

## **Web transcreation in the Spanish business context: the case of healthcare SMEs**

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## **ABSTRACT**

A new trend has arisen in the sphere of the globalised market known as transcreation, the intra or intralinguistic reinterpretation of a text for its adaptation to the target public (Gaballo, 2012). In the case of interlinguistic reinterpretation, transcreation gives rise to a type of translation in which both the words and meaning of original texts can be greatly modified with the aim of producing the same effect in the target recipients as in the original audience (taking into account that cultural, and not just linguistic, differences exist between both publics). Given its nature, the spheres where transcreation has reached a greater development are those related to marketing, communication and publicity, due to the need on the part of companies to adapt advertising campaigns or marketing actions to other markets. The need to favour the communication and dissemination of corporate information, and interaction with potential consumers, makes it essential for companies to achieve an Internet presence that is solid, professional and adapted to target markets. This aspect becomes even more relevant in the case of small and medium enterprises, for whom using the Internet offers a multitude of opportunities at reduced cost.

The Web presence of transcreated corporate sites has been analysed from a sample of SMEs dedicated to healthcare activities. A contrastive study has been carried out wherein we have compared original websites with translated ones in order to determine how often and in which areas transcreations are implemented or, in contrast, whether the mere localisation or translation of texts is the most habitually employed procedure.

## **Key Words**

Transcreation, marketing, SMEs, healthcare SMEs

## 1. Introduction

Transcreation can be understood as the intra or interlinguistic reinterpretation of a text for its adaptation to the target public (Gaballos, 2012). In the case of interlinguistic reinterpretation, transcreation leads to a type of translation wherein both the words and the meaning of the original texts can be susceptible to serious modification with the aim of producing the same effect in the receivers of the target language as in the source audience -taking into account the existence not only of language, but also cultural differences between them-. Given its nature, the fields where transcreation has reached a greater development are those related to marketing, communication and advertising, due to the need to adapt advertising campaigns and marketing actions to other globalised markets. The transcreation approach can therefore be described as a creative, subjective and emotive process via which parts of the message are translated and others adapt to the target market.

As such, it is in the context of businesses and markets where transcreation acquires a special relevance as a means of language and cultural translation, because it involves a transfer of brands and messages from one culture to another. It aims to preserve the brand identity and the creative intention of the original campaign and its message (Pedersen, 2014).

In this regard, transcreation could be confused with other language services such as pure translation, or adaptation. However, transcreation has its own identity. Even standards such as ISO 17100 (Aenor, 2016) have recognised transcreation as an added value service within the language services industry. The characteristics that give transcreation its own identity are related to its field of application, the type of texts it works with and with the competencies that must be acquired to carry it out.

The contexts of marketing and advertising demand more than a translation or adaptation. The transcreator is required to produce a completely new text that complies with the customer's subjective specifications, which are usually focused on persuasive communication techniques (Morón & Calvo, 2018). It is because of this that transcreation is talked about in those situations where translation seems insufficient. In this sense, transcreation would be a midway point between translation and copywriting (Benetello, 2018).

This does not mean that transcreation is solely limited to the sphere of advertising and marketing. It is also fitting to speak about transcreation in other spheres that are creative in nature such as literature, communication and audiovisual products. TV series, comics and videogames are examples of such products where characters, objects and places are reinvented to adjust to the different realities of receivers.

Secondly, transcreation works on the whole with intersemiotic texts. For instance, texts destined for web dissemination, in which language, image, colour, layout, animation, voice, music, elements, etc. all come into play (Rike, 2013). For these multi-mode texts, language is no longer the dominant semiotic source, rather, another resource that interacts with the rest, creating meaning (Munday, 2004). When this intersemiotic content of a website needs to be culturally developed up to, perhaps, the point of having a completely different website, it being transcreated. The difference between web transcreation and localisation would be along the lines of the aforementioned: transcreation goes beyond language translation and cultural adaptation, being the production of a new website that is different to the original. Localisation and transcreation are very similar, but the former is not associated with the idea of creativity, whereas transcreation is (Rike, 2013).

Web transcreation is thus defined as a reinterpretation or new creation of a website, even without a reference to the original, as opposed to web localisation, which only creates something completely new on specific occasions (Ramírez Pereda & Varela Salinas, 2017). Web transcreation is being treated as an entity in itself, which leads to a specific product. This product would be a new website, but transmitting the intention of the original and preserving the brand identity (Pedersen, 2014), in the case of a corporate website.

In this regard, it could be argued that web transcreation is not a true novelty within the field of translation, as numerous multinationals offer very different versions of their corporate websites for different types of public (locales). Until now, this linguistic and cultural management was included within web localisation. However, once we start talking about transcreation, and web transcreation as a professional practice, it seems logical for the term *web localisation*, understood as the creation of a new website, to evolve into *web transcreation*. In this way, *web localisation* would be understood as the linguistic and cultural adaptation of a website, and

the term *web transcreation* as the reinterpretation of the original work (Gaballo, 2012) and the creation of a completely new website.

Nevertheless, Pedersen (2017), points to the primordial difference between a localiser and a transcreator being the sphere in which they work, arguing that localisation is more closely associated with the software industry, whereas transcreation is normally understood within the context of marketing and advertising. There are contexts, however, in which both practices can take place simultaneously or in parallel; in other words, the internationalisation of companies through their corporate websites.

The continuous transformation of the economic environment is a challenge that all companies of all sizes must face. Globalisation is making it increasingly necessary for all types of companies to enter foreign markets (Díaz-Millón, 2018). Companies are seen and have been seen to be exposed when implementing internationalisation strategies that take them to international markets where they can reach new potential customers. In the case of Spanish small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), this need has been aggravated by the impact of the economic crisis. These companies, which up to now had subsisted with national sales, must now enter new markets to survive (Medina Reguera & Ramírez Delgado, 2015).

Translation, localisation and transcreation are inevitably becoming crucial elements in the process of the internationalisation of companies, as they contribute to bringing them closer, via the Internet, to potential customers from diverse socio-cultural and linguistic contexts. It is for this reason that there is a need for expert professionals, not just in translation and localisation, but also transcreation. These three activities are not just complementary, they frequently overlap.

This statement would seem to suggest a contradiction with the definition of web transcreation already set out in this work, given that it implies that web transcreation is not a process independent from web localisation, rather, they occur on a simultaneous and complementary basis. We will explain this apparent contradiction further down.

Websites are, in general, a combination of web pages interconnected with hyperlinks, and grouped under a specific domain (Ramírez Delgado, 2017). They belong to a multimodal text type that employs a variety of semiotic resources including verbal text, images, and animations. (Rike, 2013). These characteristics convert websites into multimedia products subject to different processes and methodologies when being translated for a different locale.

Multiple strategies can be employed in the adaptation process. Amongst these are the possibility of rewriting or recreating certain parts or certain pages within a website to make it suitable for the target audience. This recreation can be understood as a strategy within the web localisation process. In fact, ten years ago Jiménez-Crespo (2008) was already talking about the possibility of "recreating the language tools, content and functions" of a website as an advanced level of web localisation. This strategy of completely recreating would also come to be called web transcreation.

Therefore, we could speak about web transcreation on two different levels. Firstly, web transcreation is a professional activity in itself, regardless of localisation or other language or cultural management activities. For the purposes of this study, we will refer to this level as *web transcreation as a practice*.

Secondly, there is web transcreation as a web localisation strategy. This level will be referred to as *web transcreation as a strategy*.

The purpose of this study is to analyse a sample of the corporate websites of Spanish SMEs in the healthcare sector, with the Spanish>English combination. The general objective of this analysis is to identify the strategies employed in the process of language management of the websites. To do so, we have determined to what degree these SMEs employ web transcreation as a web strategy in this process of language management or if, on the contrary, they turn to web localisation strategies.

To identify web transcreation as a strategy we have made efforts to recognise features of reinterpretation or creation of new elements of the website, be they texts, audiovisual content or the design itself. To implement the evaluation on the use of strategies in a quantitative and measurable way that permits the extraction of objective data, we firstly created a list of evaluation indicators.

### **1.1. Web transcreation as a practice**

This level of transcreation involves the creation of a website that is completely different to the original. There are countless examples of this practice in the sphere of the corporate websites of many multinational companies, such as Coca-Cola and Kellogg's. Up to now this activity was included within the process of web localisation, and considered part of the cultural adaptation process.

For many authors, any modification and adaptation was thought to be a web localisation strategy, from the modification of images to considerable changes in website design. It is this creative process of the production of a completely new website that constitutes the first and widest level of *web transcreation*, given that it means going a step beyond cultural adaptation.

### **1.2. Web transcreation as a strategy**

Web localisation can be defined as the process of modifying an existing website in order to make it accessible, useable and culturally appropriate for a target public (Sandrini, 2008).

In the process of the translation of the text and cultural adaptation of the website (images, videos, colours, etc.), localisers can find themselves involved in employing transcreation strategies, that is, creating certain parts of the website from scratch. There are certain elements within a website that may be inadequate, offensive or, simply, irrelevant for the public of the target locale. In addition, there may also be elements excluded from the original website that require creation specifically for the localised version. All of these strategies that imply creating or recreating parts of a website are called *web transcreation as a strategy*.

Roughly speaking, a website is made up of a macrostructure of web pages connected by hyperlinks. These web pages have different types of content: verbal text, audiovisual elements (images, audio, video, animation) and, of course, more hyperlinks that direct to other web pages and sites. Both the content of a website and its own structure and design are susceptible to localisation and, therefore, transcreation.

## **2. Methodology**

The results of a teaching innovation project on transcreation indicate the difficulty in structuring evaluation criteria for campaigns transcreated by students, and points to the interest in tackling the evaluation of creative traductological products (Calvo, 2017). For their part, Risku et al. (2017) propose three types of quality criteria for creative texts that customers can apply: translator qualifications (person-orientated criteria), the systematic management of the translation project (process-orientated criteria) and formal correction and integrity of the translation (product-orientated criteria).

In the sphere of creativity we find ourselves in, perhaps it might be more interesting to evaluate the processes and strategies employed during the transcreation process, and not just the transcreated product itself. As Benetello (2018) rightly points out, the categorisations of errors and evaluation criteria applied to translation to date cannot (nor must they) be applied to transcreation because in this discipline breaking the rules is an added value, and not something that should be penalised.

Previous years have seen the publication of numerous articles and studies dedicated to evaluating web localisation quality including, for example, the work of Jiménez-Crespo (2011a), in which the author develops a typology of errors for localised websites, specifying translation, localisation and other language-related errors. Later, the same author would then create another categorisation of errors (Jiménez-Crespo, 2015) based on the works of De Rooze (2003) and Martínez Melis & Hurtado Albir (2001). No similar studies exist, however, on web transcreation. It is no coincidence that it involves a new concept that has come about as a line of research in recent years.

Although evaluation methodologies based on categorisations and error types are very useful for evaluating web localisation quality, they do not appear very appropriate for evaluating strategies such as web transcreation. This is due to the fact that they are focused on evaluating the quality of the product and not the processes that have been carried out to create the product.

Defining quality criteria for creative texts is extremely complicated, as there are no clear procedures or standards for the creative process (Risku et al, 2017). For this reason the focus in this study is primarily on identifying which strategies are used in the language management of the sample analysed and, secondly, on identifying if these strategies, creative or not, help the "localised/transcreated" website to fulfil its function.

To create a list of indicators, the starting point is the study by Okazaki (2005) in which the author seeks to identify the standardisation strategy in the web localisation process of American companies for different European countries. To do so, Okazaki creates a list of elements (which he calls dependent variables) that it is possible to evaluate with a scale of growing similarity indices, in which value 1 would indicate that the element is very different to the localised website, and 5 would mean it is very similar. This study led to the idea of creating a scale of degree of similarity between original and localised websites. It involved a scale of 1-5, following Okazaki's model.

Furthermore, we proceeded to carry out an exhaustive bibliographical review to determine which indicators permitted the identification of the strategies employed in the language management.

Given that the websites are complex types (Jiménez-Crespo, 2011b), and in order to be able to carry out an analysis that took into account all of the aspects of a website, we classified the indicators into three dimensions. 1) indicators that evaluate website layout, 2) indicators that evaluate verbal content and 3) indicators that evaluate non-verbal content.

### 2.1. Layout indicators

Starting from the studies by Okazaki (2006) and Wang et al. (2016), we created a list of evaluation indicators for the visual aspect of the websites. Both are studies that analyse localisation processes, with the former doing so from the perspective of the identification of strategies and the latter from the perspective of the identification of cultural elements in corporate websites.

When, at the time of analysis, the target websites showed substantial differences in design compared to the original sites, the evaluation considered that transcreation strategies had been incorporated.

### 2.2. Verbal element indicators

The studies carried out by Jiménez-Crespo (2011a) and Nord (2012) served as a basis for determining the evaluation indicators of the verbal elements of the websites. Thus, Nord was a starting point for identifying the most relevant verbal elements. For his part, Jiménez-Crespo proposes a typology of errors for evaluating web localisation quality based on language criteria, and was of considerable use when developing this aspect of our analysis.

### 2.3. Non-verbal element indicators

The indicators relating to non-verbal elements or content, also fundamental in the evaluation of website transcreation, were established using Okazaki (2006) and Wang et al. (2016) as a reference.

The complete list of evaluation indicators are those shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Evaluation indicators

Dimension	Indicators	Scale
Layout	Logo, logo positioning, logo frequency, layout of the top/right half, layout of the bottom/left half, colours in the top/right half, colours in the bottom/left half, scroll limiting, main text positioning, number of images, main image positioning, main graphic or table positioning, presence of interactive images (animations, pop-ups, pop-unders, banners).	1-5
Verbal elements	Theme, composition, pragmatic (text type, language functions), style, register, suprasegmental features	
Non-verbal elements	Content of main photographs (product, people, background or landscape), content of main graphic or table, content of interactive images (animations, pop-ups, pop-unders, banners), audio and video.	

Once these criteria were defined, we proceeded to analyse the selected sample of websites, granting each indicator a numerical score that indicated the degree of similarity between the original website in Spanish and the target website in English.

## 2.4. Sample selection

For the selection of the sample of corporate websites of SMEs from the healthcare sector we started from the list of the 224 member companies of the Spanish Federation of Healthcare Technology Companies (Fenin) available on its website<sup>1</sup>. It is a federation that enjoys a wide reputation and groups together importers, distributors and manufacturers of healthcare products that provide all of the Spanish healthcare institutions. Starting out from the information offered by this body, we identified the small and medium-sized Spanish companies (eliminating large companies and foreign multinationals with subsidiaries in Spain). Of the 86 companies to fulfil these requirements, 47 presented the conditions necessary for the analysis, that is, they had a corporate website available in Spanish and English, to which they comprised the definitive sample. The analysis of web transcreation of Spanish SMEs dedicated to healthcare technology comprising our study sample was carried out in January and February 2019 by a team of 5 professionals and students from the field of Translation and Interpreting.

## 3. Results and discussion

The data obtained from the evaluation of those indicators not present in at least 50% of the websites analysed were eliminated from the study in order to reduce a possible distortion in the results, and increase their precision. In this way, the following were excluded as layout indicators: a) positioning of main graphic or table and b) presence of pop-ups and pop-unders. The following indicators of non-verbal aspects were eliminated: a) the content of the main graphic or table; b) the content of the pop-ups and pop-unders, and c) audio and video content. Table 2 shows the average score obtained regarding the different transcreation evaluation indicators for the websites in the sample analysed.

As can be seen, the fact that very high scores have been obtained for practically all of the aspects analysed particularly stands out. Given that the scoring applied, on a scale of 1 to 5, shows the degree of similarity between the original website and the translated or target site, the data indicate that there are few big differences between them before and after their linguistic adapt to another language. That is, it cannot be affirmed that clear transcreation strategies have been applied. There are thus five indicators that obtained an average score of 5 points, which indicates that they were presented in a similar way on all of the websites analysed. These indicators are: theme, text type, language functions, content of the main photograph of a person and content of the main photograph of a background image. They are three indicators of verbal aspects that analyse the basic entity of the text and two that evaluate the content of the images.

The indicators with the lowest scores were composition of paragraphs within each tab of the websites (3.89), and content of banners (3.90). Their scores suggest that the indicators are quite similar between websites, but start to show significant differences.

In general, this analysis appears to show that the sample websites analysed present many similarities between the original (Spanish) and the target (English). We find ourselves, then, before a generalised strategy in the language management of these websites; the translation of text and, on occasions, the adaptation of audiovisual content (images, videos, animations, etc.). However, it is not yet possible to talk about web transcreation initiatives in Spanish SMEs from this activity sector. Evidence of transcreation has scarcely been found, with the exception of the case that will be mentioned further on.

