MANAGING TRANSLATION PROJECTS:
PRACTICES AND QUALITY IN PRODUCTION NETWORKS

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<td>ANT</td>
<td>Actor Network Theory</td>
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<td>CAT</td>
<td>computer-assisted translation</td>
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<td>DTP</td>
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<td>ERP</td>
<td>enterprise resource planning</td>
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<td>FTF</td>
<td>face-to-face</td>
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<td>IM</td>
<td>instant messaging</td>
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<td>ITI</td>
<td>Institute of Translation &amp; Interpreting</td>
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<td>LSP</td>
<td>language service provider</td>
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<td>MT</td>
<td>machine translation</td>
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<td>NDA</td>
<td>non-disclosure agreement</td>
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<td>PM</td>
<td>project manager</td>
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<td>request for quotation</td>
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<td>SME</td>
<td>small and medium-sized enterprise</td>
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<td>TM</td>
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<td>translation quality assessment</td>
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<td>translation studies</td>
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<td>TT</td>
<td>target text</td>
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<td>VM</td>
<td>vendor manager</td>
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Abstract

Over the past two decades, translation workplaces have been substantially transformed by technological developments (Drugan 2013; Risku et al. 2013), and by the emergence of production networks in which a language service provider (LSP) acts as an intermediary between translator and client (Abdallah and Koskinen 2007; Abdallah 2012). However, there is little research into how technologies are integrated in the various translation workplaces found in production networks.

My research aims at enhancing our understanding of translation project management and translation quality in production networks by conceptualising project management as a practice (Shove et al. 2012). For this empirical study, a data set was collected based on 60 hours of workplace observations within a UK-based LSP and 10 semi-structured interviews with four project managers (PMs) and one vendor manager (VM). Drawing on concepts from practice theory, the study analyses routinised enactments of the practice by PMs, their integration of information technologies into such enactments, their understanding of translation quality, and their strategies to achieve quality in the translation production process.

I propose that the practice of translation project management is deeply embedded into a larger complex of interdependent translation production practices. A practice-theoretical framework emphasises the socio-material and collective nature of the practice. My study demonstrates that project management is a joint effort between PMs and other actors in translation production. Based on an analysis of how PMs use CAT tools and an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system when they are managing translation projects, I argue that technologies are inextricably linked with enactments of production practices, and that they form part of the social structures surrounding the practice. The application of practice theory affords a new understanding of skills, or competence, in which the engagement in professional activities is vital, and in which building competence is an ongoing process. Finally, I suggest that buyers of translation products, i.e. clients, substantially contribute to translation quality, as PMs carry out project management based on the notion of translation as a service.
Declaration

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Furthermore, my appreciation goes to my colleagues in the LEAP German team for their understanding and flexibility during the final stages of my research.

On a more personal note, I would like to thank James, my family and friends for their continuous support. Most of all I am indebted to my parents, Bärbel and Matthias, to Jess, to Bertram and Sabine and to my grandparents for their love and support. I am also deeply grateful to Maggi and Melle for their company and encouragement on this journey.

The author

Melanie Foedisch holds a BA degree in German Language and Literature (Universität Hamburg, 2010) and an MA degree in Translation and Interpreting Studies (University of Manchester, 2012). This project constitutes her first experience of carrying out empirical research. She has professional experience as a translation project manager for an LSP in Hamburg, Germany, and worked as a freelance translator.

\(^1\)The company name has been changed to preserve anonymity.
Introduction
Several years ago, I worked as a project manager (PM) for a language service provider (LSP). This job constituted my first experience of the translation industry, and it has had a significant impact on my decision to pursue this project. I initially began to think about processes in translation production and translation quality when I took on this position shortly after I had finished my undergraduate degree, and I never lost sight of these topics while I was doing a postgraduate degree in translation and working as a freelance translator. My opinion has always been that translation is a collective endeavour between translators and a number of other people involved in translation projects. I take the view that translators tend not to work on their texts in isolation but that they refer to resources and communicate, cooperate and collaborate with other human beings in the translation process. To gain insight into how translations are produced, we should therefore take the bigger picture into account. This perspective has been adopted by some translation researchers in the last 40 years (see Buzelin and Baraldi 2016:118), and it has been suggested to label this field ‘contextual workplace studies’ (Abdallah 2012:iii), a designation which leaves room for exploring the wider context in which the practice of translating takes place, as well as for investigating the variety of translation workplaces. The translation process is a complex one and thus, it needs to be uncovered one step at a time, and this can be done from different viewpoints. In this research, I approach the translation process from the perspective of translation project management.

