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Towards a technologised translation classroom

**Practices and perceptions from trainers
at a Swiss University**

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1. Introduction

Growing importance of technologies in the language industry

Profiles with increasing levels of technical skills

Highly multidisciplinary profiles

Traditional translators -> language engineer

1. Introduction

University translation programmes, at least in Europe -> minimal adaptation

Significant gap between:

- the real technological demands of the professional translation market
- the training offer in TT at university levels

Particularly with regard to TT integration into practical translation classes

1. Introduction

Concept and definition of 'translation technology' (TT):

"In its broadest sense translation technology is understood to include a large array of computer tools that help translators do their jobs, including word processors; spell, style, and grammar checkers; the World Wide Web; corpus compilation and analysis tools; terminology management tools; translation memory tools (TM); translation management systems (TMS); and machine translation (MT)".

1. Introduction

Recent study in Spain with translation trainers at BA level:

- Not everything that happens in the translation classroom is reflected in the module syllabi
- Trainers face many obstacles when integrating TT into the translation classroom
- Rigidity of the higher education institutions' system itself
- Bureaucratic constraints to make substantial changes in curricula

2. Research context

Faculty of Translation and Interpreting (FTI) of the University of Geneva,
Switzerland

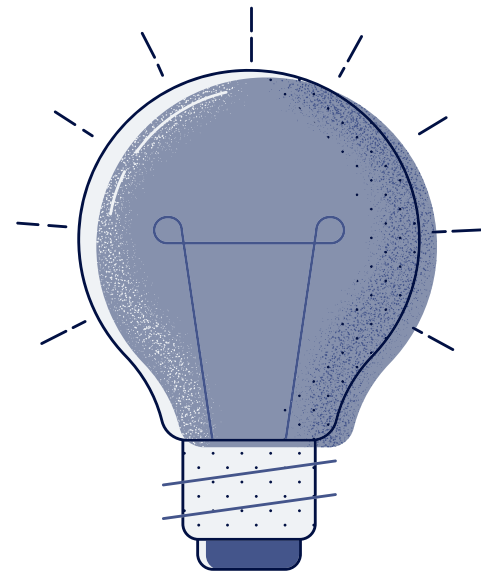
Long history of teaching TT

Translation education at Bachelor (BA) and Master (MA) levels

Is the technologic knowledge and know-how acquired by students applied in the translation classroom?

If so, how it is integrated?

3. Research goal



To obtain a holistic description of how technologies are used in the translation classroom at the FTI of the University of Geneva

4. Method

Study design

Semi-structured personal interviews

Online, in person and hybrid mode

Between May and July 2022

Sample selection criteria

CfP sent to all FTI academic staff responsible for at least one translation module

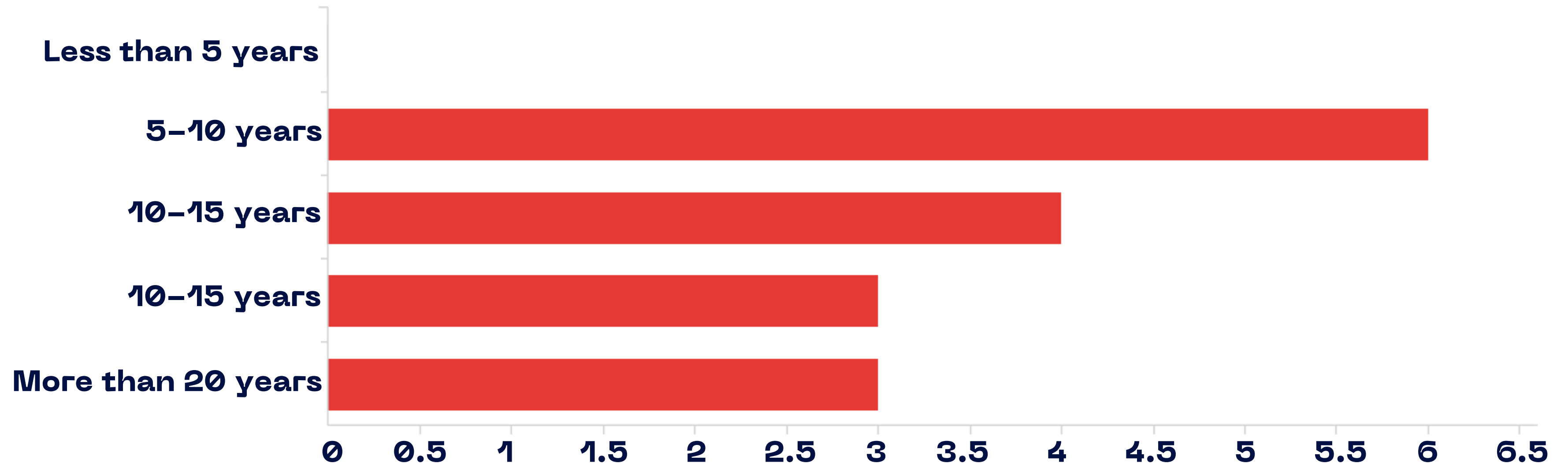
16 FTI trainers recruited for the study

Both BA and MA levels

4. Method

Sample profiling (demographic data)

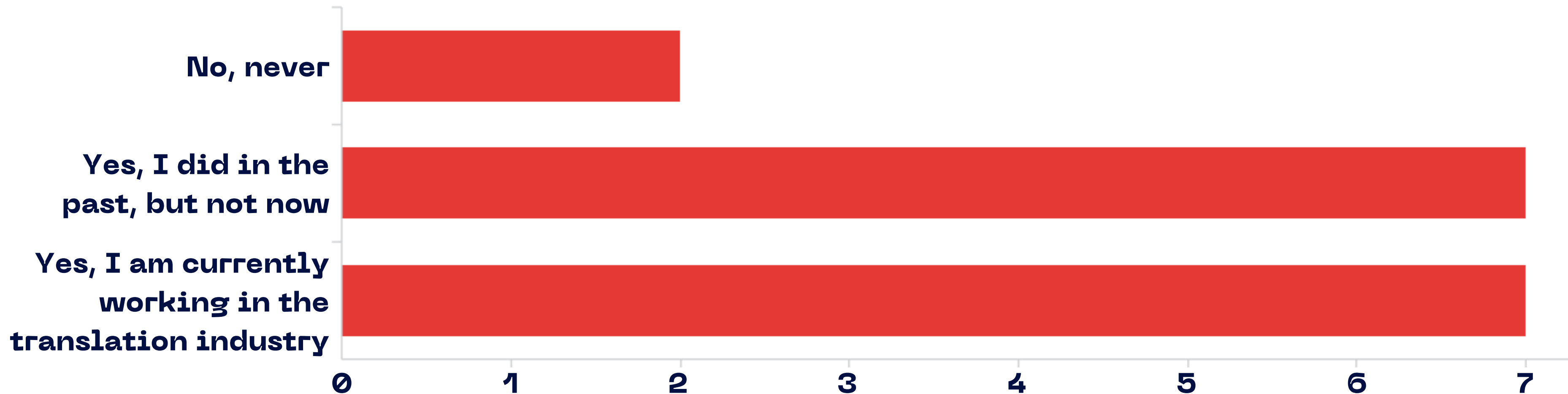
Q1 – For how many years have you been working as a trainer in the Translation undergraduate degree? (Please select only one answer)



4. Method

Sample profiling (demographic data)

Q4 – Do you work or have you ever worked in the translation industry (either as a translator or in a translation-related job)?



4. Method

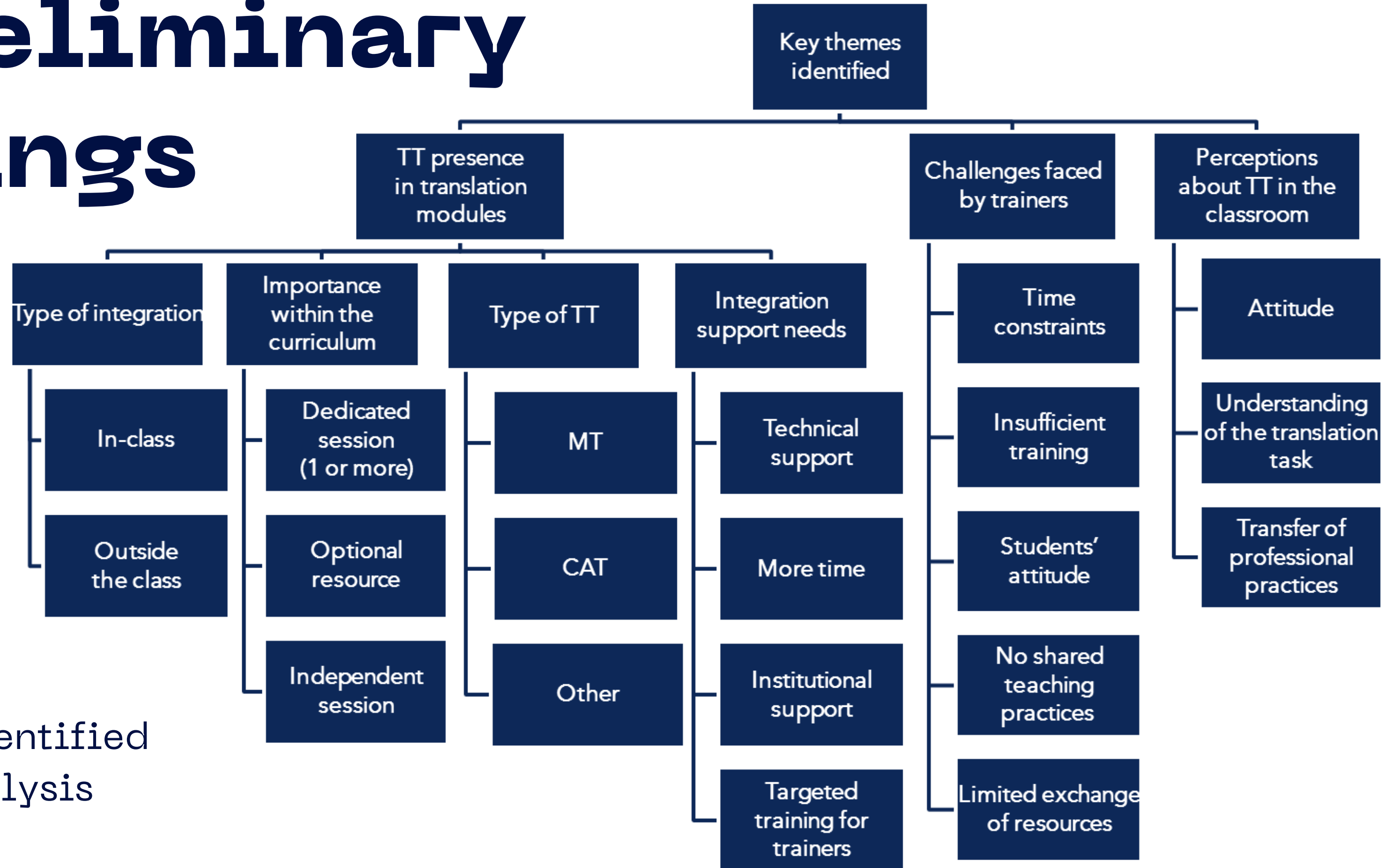
Interested in:

