Survey on rates, pricing methods, and income satisfaction for translation, revision, and post-editing services in Belgium

Dr Sabrina Girletti, University of Geneva

Prof Marie-Aude Lefer, UCLouvain

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UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE
FACULTY OF TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING

UCLouvain
Louvain School of Translation and Interpreting

Chambre Belge des Traducteurs et Interprètes
Belgische Kamer van Vertalers en Tolken

Table of contents

Introduction

This report presents the findings of an online survey conducted in 2024 among freelance language professionals based in Belgium. The aim of the survey was to gather detailed insights into pricing practices, rates and income satisfaction levels of freelancers offering translation, revision and/or post-editing (PE) services.

The questionnaire was designed to be fully anonymous. It comprised five key sections: a profile section collecting demographic and professional data, three service-specific sections (translation, revision and post-editing), and a final section on satisfaction. In the service-specific sections, respondents were asked to report on the clients they work with, and to provide up to three examples per client type, i.e. direct clients and/or translation agencies. For each example, data was collected on the pricing method used, the rate charged, and the respondent's satisfaction with the rate. To accommodate the wide range of practices, respondents could select from seven predefined pricing methods: source or target word rate, source or target line rate, source or target page rate, and hourly rate, along with an open "Other" category. The final section of the questionnaire assessed satisfaction with pricing methods, income, and profession in general.

The questionnaire included up to 167 questions, many of which were optional or shown conditionally based on prior responses. The survey was administered via the LimeSurvey platform and launched on June 4, 2024.

It remained open until August 5, 2024. Distribution was carried out through the Belgian Chamber of Translators and Interpreters (CBTI/BKVT) and the authors' social media channels, with two reminders issued during the survey period. Prior to launch, the questionnaire underwent several rounds of pre-testing involving CBTI/BKVT members and university colleagues who are also active freelance translators.

In total, 176 valid responses were collected in Belgium, of which 133 were complete and 43 partial. To be considered valid, responses had to originate from freelancers based in Belgium and include at least one completed service-specific section. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and responses to the fifteen open-ended questions were analyzed thematically.

This report focuses exclusively on the Belgian data. However, it is important to note that the survey was also conducted in Switzerland in collaboration with the Swiss Association of Translators, Interpreters and Terminologists (ASTTI) and in France with the support of the French Society of Translators (SFT). Country-specific findings from Switzerland and France are reported independently.

August 2025 , Geneva and Louvain-la-Neuve

Sabrina Girletti and Marie-Aude Lefer

Foreword

by the President of the Belgian Chamber of Translators and Interpreters (CBTI/BKVT)

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this report on rates, pricing methods and income satisfaction among freelance language professionals in Belgium - the result of an ambitious survey project conducted by Dr Sabrina Girletti (University of Geneva) and Prof Marie-Aude Lefer (UCLouvain).

As president of the CBTI/BKVT, I wish to thank both authors for their work and their commitment. This project reflects the collaboration we value within our professional community. The CBTI/BKVT is proud to have taken part in and supported this initiative, which provides useful data and insights into key issues affecting the day-to-day realities of our members.

Few topics spark as much interest and, indeed, as much debate within our sector as those related to pricing and income. The landscape in which we operate is evolving rapidly: the rise of machine translation and generative AI, increased competition, shifting client expectations and downward pressure on rates have profoundly reshaped the field in recent years. In this context, having access to clear, data-driven insights into what language professionals actually experience on the ground is more valuable than ever.

This report not only offers statistics and hard figures, but also sheds light on the current tensions between preferred pricing models and market practices; on the gap between the perceived value of our work and the rates often offered; and on the professional challenges and satisfactions that shape our choices. It provides our associations (in Belgium and beyond) with a strong evidence base for future action, be it in the form of advocacy, member support or strategic reflection.

I hope this report will be widely read and shared within our professional networks and institutions. It is my belief that collective knowledge is a powerful driver of change and that initiatives like this are essential to building a stronger, fairer and more sustainable future for our profession.

Max De Brouwer

President, CBTI/BKVT

Executive summary

This report presents the findings of a survey conducted in 2024 among freelance language professionals based in Belgium. The study aimed to shed light on their pricing models, rates, and levels of income satisfaction across three services: translation, revision and post-editing. A total of 176 valid responses were collected between June and August 2024 through an online questionnaire distributed via the Belgian Chamber of Translators and Interpreters (CBTI/BKVT) and the study authors' professional networks.

Participant profile and services offered

Respondents represent a wide range of experience levels, with the average professional career spanning 16.5 years. The largest age group is 40-49 years old. Most respondents offer translation services, while a significant proportion also offer revision and, to a lesser extent, post-editing services. Their client base includes both agencies and direct clients (mainly companies, but also organizations, colleagues and individuals). Across all services, agencies remain the primary client type, particularly for post-editing, which is overwhelmingly agency-driven.

Pricing methods and preferences

The survey reveals strong preferences for certain pricing methods:

- Translation: Word rates (source text) are both the preferred and most used method, particularly with agencies.
- Revision: A clear preference emerges for hourly rates, although it appears that agencies frequently apply word rates for this service.

- Post-editing: Although agencies most often impose word rates, translators overwhelmingly favour hourly billing for this service as well.

This highlights a disconnect between freelancers' preferred pricing models, which emphasize time-based compensation, and the word-based pricing structures commonly imposed by agencies, particularly in post-editing.

CAT discounts

CAT tool discounts are a widespread practice in translation and post-editing assignments with agencies. While some translators also apply discounts for direct clients, data here are limited. In the comments' section, concerns were raised about the fairness of these practices, particularly since post-editing often involves significant effort not reflected in pricing grids.

Satisfaction with pricing methods

Satisfaction levels vary by service and pricing method:

- Translation: Over 70% of respondents are satisfied with word-based pricing and hourly billing.
- Revision: Almost 90% are satisfied with hourly billing, but less than 50% are satisfied with word-based pricing.
- Post-editing: Satisfaction is low with word-based pricing.

These findings support a broader trend: hourly rates tend to be more positively evaluated across services, particularly for revision and post-editing that involve variable effort and quality.

Income satisfaction

Income satisfaction reveals a consistent gap between client types. Translators report higher income satisfaction from direct clients than from agencies across all services. This is most pronounced in post-editing, where only 21% are satisfied with the income earned through agencies, the lowest figure in the survey. Overall, just 38% of respondents are satisfied with their income, while 49% report dissatisfaction. Contributing factors include low or stagnating rates, high taxation, increased competition, irregular workloads, and the growing influence of AI-driven translation.

Overall job satisfaction

Despite financial challenges, overall job satisfaction remains relatively strong, with 64% of respondents reporting satisfaction in their careers as freelance language professionals. Respondents emphasized the intellectual stimulation, flexibility, and autonomy of the work, along with the sense of fulfilment it can provide. However, persistent concerns were raised about income insecurity, the impact of AI on workload and translation quality, and a general feeling of being undervalued, both financially and professionally.

Profile of the respondents

This section describes the profile of the **176 respondents** who took part in the survey, in terms of age, language combinations, years of experience in the language services industry, domain specialization, affiliation to professional associations, and language services offered, among translation, revision and post-editing.

Age ranges

Overall, the data indicates a rather strong representation of **middle-aged** participants, particularly those between 40 and 59 years old (Table 1). The largest proportion of respondents (34%) fall within the 40-49 age range. This was followed by the 50-59 group at 22% and the 30-39 group at 20%. Younger respondents aged 18-29 made up 10% of the total, while those aged 60+ represented 13%.

AGE RANGE	N	%
18-29	18	10%
30-39	35	20%
40-49	59	34%
50-59	39	22%
60+	23	13%
I do not wish to share this information	2	1%
TOT.	176	100%

Table 1 – Respondents' age range (N=176).

Language combinations

In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate their main language combination. However, some respondents listed multiple combinations. Table 2 includes all the language combinations reported. The most frequently cited combinations in terms of workload were **Dutch into French** (27%), **English into French** (22%), **French into Dutch** (21%), and **English into Dutch** (17%).

LANGUAGE COMBINATION	N	%
NL>FR	47	27%
EN>FR	38	22%
FR>NL	37	21%
EN>NL	29	17%
NL>EN	13	7%
DE>FR	10	6%
FR>EN	7	4%
DE>NL	6	3%
ES>FR	3	2%
NL>DE	3	2%
AR>EN, ZH>NL, EN>DE, ES>NL, FR>ES, FR>PL, IT>FR, IT>NL, NL>ES, NL>ZH, PL>FR, PT>FR, RU>FR	2 mentions each	1% each
AR>FR, CS>FR, DE>EN, EN>AR, EN>ES, EN>EUQ, EN>PL, EN>TR, EN>ZH, ES>EN, ES>EUQ, EUQ>ES, ZH>FR, FR>AR, FR>RU, FR>TR, FR>VI, JP>FR, PL>EN, RO>FR, SE>NL, SV>EN, SV>NL, unclear response	1 mention each	Less than 1% each

Table 2 – Respondents' main language combinations (N=176).

Years of experience as a professional translator

Respondents reported a wide range of professional experience as translators, from 1 to 40 years. The average number of years worked in the language services industry is **16.5**, while the median is slightly lower at 15 years. This suggests a moderately experienced group overall, with some participants at the early stages of their careers and others with decades of experience.

Translation as main professional activity

Translation constitutes the main professional activity for 130 of the 176 respondents (74%).

Domain specialization

A total of 144 respondents (82%) reported having a specialization in at least one domain. Among these, 35% indicated a single area of expertise, 53% cited two or three domains, 8% mentioned four or five, and 5% reported being specialized in more than five domains. Two respondents did not specify their domain(s) of specialization.

Respondents cited a remarkably wide range of specializations – 98 different domains – ranging from broad fields to niche sectors (Table 3). The most cited areas were **legal** translation (39%) and **medical** translation (18%). Marketing followed with 17%, then technical translation (15%), finance (14%), and institutional translation (7%). Human resources, IT, and tourism were each mentioned by 6% of respondents, while all other domains were cited by 5% of respondents or fewer.

DOMAIN	N	%
law	56	39%
healthcare	25	18%
marketing	24	17%
technical	21	15%
finance	20	14%
institutional	10	7%
HR	8	6%
IT	8	6%
tourism	8	6%
business	7	5%
fashion	7	5%
economics	6	4%
administration	5	4%
art	4	3%
communication	4	3%
culture	4	3%
environment	4	3%
food	4	3%
insurance	4	3%
subtitling	4	3%
agriculture	3	2%
editorial	3	2%
electronics	3	2%
history	3	2%
l10n	3	2%
academia, automotive, construction, cosmetics, dubbing, energy, lifestyle, literature, music, patent, safety, sciences, SEO, social, theology	2 mentions each	1% each
ancient literature, archaeology, architecture, art history, audio description, audiovisual, biodiversity, civil state, classical music, climate change, counterterrorism, creative content, diplomacy, education, engineering, epigraphy, ERP, foreign trade, game l10n, GDPR, gender issues, government, hearing aids, horse-riding, human rights, humanities, Humanities-Arts-and Social Sciences (HASS), inclusive language, insurance surveys,	1 mention each	Less than 1% each

international affairs, international aid, international criminal law, literature (non-fictional), logistics, macroeconomics, manga, marketing surveys, migration, natural stones, NGO, non-fiction, nutrition, packaging waste management, palaeography, personal development, politics, psychology, recipes, regulatory, retail, social law, social media, software l10n, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, technology, textual criticism, unions, furniture		

Table 3 – Respondents' domain specializations (N=142).

Affiliation to a professional association

Out of 176 respondents, 120 (68%) reported being members of at least one professional association. However, the survey did not collect information on which associations they belong to.

Services offered

Translation

The vast majority of respondents, 172 out of 176 (98%), declared offering translation services. Two of the four respondents who answered "No" left comments indicating that they may have misunderstood the question.

What percentage of your workload as a freelance translator does it represent?[1]

142 respondents answered this question. On average, translation assignments represent **69% of their workload** (median: 80%).

Revision

124 out of 176 respondents (70%) declared offering revision services. Those who said "No" shared their reasons for not providing such services. The most common themes included a preference for revising only their own work (self-revision), concerns about the quality of translations provided for revision, and a general lack of interest or enjoyment in the task. Others mentioned lacking the necessary skills, receiving few or no requests, or finding the work unprofitable or poorly paid.

What percentage of your workload as a freelance translator does it represent?

94 respondents answered this question. On average, revision assignments represent **16% of their workload** (median: 10%).

[1] For 21 respondents, the sum of the three services exceeds 100%. These responses were discarded in the results reported in this section.

Post-editing (PE)

About half of the respondents, 89 out of 176 respondents (51%), declared offering post-editing services. The participants who do not offer PE services cited a range of personal, professional and ethical reasons. Some feel there is simply no need, due to a steady flow of translation work, lack of client requests, or irrelevance to their specific domains. Others expressed a strong dislike for PE, describing it as boring, uncreative, or unsatisfying. Practical concerns were also common, including lack of knowledge, tools, or clarity around pricing, as well as the time-consuming nature of the work. Ethical objections featured prominently, with some viewing PE as harmful to the profession or contrary to its values. Additional reasons included low pay, poor machine translation quality, and a belief that PE does not constitute true translation.

What percentage of your workload as a freelance translator does it represent?

67 respondents answered this question. On average, PE assignments represent **27% of their workload** (median: 20%).

Translation services

This section presents the survey results for **translation services**.

Most respondents offer translation services to both direct clients and agencies. The figure is higher for direct clients (87%) than for agencies (78%) (Figure 1).

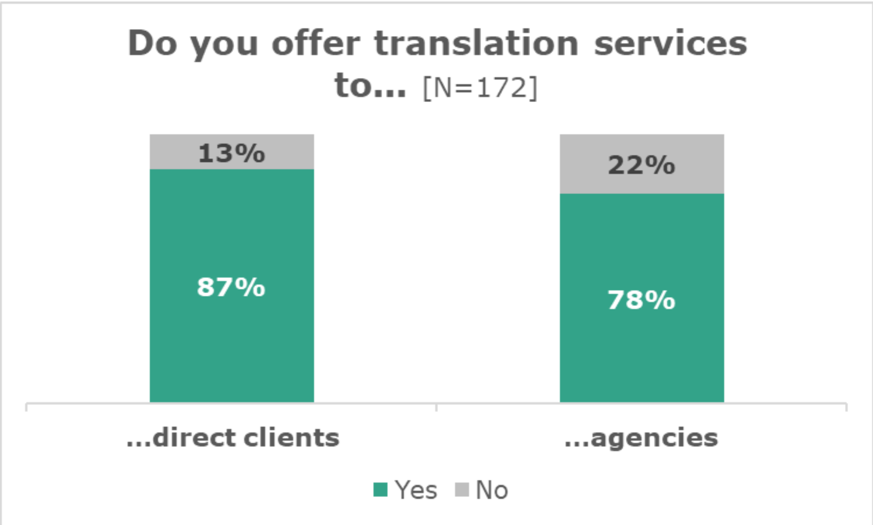

Figure 1 – Translation services offered to direct clients and agencies (N=172).

Table 4 provides the number of respondents who reported data for one, two or three clients or agencies, respectively. The data show that respondents work with a greater variety of direct clients than agencies. For instance, 77 respondents reported having three direct clients, with only 36 participants collaborating with three different agencies.

TRANSLATION SERVICES		N
Direct clients	***One client***	23
	Two clients	37
	Three clients	77
Agencies	***One agency***	43
	Two agencies	36
	Three agencies	36

Table 4 – Number of respondents who provided data for one, two or three clients, per client type (translation services).

Direct client type

The majority of respondents providing translation services work directly with companies, with 174 mentions, by far the most common direct client type (Table 5). National and international organizations were also a significant client group, cited 67 times. Colleagues and other types of direct clients were mentioned less frequently, with 43 and 44 mentions respectively. The "Other" category reflects a broad mix of clients, including private individuals, cultural institutions, legal professionals, non-profits, and public services, highlighting the diversity of some translation work outside traditional commercial or institutional channels.

Direct client type (translation services)	N mentions
Company	174
National or international organization	67
Colleague	43
Other	44

Table 5 – Type of direct clients for translation services.

Direct client location

79% of the direct clients for translation assignments are based in Belgium (Figure 2).

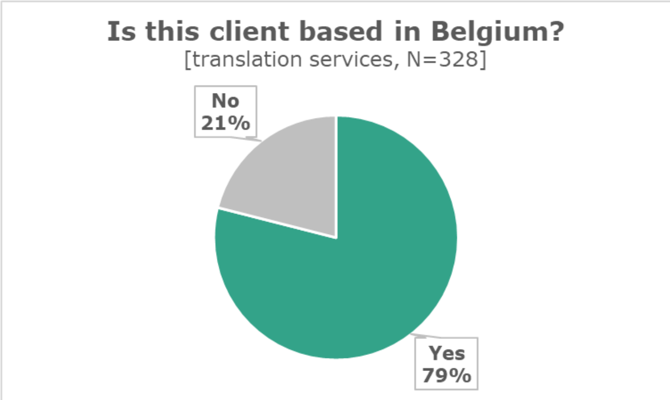

Figure 2 – Direct client location, translation services (N=328).

Agency location

Among the agencies respondents work with for translation services, 60% are based in Belgium, while the remaining 40% are located abroad (Figure 3). This indicates a relatively international scope of collaboration, particularly as many international agencies today are large firms with cross-border operations and client bases.

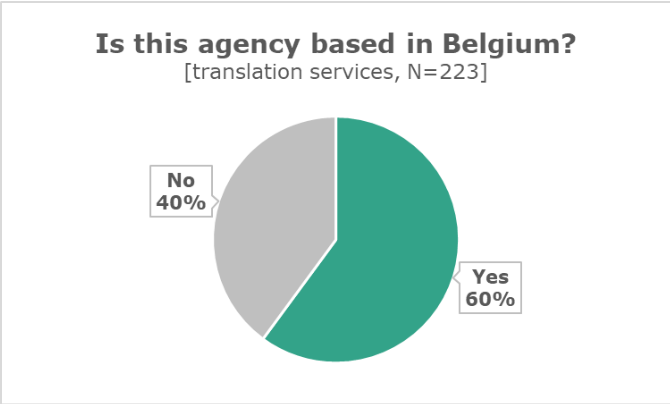

Figure 3 – Agency location, translation services (N=223).

Best pricing methods

Among the 104 respondents who answered the question, the majority (N=51) consider **word rate** to be the best pricing method for translation, making it the clear frontrunner. **Hourly rate** follows at a distance with 32 mentions, while **project-based pricing** is preferred by 10 respondents. **Line rate** and **page rate** are the least favoured, with only 8 and 3 mentions respectively. Overall, the results suggest that word-based pricing remains the most widely accepted and valued pricing method for translation.

Most common pricing methods

The most widely used pricing method for translation is the **word rate** based on the source text, with 200 mentions for direct clients and 185 for agencies (Table 6). Other pricing methods are far less common. Word rate based on the target text appears occasionally with direct clients (34 mentions) but is rarely used with agencies (7 mentions). Line and page rates, whether based on source or target, are used by a smaller number of respondents, especially in agency work. Hourly rates are mentioned more often with direct clients (25) than with agencies (5), while other methods are also more commonly applied with direct clients. Overall, the data confirms that word rate (source) is the dominant pricing method for translation, particularly in agency collaboration, while pricing tends to be more varied when dealing with direct clients.

Pricing method	Direct clients	Agencies
Word rate (source)	**200**	**185**
Word rate (target)	34	7
Line rate (source)	15	1
Line rate (target)	27	9
Page rate (source)	5	6
Page rate (target)	2	0
Hourly rate	25	5
Other method	20	10

Table 5 - Most common pricing methods for translation services (number of mentions).

Are CAT discounts applied?

The results indicate that CAT discounts are much more frequent with agencies than direct clients, with 72% and 23% respectively (Figure 4).

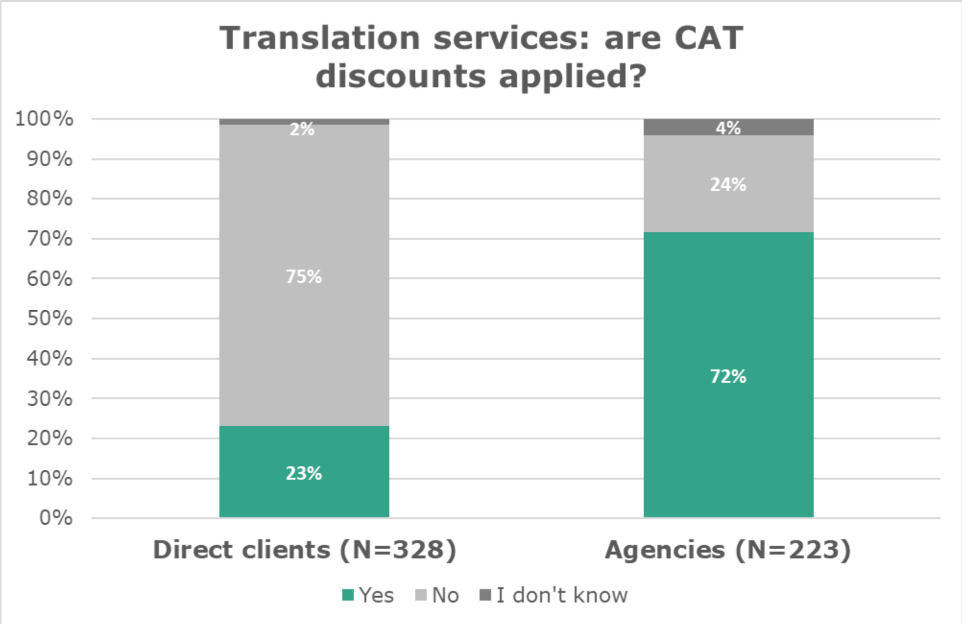

Figure 4 – CAT discounts (translation services).

Revision services

Out of the 111 respondents who offer revision services, 63% work with direct clients, while 68% collaborate with agencies (Figure 5). This suggests that many professionals in this group engage with both types of clients.

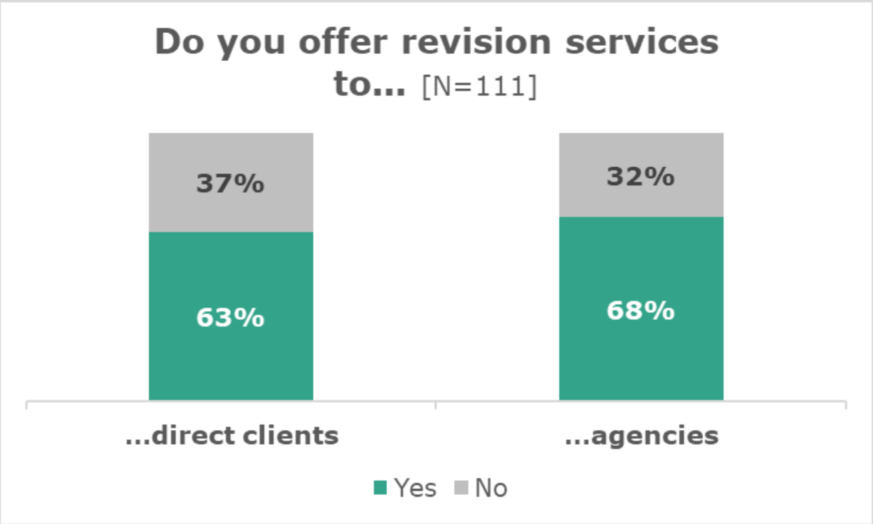

Figure 5 – Revision services offered to direct clients and agencies (N=111).

Table 7 shows the number of respondents who reported working with one, two, or three direct clients or agencies. The data reveals similar patterns for both groups, with most translators collaborating primarily with a single client or agency for revision services.

REVISION SERVICES		N
Direct clients	*One client*	36
	Two clients	12
	Three clients	15
Agencies	*One agency*	41
	Two agencies	16
	Three agencies	11

Table 6 - Number of respondents who provided data for one, two or three clients, per client type (revision services).

Direct client type

Among respondents offering revision services, companies are the most frequently cited type of direct client, with 55 mentions (Table 8). Colleagues also represent a significant share, mentioned 26 times, suggesting a degree of peer collaboration in revision work. National and international organizations were identified less often (17 mentions). The "Other" category, with 8 mentions, mainly includes private individuals.

Direct client type (revision services)	N mentions
Company	55
Colleague	26
National or international organization	17
Other	8

Table 7 - Types of direct client for revision services.

Direct client location

Most direct clients for revision work (73%) are based in Belgium (Figure 6).

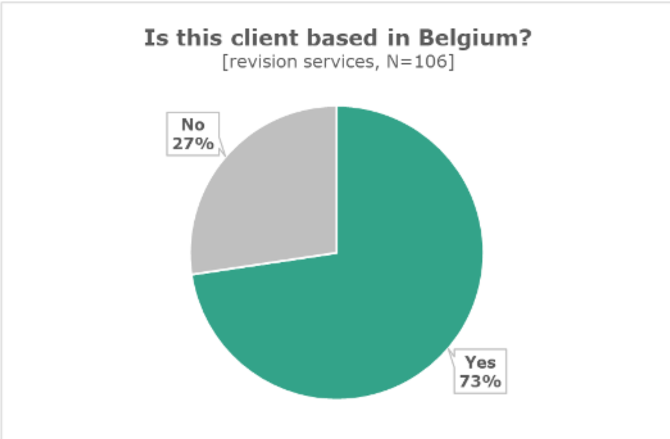

Figure 6 – Direct client location, revision services (N=106).

Agency location

As shown in Figure 7, half of the agencies with whom translators offer revision services are based in Belgium, while the other half operate from abroad, reflecting a balanced mix of domestic and international collaboration in this area.

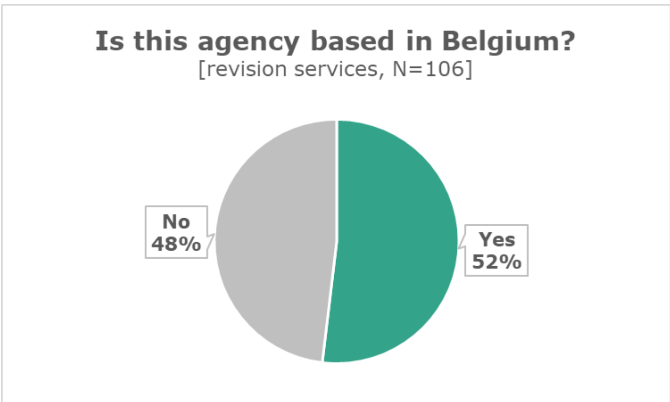

Figure 7 – Agency location, revision services (N=106).

Best pricing methods

Among the 91 respondents who answered the question, the vast majority (72) consider the **hourly rate** to be the most appropriate pricing method. Far fewer favour alternative approaches: 13 selected word rate, 4 preferred project-based pricing, and only one respondent each mentioned line rate and page rate. This strong preference for hourly billing suggests that many professionals view revision work as better suited to **time-based compensation**, due to the variability of tasks involved.

Most common pricing methods

As shown in Table 9, the **hourly rate** is by far the most commonly used pricing method for revision services, particularly with direct clients (72 mentions) and, to a lesser extent, with agencies (48 mentions). Word rate based on the source text is the next most frequent method, though more commonly applied in agency work (50 mentions) than with direct clients (23 mentions). All other pricing methods, such as word rate based on the target text, page rate, and other approaches, are rarely used. Line rates are not used at all.

Interestingly, while translators overwhelmingly favour hourly rates for revision, agencies tend to impose word-based pricing in half the cases, highlighting a disconnect between professional preferences and market practices.

Pricing method	Direct clients	Agencies
Word rate (source)	23	**50**
Word rate (target)	5	5
Line rate (source)	0	0
Line rate (target)	0	0
Page rate (source)	1	3
Page rate (target)	1	0
Hourly rate	**72**	**48**
Other method	3	0

Table 8 - Most common pricing methods for revision services (number of mentions).

Post-editing services

This section focuses on post-editing (PE) services, which are offered by approximately half of the survey respondents.

Among the 70 participants who provided detailed information about PE, a clear majority (80%) offer PE services to agencies, while only 16% do so for direct clients (Figure 8). This suggests that post-editing remains largely concentrated within agency workflows, with limited uptake among direct clients.

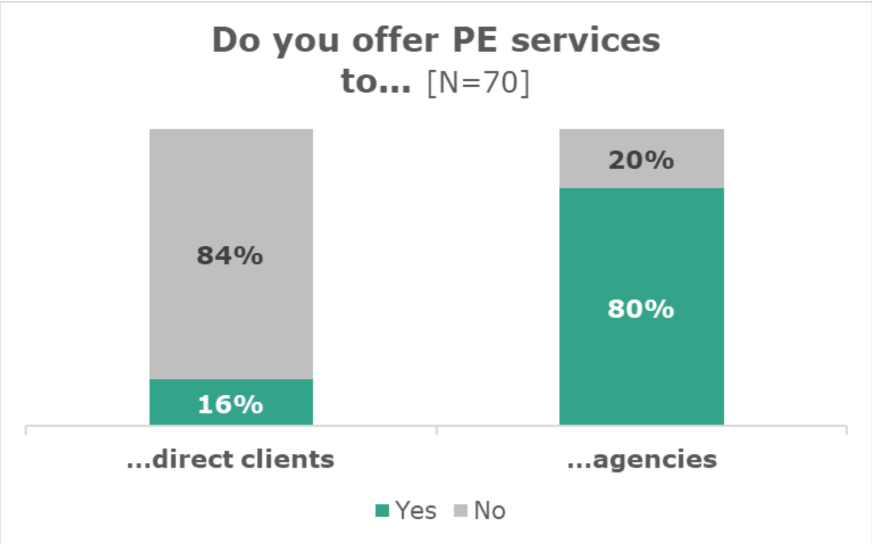

Figure 8 – PE services offered to direct clients and agencies (N=70).

Table 10 presents the number of respondents who reported working with one, two, or three clients or agencies for post-editing services. The data indicates that many respondents rely on just one or two agencies for this type of work, highlighting a relatively concentrated client base in the PE sector.

POST-EDITING SERVICES		N
Direct clients	***One client***	9
	Two clients	0
	Three clients	0
Agencies	***One agency***	33
	Two agencies	14
	Three agencies	6

Table 9 - Number of respondents who provided data for one, two or three clients, per client type (PE services).

Direct client type

Only a very small number of translators (N=9) provide post-editing services to direct clients, and these clients are primarily companies (Table 11). This suggests that, while rare, direct client demand for PE tends to come from the corporate sector.

Direct client type (PE services)	N mentions
Company	6
Colleague	1
National or international organization	1
Other	1

Table 10 - Type of direct client for revision services.

Direct client location

Direct clients, which are rare (9), are based in Belgium or abroad (Figure 9).

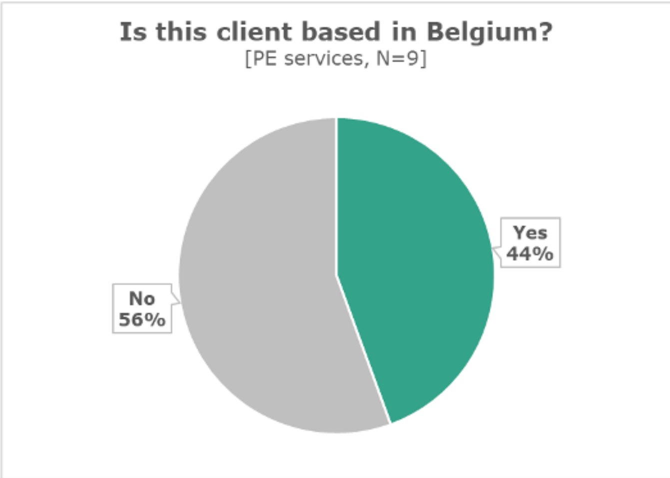

Figure 9 – Direct client location, PE services (N=9).

Agency location

As with translation and revision services, the agencies with whom translators collaborate for PE are both Belgium-based and international, reflecting the same mixed geographical distribution seen in other service areas (Figure 10).

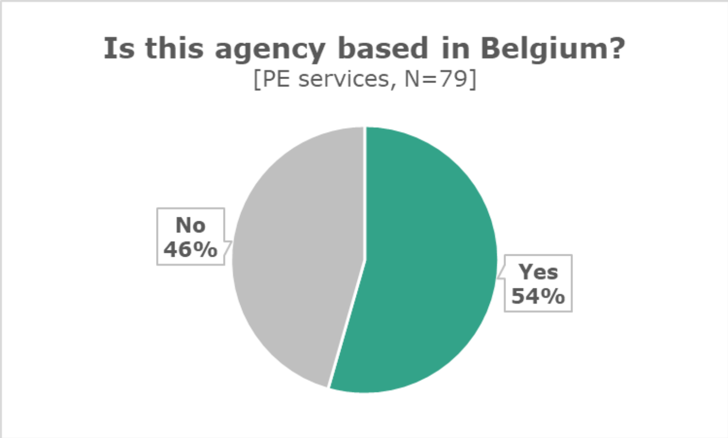

Figure 10 – Agency location, PE services (N=79).

Best pricing methods

Among the 81 respondents who answered this question, the majority (59) consider the **hourly rate** to be the most appropriate pricing method for PE. Word rate is a distant second, with 17 mentions, while project-based pricing (3), line rate (1), and other methods (1) rank far behind. These preferences closely mirror those observed for revision services, suggesting a consistent view among professionals that **time-based compensation** is better suited to tasks like revision and post-editing, where effort can vary widely depending on translation quality and raw machine translation quality, respectively.

Most common pricing methods

There is a clear **discrepancy** between translators' preferred pricing methods for PE and those commonly used in the market (Table 12). While the survey shows that translators overwhelmingly favour hourly rates for post-editing, agencies continue to rely heavily on source word rates (mentioned by 63 respondents), making it the dominant PE pricing model for agency work. In contrast, only 9 respondents report using hourly rates with agencies. This highlights a significant mismatch between professional preferences and prevailing agency practices in post-editing. Among the few translators who offer PE services to direct clients, pricing is more varied but remains limited in scope, with 8 citing word rate and only 1 using hourly billing.

Pricing method	Direct clients	Agencies
Word rate (source)	**6**	**63**
Word rate (target)	2	3
Line rate (source)	0	1
Line rate (target)	0	0
Page rate (source)	0	2
Page rate (target)	0	0
Hourly rate	1	9
Other method	0	1

Table 11 - Most common pricing methods for PE services (number of mentions).

Are CAT discounts applied?

CAT tool discounts are regularly imposed by agencies for post-editing work, representing 80% of mentions (Figure 11). While such discounts are also commonly applied in work with direct clients, the sample size is very small (only 9 mentions), therefore, findings should be interpreted with caution.

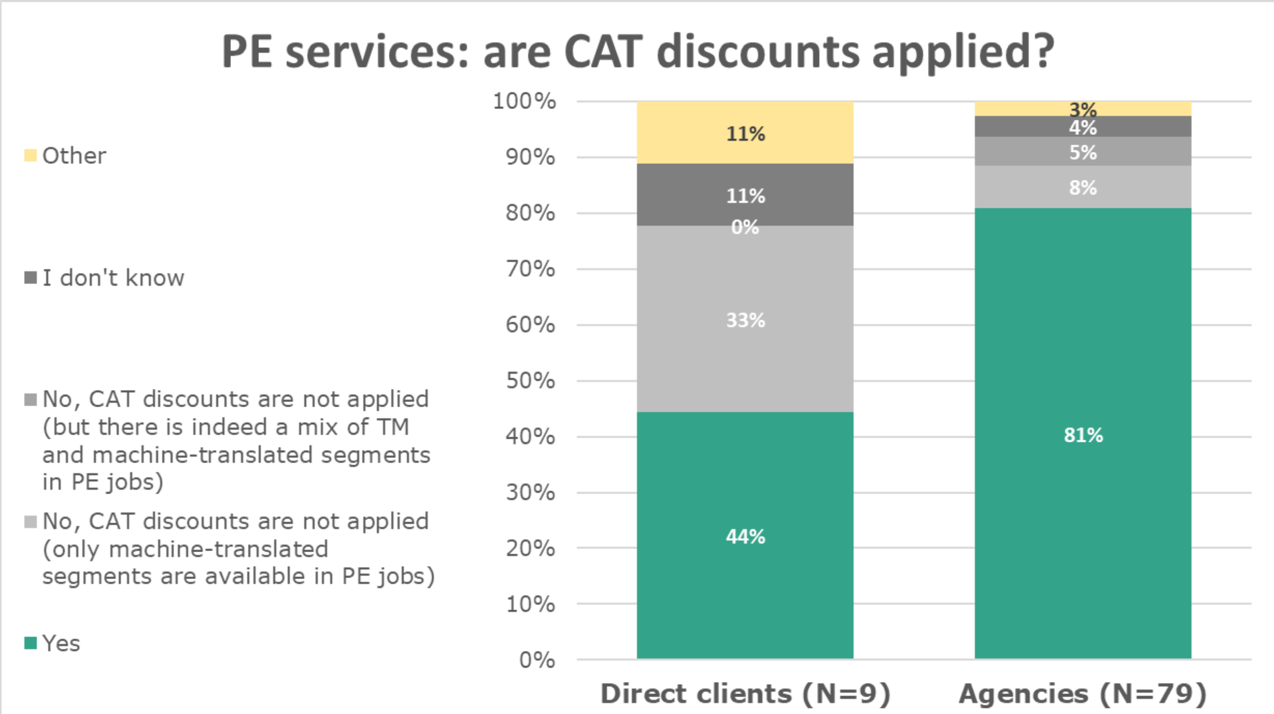

Figure 11 – CAT discounts (PE services).

Rates

This section presents data on rates. Only **precise figures** were included in the analysis, while price ranges provided by some respondents were excluded. Additionally, we limited the analysis to participants who reported a single language combination at the start of the survey, in order to ensure that the rates could be accurately linked to specific language pairs.

Happiness with rates (all services)

Most respondents report feeling either neutral or satisfied with the rates they receive from direct clients (Figure 12). This represents 86% of mentions for translation (N=327), 93% for revision (N=106) and 89% for PE (N=9). In contrast, the situation with agencies is less positive: the majority express neutrality or dissatisfaction with agency-imposed rates. This discrepancy is particularly pronounced in the case of post-editing, where dissatisfaction is more common (48%, N=79) than for translation (34%, N=223) or revision (32%, N=106).

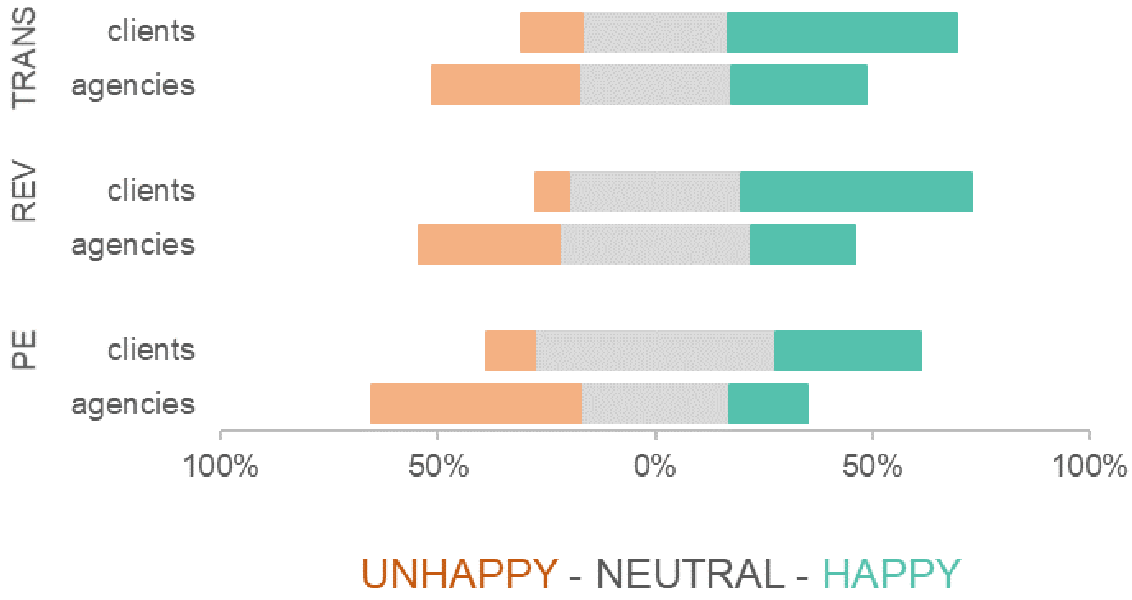

Figure 12 – Satisfaction with rates, per service and client type.

Tables 13 to 18 below present the rates (in euros) for the three services surveyed, broken down by direct clients and agencies. For respondents who reported multiple rates (corresponding to different clients or agencies), an average was calculated per respondent. In cases where only a single rate was provided for a given pricing method and language combination, that value appears in the "Mean" column. The tables indicate the number of respondents (N). Data is reported only for pricing methods and language combinations represented in the survey responses.

Translation rates

Direct client rates (translation)

Pricing method	Language Pair	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	N
WORD RATE (SOURCE)	NL>FR	0.12	0.10	0.07	0.21	30
	FR>NL	0.13	0.13	0.08	0.17	16
	EN>FR	0.13	0.14	0.07	0.18	11
	EN>NL	0.11	0.12	0.08	0.14	7
	DE>FR	0.12	0.10	0.08	0.18	3
	NL>EN	0.13	0.13	0.11	0.17	3
	EN>DE	0.17	0.17	0.15	0.19	2
	FR>EN	0.08	0.08	0.06	0.10	2
	CS>FR	0.10				1
	DE>NL	0.24				1
	EN>TR	0.10				1
	EN>ZH	0.08				1
	ES>FR	0.15				1
	FR>ES	0.08				1
	PL>FR	0.11				1
	PT>FR	0.11				1
	ZH>FR	0.17				1
WORD RATE (TARGET)	NL>FR	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.10	4
	DE>FR	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	2
	EN>FR	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.13	2
	FR>NL	0.12	0.12	0.10	0.13	2
	FR>PL	0.10				1
	NL>EN	0.14				1
HOURLY RATE	FR>NL	53.00	50.00	45.00	70.00	5
	NL>FR	72.00	55.00	45.00	150.00	5
	EN>FR	51.25	51.25	30.00	72.50	2
	DE>NL	70.00				1
	EN>NL	75.00				1
	FR>EN	30.00				1
	NL>DE	70.00				1
LINE RATE (SOURCE)	NL>FR	1.48	1.59	1.00	1.75	4
	EN>FR	1.00				1
	EN>NL	1.00				1

	FR>NL	1.00				1
LINE RATE (TARGET)	EN>NL	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	2
	NL>DE	1.46	1.46	1.45	1.47	2
	EN>DE	1.75				1
	FR>NL	1.10				1
	NL>FR	1.20				1
	PT>FR	1.00				1
PAGE RATE (SOURCE)	JP>FR	5.00				1
	NL>FR	70.00				1
PAGE RATE (TARGET)	JP>FR	6.00				1

Table 12 - Translation rates with direct clients,
per pricing method and language combination.

Agency rates (translation)

Pricing method	Language Pair	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	N
WORD RATE (SOURCE)	NL>FR	0.10	0.09	0.07	0.14	25
	EN>FR	0.09	0.09	0.05	0.12	12
	FR>NL	0.09	0.09	0.06	0.14	12
	EN>NL	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.10	8
	DE>FR	0.11	0.11	0.09	0.12	5
	DE>NL	0.10	0.12	0.07	0.12	3
	NL>EN	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.10	3
	EN>DE	0.13	0.13	0.11	0.15	2
	CS>FR	0.09				1
	EN>TR	0.08				1
	ES>FR	0.12				1
	FR>ES	0.08				1
	PT>FR	0.09				1
WORD RATE (TARGET)	EN>FR	0.13	0.13	0.08	0.18	2
	FR>NL	0.12				1
	NL>FR	0.06				1
HOURLY RATE	EN>FR	31.75	32.00	23.00	40.00	4
	EN>NL	50.00				1
LINE RATE (SOURCE)	FR>NL	0.68				1
LINE RATE (TARGET)	FR>NL	1.10				1
	NL>DE	1.00				1
PAGE RATE (SOURCE)	EN>FR	22.50	22.50	22.00	23.00	2
	EN>NL	23.00				1
	FR>NL	23.00				1

Table 13 - Translation rates with agencies,
per pricing method and language combination.

Revision rates

Direct client rates (revision)

Pricing method	Language Pair	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	N
WORD RATE (SOURCE)	FR>NL	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03	3
	EN>FR	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.06	2
	EN>NL	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	2
	NL>FR	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.03	2
	EN>ZH	0.04				1
	NL>EN	0.02				1
WORD RATE (TARGET)	FR>NL	0.09				1
	PT>FR	0.05				1
HOURLY RATE	NL>FR	45.26	43.00	25.00	70.00	9
	FR>NL	54.17	55.00	30.00	70.00	6
	EN>FR	37.63	33.75	23.00	60.00	4
	EN>NL	48.75	42.50	35.00	75.00	4
	NL>EN	44.17	37.50	30.00	65.00	3
	EN>DE	50.00	50.00	45.00	55.00	2
	DE>FR	35.00				1
	DE>NL	56.67				1
	FR>EN	30.00				1
	FR>VI	55.00				1
PAGE RATE (TARGET)	NL>EN	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	1

Table 14 – Revision rates with direct clients,
per pricing method and language combination.