It is well known that translators translate texts from one language into another. PMs manage translation projects, but what does this actually involve? Today’s translation industry relies heavily on LSPs that employ PMs and can respond to individual client needs by providing a wide range of language services. In very broad terms, LSPs take on the responsibility for organisational and administrative aspects of translation and tend to outsource most of the actual translating. They usually get contacted by potential clients who require all kinds of translation. LSPs provide information about their available services, advise their clients on an individual basis and provide tailored quotations. This kind of flexibility is possible because LSPs are specialised in the organisational and managerial tasks of translation and maintain professional contacts with a large number of linguists. Finally, when the translation is finished, the LSP delivers it to the client and receives the agreed payment. This simplified account
of managing translation projects only serves as a first overview for the reader
and I will revisit this process in more detail in chapter 1.

I have chosen the term project manager in this thesis instead of the also
widely used designation account manager. This decision has not been straight-
forward for two reasons. First, it should be noted that the participants of
my study, a group of employees of the same LSP, adopted varying job titles
when they were talking about their profession. During my fieldwork, one of
the participants explained to me that account managers have a wider scope of
tasks than project managers. The participant pointed out that in their view,
account managers are project managers who are also responsible for managing
client relations, as they manage both translation projects and client accounts.
However, another participant with a similar set of tasks referred to themselves as
project manager. The apparent disagreement over the designation did thus not
allow for a simple decision on which term to choose. Second, in the translation
industry, the title of account manager is not applied in a standard way either,
as the role accommodates differing responsibilities which PMs have at different
LSPs. Task profiles vary considerably in terms of the extent of client contact,
as well as the activities performed on translation projects. Eventually, I had
to make a decision and decided to employ the designation of PM throughout
this thesis, on the grounds that it is widely used in the translation industry
and because at least some of the employees mentioned it. Following from the
above, I would like to emphasise that the PMs in the LSP which I studied have
a varied set of tasks, which includes managing translation projects as well as
acting as a contact person for clients.

In this thesis, I set out to investigate how translation projects are carried
out by PMs, and especially how these people contribute to the quality of a
translation throughout the production process. This is of course a specific
translation situation and other ones in which PMs do not feature are possible.
Nevertheless, I believe that it is an important scenario which deserves to be
investigated in some detail, as there is a notable research gap despite the fact
that translation has been a fast-growing industry of increasing significance.
Technologies are now vital for translation (Drugan 2013:23) and for the last
two decades, the translation industry has seen a growing demand in terms of
the volumes of commissioned translations, as well as in the number of target
languages (TLs) requested. Language services were predicted to generate
Introduction

a global revenue of US$40 billion in 2016 (DePalma et al. 2016). In light of these developments, LSPs are proving increasingly critical for translation production, as they can cater for the increased demand. However, processes of translation production and the translation industry in general are currently under-researched in academia (Abdallah 2012; Drugan 2013; Kushner 2013). Empirical studies on production networks, i.e. constellations of actors who are involved in the production of translations and who tend to be based in different locations, are sparse, and thus there is currently a need to examine the various translation workplaces in more detail. Such research must take into account that translation is a complex activity which, at the same time, tends to lend itself to a high degree of individualisation in particular translation projects in order to respond to clients’ needs. Unforeseen events during the translation process may also occur and further complicate the development of an understanding of such processes.

From an academic viewpoint, the focus on PMs is justified, since there is a lack of studies on how these professionals shape the translation production process. Overall, research in translation studies (TS) has seen a significant development from studying translated texts, i.e. translation products, to investigating the role of translators who prepare these texts. In its early stages, studies focused on textual material. Translations constituted research objects which ‘were often analysed and assessed in terms of things happening to texts or in terms of comparing the linguistic devices available in translation (i.e. contrastive linguistics) with little mention of the agent responsible for these things happening’ (Jääskeläinen 2007:4). Linguistic approaches (see Fawcett 2001) played a crucial role in establishing TS as an academic discipline in its own right. The subsequent development of functionalist approaches (see Mason 2001) such as Skopos theory (Nord 2010; Vermeer 1989) and the theory of translatorial action (Holz-Mänttäri 1984) during the 1980s led to a greater emphasis on translators as significant actors in translation processes. These approaches acknowledged the role of the ‘translator as the central decision-maker in the translation process’ (Jääskeläinen 2007:5) and a number of concepts were introduced to explain these decisions, for instance, the notion of norms (Toury 1978) which presupposes that translators act according to certain expectations. In the following decades, influences from a variety of disciplines further broadened the field of TS. One of the subfields that emerged is translation
process research which explores various cognitive aspects taking place in the translator’s mind during the activity of translating (see Alves and Albir 2010) by using methods such as think-aloud protocols (TAPs) and keystroke logging (Jääskeläinen 2007), as well as neuroimaging and word-based experimental methods (Campbell 2000).

The last decade saw a strong trend towards sociological approaches (see Buzelin and Baraldi 2016; Chesterman 2006; Wolf 2011; Wolf and Fukari 2007). In general, these provide a means to study translation in its various contexts and conceptualise it as an interactive activity involving a number of actors. Their introduction into TS is particularly relevant for this thesis which adopts a concept of translation processes that is different from the cognitive notion outlined above. In a broader sense, the translation process denotes the various steps involved in producing a translation, including organisational activities related to translating (Williams and Chesterman 2002). It is precisely this notion of translation process that I am going to explore in this research. I focus on the translation process from the PMs’ perspective but naturally, the process could also be explored from the perspectives of translators and other parties involved.

Previous sociological approaches which have informed new perspectives on translation and which have been used to theorise translation and interpreting include the work of Bourdieu (1977, 1990), notably the concepts of field and habitus. Bourdieu’s work has been discussed in TS since the 1990s and is still part of theoretical debates in TS (Gouanvic 2005, 2010; Inghilleri 2005b; Simeoni 1998; Vorderobermeier 2014), where it is generally used to provide insight into the role of translation in society, with a focus on the political and cultural aspects of translation. It has been suggested that the application of Bourdieu’s concepts in TS, especially those related to discourse on power, has facilitated a discussion on translator ethics (Inghilleri 2008). Some of Bourdieu’s concepts are applicable to and have been integrated into practice theory, the theoretical framework on which I draw in my research (see section 2.1). In particular, the concept of habitus encompasses the fundamentals of practice theory, as it emphasises connections between people’s dispositions, a need for participation in practices and the interdependence of structure and agency (see also section 2.1.2). Therefore, Bourdieu’s work is relevant to this thesis to a certain extent too.
Ethics have been continuously discussed in TS since the millennium. Differences in approaching the topic have been outlined in Chesterman’s (2001) suggestion for a ‘hieronymic oath’ for translators, which was published in a special issue of The Translator (edited by Pym 2001). In this article, Chesterman (2001) has suggested that ethics should be related to what we do, in the best possible way, as translators. Although I agree with the proposed focus on professional practice, the application of Chesterman’s (2001) approach to translators’ activities poses certain limitations. As I will argue in this thesis, translators and their practice are part of a larger nexus of activities which has to be taken into account when addressing ethical aspects. Ethics is of topical interest, as indicated by a second, more recent special issue on translation, ethics and social responsibility (edited by Drugan and Tipton 2017). A useful addition to the discussion of ethics outlined above is Drugan’s (2017) suggestion to draw on the concept in order to look at the wider contexts in which translation professionals work. Such an approach allows for the implications of translation practice on other, related practices and is therefore of particular importance to this thesis.

A second sociological framework that has provided a new perspective on aspects of translation and interpreting is Latour, Callon and Law’s Actor Network Theory (ANT), which has been applied, for instance, to interpreting (Devaux 2016), literary translation (e.g. