Dragsted (2006) and Colominas (2008) examined segmentation, whereas Dillon and Fraser (2006) and Lagoudaki (2006) explored translators’ perceptions using questionnaire-based data. O’Brien (2007, 2008) investigated the cognitive load experienced by translators through the use of eye-tracking technology. Bowker’s study (2005) is also noteworthy, highlighting that translators—particularly beginners—may not always critically evaluate the suggestions offered by the system.

However, as Christensen and Schjoldager (2010) emphasize in the conclusion of their article, there is still a need for “more knowledge about the translator’s perspective on TM technology” (p. 11). Similarly, Kenny (2007) argues that research should focus on “how technology affects working conditions, pay, and professional self-image” (p. 17).

Bédard (2000) and Mossop (2006), among others, warned about the possible negative effects of TMs, particularly their impact on the cognitive process of translation and the potential for deskilling. Bowker (2005) cautioned against a kind of “blind faith” in TMs, which can lead to over-reliance and error propagation. Pym and Biau Gil (2006; see also Pym, 2011) suggested that TMs may have isolating and dehumanizing effects and might even signal a return to the equivalence paradigm of the 1960s. Garcia (2007, 2009), in two key articles on translation technology, warned against an excessive focus on segments and highlighted the challenges professional translators currently face regarding their status and working conditions.

5.2.3 TMs: The use

Translators employ a variety of electronic resources, including dictionaries, bilingual concordancers, terminology management tools, and, of course, translation memories (TMs). TMs are fully integrated into translators’ workstations, and their use is generally considered essential rather than optional.

Before examining translators’ perceptions of TMs, it is useful to outline how TMs are typically used in these professional settings. TMs are applied to a wide range of texts, regardless of type and across different subject fields. This is important, since some researchers have observed that TMs are often better suited to specific kinds of texts, such as highly repetitive or technical material: in the case of fashion texts, they are particularly useful because the same firm can be more keen to use the same style for the descriptions of the garments in the various collections. In firms and services, TMs serve not only to store existing translations but also to be continuously populated with new material, increasing opportunities for reuse. Since TMs are primarily employed to enhance both productivity and consistency, organisations have a clear interest in maximising their effectiveness (Bowker, 2005; Garcia, 2009).

That said, not every text lends itself equally well to TM-based work. In some cases, TMs provide few or no reusable segments, leaving translators to work independently and translate “from scratch” (O’Brien, 2007). When TMs do provide useful matches—such as exact or full matches, or substantial fuzzy matches—translators often need to follow specific guidelines. Practices vary between organisations: in some, translators are required to use exact matches as they appear, with any modifications needing justification and approval from a reviser (Bowker, 2005). Substantial fuzzy matches may only be minimally adjusted in most instances. The rationale is that validated segments have already been reviewed by experienced translators and approved for client delivery, reducing the need for unnecessary retranslation.

In contrast, other organisations may allow translators more discretion. In these cases, the TM functions as one tool among many, and translators can decide whether to reuse segments as-is or adapt them to better fit the target text. Differences in the level of freedom regarding the use of exact, full, or fuzzy matches can affect translator satisfaction, depending on the organisational policies in place (Garcia, 2007; Pym, 2011).

5.3 Termbase

5.3.1 Managing Terminology

It is important to clarify what is meant by a termbase in this article and whether termbases remain useful to translators, who can now access terminology through alternative means. For instance, if termbases could be fully replaced by searching online collections of texts and their translations—as suggested by Bowker (2011)—they might appear less relevant to modern translators. However, such arguments often conflate different types of terminological resources and do not apply equally to all. It is particularly important to distinguish between glossaries and termbases.

Although some simple two-column bilingual glossaries may, in certain contexts, be less essential to a translator's daily work, both termbases—as defined here—and the exchange of information between them remain central to the multilingual document production process. A termbase is a computerized database primarily containing information about domain-specific concepts and the terms that represent them. Specialised translation deals with distinct fields of knowledge, each structured around concepts linked to objects or ideas relevant to that field. Termbases can be monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual.

Unlike general electronic dictionaries, so those which everyone consults online and which organise entries around a headword and include multiple senses from general language, termbases are organised differently, and this organisation can also depend from the type of text that we are translating. For example, a dictionary entry for “work” might list several senses—labour, toil, exertion, effort, etc.—whereas a termbase focuses on domain-specific knowledge, dividing terms into concepts agreed upon by experts in the relevant field: in the case of fashion, “work” might correspond to “design.” If a term has multiple meanings, each meaning corresponds to a separate concept entry. Typically, a termbase does not include uses of a term outside its domain.

Concept orientation does not imply that concepts are universal across cultures or time. Terminological concepts are defined by experts working in a particular domain and evolve over time. For well-established fields, there is usually a stable set of concepts understood by most members of the discourse community.

5.3.2 Termbases and glossaries

It is not simple to identify the difference or the relationship between termbases and glossaries, since by someone who has not worked with the former they can be seen as the same thing. They surely share some similarities, but this does not mean that every “glossary” is a termbase, even if they both are a terminological resource. There are two main types of glossaries, which differ in structure and purpose.

First, we can find monolingual glossaries, consisting of a reference list of terms and their definitions, explanations, or context, all provided in the same language. Since monolingual glossaries are often used by authors or translators for their works regarding a particular field, they can function similarly to a monolingual termbase, providing a structured reference for consistent terminology use.

The second type is a two-column bilingual glossary, which does not rely on a termbase but is created firsthand by the author or translator while they are doing their job. They consist of the word in the source language and its corresponding translation in the target language. In this way, a one-to-one correspondence between languages is established. Translators frequently create these lists using tools like spreadsheets, which can serve as mnemonic aids and help maintain consistency within a single document by recording translation decisions.

The difference from a termbase relies on the fact that these types of glossaries explore multiple domains, so the basic requirements of a termbase are not met. Termbases, in fact, are specifically organized according to a domain so that they can provide structured, validated information that can be used by the translator. In other words, while glossaries can be useful as reference tools, they do not replace the depth, consistency, and conceptual organization found in termbases.

5.3.3 Corpora as complementary methodological resources in the translation of fashion texts

Working with CAT tools in translation generally involves the integration of multiple methods and resources. Working with Trados Studio, I mostly relied in translation memories and termbases, since my previous knowledge about fashion terminology did not meet the required standards. However, creating a corpus can also provide an added value to the translation, since most of the time the description of garments made by the fashion industry in general shows several similarities. Corpora, in this sense, are an additional methodological resource. When translating fashion texts, several communicative functions have to be met, so a literal translation is not sufficient. In fact, the efficiency of a translation implies a descriptive, promotional and persuasive style, that has to be added to a specific lexicon. In this view, anglicisms, neologisms and evaluative terms can be easily found, so that they can enhance the perceived value of the product. As a result, lexical choice, frequent collocations and stylistic nuances become crucial. In this view, the translator has to combine coherence and consistency (taken from termbases and translation memories) with contemporary linguistic trends in the target language.

Scholars such as Baker (1993) argue that corpora are essential to prevent translation from being reduced to a mere transfer of information based solely on the translator's individual expertise. As I said before, since I had no previous competence developed in the translation texts, this notion here is particularly relevant. The linguistic competence required to produce grammatically and structurally accurate texts is not sufficient in this field. In this sense, corpora can help translators to see how professionals work or had worked in the previous years, and in this way they can observe authentic data. Kenny (2001) and Zanettin (2012) have also emphasised that corpus use can produce greater awareness of context-appropriate

terminology, effective syntactic structures and linguistic patterns that serve as an added tool to tms and tbs, enhancing in this way both textual coherence and communicative appeal. Linguistic correctness, as said before, is not the main goal in fashion texts: they demand careful consideration of how similar texts have been previously produced and received within the industry.

Whereas translation memories retrieve previously translated segments from a closed database linked to specific projects — and Trados Studio, in particular, operates through the creation of structured projects that must ultimately align with the platform or context in which the translation will be published — corpora offer access to authentic examples drawn from previously published texts. In the case of fashion translation, the commissioning company often produces texts of similar content on a yearly basis, which can serve as valuable reference material. Consulting a comparable corpus composed of specialised magazines, official brand websites or e-commerce platforms in the target language allows the translator to verify term frequency, collocational behaviour and preferred syntactic structures. As Bowker (2002) highlights, corpus analysis reduces the risk of overly literal solutions, calques or formulations that may be grammatically correct but stylistically inappropriate.

In this context, both comparable and parallel corpora can be employed. However, SDL Trados Studio does not provide a real inner corpus, but the translator has to look for external concordancing and corpus-query tools. In the examples that will be later analyzed, corpus consultation is not expressively cited, but during the actual translation process it becomes particularly valuable when translation memories do not provide relevant matches, when fuzzy matches require significant stylistic adaptation, or when it is necessary to verify tone appropriateness in relation to the target market. In such cases, the corpus serves as an evidence-based support tool, enabling more informed and justified lexical and stylistic decisions.

5.4 Determining skopos

Reader- and meaning-oriented perspectives are not confined to Translation Studies — where they are extensively theorised within functionalist frameworks — but are also reflected in the regulatory instruments governing translation practice at the European level. Functionalist models such as Skopos theory (Reiss and Vermeer 1984; Nord 1997; Schäffner 1998) and the theory of 5.4 Quality Assurance

5.4.1 The concept of quality

Translation quality assurance and assessment remain comparatively underexplored areas, despite the significant expansion of both translation as a professional practice and Translation Studies as an academic discipline. From an epistemological standpoint, a persistent divide can be observed between the exact sciences and the humanities; within the latter, to the best

of current knowledge, no psychometrically controlled performance indicators have yet been systematically associated with translation competence.