Furthermore, regarding the indicators of verbal aspects, we again observe that the majority of average scores exceed 4, which indicates that the textual content of the analysed websites is quite or very similar for the original and target. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the indicator that evaluates the composition of the text on each page within the website scores 3.89. This suggests the appearance of significant differences in text composition. Despite the similarity between the texts, reinterpretation strategies can now start to be appreciated, which leads us towards transcreation strategies.

Lastly, in that which refers to audiovisual content, once more we can observe high scores, which suggest a great similarity between the Spanish and English website versions. It is worth mentioning, however, that banner content scores 3.90. This indicates that the content of the banners shows significant differences in the

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<sup>1</sup> Fenin: <http://www.fenin.es/quienes-somos/empresas-asociadas>. Website last consulted on 11/02/2019.

different languages. Again, we can start to observe reinterpretation strategies for the web content that open the path to the application of web transcreation strategies.

Table 2: Criteria scores

Design indicators		
Logo		4.96
Logo positioning		4.91
Logo frequency		4.91
Layout or design of	Upper half/right half	4.60
	Lower half/left half	4.49
Colours in	Upper half/right half	4.98
	Lower half/left half	4.96
Scroll limiting		4.51
Positioning of main text		4.66
Number of images		4.38
Positioning of main images		4.30
Presence of interactive images	Animations upon opening site	4.71
	Banners	4.28
Indicators of verbal aspects		
Theme		5.00
Composition	1st level: tabs within the website	4.49
	2nd level: paragraphs within each tab	3.89
Pragmatic	Text type	5.00
	Language functions	5.00
Style		4.77
Register		4.85
Typography/suprasegmental elements		4.53
Indicators of non-verbal aspects		
Content of the main photographs of	Product	4.79
	Person	5.00
	Background image	5.00
Content of interactive images	Animations upon opening site	4.85
	Banners	3.90

#### 4. Conclusions

Transcreation and, specifically, web transcreation, have been growing trends in recent years. The focus of this study was the web transcreation of the corporate sites of healthcare sector companies.

The purpose of the work was to analyse the strategies employed in the language management of a sample of corporate websites of Spanish SMEs in the healthcare technology sector, to identify possible web transcreation strategies. Following a comparative analysis of the original websites in Spanish and the target sites in English, the degrees of similarity between them were indicated. This analysis was carried out from three perspectives: evaluation indicators of the website layout; evaluation indicators of the verbal content, and evaluation indicators of the non-verbal content. Through a scale of 1-5, average scores for the degrees of similarity of each indicator were obtained. These scores provided us with measurable data that allowed us to identify the strategies employed in a more objective way.

The analysis permitted us to determine that the original and target websites were quite or very similar, which indicates that the most common strategies as regards language management of the sites are the translation of texts and the localisation or adaptation of content.

Notwithstanding, in some aspects of the websites, in particular text composition and the content of audiovisual elements such as banners, we begin to see significant differences between the original and target versions.



This suggests that the path towards web transcreation for corporate sites is beginning to open up in this sector.

In fact, we can observe some success stories, such as the corporate website of the company Biotechnology Institute, SL, an enterprise dedicated to the design, manufacture and commercialisation of dental implant products. This website offers a version in international English, at the same time as offering a version for different English-speaking countries: United States, United Kingdom and Australia. For the previously gathered results, we analysed the international version. When reviewing the different versions in English, however, an interesting situation can be observed. Whilst there are many similarities between the versions for the United States and the United Kingdom, and regarding the original version, a number of differences can be appreciated in the version for Australia. Not only does it present a completely different layout, but also texts, images and, in short, a website with content and design that show many differences.

In figures 1, 2 and 3 notable differences can be observed between the designs of the original website, the international English version and the Australian version, also in English.

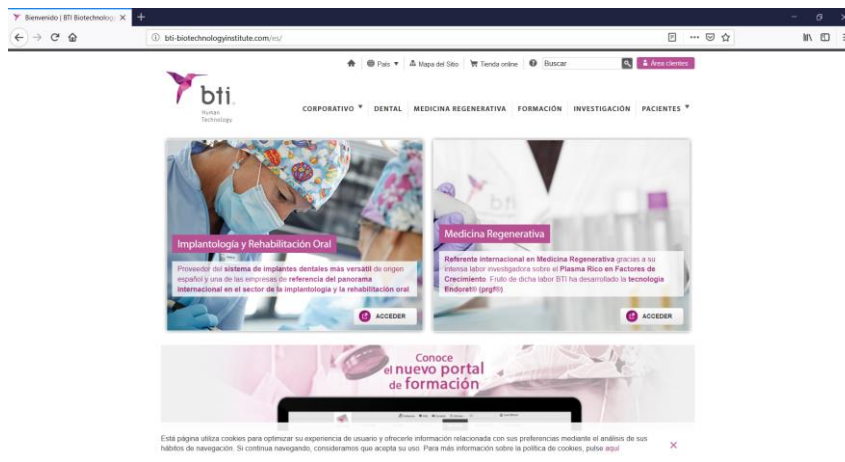


Figure 1: Biotechnology Institute, SL website for Spain: <http://bti-biotechnologyinstitute.com/es/>

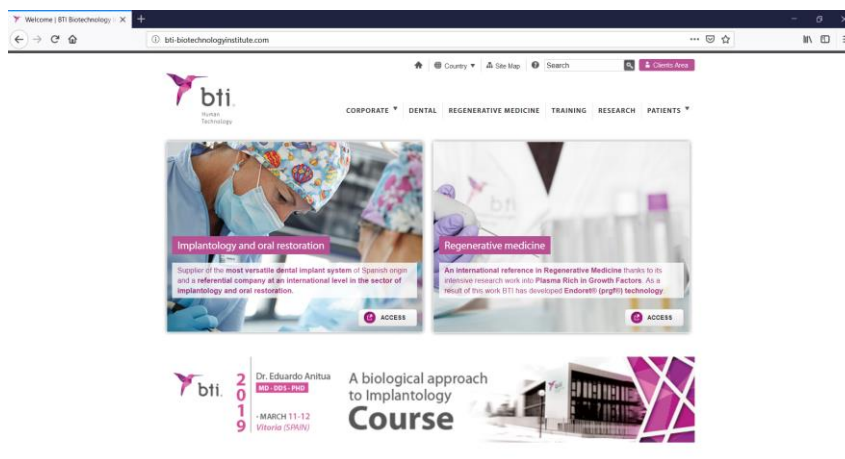


Figure 2: Biotechnology Institute, SL website, international version: <http://bti-biotechnologyinstitute.com/>

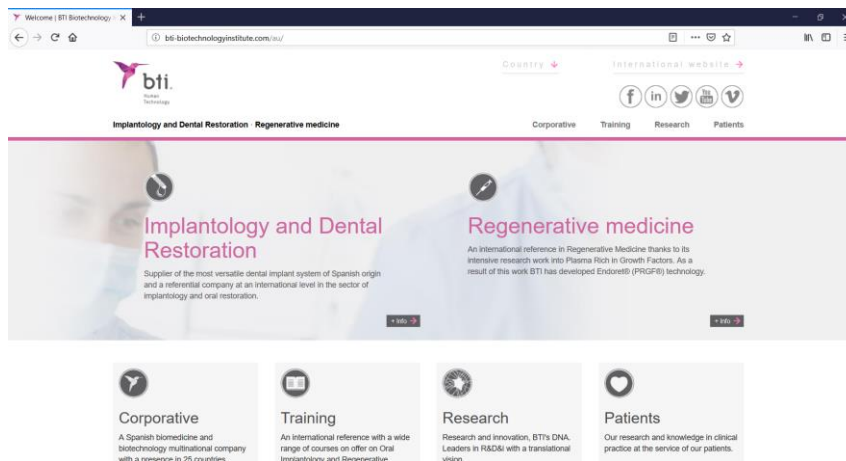


Figure 3: Biotechnology Institute, SL website for Australia: <http://bti-biotechnologyinstitute.com/au/>

Although it is necessary for a wider and more in-depth development of the research into web transcreation regarding the healthcare sector, it is certain that it can already be seen as a very promising area. Studies on web transcreation will therefore be of benefit not just for translators-transcreators (who will in this way receive clearer guidelines for carrying it out), but also for their potential clients, that is, companies. This new tendency in translation studies opens the door to a line of research that is open to interesting contributions.

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