



Translation memories and computer-assisted translation tools



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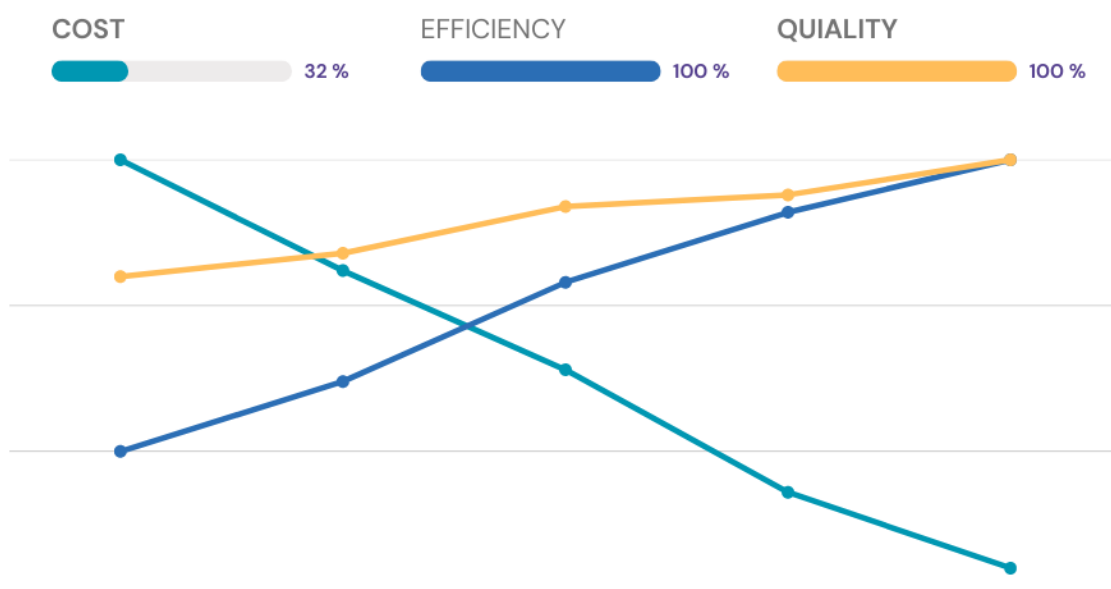


WHAT ARE TRANSLATION MEMORIES?

To put it simply, a translation memory is a database that, in real time, stores all texts (both the originals and the translations) that are being translated in the tool.

While this concept was created in the 70s, it wasn't until 20 years later that it became more widely known and started being used commercially in the translation community.

To be able to work in this database (whose structure is also known as “parallel texts”), the tool splits the text into what we call “segments”; in other words, sentence units that make sense. Each segment is the element stored by the tool, in such a way that, if the same segment is repeated (whether it is one unit of a sentence or a full sentence), its translation will come up automatically. In this regard, it's important to highlight the fact that this isn't a machine translation, like in the case of engines such as Google or DeepL. Rather, it is a translation previously carried out by a professional human translator that has just been stored for future use.





WHY DO WE WORK WITH TRANSLATION MEMORIES?

Translation memories are really useful, both for translators and for customers with regular translation needs. Among many other reasons, we can highlight the following:

Terminological consistency: terms that have already been used in previous translations will come up as a suggestion for the translation in progress.

Stylistic consistency: by having access to previously translated texts, the translator can check and verify the style confirmed by the customer. This may include how the reader is addressed (such as through the use of *tú/usted* in Spanish), the degree of formality, whether a direct/indirect style is used, etc.

Content-related consistency: writers tend to repeat phrases and expressions to highlight an idea for marketing purposes (catchphrases, slogans, or even different styles that represent a company's brand image). If segments are repeated, the translation memory selects the first translated segment, and this will be propagated automatically, in such a way that the same sentence will be translated in exactly the same way. Therefore, it also guarantees that the original communicative intent is conveyed in the translation.

Shorter deadlines: this increase in productivity implies faster turnaround times, given that the actual workload will be significantly reduced, depending on the number of repetitions and matches.



Productivity: by having lots of stored segments in this database, it is likely that the new text to be translated will contain previously translated segments, meaning that the translator won't have to translate them again. This implies a considerable boost in productivity, since the same work won't have to be done twice and the translator won't have to start translating from scratch.

Lower quotes: likewise, using these translation memories also leads to a reduction in the final quote, since there will already be parts that have been previously translated or that are repeated in the text itself.

Constant updates: translation memories are a live, constantly evolving database because they are updated with each translation job received. The more you update it, the more likely there will be matching or repeated segments in the next translation. Essentially, this means that a higher level of productivity can be achieved in the next job.

Transferability and exporting: memories are easy to export, meaning that each customer can send us their own database of previously translated texts in order to adapt as much as possible to the style and terminology used in previous texts.



WHAT IF I DON'T WORK WITH TRANSLATION MEMORIES?

If translation memories aren't used, as was the case many moons ago, the translator will have to:

- 1 Open four files: the original file that had to be translated; the translated file; the new file for translation; and, finally, a blank document they will use for the new translation.
- 2 Working manually on these four files (reading and looking for similar or repeated parts) means that there is a higher chance of human error, since it isn't an automated process.
- 3 Carry out an exhaustive proofreading process and thoroughly check both the previously translated file as well as the file for translation, without the help of memories.
- 4 Copy/paste the text from the old translation into the new translated file.
- 5 Modify the previous or subsequent sentence, as per the context, since all the sentences are part of a common context and must be adapted depending on the added or modified sentence.

On the other hand, this manual work implies:

- X A greater margin of error, since it is a manual process instead of an automated one.
- X Lower productivity in terms of words translated per hour.
- X Less stylistic, terminological, and content-related consistency, since it is practically impossible to translate while simultaneously reading three different files.
- X A higher quote and longer turnaround times, since there is much more work to do.



HOW DOES A TRANSLATION MEMORY WORK?

Segmentation

As we were saying, translation memories split the text into what we call “segments”. These may be whole sentences, fragments of sentences, or even paragraphs. This segmentation is usually done according to the text’s punctuation (periods, exclamation marks, etc.) although it is advisable that, in the case of lists or tables, the text be divided into paragraphs.

For a text to be segmented properly, we recommend:

- Writing in line with orthographic and typographic conventions, making sure to use punctuation appropriately and correctly (including periods, quotation marks, exclamation marks, question marks, etc.). Otherwise, the segmentation may come out wrong.

- Keeping the use of abbreviations to a minimum, since they always have a period at the end. As a result, the tool might see this as the end of the whole sentence.

- Avoiding splitting sentences or titles across different lines (for example, when you want a title to occupy two or three lines for aesthetic reasons). This is so that the tool can properly interpret that the content is part of the same unit.

- Avoiding manually numbered lists to avoid having to use extra periods.



Matches and repetitions

Up to now, we've been discussing repetitions. Computer-assisted translations tools, however, go far beyond this. Translation memories store the entirety of the translated text, meaning that this content can be reused in future translations, whether it partially or fully matches.

Translation memories classify the segments according to the match percentage of the new segment with respect to the content that has already been stored:

Internal repetitions (IR): these are identical segments that are repeated throughout the text that is being translated.

Perfect match (PM): these are segments in the text that are fully identical in terms of content, format, and punctuation with respect to what is stored in the translation memory (whether it has been translated in the text itself or in a previous job).

Fuzzy match (FM): these are segments that are partially translated in the translation memory and can be recovered for the new job. In this case, it's important that the translator pays attention to the differences in order to modify the existing translation according to the source's content.

No match (NM): these are segments that are completely new and that, therefore, are not in the translation memory. This means that they must be translated manually from scratch.



WHAT TYPE OF TEXTS GET THE MOST OUT OF IT?

Translation memories can be used for any text that needs to be translated. However, there are several text types that have a much higher number of repetitions and matches, which is why they are especially suited.

The three types of texts that tend to have the most repetitions are:

E-commerce: brick and mortar businesses also offer customers an online catalogue, and it's increasingly common to come across companies that operate exclusively online and that sell millions of products. What's more, these businesses often have to translate their content due to the need to globalize. Many of these products are very similar and only differ in one or two features. As a result, their repetition and match percentage tends to be very high.

Technical texts: for example, instruction manuals, given that a sector's terminology and specialist jargon requires the utmost precision. These manuals often need to be updated periodically. Therefore, if we already have the previously translated text in our memory, all we'll need to do is translate the new updated information instead of translating the whole manual again. In this way, we guarantee the terminological, stylistic, and content-related consistency with respect to the previous translation.

Legal texts: most contracts tend to have the same structure, as well as the same recurring expressions. Therefore, this tool is particularly useful to guarantee the highest degree of consistency and efficiency during the process.



It's a good idea to use translation memories in most texts. Content is often repeated, even in sectors such as the tourism industry (for example, welcome letters, updated menus, etc.).



HOW TO ORGANIZE TRANSLATION MEMORIES

Translation memories can be organized according to two parameters:

a Translation memories by customer

Translation professionals work with several customers, and often a translation memory is needed for each one in order to have access to their whole text and translation-related database. What's more, each customer does not necessarily produce just one kind of text, since companies are made up of different departments that write content depending on the role they play (marketing departments publish creative texts for social media, while production departments publish texts that probably require more technical knowledge).

b Translation memories by sector

On the other hand, translation memories can also be structured by sector (technical, legal, marketing, medical, etc.). In this way, if we get an order for a medical text from a new customer, for example, we can use the translation memory of another similar job and make use of the previously conducted research.

HOW TO ORGANIZE TRANSLATION MEMORIES

Translation memories are usually exported in TMX format or, if they need to be read in a more accessible program, they can also be opened in xlsx (Excel) format.



WHAT IS BLARLO?

[blarlo](#) is a language services company that offers translation services by professional native translators from all around the globe.

Our technology and methodology allow us to significantly reduce costs and shorten delivery deadlines. We are also committed to providing the maximum quality and efficiency in our translation projects, including the customer's processes.

Our service is based on three key driving forces:

QUALITY

Our translators are certified professionals with extensive experience who translate exclusively into their mother tongue. This allows us to ensure the best quality in all our translations.

PRICE

For each text, depending on its length and complexity, we provide you with an estimated deadline. The best translation in the shortest possible time.

SPEED

Clear quotes without hidden costs. At blarlo, we charge you a fixed price per word for the languages into which you want to translate your texts.

DO YOU HAVE RECURRING TRANSLATION NEEDS?

Our platform optimizes processes through glossaries and translation memories. With these, we create databases where we store all the translated sentences and phrases so that, in the event they reappear in future orders, we won't charge the customer again to translate them.

While we do use technology, our translation and proofreading processes are carried out by human linguists, because nobody speaks like a robot.

GOAL: TO ALWAYS OFFER THE BEST TRANSLATION. Quality is at the core of our translations, and we want to provide you with the best service.



SERVICES FOR COMPANIES

At [blarlo](#), we believe in innovation and technology. Our will to constantly improve drives us to find new ways to fulfill our customers' translation needs, always while offering the best service.

From the very beginning, we have worked towards putting together a great team of professionals that is with us every step of the way. Thanks to this, we can offer a wide range of services:

SECTOR-BASED TRANSLATION

Translations carried out by professional native translators with extensive experience in different specializations. We are aware that every sector is a whole different world and that some of them require highly technical knowledge. This is why we make sure that each and every one of our translators has the right knowledge and proven experience in the texts' subject matter. We offer, among others, the following sector-based translation services:

- [E-learning translation](#)
- [E-commerce translation](#)
- [Marketing translation](#)
- [Audiovisual translation](#)
- [Legal translation](#)
- [Financial translation](#)
- [Website translation](#)
- [Translation for companies](#)

SECTOR-BASED PROOFREADING

Proofreading performed by translators who are specialized in the text type in question, guaranteeing the proper localization of the translations. At blarlo, we always recommend that translations be proofread. As the saying goes, "two heads are better than one". We offer this service for all text types and translations.



100% CUSTOMER-FOCUSED

At [blarlo](#), we are committed to the quality of each and every one of our projects. Each project is unique, which is why we create specific work teams for each customer.



We understand each project as an interactive, non-linear process. This increases the flexibility and potential for improvement of all the projects we carry out.

1 PERSONALIZED MANAGEMENT

At the start of each collaboration, we assign a Business Manager and a Project Manager to each customer for all their projects.

2 QUALITY AND CONTROL

We create a unique database for each customer, as well as a glossary per project or customer, depending on the specific needs. This is the first step towards ensuring the content's quality and consistency. We also carry out different proofreading and QA phases within the workflow.

3 TOTAL ADAPTATION

Depending on the languages needed, we put together fixed teams of translators for ongoing projects. In this way, we ensure that everyone who contributes to the project is perfectly aware of the customer's needs.



Professional translation agency