Agency rates (revision)

Pricing method	Language Pair	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	N
WORD RATE (SOURCE)	EN>FR	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	6
	EN>NL	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	6
	FR>NL	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	4
	NL>FR	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	4
	CS>FR	0.05				1
	DE>NL	0.03				1
	ES>FR	0.04				1
	NL>DE	0.04				1
	NL>EN	0.03				1
WORD RATE (TARGET)	EN>FR	0.08				1
	PT>FR	0.05				1
HOURLY RATE	EN>FR	33.00	32.50	23.00	47.00	6
	NL>FR	38.06	35.00	30.00	55.00	6
	FR>NL	31.38	33.75	18.00	40.00	4
	DE>FR	34.17	35.00	30.00	37.50	3
	EN>NL	38.33	35.00	30.00	50.00	3
	EN>DE	40.25	40.25	38.00	42.50	2
	NL>EN	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	2
	DE>NL	45.00				1
	EN>TR	35.00				1
	FR>VI	55.00				1
	NL>DE	40.00				1
PAGE RATE (SOURCE)	EN>FR	6.50				1
	FR>NL	8.00				1

Table 15 - Revision rates with agencies,
per pricing method and language combination.

PE rates

Direct client rates (PE)

Pricing method	Language Pair	Rate	N
WORD RATE (SOURCE)	DE>FR	0.09	1
	DE>NL	0.05	1
	EN>DE	0.14	1
	EN>NL	0.06	1
	EN>ZH	0.04	1
	PL>FR	0.05	1
WORD RATE (TARGET)	EN>ZH	0.40	1
HOURLY RATE	FR>EN	30.00	1

Table 16 - PE rates with direct clients,
per pricing method and language combination.

Agency rates (PE)

Pricing method	Language Pair	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	N
WORD RATE (SOURCE)	EN>FR	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.07	12
	NL>FR	0.06	0.06	0.04	0.10	10
	EN>NL	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.08	5
	FR>NL	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.06	5
	DE>FR	0.07	0.07	0.04	0.09	2
	NL>EN	0.05				1
WORD RATE (TARGET)	EN>FR	0.07				1
HOURLY RATE	EN>FR	25.00	25.00	23.00	27.00	2
	DE>FR	30.00				1
	EN>DE	38.00				1
	EN>NL	26.25				1
LINE RATE (SOURCE)	FR>NL	0.50				1
PAGE RATE (SOURCE)	EN>FR	13.50	13.50	10.00	17.00	2

Table 17 - PE rates with agencies,
per pricing method and language combination.

Satisfaction

This final part of the report presents survey results related to various aspects of satisfaction, including satisfaction with pricing methods by service type, income satisfaction (per service type and overall), and job satisfaction.

Satisfaction with pricing methods

This section discusses satisfaction with pricing methods by service type, focusing on the method of pricing itself rather than the specific rates charged.

Translation services

Respondents are generally satisfied with **word-based pricing** (106 respondents) and **hourly billing** (22 respondents) for translation services, with satisfaction levels over **70%** for both methods (Figure 13). While satisfaction data is also available for other pricing methods, the sample sizes for those are too small to draw meaningful conclusions.

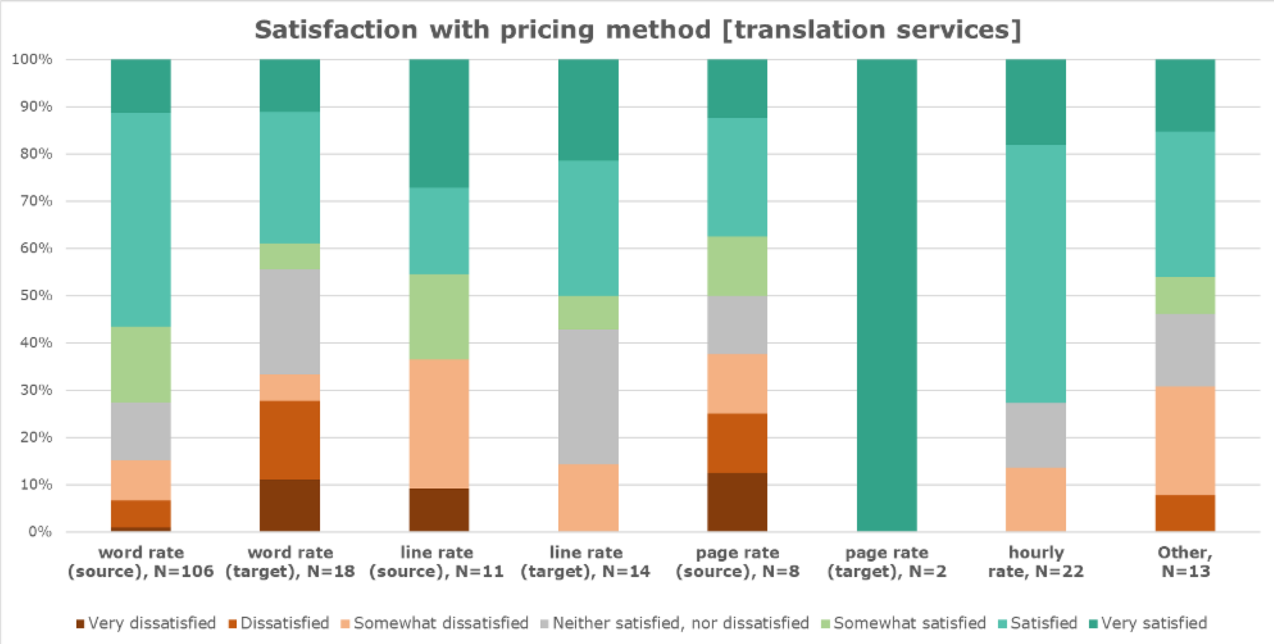

Figure 13 – Satisfaction with pricing method (translation services).

Revision services

A sharp contrast emerges in the case of revision services. While an overwhelming majority of respondents express satisfaction with **hourly billing** (54 respondents), fewer than half report being satisfied with **word-based pricing** (40 respondents) (Figure 14).

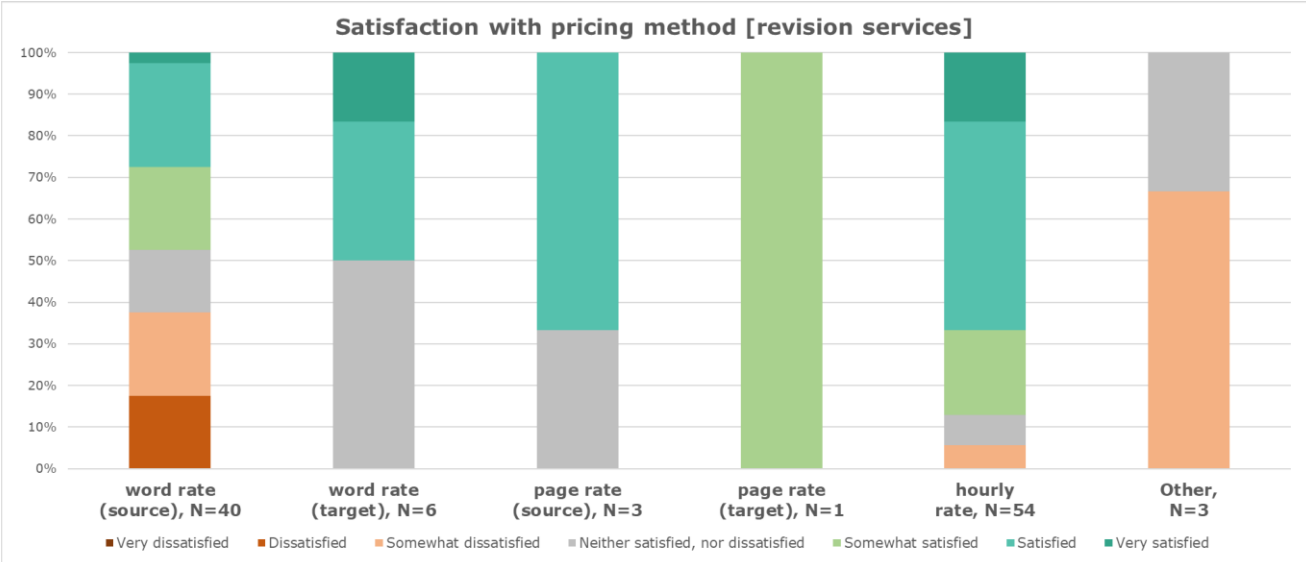

Figure 14 – Satisfaction with pricing method (revision services).

PE services

As with revision services, a mixed picture emerges for **word-based pricing** in post-editing. Only half of the 47 respondents who commented on this method reported being satisfied (Figure 15). In contrast, satisfaction is higher for **hourly billing**, although this is based on a much smaller number of respondents (9), limiting the strength of the conclusion.

