



Out

Polls, Stats & CIOL Voices

CIOL Translators Day 2025

Steve Doswell & Dom Hebblethwaite

Introduction – Steve and Dom



Steve Doswell, CIOL Chair



Dom Hebblethwaite, Head of Membership



What we will cover:

- Quick audience polls
- Recap of some other recent polls and surveys
- AI and changes in the profession/industry



Active poll

144

How have your work volumes changed over the last 12 months?

No Change



Small Increase



Small Decrease



Big Decrease



Big Increase



What is responsible for the change in workloads?





Active poll

137

What is your personal strategy? (rank in order)

1. Direct Clients



2. Specialisation



3. Diversification



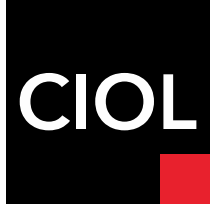
4. Engaging with technology



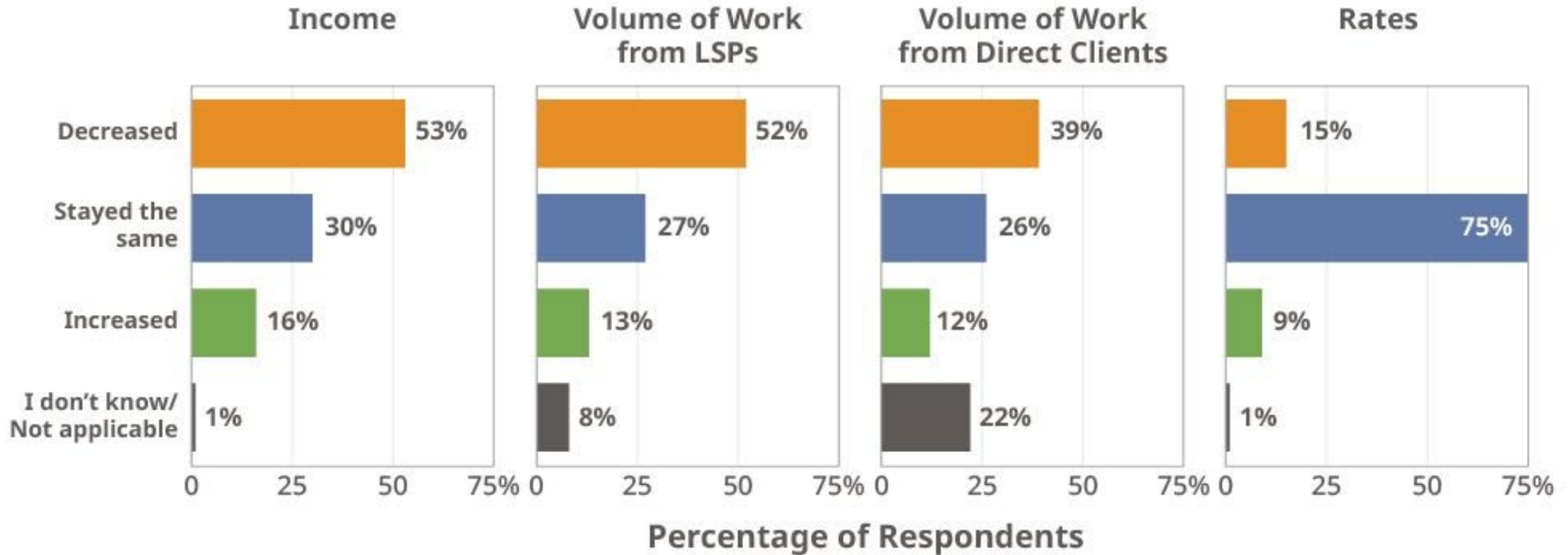
5. Hope AI hype will die down



Wider freelance translator trends



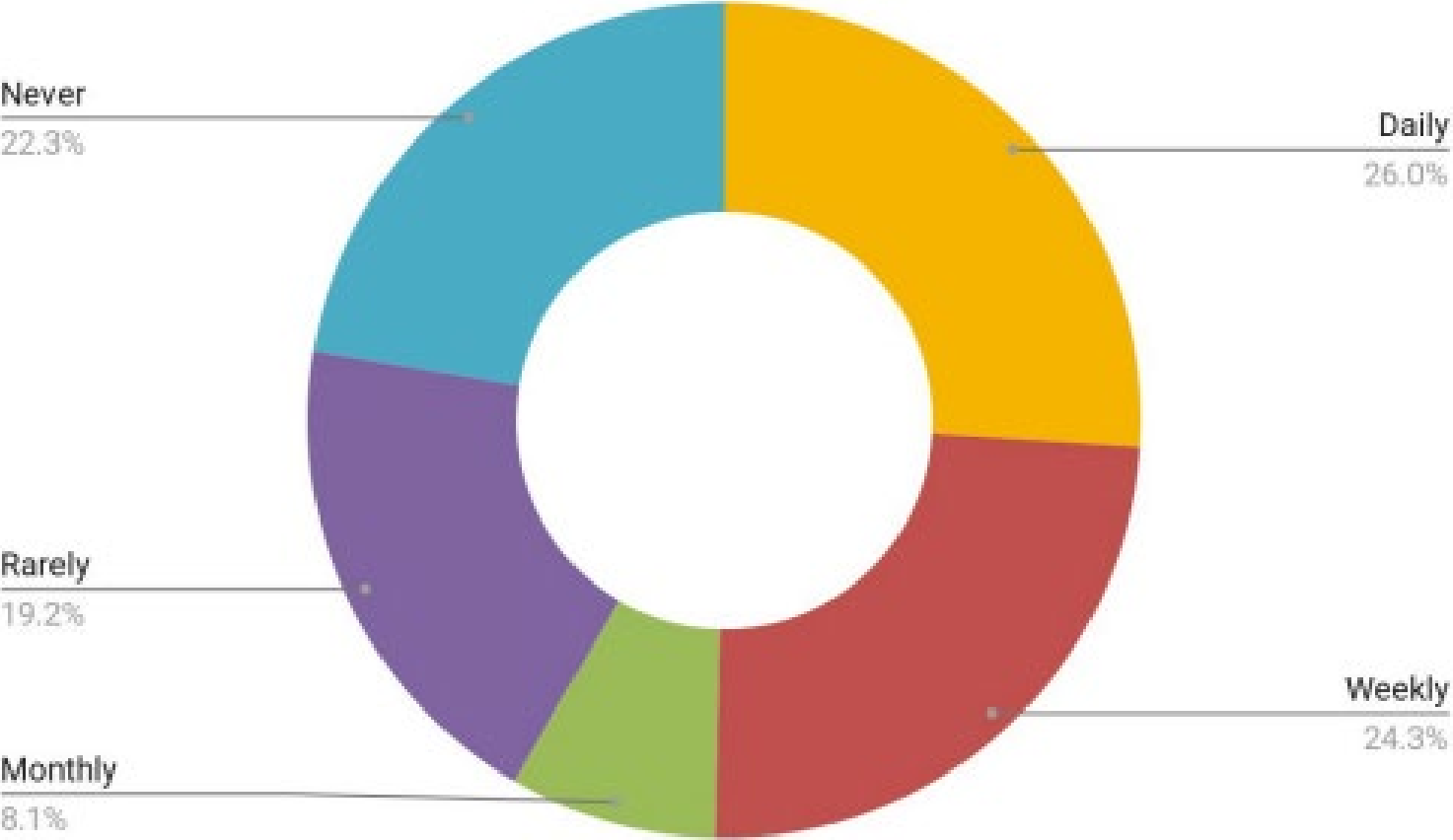
How has your business changed in the last six months?



Linguists are **divided** on AI use*



Linguists: How frequently do you use AI-powered translation tools in your work?



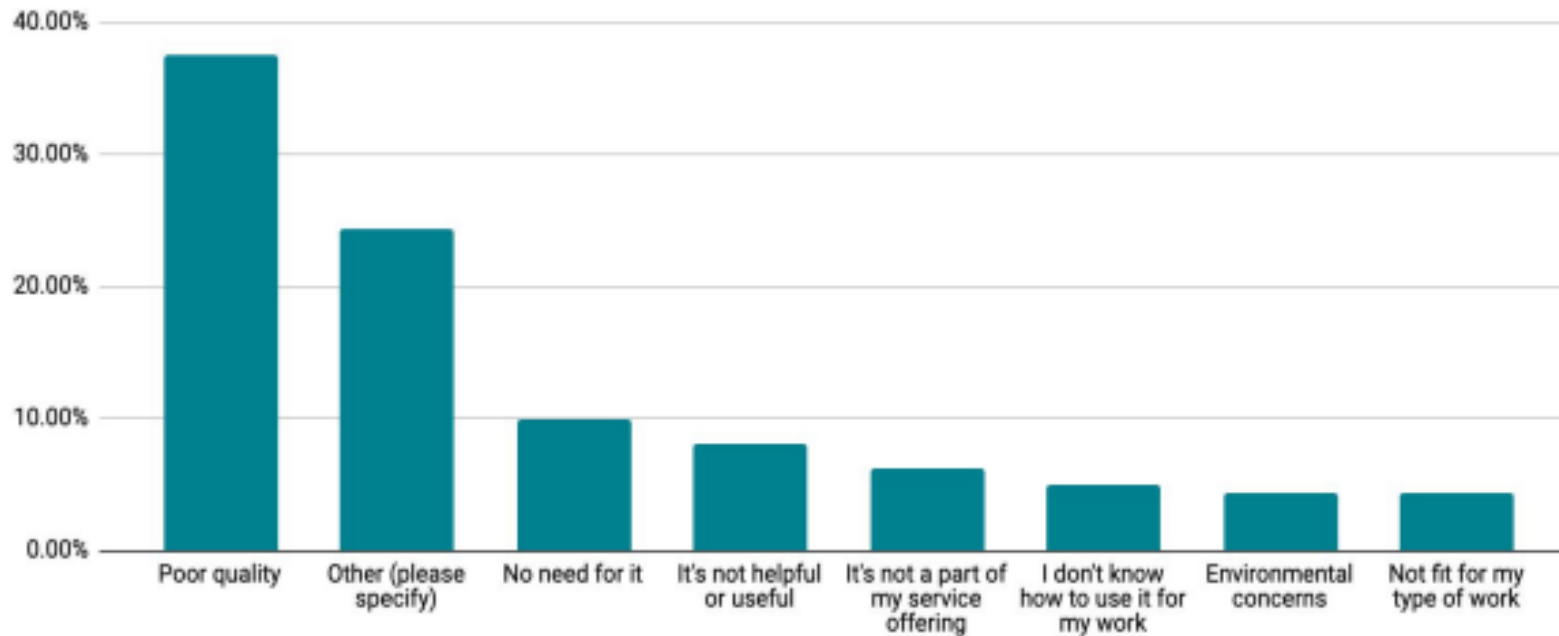
* Comtec Translations
February 2025

Barriers to AI adoption*



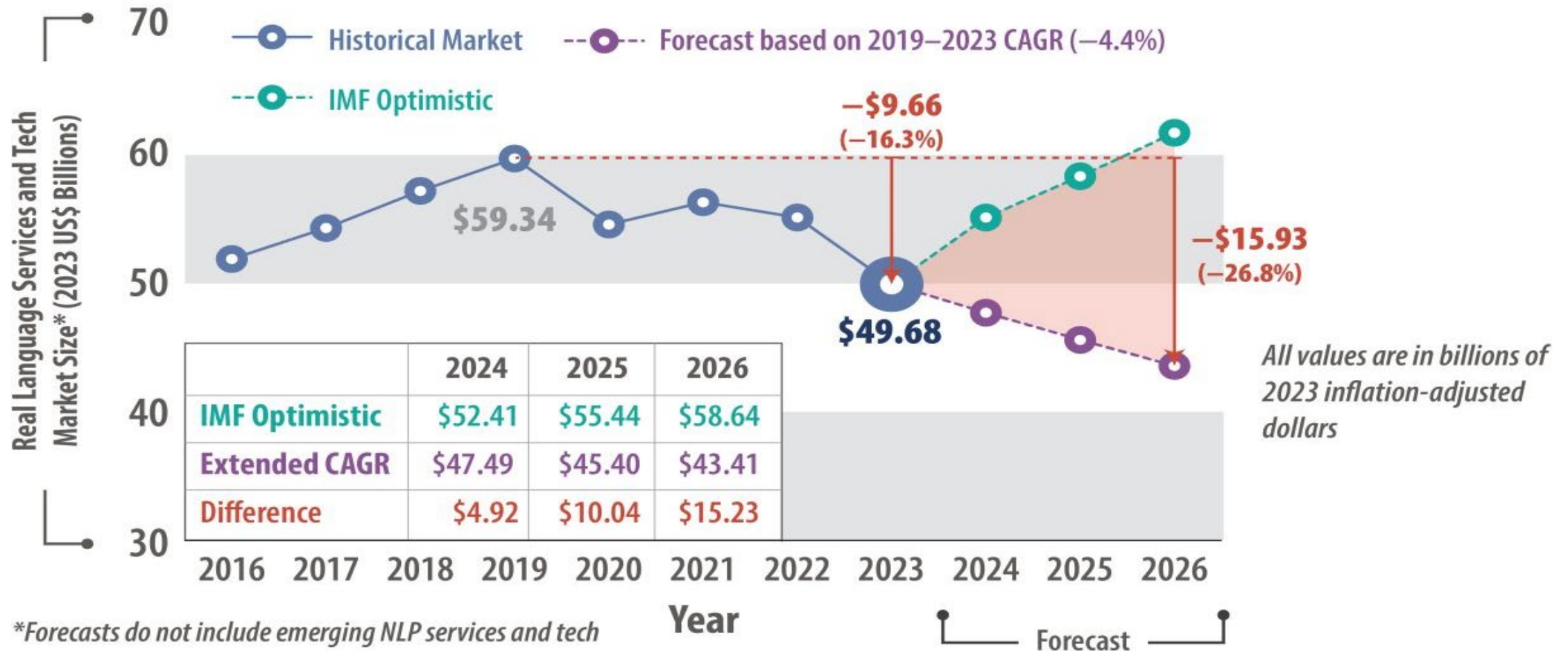
When exploring the barriers to AI adoption among linguists, quality is the number one stated reason, accounting for over a third of all responses.

Linguists: What's your main reason for never using AI?

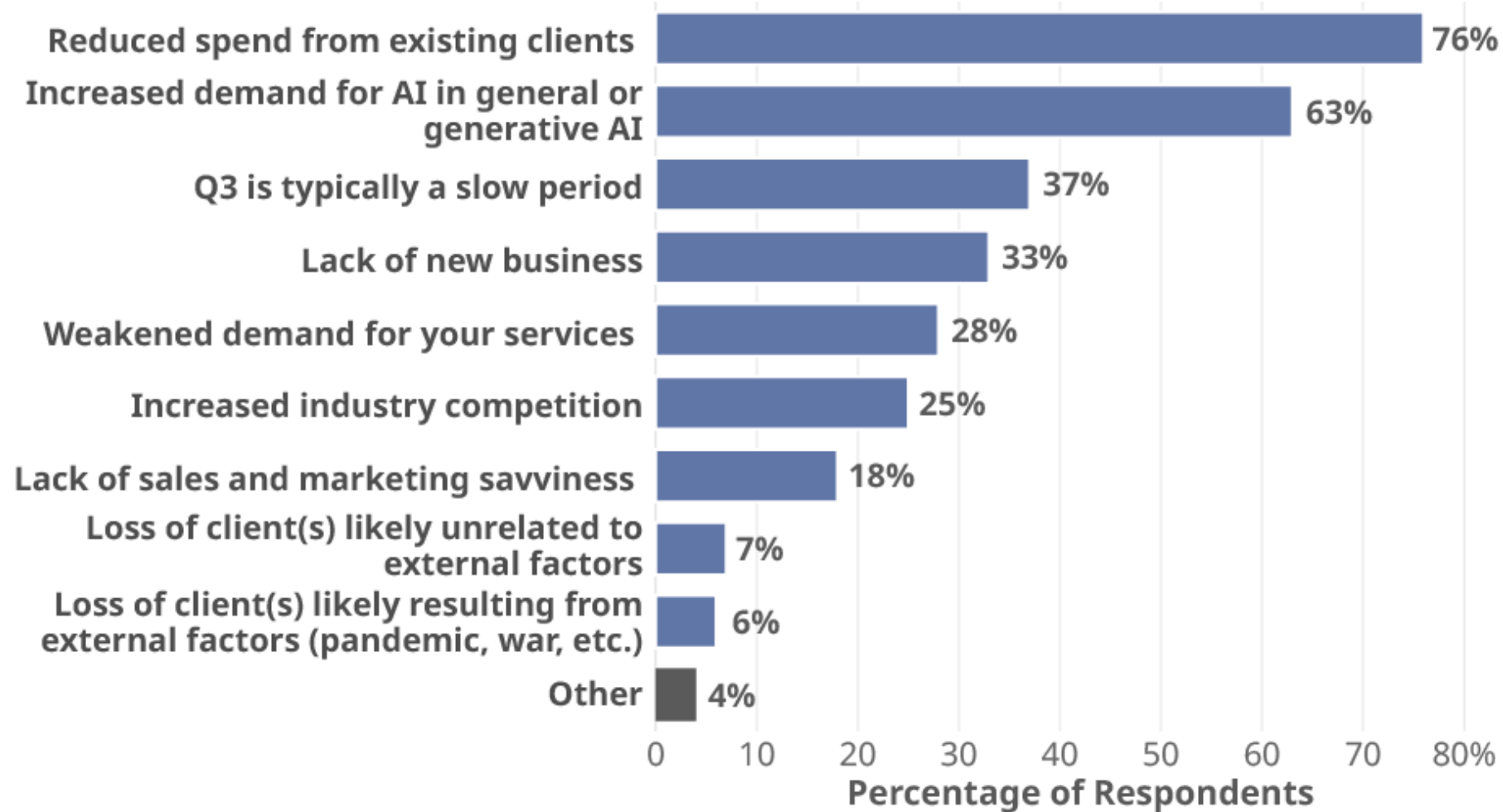


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Revenue **decline** or revenue **growth**? Which way forward for Language Services?



Reasons for **decline** for LSPs?



N = 67 top LSPs that experienced flat or decreased revenue between Q2 2024 and Q3 2024



With AI - are we at a **Crossroads?**

As language professionals, we find ourselves at what feels like a crossroads:

- Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming our context
- Winding back, or pausing, language-related AI development is likely to be neither practical nor achievable; although we can, and do, advise public services and government on risks
- Realistically, we need to focus on how to harness AI's potential while addressing its challenges

In doing so it is crucial to recognise that 'AI' is not a monolithic entity but a diverse set of technologies, with varying applications in the lives and work of linguists. From machine translation to speech recognition, many of these tools are used routinely.