- The use of TT in the translation classroom
- How TT is used in the translation classroom
- Problems trainers face using TT in the translation classroom
- Trainer's training and skills in TT
- Link between professional experience using TT and translation lessons

Data analysis

Thematic analysis with Atlas.ti (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

5. Preliminary findings



Key themes identified during the analysis

6. Research indicators



Not common for Translation studies (both at BA and MA levels) of the FTI to formally integrate TT in the translation classroom



Translation trainers usually consider translation to be on the centre of their lessons, and see TT as a complement



TT is usually integrated in the translation classroom thanks to trainers who are trained and feel prepared for it



The lack of homogeneity across trainers' practices in the classroom sometimes makes it difficult to plan translation lessons with a minimum technological component

In line with: Austerlühl, 2013; Rodríguez Vázquez and O'Brien, 2017; Briva-Iglesias and O'Brien, 2022;
O'Connor and Bença, 2022

6. Research indicators



Examples of TT integration into the translation classroom (according to the interviewed trainers):

- Use of word processors for translating and reviewing
- Use of electronic dictionaries and corpus tools (eg. "I use AntConc with my students")
- Use of CAT tools:
 - Activities guided by the trainer (e.g. "I reserve three weeks for a CAT tools project")
 - Free use by students (e.g. "This semester I did have students asking me if they could use Trados, for example")

6. Research indicators



Examples of TT integration into the translation classroom (according to the interviewed trainers):

- Use of MT:
 - Activities guided by the trainer (e.g. “We use machine translators, automatic translators. DeepL and Google Translate, for example. [...] And we do analysis”)
 - Free use by students, usually to understand the text (e.g. “Students say that they use DeepL when they do not understand the source text”)

6. Research indicators



Trainers' training and skills in TT



Difficult to design effective teaching materials to adequately apply TT in practical translation sessions



Interviewed trainers might not always understand the current needs of the industry

In line with: Austermühl, 2013; Gaspari, Almaghout and Doherty, 2015; Massey, 2021

7. Constants in literature



Sometimes students lack motivation → this can make it difficult for them to understand and use the technology



Lack of “engagement” with their training



Academia needs to reflect around MT and post-editing



Translation competence ≠ post-editing competence



Students (and trainers) need to be aware of the risks and shortcomings of MT

In line with: Torrejón and Rico, 2012; Doherty and Moorhens, 2013; Massey and Kiraly, 2019; Nitzke, Hansen-Schirra y Canfora, 2019

8. Limitations & future work

Limitations

- Not all members of each unit/department were interviewed
- It has been noted that there is not necessarily an exchange of materials or knowledge between colleagues, so the results may not be generalizable to the whole FTI
- Case study carried out in Switzerland; it would be interesting to replicate it in other universities with a similar offer

Future work

- Complete the analysis of the whole sample
- Survey the students
- Complement results with a market research study, ideally involving language service providers (LSPs)

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Thanks for your kind attention!

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