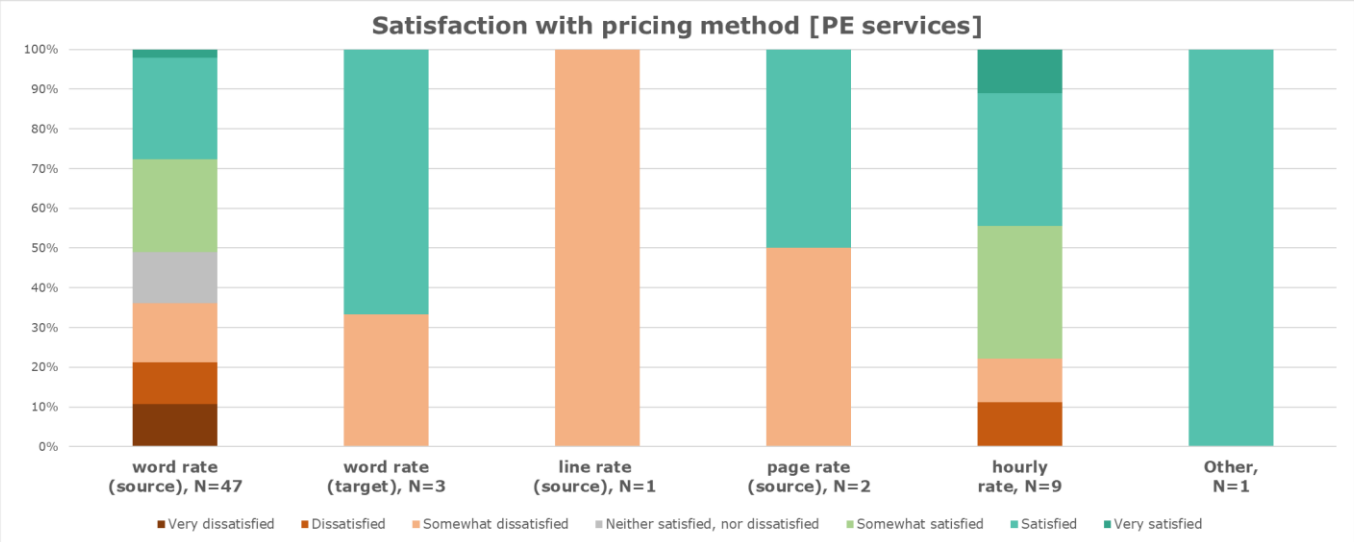

Figure 15 – Satisfaction with pricing method (PE services).

Satisfaction with income, per service and client

Two main trends emerge from the survey regarding **income satisfaction per service and client** (Figure 16). First, translators consistently report lower satisfaction with income from agencies compared to direct clients. Second, income satisfaction levels are relatively consistent across different services. The following sections explore each service in detail.

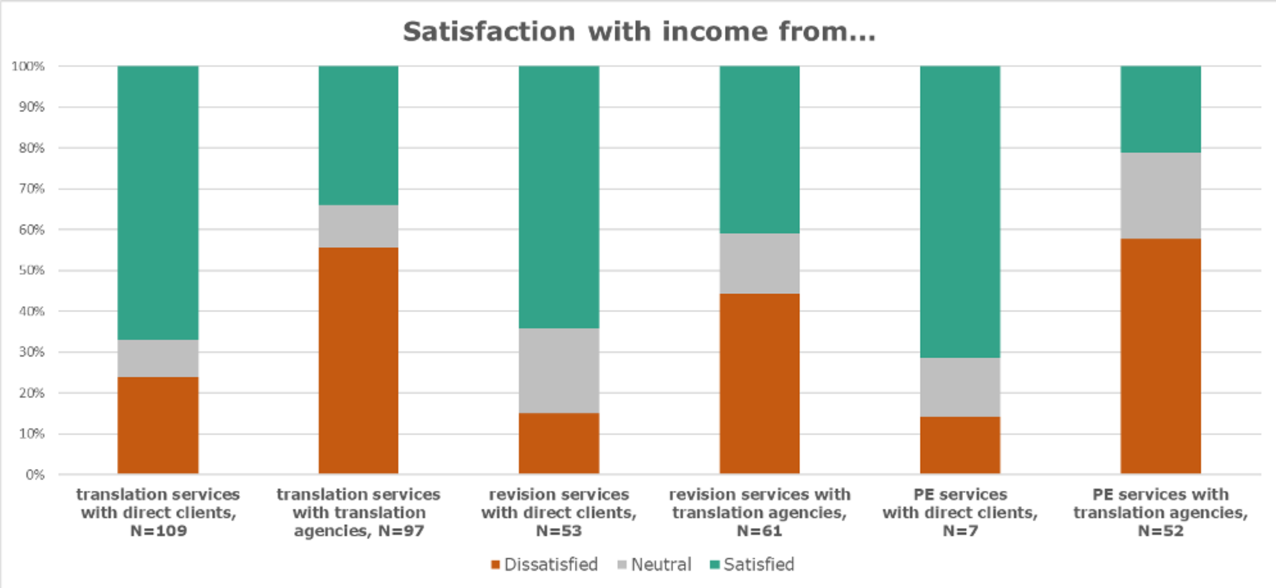

Figure 16 – Income satisfaction per service and client type.

Translation

Satisfaction with income from translation services varies significantly depending on the type of client. Among the 109 respondents who work with **direct clients**, **67%** report being satisfied with their income. In contrast, only **33%** of the 97 respondents working with **agencies** express satisfaction, confirming a consistent trend of lower income satisfaction in agency collaborations.

Several reasons help explain dissatisfaction with **direct clients**. While rates are generally higher than those offered by agencies, many still find them insufficient relative to their qualifications. Some struggle to raise their rates, due to factors such as fear of losing long-term clients or competition from cheaper providers. Others cite a lack of direct clients, often due to pricing concerns or difficulty acquiring new ones. Additional concerns include a perceived lack of recognition for their qualifications, heavy taxation, reduced demand due to AI, and the irregular nature of direct client work. Some also note hidden costs (post, printing, etc.) and the challenge of convincing direct clients to prioritize quality over price.

For **agency work**, dissatisfaction is much more pronounced. Many describe the situation as "a race to the bottom", citing unsustainably low rates, lack of rate increases over time, and the perception that agencies profit significantly without fairly compensating freelancers. Unfair CAT tool discounts are a recurring complaint, as are irregular workloads. Respondents also report poor treatment by agencies, including unrealistic expectations, lack of support, and minimal room for negotiation. Tools and processes are another source of frustration, with translators often required to use costly CAT tools or unintuitive online platforms.

Revision

Satisfaction with income from revision services also differs between direct clients and agencies. Among the 53 respondents working with **direct clients**, **64%** report being satisfied with their income. In contrast, only **40%** of the 61 respondents working with agencies express satisfaction, which reflects a pattern similar to that observed for translation services.

Across **both client types**, several shared challenges contribute to dissatisfaction. A common concern is the irregularity of the workload, with many respondents citing a lack of consistent revision assignments. Rates are also a frequent point of tension. Some respondents feel that the time required for revision is underestimated, leading to insufficient compensation, especially when pricing is based on word rates. Others mention the difficulty of raising rates, often due to fear of losing clients or resistance in the market. In both contexts, some translators also expressed a general lack of enjoyment with revision work, noting that it can be unengaging or only fulfilling when the subject matter is interesting.

However, certain issues are specific to each client type. With **direct clients**, dissatisfaction often stems from the small client base and a decline in demand, particularly as AI-generated content becomes more prevalent. Some also report having had to lower their rates over time or feeling pressure not to raise them. For **agency work**, dissatisfaction is more closely tied to structural and workflow-related issues. A key complaint is the poor quality of translations received for revision, which significantly increases the time and effort required, especially when the original translator was paid very low rates. Additionally, respondents point to agencies' practices such as time pressure, lack of added value, and feedback loops that force freelancers to rework content without additional pay.

Post-editing

Given the small number of respondents offering post-editing services to direct clients, the present analysis focuses on the 52 respondents who provide PE services to **agencies**. Among them, satisfaction with income is strikingly low, only **21%** report being satisfied, making this the lowest satisfaction level across the three services surveyed.

Several factors contribute to this dissatisfaction. A key issue is low, non-negotiable rates imposed by agencies, which many respondents view as unprofitable. Unfair CAT tool discounts are another concern, with some translators expected to post-edit certain segments for free. The variable quality of machine translation also adds complexity: while some outputs are acceptable, others are of poor quality and require extensive reworking, often without advance warning or rate adjustment. Additionally, respondents frequently describe PE work as uninteresting and unsatisfying, with some indicating they only accept it when their schedule allows. Agency practices exacerbate these issues: agencies are seen as adding little value, simply distributing tasks without supporting translators. There is also a perceived lack of respect for the nature of PE, with agencies assuming it is quicker or easier than translation, despite this not always being the case. Finally, irregular workloads contribute to overall dissatisfaction, adding to the instability of income from PE work.

Satisfaction with income as language professional

Out of 133 respondents, only **38%** report being **satisfied** with their income as language professionals, while nearly half (49%) express dissatisfaction. A further 13% indicate a neutral stance (Figure 17). This overall picture highlights significant concern within the freelance profession about financial sustainability.

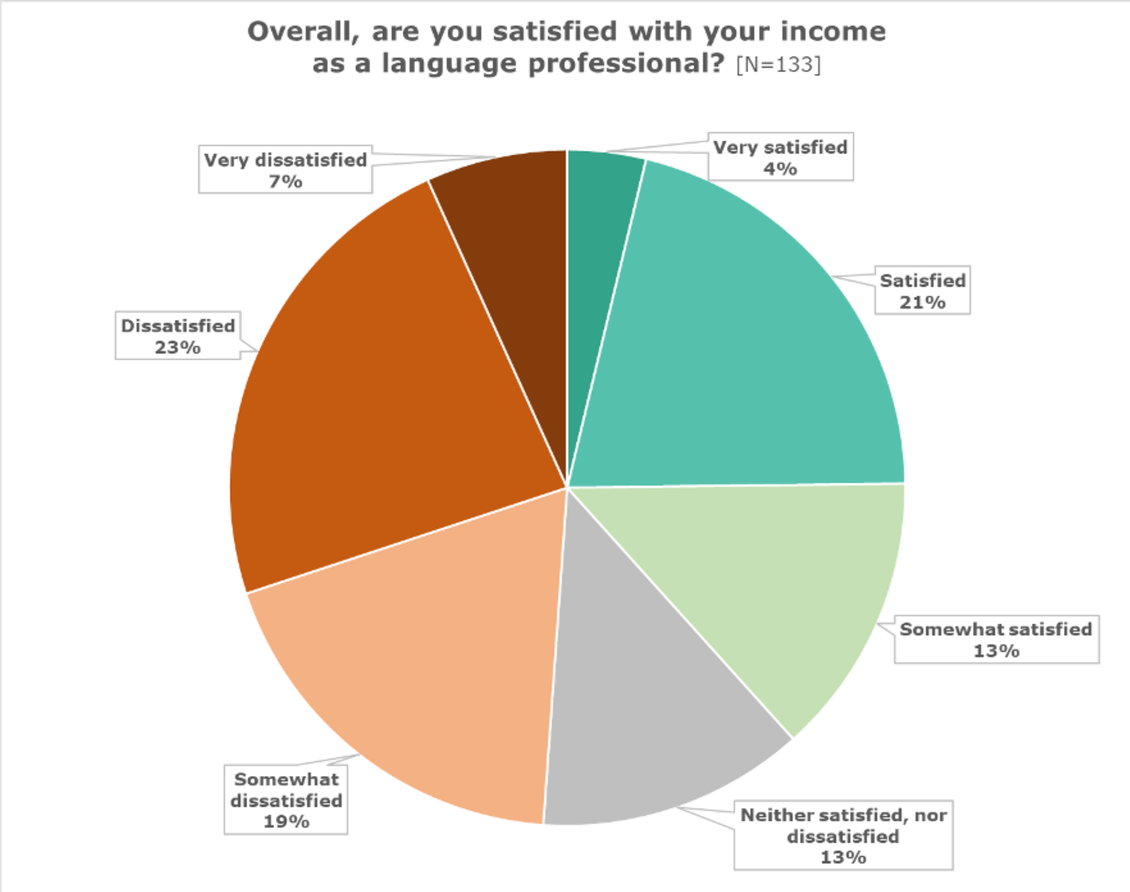

Figure 17 – Overall income satisfaction.

Respondents cite a wide range of reasons for their overall income dissatisfaction. A recurring theme is low or declining income, with many reporting that their earnings have dropped in recent years or are insufficient to ensure financial security, let alone savings for the future. High taxation in Belgium adds to the pressure, as does inflation, which further erodes the value of already limited earnings.

Many respondents describe feeling trapped in a market dominated by unfair competition and downward price pressure. The presence of freelancers offering lower rates, combined with clients refusing to accept rate increases, contributes to a persistent inability to raise prices.

Irregular workloads and direct client loss are additional concerns, often tied to the rise of AI and machine translation, which respondents view as a growing threat to job stability. Some highlight the need to supplement their income through other activities like teaching. The resulting insecurity is compounded by a lack of paid holidays and a negative impact on health and well-being.

Finally, there is a strong sense that the profession, and the expertise it requires, is undervalued. Respondents point to the lack of recognition for their skills, qualifications, and creativity, as well as the difficulty of marketing themselves in a highly competitive and changing landscape.

Overall job satisfaction

Despite widespread concerns about income, overall job satisfaction among language professionals paints a more encouraging picture. Of the respondents, **64%** report being **satisfied** with their work, 7% feel neutral, and 29% express dissatisfaction, most of whom are only somewhat dissatisfied rather than strongly discontent (Figure 18). This suggests that, while challenges exist, many still find meaning and enjoyment in their professional lives.

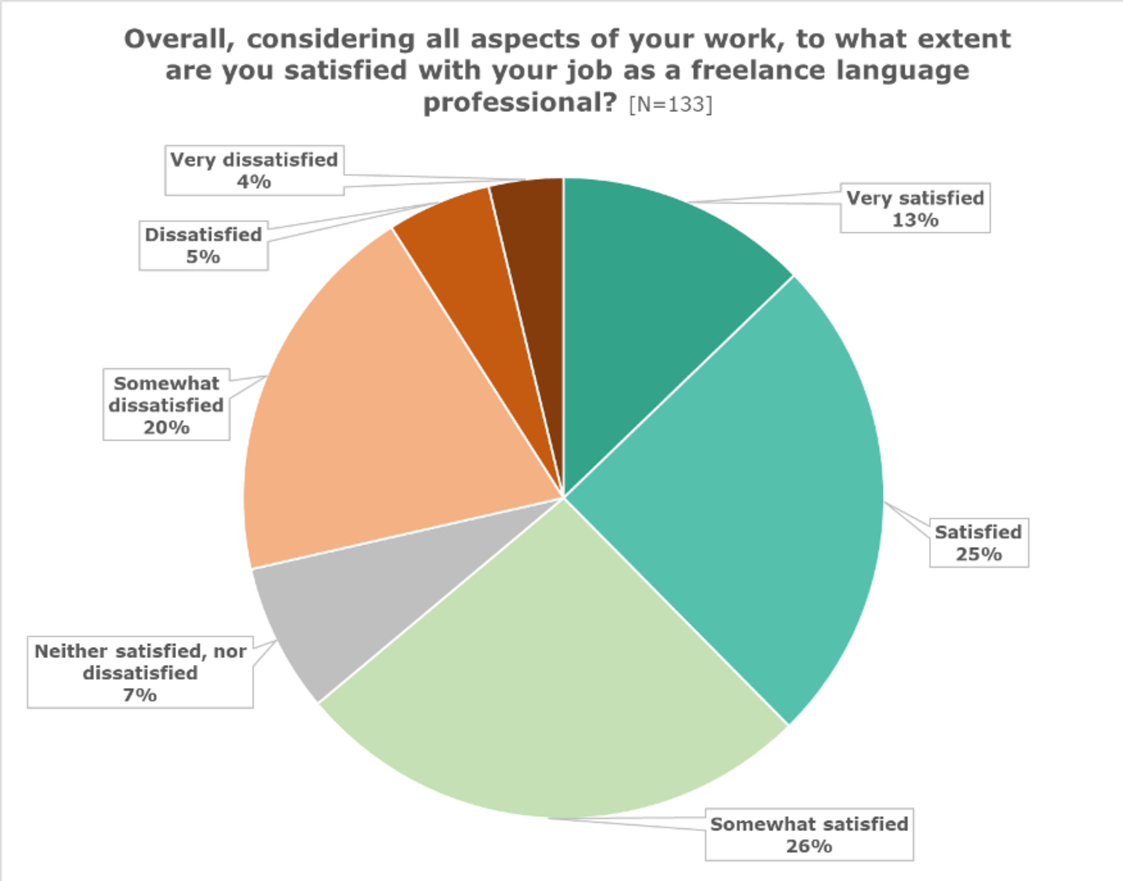

Figure 18 – Overall job satisfaction.

Positive aspects of the profession are frequently highlighted. Many respondents describe translation as a fulfilling and intellectually stimulating career. They speak passionately about their love for the job, and the diversity of tasks. The autonomy of freelance work is another major benefit, offering the freedom to choose clients, manage one's schedule, and work independently. Several respondents also cite a positive work-life balance, emphasizing the comfort of working from home, avoiding commuting, and enjoying a flexible lifestyle. For some, who identify as highly skilled translators, the profession still offers a decent income.

However, **reasons for job dissatisfaction** are significant and often tied to broader concerns about the future of the profession. A key source of anxiety is uncertainty about income, workload, and the long-term viability of the profession, particularly in light of AI developments. Many express worry or stress over AI's impact, noting that it is already leading to reduced demand and a perceived devaluation of human translators. Low income remains a persistent issue, with respondents pointing to stagnant or declining rates, high taxes, and difficulty negotiating better pay. These financial pressures can negatively affect work-life balance, with some reporting long hours, isolation, and stress. Several also feel that the profession is undervalued, citing a lack of recognition or respect for their expertise. Others find the entrepreneurial side of freelancing, such as administration, marketing, and client communication, unrewarding or burdensome. A few respondents note that the nature of the work itself is changing, particularly with the rise of post-editing, which some view as dull or unfulfilling. This shift has led some to question whether they will continue in the profession long term.

In sum, while a majority still take satisfaction in their work, there is an undercurrent of concern, especially around financial sustainability, evolving job content, and the impact of AI. The data suggests that many translators continue to find purpose and enjoyment in their profession, but the future feels uncertain and, for some, increasingly precarious.