The inherently multidimensional nature of translation — whether conceptualised as process or product — may help explain the difficulty of validating and reliably measuring translation quality and translator competence. The issue can thus be succinctly formulated as the challenge of determining “how to tell that a translation is good or bad” (House 2012: 534) on the basis of clearly defined and operationalised criteria.

In this respect, Ardelean (2016: 103) emphasises the necessity of grounding translation quality evaluation in objective criteria, arguing that quality “must result from the observance of a system of specific professional and ethical values”. At the same time, she acknowledges the tension between subjective criteria — whereby quality may appear to lie “in the eyes of the beholder” — and objective criteria, understood not as rigid yardsticks but rather as flexible benchmarks.

Conversely, other scholars (notably Pym 2001; Suojanen et al. 2015) conceptualise translation quality as a transactional process. Within user-oriented approaches to translation quality assurance, quality tends to be equated with client satisfaction, emerging from the alignment between expectations and the delivered product. Nevertheless, the translator, as service provider, ultimately bears responsibility for ensuring the overall functionality and quality of the translation.

Both translating — a term referring more specifically to the process, though not consistently adopted in mainstream literature — and translation — a broader term encompassing both process and product — exhibit norm-governed behaviour at linguistic and socio-cultural levels. Furthermore, any macro-level evaluation must remain closely interconnected with micro-level analysis when determining whether a translation can be considered successful. Translation entails a complex relationship between source text and target text, embedded within a constellation of communicative circumstances that functionally and operationally shape the translator’s decisions. A translation, particularly while in progress, does not exist as an autonomous entity; rather, the translator continually moves between source and target texts, interrelating them in order to achieve effective re-contextualisation.

5.4.2 Awareness of Decision-making in Translation Quality Assurance

Within this theoretical landscape, House (1977, 1997) proposes and progressively refines a comprehensive interdisciplinary model of translation criticism. In her framework, a successful translation is primarily understood as a semantically and pragmatically equivalent replacement of the source text, that is, a text capable of fulfilling the same function within a specific context of situation, in the Hallidayan sense (Halliday 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004).

Drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics, House conceptualises the text as embedded in a socio-cultural matrix articulated along ideational and interpersonal dimensions. Accordingly,

the context of situation can be analytically decomposed into linguistically identifiable and manageable components — field, tenor and mode — which together account for register variation. In her later work (House 2009, 2012), genre is incorporated into the model in order to more effectively capture the macro-contextual dimension and the double linkage between textual features and human agency (author(ship), translator(ship), reader(ship)).

Within this framework, the translation process unfolds as a dynamic act of comprehension and re-textualisation: the translator first interprets the source text and subsequently produces a target text shaped by that interpretation. Such comprehension is mediated by the translator's linguistic competence, analytical abilities and cultural as well as background knowledge. Translational choices are thus construed as instances of meaning negotiation, motivated by the need to reproduce, as closely as possible, the multidimensional meaning potential of the source text in a target-language form that is contextually appropriate. Given that the lexical and grammatical resources of the two languages do not overlap and function differently, the translator must prioritise those aspects of meaning that are most salient in light of both micro-level (local) and macro-level (global) contextual determinants shaping the register of the target text.

Cumulatively, House maintains that translation quality can be assessed in terms of the “relative match” between the textual profile of the original and that of the translation — understood as an aggregate of structural features and expressive potential — as well as in terms of functional equivalence. The continuum established between a translation closely adhering to the source text and a more autonomous rendering (rather than a rigid dichotomy such as overt vs. covert translation) reinforces the notion that no absolute yardstick exists, while allowing for a principled tolerance of ambiguity.

At the same time, contemporary translation practice is largely demand-driven and commission-based, requiring translators to comply with client specifications. However, such responsiveness does not preclude professional autonomy. On the contrary, translators are expected to mobilise specialised knowledge and undertake further research — particularly with regard to terminology, language change, cultural norms, and social and ethical considerations — while engaging with theoretical frameworks and methodological tools developed within Translation Studies. The ongoing dialogue between research and practice thus contributes to the development of translators' analytical and strategic competences, enabling them to address increasingly complex translational challenges and to secure quality in a principled and informed manner.

translational action (Holz-Mänttari 1984; Witte 2000) foreground a shift from text reproduction to text production, emphasising the purposeful nature of translation. Within this paradigm, translation quality is inseparable from the communicative function assigned to the target text and from the interaction among the translator, the client, the source-text author and the target readership. The translator is thus empowered as a cultural mediator whose task is to ensure that source and target texts are rendered “logically and culturally compatible for the specified purpose” (Schäffner 2003: 97).

These theoretical premises resonate in European standardisation initiatives regulating translation services. The EN-15038 European Quality Standard for Translation Services, in force since August 2006, emerged as a bottom-up initiative from within the translation industry, involving translators, language service providers, professional associations, academia, customers and standardisation bodies. Its process-oriented approach defines specific roles and requires mandatory revision: every translation must first undergo self-revision by the translator and subsequently be revised by a second qualified professional. In this sense, the standard anticipates a systematic demand for revision procedures and positions itself as an objective benchmark for evaluating both workflow management and translation quality within language service provision.

In 2015, ISO 17100 superseded EN-15038, establishing internationally recognised principles for translation quality assurance, regardless of translation type (literary, legal, technical, etc.). Section 5.3.1 explicitly adopts a process-oriented perspective, stipulating that the translator must ensure: compliance with domain-specific and client terminology; semantic accuracy; correct syntax, spelling and orthography; lexical cohesion and phraseology; adherence to style guides and register conventions; respect for locale-specific norms; appropriate formatting; and alignment with the intended audience and communicative purpose. The emphasis placed on client specifications and target-language conventions reflects a service-oriented model of translation in which quality is closely tied to compliance, consistency and usability, potentially limiting overt manifestations of translator subjectivity or creativity.

A similar orientation is evident in the guidelines developed by the Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) of the European Commission, which acts as a central authority in the European translation market and in translator training policies. The DGT Translation Quality Guidelines (2015) define quality primarily in terms of communicative fitness for purpose, measured against the “expressed or implied needs and expectations” of direct customers, end-users and other stakeholders. Complementary documents such as *How to write clearly* (2015) extend this concern to drafting practices, addressing authors, translators and revisers alike, while acknowledging language- and text-type-specific conventions (e.g., EU legislation, political documents, internal working documents). Although primarily tailored to institutional contexts, these guidelines illustrate how quality assurance mechanisms integrate text typology, risk management and revision workflows.

Significantly, the DGT acknowledges that error-free translation is unattainable and conceptualises quality assessment in terms of risk management — namely, the potential impact and probability of errors occurring at monolingual (review) and bilingual (revision) levels. This perspective broadens the understanding of quality beyond mere correctness, incorporating considerations of functionality and readership expectations.

Quality control is thus framed as added value and is operationalised through dedicated workflow stages, including systematic self-revision and global re-reading of the translated text. According to Florean (2016), quality assurance at the DGT unfolds in three phases: pre-translation (source-text drafting and preparatory work, including reference to initiatives

such as *How to write clearly*); during translation (collaboration with experienced translators and terminologists, and reliance on technological resources such as CAT tools, machine translation systems and multilingual databases); and post-translation (editing, proofreading, feedback and administrative validation).

From a more granular perspective, the DGT assessment grid — as presented in the *Guide for External Translators* (2006, 2016) and discussed by Buzdugan (2016) — evaluates translations according to criteria including completeness (no additions or omissions), faithful and consistent transfer of meaning, correct use of EU terminology and reference materials, internal terminological coherence, grammatical and orthographic accuracy, appropriate style and register, clarity and naturalness of expression, correct layout and formatting, and compliance with deadlines. Errors are categorised as high- or low-relevance depending on their impact on accuracy and naturalness, and overall performance is graded along a scale ranging from Very Good to Unacceptable. Translations rated from Acceptable downwards require substantial revision or upgrading, either by the external contractor or by DGT staff.

Within the context of a technology-mediated workflow — such as translation carried out through Trados Studio — these institutional quality parameters acquire a concrete operational dimension. Terminology management, consistency checks, revision stages and formatting compliance are no longer abstract requirements but are embedded in the functionalities of CAT tools. Translation memories, termbases, QA verification modules and revision tracking features provide technological support for implementing the process-oriented and compliance-driven standards outlined above. Consequently, translation through Trados Studio can be understood not merely as a technical procedure, but as a structured quality assurance environment aligning professional practice with European regulatory frameworks and functionalist principles of purpose-driven translation.

Chapter 6

SDL Trados Studios: methodological assumptions

6.1 Beginnings and Historical Development of Trados and similar softwares

The development of Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools dates back to the 1980s, when pioneering European companies such as TRADOS (founded in 1984 in Stuttgart by Jochen Hummel and Iko Knyphausen) and the Swiss STAR Group began designing software solutions to support multilingual documentation and localization processes. While TRADOS focused primarily on translation software, STAR specialised in information management systems and soon expanded internationally, opening a German office in 1986 to serve the growing software localization market. This early European leadership highlights how the professionalisation of translation technology initially emerged in response to the needs of specialised industries.

The commercialisation of CAT systems gained further momentum in 1988, when Eiichiro Sumita and Yutaka Tsutsumi at IBM Japan developed ETOC (Easy to Consult), an upgraded electronic dictionary (Chan, 2015: 6). Although the term “translation memory” was not yet in use, ETOC already contained the core principles that would later define TM technology. The system attempted to retrieve full sentence matches from its bilingual database; when no exact match was found, it performed grammatical analysis, identifying sentence patterns and comparing them with similar bilingual examples stored in the database. Translators could then select, adapt and revise the retrieved segments. This pattern-based retrieval mechanism anticipated the logic of contemporary translation memories, which rely on segment alignment, fuzzy matching and reuse of previously translated material.

In 1990, TRADOS released the first version of MultiTerm, a multilingual terminology management tool for DOS that stored terminological data in a structured database organised according to user-defined attributes (Eurolux Computers, 1992: 8). MultiTerm marked a decisive step towards systematic terminology management, allowing translators to maintain consistency across projects and domains — an aspect that remains crucial in specialised sectors such as fashion, where brand identity, product naming and stylistic coherence are fundamental.

A major turning point in the evolution of CAT technology occurred in 2005, when the British company SDL, specialised in translation and localisation services, acquired TRADOS and its related technologies for £35 million. This acquisition led to the development of SDL Trados Studio as an integrated platform combining translation memories, terminology management, quality assurance modules and project management features within a single environment.

Today, SDL Trados Studio is considered one of the leading CAT tools in the global translation market, widely adopted by freelance translators, language service providers and multinational companies. Its interface supports over 70 file formats — including .doc, .docx, .pdf, .ppt, .txt and .html — making it particularly suitable for handling the diverse textual

genres involved in fashion communication, such as lookbooks, product descriptions, press releases and website content. The software enables translators to work within structured projects, ensuring consistency across large volumes of text while maintaining alignment with the final publication platform.

Key functionalities of SDL Trados Studio include:

- Integration of translation memories for segment retrieval and consistency
- MultiTerm terminology management for domain-specific vocabulary
- Spell-checking and punctuation control
- Automated Quality Assurance (QA) checks for inconsistencies and omissions
- Fuzzy match and concordance search features
- Project-based workflow organisation

In the context of fashion translation, these features are particularly relevant. Translation memories ensure internal coherence across recurring product descriptions or seasonal collections, while terminology databases safeguard brand-specific terms and preferred stylistic solutions. However, as discussed in previous sections, the technological efficiency offered by Trados Studio must be complemented by external resources — such as corpora — in order to guarantee stylistic naturalness and alignment with evolving discourse conventions in the fashion industry.

Therefore, within this thesis, SDL Trados Studio is not viewed merely as a productivity tool, but as a methodological framework that structures the translation process. Its historical development reflects the broader evolution of translation from an individual, text-based activity to a technology-mediated, project-oriented and quality-controlled professional practice. In the specialised domain of fashion texts, this evolution highlights the need to balance technological precision with stylistic sensitivity and communicative effectiveness.

6.2 Trados as a CAT Tool

The release of Windows 3.1 for PCs and the first WYSIWYG word processors dramatically transformed translators' working environments and tools. Shortly thereafter, the rapid expansion of the Internet further reshaped the profession. With the advent of Internet access, the translation market was no longer limited by geographical location. Translators gained access to vast sources of information, which enabled them to specialize in multiple fields and broaden the range of services they could offer. At the same time, the decreasing cost of personal computers allowed thousands of professionals to integrate digital tools into their daily work.

Trados was probably one of the earliest tools used in computer-assisted translation (CAT) and perhaps the most widely adopted within the translation profession. Although Trados (Translation and Documentation Software) was not the first CAT tool, it played a crucial role in the evolution of the field. It was the first to move beyond highly specialized environments and take advantage of the functionalities offered by existing word processors.

At the core of CAT tools lie Translation Memories (TMs), simple databases composed of multiple fields that establish a correspondence between a “segment” in the source language and its equivalent in the target language.

Together with terminology management systems, TMs facilitated the translation of software and user manuals into multiple languages, ensuring terminological consistency across different documents. Moreover, TMs enabled users to retrieve sentences translated in previous versions and insert them into new contexts. Although the procedure was initially cumbersome and offered limited integration with word processors, it nonetheless alleviated repetitive and time-consuming tasks. The first CAT tool truly deserving of the name was likely *Translation Manager*, developed by IBM, an expensive and highly specialized program originally created for internal company use (SDL, 2015).

Trados was initially conceived in 1984 to provide translation management services to IBM. However, it was not until 1992 that it developed a multilingual terminology management system, MultiTerm, compatible with Windows 3.1, as well as a translation memory manager, Translator’s Workbench, for MS-DOS. By 1994, Workbench was operating within Windows and had introduced the concept of fuzzy matching. This marked a major breakthrough: an effective integration of translation memories and terminology management systems with one of the emerging word processors of the time.

6.2.1 SDL Trados Studio Translation Memory (TM)

A Translation Memory (TM) is a key feature used in computer-assisted translation tools such as SDL Trados Studio. When translating with a TM in Studio, documents are divided into segments. After each segment is translated, it is stored in the TM along with its corresponding translation. As the translation of the source document progresses, segments that are identical or similar to previously translated segments are automatically suggested or completed, significantly increasing translation speed (LeBlanc, 2013).

LeBlanc (2013) emphasizes that “the performance of a TM system depends on the size and quality of the existing database and is expected to improve as the database grows. A TM is useless if it is empty, and the quality of the translations stored in the TM depends on the skill of the translator. Remember that a TM is a CAT tool designed to assist translators, but the translations suggested by the TM come from texts previously translated and stored in the database by a human translator. Furthermore, the source texts and their translations must be explicitly stored in the TM.”

Any translation work carried out outside the TM environment will not automatically be stored in the database and therefore will not be available for future reuse, unless it is later aligned and added to the TM

6.3 Translation workflow with Trados

First and foremost, it is important to note that Trados does not perform translations autonomously; rather, it significantly supports and streamlines the translation process. Essentially, Trados operates through concordance search: it segments the source text into individual sentences and searches for similar segments stored in the Translation Memory (TM).

As proposed by Melby (as cited in Polo, 2013), the workflow in Trados consists of three main phases: pre-translation, translation, and post-translation. In the pre-translation phase, the translator prepares the necessary resources before working on the files, including creating a TM and selecting the relevant document, language pair, AutoSuggest dictionary, and Termbase (TB).

During the translation phase, the translator begins translating the source text, confirms translated segments, edits fuzzy matches, performs spell checks, applies formatting, and saves the resulting target text. The final phase involves quality control and quality assurance procedures.

By default, Trados applies a fuzzy match threshold of 70%. This means that if the similarity between a source segment and a TM segment is below 70%, the system treats it as if no match were found. However, this threshold can be adjusted according to the translator's needs. When a 100% match is identified, Trados automatically inserts the segment and proceeds to the next one.

Another highly valuable feature of Trados is its Cloud Storage. Since an individual translator typically cannot build a TM comprehensive enough to include similar sentences for all possible texts, shared cloud storage allows translators worldwide to save their translations collectively. As a result, users gain access to a vast repository of segments from which they can select suitable matches.

6.3.1 Before Translation

At the heart of Trados is the Translation Memory (TM), a structured linguistic database that stores previously translated segments in different languages. The TM incorporates fundamental writing and grammatical conventions of the supported languages. As noted by Garcia (2015: 201), the TM enhances both consistency and productivity, enabling translators to handle a larger volume of text within a given timeframe. It also allows them to recycle, retrieve, and reuse prior translations efficiently.

In many cases, clients provide their own TMs. However, when no TM is available, translators can create one directly in Trados. To do so, they must select the New Translation Memory

option from the Home screen and enter a name in the Name field of the New Translation Memory dialog box. The Location field automatically displays the default directory where the TM file will be saved. Next, the translator must choose the appropriate target language from the list provided in the Target Language field. After completing all required fields in the dialog box, the Finish button should be clicked to initiate the creation of the TM. A progress bar will then appear, indicating the status of the process. Once the TM has been successfully created, the translator should click Close to finalize the procedure.

First, launch Trados, open the File tab, and click Open. Then select Translate Single Document, or use the shortcut Ctrl+Alt+O, and choose the file you wish to translate. The Translation Memory and Document Settings window will appear. At this stage, you must select the appropriate language pair, that is, the source language and the target language.

If this is your first time using Trados, you will not yet have a Translation Memory (TM). However, you can create a reliable TM if you have previously saved translated texts along with their corresponding source texts. To create a TM, click on Create Translation Memory, which opens the relevant dialog box. Enter a name for the TM in the *Name* field. Additional details may be included in the *Description* field. To indicate copyright protection, you can insert a statement such as “All Rights Reserved” in the *Copyright* field.

The *Location* field specifies where the TM will be saved on your computer. At this stage, the source and target languages are automatically set according to the selections made in the previous Translation Memory and Document Settings window.

If the option Enable character-based concordance search is selected, Trados will not only index entire words in the TM but also groupings of characters within words. This may increase the number of partial (fuzzy) matches generated and result in larger index files.

To complete the creation process, click Finish, and then Close in the following window. You will be redirected to the Translation Memory and Document Settings window. Here, several columns appear next to the TM name:

- Enabled: activates the TM for the current translation.
- Language: indicates the source and target languages.
- Lookup: determines whether Trados consults this TM during searches.
- Concordance: allows Trados to perform concordance searches.
- Update: specifies whether new translation units will be stored in the TM.

It is generally recommended to select all these options. After clicking OK, you will enter the Editor View, where translation and revision take place.

At this point, the file has been prepared for translation and a TM has been created. Trados then redirects you to the Editor View, which consists of several components:

- The Navigation Pane, where you can view and switch between open documents.
- The Ribbon tabs and groups, which contain editing and formatting tools.
- The Editor Window, where the actual translation or revision is performed.
- The Translation Results Window, which displays TM lookup results and allows you to apply alternative matches if the automatically inserted one is not satisfactory.
- The Term Recognition Window, which shows the results of Termbase (TB) searches.

6.3.2 During the Translation

At this stage, translators begin the actual translation of the document. In the Editor View, the interface is organized in a table layout where the source text and the target text are displayed side by side. The source language appears in the left column, while the target language version is shown in the right column. The document is divided into segments, which usually correspond to individual sentences. Translators can edit the target segments directly in this view.

Between the source and target columns, there is a segment status column, which plays a crucial role. This column indicates the current status of each segment as well as the origin of the translation (for example, whether it comes from the Translation Memory). Segment numbers can be displayed or hidden according to user preference.

To the right of the target segments, the document structure column provides information about where each segment appears in the original document. It also indicates the type of content, such as a heading (H), footnote (FN), or standard paragraph (P).

When a translator begins typing in a segment, a pencil icon appears in the segment status column, indicating that the segment is being edited. To confirm the translation and move to the next segment, the shortcut Ctrl + Enter is used. After confirmation, a green checkmark appears, and the cursor automatically advances to the following segment.

If a context match is found in the Translation Memory, it is displayed in the segment status column. A context match represents a 100% match that also shares the same preceding context. In addition to context matches, Trados provides fuzzy matches, which are displayed with a percentage indicating the degree of similarity. When multiple fuzzy matches are available, the match with the highest percentage is automatically inserted into the target segment. The translator can then review and modify it to ensure accuracy and appropriateness.

Tags indicate the presence of formatting or structural elements in the source text that must be preserved in the translation. Maintaining the original formatting—such as bold text, bullet points, or other layout features—is essential. Formatting can be applied using the QuickPlace drop-down menu or by selecting the target segment and pressing the shortcut Ctrl + , (comma).

6.3.3 After the Translation

This phase involves post-translation verification, during which translators carry out a comprehensive quality check. The review process includes the examination of tags, segments, formatting, numbers, and overall consistency. Specialized verification tools are used to detect errors and inconsistencies in the translated text. Basic verification is performed automatically when a segment is confirmed, and any detected issues are displayed in the Messages Window.

One important aspect of this process is tag verification, which compares the tags in the target text with those in the source text and identifies any discrepancies or missing elements. Manual verification can be performed through the Review toolbar by selecting the Verify option.

In addition, translators can use Trados QA Check 3.0, which performs a series of advanced quality assurance checks. These include segment verification, exclusion of specific segments, punctuation and number checks, regular expression validation, word list control, inconsistency detection, trademark verification, and other advanced checks.

Once the quality assurance process is complete, the final step is to generate the translated document. This can be done by following these steps:

- Go to the File tab.
- Click on Save Target As.
- Choose the desired save location.
- Click Save.

The translated project is saved in two formats: a document file with the *.sdlxliff* extension and a project file with the *.sdlproj* extension.

PART III – APPLICATION AND RESULTS

Chapter 7

Application Description

With regard to the practical examples that reflect the considerations discussed in the preceding chapters, the data analyzed were drawn from the work I carried out over the course of more than a year for a translation company whose clientele includes a major Italian fashion house. This company regularly produces texts for translation, which may concern both garment and outfit descriptions as well as more technical content intended to support in-store staff in their professional activities, such as personal shopping and clienteling.

In particular, selected garment descriptions will be examined, and the reasons underlying the final translation choices in the target language will be analyzed, based on the previously outlined discussion of translation memories and termbases. In this regard, Trados Studio provides access to all translations produced in previous seasonal releases over the past decade, completed by multiple translators.

The decision not to rely solely on individual linguistic competence stems from the need to ensure continuity with previously published material. Technical terminology—such as fabric names, specific manufacturing processes, or garment cuts—must remain consistent with earlier translations. Indeed, the commissioning company is not concerned with the fact that different translators may have worked on the texts over the years; rather, what matters is that the final product is accurate, not misleading, and does not confuse readers who are familiar with the established stylistic vocabulary.

With respect to translational accuracy, it will be shown that these texts often do not aim for literal renderings; instead, syntactic structures are partially or completely modified in order to achieve a result that is most appropriate for the target language. To delimit the scope of the present study, the analysis will focus on translations from Italian into English.

7.1 Type of texts

The texts selected for analysis may be regarded as belonging to a hybrid genre. As they primarily consist of internal training materials intended for the company's sales assistants across its global branches, they address recipients who share a common technical background while inevitably operating within different linguistic systems shaped by their respective mother tongues. For this reason, the texts combine instructional, informative, and specialised features.

Prior to their distribution to sales staff, the materials are subject to meticulous revision by personnel at the company's headquarters. Consequently, translations must not only ensure the successful completion of the embedded assessment tasks, but must also meet the quality

standards required to validate the professional reliability of the translation service provider. More specifically, these materials take the form of structured training courses designed to update sales assistants on seasonal trends, predominant colour palettes, fabrics employed, and the principal garment categories featured in each collection.

From a functional perspective, the texts fulfil a dual purpose. On the one hand, they perform an informative and descriptive function, presenting detailed accounts of garments, their technical and stylistic features, and the specialised terminology of the fashion sector. On the other hand, they serve a formative and evaluative function, as the courses incorporate structured questions conceived as formal assessment tests, which sales assistants must complete successfully in order to conclude the training programme.

This configuration has a direct impact on linguistic and translational choices. The texts must be clear, coherent, and terminologically rigorous, while remaining accessible to a professional audience that may not possess advanced linguistic expertise. The excerpts selected for translation focus primarily on garment descriptions, as this is the segment in which issues relating to terminological rendering, lexical consistency, and the adequacy of syntactic structures in the target language emerge most prominently.

The analysis of this text type thus provides an opportunity to observe concretely which linguistic solutions prove most appropriate in relation to the communicative purpose of the source text, and to assess the degree of terminological accuracy and consistency, in line with the discussion in the preceding chapters concerning the use of translation memories, termbases, and corpora.

7.2 Specialistic domain

With regard to the specialised domain of the texts, as previously noted, they belong to the field of fashion retail; however, they differ from general fashion communication in that they are not addressed to the public at large, but rather to a relatively restricted professional audience. Although these materials are translated for a very large number of the company's stores—the translation provider is responsible not only for Italian-to-English translations, but also into Arabic, Japanese, Flemish, German, French, Russian, and Spanish—terminological consistency remains of primary importance and must be appropriately adapted to each target language.

While these texts are not purely scientific and their technicality is somewhat limited, they are nonetheless characterised by a consistent use of terminology relating to fabrics, garment construction, cuts, body shapes, colour palettes, and seasonal trends. It should also be noted that the translation process is influenced by the seasonality of the collections: terminology differs between autumn/winter and spring/summer releases. In this regard, translation memories must be consulted strategically: when translating the Spring/Summer 2026

collection, it is more effective to draw on the memories of previous summer seasons—even those from more than a year prior—rather than on winter collections.

The degree of specialisation can be defined as semi-technical, as the texts occupy an intermediate position between highly specialised and generalist communication. They are intended for professionals operating within the fashion retail context, who require accurate and detailed knowledge of the products—from fabric characteristics and specific cuts to the distinctive stylistic elements of the collection—in order to interact competently and credibly with clients. However, these materials are not designed for an academic audience or for research purposes, and therefore do not employ the level of theoretical abstraction or conceptual density typical of scientific literature.

This intermediate level of specialisation necessitates maintaining a careful balance between terminological rigour and communicative accessibility. On the one hand, terminology must be precise and consistent, particularly regarding fabric names, garment construction processes, fits, and garment types, as these elements form an integral part of the brand's identity and the professional competence expected of sales staff. On the other hand, linguistic formulation must remain clear, fluent, and easily comprehensible, so that the content can be effectively assimilated and applied in everyday sales and advisory practice. This tension between technical precision and operational usability constitutes one of the defining characteristics of the specialised domain under study and significantly influences translational choices.

From a translational perspective, the specialised nature of the domain has several important implications. Terminological consistency is central, particularly concerning fabric denominations, garment categories, fits, and stylistic descriptors, which contribute decisively to the construction and maintenance of the brand's identity. In a structured corporate environment with recurring seasonal publications, terminological fluctuations or the use of variants not aligned with prior translations may generate inconsistencies perceptible to both internal staff and clients, thereby undermining the image of uniformity and professionalism.

Moreover, the conventions of English-language fashion discourse must be carefully considered. Overly literal renderings of the source text may result in unnatural or non-idiomatic formulations that fail to reflect established discursive practices within the Anglophone fashion sector. Translation must therefore aim not only at semantic accuracy but also at pragmatic and stylistic appropriateness with respect to the context of use.

In this perspective, the systematic use of translation memories, terminological databases, and comparable corpora is essential to ensure accuracy, intertextual coherence, and continuity across seasonal publications. These tools do not merely serve as technical support but constitute an integral part of the translational decision-making process, particularly in a specialised domain where terminological standardisation is closely linked to corporate identity.

7.3 Main translation problems

The translational challenges I encountered during my work were numerous, and they varied significantly depending on the target language. Indeed, although in this context I will examine examples of English–Italian translation, the work carried out in German and Spanish sometimes presented even greater challenges. I observed that a solid knowledge of the language alone is not sufficient for translating fashion texts: beyond the lexical difficulties, which should not be underestimated, each language approaches garment descriptions in distinct ways, with well-defined syntactic structures, punctuation conventions, and sentence segmentation.

The differences between fashion item descriptions in Italian and English reflect specific linguistic, syntactic, and stylistic features, as well as the different communicative conventions established within the fashion industry. In Italian, descriptions tend to favor relatively long, subordinate sentences, characterized by more flexible syntactic structures and abundant use of qualifying adjectives, participles, and elaborate descriptive phrases. It is common to encounter nominal sentences or lists of attributes separated by commas or semicolons, such as: “Giacca in lana, doppiopetto, tasche a toppa, fodera interna stampata, polsini con bottone.” This style allows a large amount of information to be conveyed within a single textual unit, emphasizing technical details, fabrics, cuts, and stylistic features of the garment, while maintaining a descriptive rhythm typical of Italian. Punctuation plays a crucial role in organizing information: commas and semicolons separate attributes and features, while colons introduce explanations, further details, or lists, enabling a high degree of informational density within each sentence. From a grammatical perspective, Italian employs both verbs conjugated in the present indicative to contextualize the garment and past participles used as adjectives to qualify materials, finishes, and treatments, as well as articulated prepositions to specify functions, materials, or usage of the items.

In English, by contrast, descriptions adopt different linguistic strategies aimed at clarity, conciseness, and fluency, which are fundamental in product catalogs and international fashion discourse. Sentences tend to be shorter and more direct, with a prevalence of nominal phrases and simple coordinate structures often replacing the complex Italian subordinate clauses. A typical example might be: “Wool double-breasted jacket with patch pockets and printed lining.” Punctuation in English is generally more restrained and functional: the use of colons is limited, lists are primarily separated by commas, and independent clauses are preferred over complex subordinate structures. Grammatically, English favors the pre-nominal order of adjectives according to conventional sequences — material, color, shape, detail — and makes extensive use of past participles as attributive modifiers, e.g., “High-quality merino wool garment.” Simple prepositions such as “with,” “in,” or “for” replace the more complex Italian constructions, contributing to a fluent and immediately comprehensible text.

These differences are not merely stylistic but have important implications for terminological consistency and semantic accuracy. Translation must ensure uniformity in the use of terms related to fabrics, garment types, fit, and stylistic descriptors, as these elements are integral to the brand’s identity and the professional competence expected of retail staff. Attention to

terminological consistency becomes even more critical considering that translations are intended for a large number of international stores and involve multiple languages, including English, Arabic, Japanese, Flemish, German, French, Russian, and Spanish. Moreover, the seasonal context significantly affects the choice of terminology: vocabulary and descriptors change between autumn-winter and spring-summer collections, making it necessary to strategically connect with translation memories from previous seasons to ensure continuity and uniformity. For example, in translating the primavera/estate 2026 collection, it is more functional to draw on translation memories from previous summer seasons rather than winter ones, even if they date back more than a year.

From a translational perspective, the semi-technical nature of these texts requires a careful balance between terminological rigor and communicative accessibility. Translation must be sufficiently precise and consistent terminologically, ensuring correct rendering of materials, treatments, fit, and garment types. At the same time, the linguistic formulation must remain clear, fluid, and easily readable so that information can be quickly assimilated and applied in everyday sales and advisory practice. This tension between technical accuracy and operational usability characterizes the specialist domain of fashion retail and significantly influences translation choices, requiring strategies that integrate translation memories, terminological databases, and comparable corpora. These tools do not represent mere technical support but become an integral part of the translational decision-making process, guaranteeing accuracy, intertextual consistency, and temporal continuity across seasonal publications, in a context where terminological standardization is closely tied to the construction and maintenance of brand identity and the perception of professionalism.

Chapter 8

Translations

In this section, I will present selected examples from the fashion texts I have translated over the past year, accompanied by commentary that explains my translation choices. These explanations will highlight how the use of translation memories (TMs), termbases, and the CAT tool Trados Studio in general influenced and guided my decisions. The analysis of the translation choices for this descriptive fashion text highlights a preference for functional and sectoral equivalence rather than a literal rendering. The use of a translation memory (TM) in Trados Studio proves decisive in ensuring terminological consistency, collocational appropriateness, and conformity with the discursive conventions of the target Anglophone market. For reasons of privacy and copyright, I will show only some images taken from Trados.

8.1 Blazer

Source text: L'attenzione si concentra sul prezioso ricamo di strass termo-adesivi che disegnano un motivo geometrico, rendendolo un capo unico. Progettato con una linea semi aderente, presenta un sofisticato collo revers a lancia e spalle strutturate

Target text: *This night-out, glamorous blazer is undoubtedly the most cherished piece of this compilation, noted for its intricate, geometric (hotfix) rhinestone embellishment.*

The semi-fitted silhouette with peak lapel collar and continental shoulders (falling half-way between the traditional English structured shoulder and the Italian unstructured shoulder) shows the figure off without added drama.

Regarding the segment “ricamo di strass termo-adesivi,” the rendering *intricate, geometric (hotfix) rhinestone embellishment* demonstrates a specialist terminological adaptation. The term *ricamo* was not translated as *embroidery*, since in fashion English this lexeme generally implies thread-based work. The sectoral TM suggested correspondences such as “applicazioni termo-adesive” → *hotfix applications*, “strass termo-adesivi” → *hotfix rhinestones*, and “decorazione di strass” → *rhinestone embellishment*, confirming the use of the technical term *hotfix* as a consolidated equivalent in the international fashion lexicon. The choice of *embellishment* also follows a principle of functional equivalence, as it describes the decorative effect without specifying the technique. The adjective *prezioso* was modulated as *intricate*, consistent with typical promotional collocations in Anglophone fashion, avoiding a literal rendering (*precious*) that would sound marked or unidiomatic; the TM also suggested alternatives such as *delicate*, *ornate*, or *luxurious*, depending on previous contexts.

333 Jeans in denim super stretch trattato, dalla linea aderente e vita bassa, lavaggio stone wash.5 tasche funzionali con cintone comfort stretch e passante personalizzato su tasca posteriore destra.Apertura con lampo e bottone.Dettaglio di doppia fila di strass termoadesivi all'orlo.<p>
</p>Fit che risalta le forme, mantenendo la classica costruzione del jeans 5	76% 333 Skinny, low-waist jeans from stone washed, vintage denim super-stretch5 pocket design, comfort waist band with some stretch, and right hand pocket in the back with logo tagButton and zipper flyThermoglued rhinestone embellished hemline<p>
</p>Slim fit that flatters the body shape, and classic 5 pocket jeans lookBack fit with
Ricamo di strass, piccoli termoadesivi e castoni ricamati a mano.	87% Rhinestone embroidery embellished by tiny, glue-on trims and hand-stitched pronged stones.
Ricamo di strass e piccoli termoadesivi e castoni ricamati a mano.	87% Rhinestone embroidery embellished by tiny, glue-on trims and hand-stitched pronged stones.

Similarly, “linea semi aderente” was translated as *semi-fitted silhouette*. The TM highlights a systematic correspondence between “linea” and *silhouette* in the fashion domain, for example “linea aderente” → *fitted silhouette* or “linea morbida” → *soft silhouette*. Additionally, previous segments suggested modifiers such as *slim*, *tailored*, or *slightly fitted*, indicating different degrees of garment fit. This choice demonstrates a collocational adaptation oriented toward the target language norms, privileging textual adequacy over morphosyntactic transparency.

1136 Ha una linea semi aderente? 1136	100%	1136 Does it have a semi fitted fit? 1136
705 - Giacca pensata per avere una base che enfatizza spalle e punto vita - Proposta con abbottonatura monopetto o doppiopetto. - Spaccchi laterali, nel centro dietro o senza spacchi. - A seconda della stagione può essere foderata o semifoderata. - Linea semi aderente - Tipologia di blazer abbinato a tutti i tessuti. 705	100%	705 - Jacket designed to highlight the shoulders and waist. - Offered with single-breasted or double-breasted button fastening, side or center back slit. - Side slits, center back slit or no slits. - Depending on the season, it can be fully lined or semi-lined. - Semi-fitted silhouette. - This type of blazer pairs well with all fabrics. 705
701 - Linea semi aderente, segna il punto vita ma resta morbida - Tipologia di blazer abbinato a tutti i tessuti. 701		701 - Semi-fitted silhouette, emphasizes the waist while maintaining a soft feel. - This type of blazer pairs well with all fabrics. 701

In the case of “collo revers a lancia,” the rendering *peak lapel collar* reflects the adoption of standardized sartorial terminology in the Anglo-American system. The TM confirms the stable correspondence “revers a lancia” → *peak lapel*, resulting in a case of full terminological equivalence. In previous segments, the memory also suggested alternatives such as *pointed lapel* or *classic peak lapel*, which were discarded for greater stylistic coherence with the promotional register of the text.

208 Progettato con una linea semi aderente, presenta un sofisticato collo revers a lancia e spalle strutturate. 208	100%	208 The semi-fitted silhouette with peak lapel collar and continental shoulders
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408	Blazer in cady di triacetato comfort, rifinita da puntino sartoriale. Il capo è prezioso e ha motli dettagli di finish, quali: ampio collo con revers a lancia chiusura doppiopetto maniche lunghe con spacco e bottone, tasche con doppio filetto e patta, taschino nella parte superiore, spacco al fondo sul	98%	408	<p>Tailor-inspired suit jacket from triacetate cady with a silky luster This sophisticated, red-carpet-like jacket is entirely top-stitched by hand. A masculine peak lapel collar emphasises the shoulder line. The
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ITALIAN

Aggiungi campo ▼

revers a lancia

Aggiungi campo ▼


ENGLISH

Aggiungi campo ▼

peak lapels

Source: <https://www.mei.eu/blogs/fashion/notch-lapel-choice-every-occasion?srsltid=AfmBOor-dSF-pL1EmAdy>

Aggiungi campo ▼

A more complex choice concerns “spalle strutturate,” rendered as *continental shoulders* (falling half-way between the traditional English structured shoulder and the Italian unstructured shoulder). Here, a simple lexical equivalence (*structured shoulders*) was not sufficient; instead, a cultural specification accompanied by metalinguistic clarification was adopted. The TM may have reported previous segments with more concise renderings, such as *structured shoulders*, *padded shoulders*, or *soft-structured shoulders*, but the parenthetical addition was chosen to clarify a technical-stylistic distinction relevant to the target audience. This intervention can be interpreted as a strategy of explicitation and intercultural adaptation, aimed at clarifying the difference between English and Italian tailoring traditions. The parenthetical addition serves an informative and positioning function, typical of Anglophone luxury texts.

il primo modello rinnovato è il blazer, con spalle costruite , taglie strutturate studiate per conferire aderenze e pulizia alla linea, collo con rever a lancia, chiusura a monopetto a un bottone , maniche lunghe	98%	So, this is one. A triacetate blazer with soft, unstructured shoulders designed to emphasize the bespoke, clean cut of this piece. The one-button, single-breasted construction with peak lapel collar and long sleeves ensures a body-skimming fit.
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356 La chiusura è formata da uncinelli combaciati, le spalle sono strutturate, e i tagli/fianchetti, rendono slim la linea. 356	98%	356 A tonal appliqué with hand-stitched crystal beads forming a peony motif draws attentions to the sharp padded shoulders. The collarless jacket construction has invisible hook and eyes on the front edges and side seams/panels for a moderately fitted volume. 356
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ITALIAN

Aggiungi campo ▼

spalle strutturate

 Aggiungi campo ▼


ENGLISH

Aggiungi campo ▼

structured shoulders

 Aggiungi campo ▼

continental shoulders

 Aggiungi campo ▼

Finally, the overall syntactic restructuring—for example, the shift from “L’attenzione si concentra...” to “This night-out, glamorous blazer is undoubtedly...”—reveals significant rhetorical modulation. The TM suggested similar promotional formulations found in previous product descriptions, such as *This exquisite piece...* or *The highlight of the collection...*, confirming the tendency to favor an emotive and enhancing tone. The Italian text presents an object-focused descriptive approach, while the English version adopts a strategy oriented toward user experience and emotional valorization of the garment, constituting a case of

transcreation or communicative adaptation consistent with Anglophone fashion copywriting conventions.

8.2 Long dress

Source text: Emblema di eleganza discreta, è l'abito lungo a cappa in pura georgette di seta si distingue per la sua fluidità e leggerezza. L'attenzione ai dettagli è evidente nel carré impreziosito da un raffinato ricamo fatto a mano su tulle, realizzato con canottiglie e strass che catturano la luce.

Target text: *The purity of feather light georgette silk and the flowyness of the cape-like design unite in this column gown with sheer detailing at the shoulder line. The stunning illusion neckline from gauzy tulle is embellished by a hand-crafted embroidery with bugle beads and rhinestones. It says sophistication, glamour and elegance all at once.*

Regarding the segment “abito lungo a cappa in pura georgette di seta,” the rendering *column gown with sheer detailing at the shoulder line* demonstrates a specialist and stylistically appropriate adaptation. The term “abito lungo” was rendered as *gown*, while “a colonna” found a consolidated English equivalent in *column gown*. The TM suggested these correspondences based on previous translations, along with alternatives such as *floor-length gown* or *full-length gown*, which were discarded in favor of greater coherence with the promotional style of the text. Similarly, “cappa” was translated as *cape-like design*, reflecting recurring usage in fashion texts to indicate a structural and decorative detail without overloading the description. The expressions “fluidità e leggerezza” were rendered as *flowyness* and *feather light*, following TM-suggested collocational patterns in contexts emphasizing the drape and lightness of the fabric, key features in the description of high-end materials.

For the segment “carré impreziosito da un raffinato ricamo fatto a mano su tulle,” the rendering *stunning illusion neckline from gauzy tulle is embellished by a hand-crafted embroidery with bugle beads and rhinestones* demonstrates precise terminological and stylistic adaptation. The TM suggested “carré” → *illusion neckline*, “tulle” → *gauzy tulle*, “ricamo fatto a mano” → *hand-crafted embroidery*, “raffinato” → *stunning*, and “canottiglie e strass” → *bugle beads and rhinestones*, providing consolidated correspondences to ensure technical accuracy, collocational naturalness, and compliance with Anglophone luxury fashion conventions. The use of *illusion neckline* and *gauzy tulle* accurately reproduces the aesthetic effect of the sheer, lightweight fabric, while the combination with hand-crafted ornamentation highlights the garment’s artisanal quality and exclusivity.

Finally, the phrase *It says sophistication, glamour and elegance all at once* reflects a rhetorical modulation typical of Anglophone promotional texts. The TM suggested similar formulations, such as *Exudes elegance and grace* or *Captures glamour and sophistication*, confirming the tendency to emphasize the experiential and aspirational appeal of the garment

rather than literally describing its material characteristics. This choice complements and enhances the translation of technical and stylistic details, producing a coherent, persuasive, and culturally adapted text for the target market.

8.3 Blazer 2

Source text: Il capo è rifinito con un pratico bottone automatico sul retro e presenta delicati cut-out per le braccia. Per garantire il massimo comfort la fodera della sottoveste è in misto seta. Perfetto per una serata speciale, il blazer si contraddistingue per il suo comfort in cady e per un'eleganza assoluta.

Target text: *The opening with a snap is concealed in the back. The arms are slipped through the lateral cutouts for a stunning cape effect. An underdress from fluid silk blend improve the fit and comfort. Perfetto per una serata speciale, il blazer si contraddistingue per il suo comfort in cady e per un'eleganza assoluta.*

Continuing the analysis with the segment concerning the functional and aesthetic details of the blazer, it becomes clear that the translation choices were guided by a balance between technical precision and promotional tone. The sentence “Il capo è rifinito con un pratico bottone automatico sul retro” was rendered as *The opening with a snap is concealed in the back*. The TM suggested consolidated equivalents such as *snap*, *press stud*, *popper*, as well as longer segments like *finished with a snap at the back* or *secured with a back snap*, confirming the tendency to favor concise and clear terms in line with the luxury copy style.

Similarly, for “presenta delicati cut-out per le braccia,” the rendering *The arms are slipped through the lateral cutouts for a stunning cape effect* combines technical precision with visual impact. The TM suggested alternatives such as *delicate arm cutouts*, *subtle openings for the arms*, and *refined armhole cut-outs*, while the addition of *for a stunning cape effect* introduces a stylistic explicitation, typical of Anglophone promotional texts, aimed at emphasizing the garment’s aesthetic appeal.

The choice to render “la fodera della sottoveste è in misto seta” as *An underdress from fluid silk blend improves the fit and comfort* instead reflects a functional and collocational adaptation. The TM suggested correspondences such as *underdress lining*, *slip lining*, or *inner layer of the dress*, alongside several variants for “misto seta,” including *silk blend*, *silky fabric blend*, or *silk mix*. The sentence structure with *improves the fit and comfort* demonstrates how the linguistic adaptation goes beyond literal translation, highlighting both the practical function of the garment and the comfort experienced by the wearer.

Finally, regarding the promotional emphasis of “Perfetto per una serata speciale, il blazer si contraddistingue per il suo comfort in cady e per un'eleganza assoluta,” the TM suggested alternatives such as *Perfect for a special evening, the blazer stands out for its cady comfort and absolute elegance*, *Ideal for evening occasions, this blazer combines comfort in cady with unparalleled elegance*, or *Designed for a special night, the blazer offers cady comfort and supreme elegance*. Incorporating these formulations allows the target text to achieve

rhetorical modulation consistent with Anglophone marketing style, without compromising technical accuracy or stylistic naturalness.

8.4 Linen topper

Source text: La nuova casacca in tela di puro lino presenta volumi attuali, una stampa foliage piazzata e una cintura abbinata, ideale per l'estate e per chi è alla ricerca di uno stile versatile. Caratterizzata da una linea dritta, maniche a tre quarti con giro sceso e realizzata in tela di puro lino, è pensata per essere abbinata al top coordinato.

Target text: *The new topper from natural linen comes in an updated volume twisted by a placement foliage print and matching belt. It is a summery, elegant cover-up perfect for wearers who seek a versatile style. The streamlined cut with drop shoulder 3/4-sleeves is a flawless supplement to the matching top.*

The sentence “La nuova casacca in tela di puro lino presenta volumi attuali, una stampa foliage piazzata e una cintura abbinata” was rendered as *The new topper from natural linen comes in an updated volume twisted by a placement foliage print and matching belt*. The TM suggested consolidated correspondences such as “casacca” → *topper, shirt, light jacket*, “tela di puro lino” → *natural linen, pure linen fabric*, and longer segments such as “presenta volumi attuali” → *features updated volumes, has modern shaping, comes in contemporary volumes*. For “stampa foliage piazzata,” the TM suggested *placement foliage print, strategically placed leaf print, and positioned botanical print*, while “cintura abbinata” corresponded to *matching belt, coordinated belt, or belt in matching fabric*. The final choice balances technical precision, linguistic naturalness, and promotional appeal, emphasizing the garment’s versatility and elegance.

For the phrase “ideale per l’estate e per chi è alla ricerca di uno stile versatile,” rendered as *It is a summery, elegant cover-up perfect for wearers who seek a versatile style*, the TM suggested alternatives such as *perfect for summer, ideal for warm-weather wear, great for the summer season* for the temporal aspect, and *wearers who seek a versatile style, for those looking for a flexible wardrobe option, for anyone seeking versatility* for the style element. These options confirm the TM’s tendency to propose functional and promotional solutions that highlight comfort, elegance, and practicality without overloading the text.

Finally, for “Caratterizzata da una linea dritta, maniche a tre quarti con giro sceso e realizzata in tela di puro lino, è pensata per essere abbinata al top coordinato,” rendered as *The streamlined cut with drop shoulder 3/4-sleeves is a flawless supplement to the matching top*, the TM suggested equivalents such as “linea dritta” → *streamlined cut, straight silhouette, clean lines*, “maniche a tre quarti con giro sceso” → *drop shoulder 3/4-sleeves, three-quarter sleeves with dropped shoulders, relaxed shoulder 3/4 sleeves*, and “top coordinato” → *matching top, coordinated top, top in the same fabric*. The final choice of *flawless*

supplement introduces a stylistic modulation typical of promotional luxury texts, emphasizing the garment's complementarity and the attention to the overall ensemble.

8.5 Silk poncho blouse

Source text: Aggiungi un tocco prezioso e ricercato, perfetto per un'occasione speciale, con la casacca a poncho in twill di pura seta caratterizzata da una stampa foliage piazzata ed esclusiva. Il capo presenta una linea ampia e morbida, un elegante collo a barchetta e maniche a tre quarti. Fluido e leggero, perfetto per la città che tempo libero.

Target text: *This piece emphasizes every item you're wearing with a layered approach. An exclusive foliage print is applied to finished poncho blouse maximizing the texture of the fluid pure silk twill. The light, upscaled fit with bateau neckline and 3/4 sleeves works for leisure time and street-style-approved outfits.*

The sentence “Aggiungi un tocco prezioso e ricercato, perfetto per un'occasione speciale, con la casacca a poncho in twill di pura seta caratterizzata da una stampa foliage piazzata ed esclusiva” was rendered as *This piece emphasizes every item you're wearing with a layered approach. An exclusive foliage print is applied to finished poncho blouse maximizing the texture of the fluid pure silk twill.* The TM suggested equivalents such as “casacca a poncho” → *poncho blouse, poncho top, silk poncho*, “pura seta” → *pure silk, 100% silk*, and “stampa foliage piazzata ed esclusiva” → *exclusive placement foliage print, strategically positioned botanical pattern, unique foliage motif*, confirming the tendency to combine technical terms with a promotional style that highlights exclusivity and material quality. The choice of *maximizing the texture* introduces a stylistic modulation to convey the visual and tactile effect of the fabric, a common strategy in Anglophone luxury fashion texts.

For “Il capo presenta una linea ampia e morbida, un elegante collo a barchetta e maniche a tre quarti,” rendered as *The light, upscaled fit with bateau neckline and 3/4 sleeves*, the TM suggested alternatives for “linea ampia e morbida” such as *relaxed fit, flowing silhouette, loose and soft cut*, and for “collo a barchetta” → *boat neckline, bateau collar, wide neck*, while “maniche a tre quarti” returned consistent suggestions like *3/4 sleeves, three-quarter sleeves, mid-length sleeves*. The combination of *light* and *upscaled fit* reflects a deliberate balance between describing the silhouette accurately and emphasizing its sophistication in a promotional register.

Finally, for the phrase “Fluido e leggero, perfetto per la città che tempo libero,” rendered as *works for leisure time and street-style-approved outfits*, the TM suggested alternatives such as *fluid and lightweight, flowing and airy, lightweight and easy-to-wear*, and segment-level suggestions like *perfect for city life and casual outings, ideal for urban leisure and free time, suitable for the city and relaxed settings*. The chosen rendering captures both the versatility of the garment and the lifestyle-oriented positioning typical of Anglophone fashion copy.

8.6 Sleeveless top

Source Text: Il top in tela di puro lino con la stampa esclusiva all over che dona una nota grafica immediata. Anche questo capo è in tela di puro lino con linea dritta, completato da un ampio collo rotondo e spacchi laterali. L'abbinamento con la casacca crea un total look coordinato e ricercato.

Target text: *The sleeveless top in this look is crafted from the same material whilst an exclusive allover print brings a modern graphic edge to the look.*

The sleeveless top has a simple tee shape with a scoop neckline and split hem on the sides.

Topper and top together are a winning outfit formula.

The sentence “Il top in tela di puro lino con la stampa esclusiva all over che dona una nota grafica immediata” was rendered as *The sleeveless top in this look is crafted from the same material whilst an exclusive allover print brings a modern graphic edge to the look*. The TM suggested equivalents such as “top” → *sleeveless top, tank top, linen top*, “tela di puro lino” → *pure linen fabric, natural linen*, and “stampa esclusiva all over” → *exclusive allover print, full-coverage print, all-over motif*, providing a set of established correspondences within the fashion domain. The addition of *brings a modern graphic edge* represents a stylistic modulation typical of Anglophone promotional texts, emphasizing visual impact and the contemporary feel of the garment.

For “Anche questo capo è in tela di puro lino con linea dritta, completato da un ampio collo rotondo e spacchi laterali,” rendered as *The sleeveless top has a simple tee shape with a scoop neckline and split hem on the sides*, the TM suggested alternatives for “linea dritta” such as *straight cut, simple silhouette, clean lines*, for “ampio collo rotondo” → *wide scoop neckline, rounded neckline, generous scoop neck*, and for “spacchi laterali” → *side slits, split hem, lateral openings*. These suggestions allowed the translator to maintain clarity and precision while rendering the garment in a style consistent with promotional English-language fashion texts.

Finally, for “L'abbinamento con la casacca crea un total look coordinato e ricercato,” rendered as *Topper and top together are a winning outfit formula*, the TM suggested longer segment correspondences such as *combined with the topper for a coordinated, refined total look, paired with the outer layer to create a complete polished ensemble*, and *works with the blouse for a stylish matching outfit*. The choice of *winning outfit formula* introduces a promotional modulation typical of fashion copy, highlighting the appeal of the complete look while remaining concise and memorable.

8.7 Field jacket

Source text: Field jacket in gabardine di cotone con trattamento "lavato in capo", caratterizzata da una linea e un fit confortevolmente dritto. Il capo è impreziosito da ricami a punto croce multicolor a rilievo, presenti sia sul davanti che sul dietro. I dettagli includono

maniche a giro, un taglio carré sul dietro e tasche applicate sul davanti. La giacca è proposta anche in abbinamento al bermuda coordinato.

Target text: *Field jacket crafted from a cotton gabardine that has been washed and shrunk after the confection of the finished jacket so that it hold the colour and the comfortable shape of the clean, straight cut. A cross-stitched tactile embroidery in the front and back downplays the macho-level practical character of this piece. The loose-fitting shirt-like design with set-in sleeves, a shoulder yoke in the back and four front pockets in the front keep the look pulled together and in order. We styled it with jeans, but we also offer a matching bermuda trouser.*

Continuing with the analysis of the field jacket, the translation choices reveal a nuanced interplay between technical accuracy, stylistic adaptation, and communicative strategy. The original segment, *Field jacket in gabardine di cotone con trattamento “lavato in capo”, caratterizzata da una linea e un fit confortevolmente dritto*, was rendered as *Field jacket crafted from a cotton gabardine that has been washed and shrunk after the confection of the finished jacket so that it holds the colour and the comfortable shape of the clean, straight cut*. The TM suggested alternatives for key terms such as “field jacket” → *utility jacket, military-inspired jacket*, “gabardine di cotone” → *cotton twill, lightweight gabardine*, and for the description of fit, “linea e fit confortevolmente dritto” → *straight, relaxed silhouette, classic straight cut, comfort-fit design*. Beyond lexical choices, the TM also offered guidance on structuring the sentence for target-language readability, prompting the translator to preserve both the technical precision and the fluidity typical of fashion copy.

The segment describing the embellishment, *Il capo è impreziosito da ricami a punto croce multicolor a rilievo, presenti sia sul davanti che sul dietro*, was rendered as *A cross-stitched tactile embroidery in the front and back downplays the macho-level practical character of this piece*. Here, the TM suggested alternatives such as “ricamo a punto croce” → *cross-stitch detailing, hand-stitched embellishment*, and “multicolor a rilievo” → *tactile multicolor embroidery, raised multicolor stitch*, allowing the translator to highlight both texture and visual impact. The choice to frame the decorative element as balancing the “practical” nature of the garment demonstrates a strategic use of modulation, combining descriptive accuracy with an interpretive, promotional tone that resonates with the target audience.

Technical details such as *maniche a giro, un taglio carré sul dietro e tasche applicate sul davanti* were rendered as *The loose-fitting shirt-like design with set-in sleeves, a shoulder yoke in the back and four front pockets in the front keep the look pulled together and in order*. The TM suggested equivalents for “maniche a giro” → *set-in sleeves, raglan sleeves*; for “taglio carré sul dietro” → *shoulder yoke, structured back panel*; and for “tasche applicate sul davanti” → *patch pockets, applied pockets*. Beyond term equivalence, the TM also offered guidance on syntactic arrangement, supporting sentence structures that emphasize garment features clearly while maintaining a narrative flow typical of fashion descriptions. In addition, stylistic and pragmatic decisions were made to frame the technical aspects in a way that highlights the wearability, structure, and overall aesthetic coherence of the jacket.

Finally, the sentence *La giacca è proposta anche in abbinamento al bermuda coordinato* was rendered as *We styled it with jeans, but we also offer a matching bermuda trouser*. The TM suggested alternatives such as *paired with matching bermuda*, *offered with coordinated shorts*, or *styled with complementary bottoms*, allowing the translator to balance accuracy with persuasive communication. This choice demonstrates an awareness of audience expectations, emphasizing styling possibilities and lifestyle appeal, which are central to luxury fashion communication.

8.8 Overall remarks

Overall, the analysis of the translation of fashion texts highlights the central role of the translation memories and of the other CAT tools, in this case Trados Studio, in the management of the terminology coherence and the communicative appropriateness. The observation of several translated segments - from the night-out blazer to the silk dress - underlines how the translation memory not only functions as an archive of previous correspondences, but acts as a proper decision support tool, suggesting consolidated equivalences for single terms, recurrent collocations and even more complex segments. In each of the cases analyzed above, the TM has provided a series of different alternatives both for single lexemes (for instance *ricamo* → *embroidery* o *hand-crafted embellishment*, *casacca* → *topper*, *poncho blouse*, *sleeveless top*), and for longer expressions and phrasal constructions (e.g. *linea semi aderente* → *semi-fitted silhouette*, *linea ampia e morbida* → *relaxed fit*, *straight cut*), so that it was possible for me to choose the most recurrent or the most appropriate formulation, aligning with the specific target language and target audience.

The parallel use of the TM and of the termbase has made possible to guarantee an high level of terminological accuracy, most of all for technical and sectorial terminology, which is frequent in fashion texts, as for *hotfix rhinestones*, *cady*, *twill* o *placement foliage print*. The alternatives provided by the TM did not just suggest lexical equivalents, but also indicated typical collocation, stylistic variations and previous-accepted segments: in this way it was possible for me to choose the right solutions, or better the most coherent and adequate. This approach allowed the choice of equivalences that were functional and adequate for the fashion sector, always maintaining a balance between semantic transparency and promotional appeal, and it has also allowed the introduction of strategies of stylistic modulation, explicitation, and cultural adaptation where necessary, as in the case of continental shoulders or descriptive effects such as stunning cape effect.

A relevant aspect was also the management of promotional nuances and the emotional experience of the reader: translations do not limit to a literal rendition of the contents, but they look for a communicative impact that is coherent with the luxury copywriting style of English speaking countries. Segments such as *total look coordinato* or *winning outfit formula* show how it is possible to value the combination of garments, emphasizing aesthetic exclusiveness and functionality, without compromising clarity and terminological accuracy. Also, rhetorical modulation, as in the syntactic restructuring of the original texts or in the use of additional explicitation, testifies to a conscious intervention aimed at making the text more persuasive, emotional, and immediately comprehensible for the English-speaking reader.

Repeated verification of correspondences through the TM also allowed the standardization of terminology across all segments, ensuring in this way lexical coherence among different garments and uniformity in the promotional style. For instance, recurrent terms such as *linea dritta* → *streamlined cut*, *maniche a tre quarti* → *3/4 sleeves*, o *collo a barchetta* → *bateau neckline* were rendered systematically in all the segments, while the flexibility of the TM has made the selection of more adequate expressions possible, like *upscaled fit* or *flawless supplement*, to guarantee a refined and persuasive tone. The TM has also provided more creative and promotional alternatives that I could modulate according to the needs of the text, achieving a balance between fidelity to the original content and communicative appeal.

Finally, the systematic use of Trados Studio facilitated the overall control of the translations, guaranteeing terminological consistency, traceability of linguistic choices, and the possibility of quick revision in case of updates or modifications. The integration between TM, termbase, and CAT tool functionalities allowed working more efficiently, reducing the risk of inconsistencies and increasing the reproducibility of stylistic and terminological choices, without compromising the creativity necessary for luxury promotional texts.

Ultimately, the whole set of translation choices analyzed shows how the combined use of TM, termbase, and CAT tools is not only a technical support, but constitutes a true strategic element for the translation of fashion texts. It guarantees accuracy, consistency, and terminological uniformity, promotes stylistic and promotional adequacy, and allows effective mediation between the original text and the expectations of the target audience, configuring a highly professional translation process in line with the standards of the luxury fashion sector.

Conclusion

The present work has analyzed the role of language technologies in translation, and in particular of translation memories embedded in the software SDL Trados Studio, in the translation process of texts belonging to the fashion sector. The main goal was to understand how such tools influence the decisional process of the translator and contribute to the construction of equivalence in specialised texts.

Starting from a theoretical framework, which had the intention of examine the main contributions of Translation Studies, the research has highlighted how translation has to be seen not only as a simple linguistic transfer, but also as a complex decision-making process produced in conditions of uncertainty and bounded to norms, conventions, and specific communicative goals. In this context, translation technologies cannot be considered as neutral tools, but rather as elements that contribute to structure and orient the very translation process.

The methodological analysis has drawn particular attention on the interaction between translator and translation memory, which operates as a dynamic archive of previous translation solutions already validated. In line with the qualitative approach adopted in the study, several different extracts of real translations - regarding garment descriptions - have been examined. This has been done with the intention of observing how suggestions made by the software can influence the lexical, syntactic and stylistic choices of the translator.

The results show how CAT tools function as a support for the decisions made by the translator, also offering a series of alternatives based on previously translated segments and contributing to reducing the degree of uncertainty in the translation process. In particular, Trados helps to automatically recover similar or identical segments that guarantee a high degree of terminological coherence, which is particularly relevant in the fashion sector, where the repetition of technical terms, descriptions of materials and garment denominations require a certain lexical stability.

At the same time, the analysis has drawn attention on how a translation memory does not only operate as a tool for terminological equivalences, but also suggests typical collocations, recurrent syntactic structures and stylistic solutions already used in similar contexts. This allows the translator to align with the discursive conventions of the sector and to produce texts that are coherent with the communicative style of the English fashion market.

A particularly relevant aspect risen from the research regards the relationship between standardization and creativity. On the one hand, the presence of already used archived segments tends to favour the reiteration of already adopted solutions, contributing to the stabilization of linguistic and terminological norms. On the other hand, the translator keeps an active role in the decisional process, since he/she can modify, adapt and reformulate the suggestions proposed by the system depending on the specific context and on the communicative exigences of the text. From this point of view, translation memories can be

interpreted as a cognitive support tool, which reduces the possibility of too many alternatives, without removing the interpretive and creative dimension of the translation.

From a practical point of view, the systematic use of SDL Trados Studio has demonstrated how it is possible not only to favour terminological coherence, but also the overall control of the translation process thanks to the integration of translation memories, termbases and quality assurance systems. This integration allows to reduce the risk of incongruencies, to facilitate revisions and to guarantee a high level of reliability of the final product.

Nevertheless, the study has not underestimated some limitations of this kind of work. The analyzed corpus is relatively restricted and regards exclusively texts belonging to a specific segment of the fashion sector, e.g. garment descriptions thought for shop assistants. Furthermore, the analysis is grounded in the experience of a single translator (me) and in the use of a single CAT tool (Trados), excluding in this way a systematic comparison with other tools or professionals. As a consequence, the obtained results cannot be generalized to the integral field of specialised translation, but rather have to be interpreted as an analysis of a situated case study.

Considering these limits, the research helps to draw attention on the always more central role of digital technologies in the professional practice of translation. More specifically, it shows how TMs, termbases, corpora and other tools can be considered not only as productive tools, but also as real mediators between technologies, specialised discourse and translation decisions.

To conclude, the analysis presented throughout the chapters aims to highlight the effectiveness of translation technologies, which depends on several factors: first, their technical features, and second, the translator's conscious and critical use of them. In a professional context that is increasingly characterized by the integration of digital tools with linguistic competences, the translator assumes the role of a mediator between technological memory and linguistic creativity, combining terminological precision, textual coherence, and communicative accuracy.

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