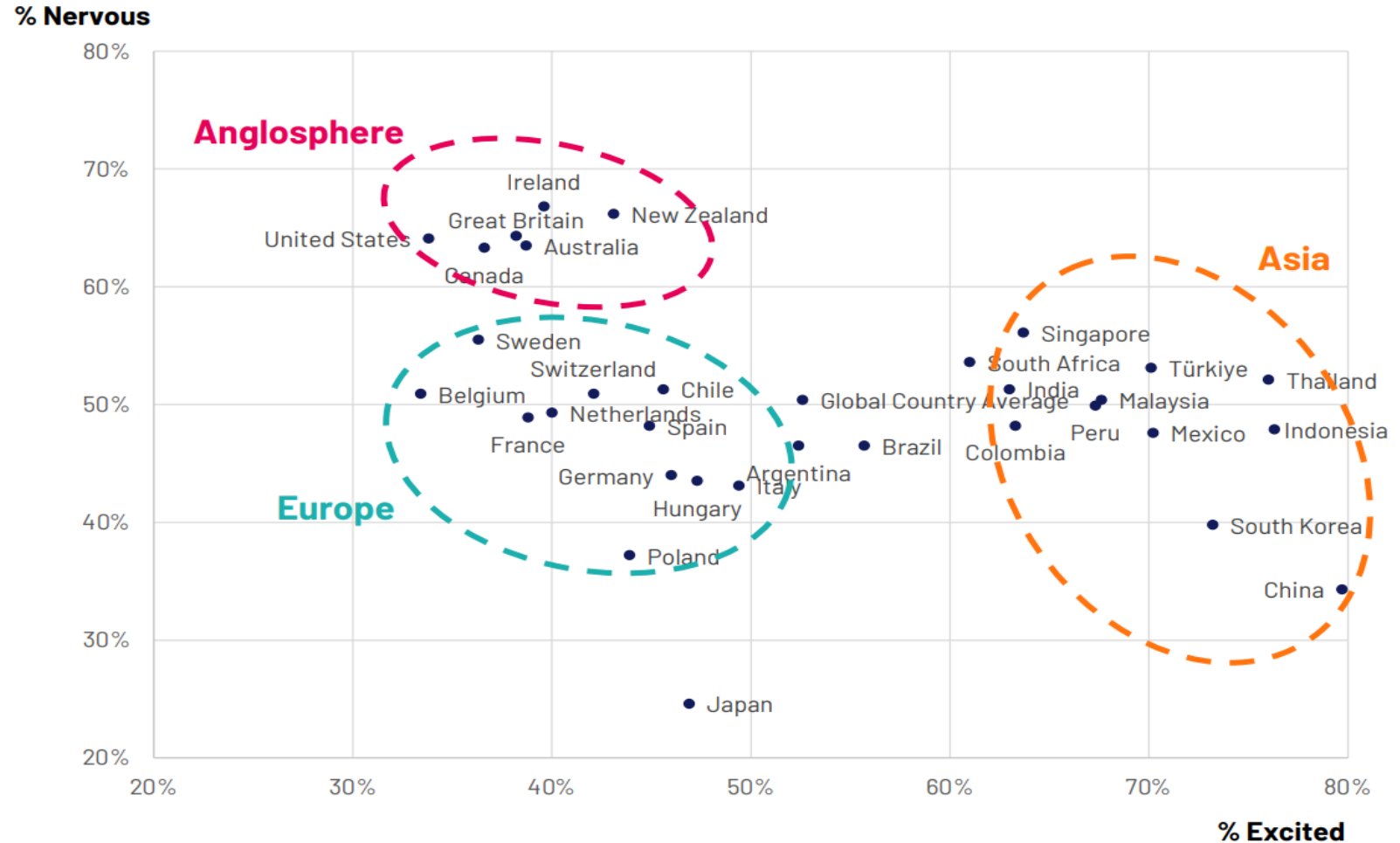
CIOL AI Updates: Nervous Anglosphere vs Excited Asia. with Europe in between...



How much do you agree or disagree with the following?

- **Products and services using artificial intelligence make me nervous**
- **Products and services using artificial intelligence make me excited**

Base: 23,685 online adults under age 75 across 32 countries, interviewed April 19 – May 3, 2024



CIOL Council's view on AI

1. We can't stop AI but there are aspects of it we should continue to challenge.
2. New models will mean new opportunities.
3. In the future much more content will be translated.
4. The human is – and will continue to be – essential.
5. The most skilled linguists will be the most in demand.

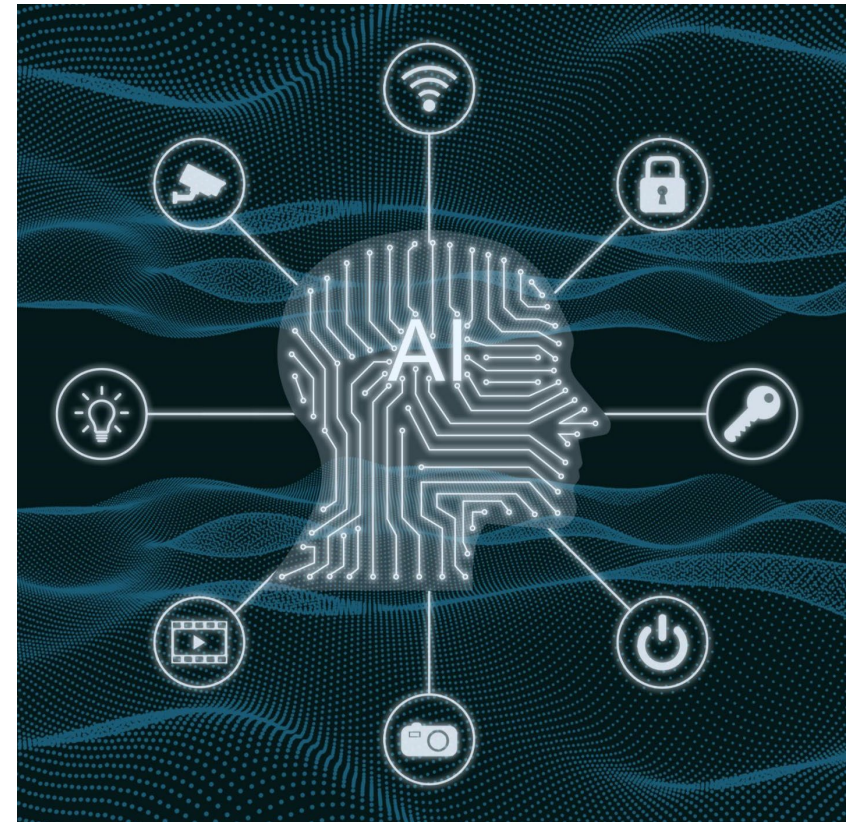


Linguists have **unique** expertise...

As **linguists**, we have a **unique expertise** which can shape to the development of language-related AI.

A key area where we can make a significant impact is in **highlighting AI bias**.

- Large Language Models (LLMs) can perpetuate and amplify **societal biases** present in their training data.
- The data used is **dominated by English** and, as we are well placed to know, LLMs do a much, much **poorer job** in **other languages**.
- By pointing out **tangible, memorable mistakes** we can highlight the **risks** of unsupervised use of LLMs and generative AI while working to advocate for more **inclusive** and **representative language**.



Some **practical steps** we can all contribute to

- **Highlighting the risks with tangible and memorable examples** - there is great work being done on LinkedIn and Social Media bringing to life the errors and omissions which AI can generate, but skilled linguists can spot and solve.
- **Promoting the ethical use of AI** - including taking care with data and when using AI in translation, interpreting, language teaching and learning and linguistic research.
- **Keeping abreast of AI and technological change** – constantly updating and maintaining our knowledge and awareness, as linguists, to promote and demonstrate AI literacy - and to ensure we are better informed and equipped to steer the use of these technologies.



Some **Questions** for today and for the **Council Panel** later

How is **AI technology** currently **impacting** translators' daily work and professional identity? What specific **challenges** has it introduced?

Are translators **inherently better equipped** than other professions to navigate the evolving **AI landscape**?

What new **AI-based opportunities** are you seeing? **Productivity, linguistic research**, other?

Besides **core language expertise**, what **skills** should the next generation of linguists cultivate?

In an era where **technology** increasingly drives translation processes, what **unique value** do skilled **human linguists** continue to provide?





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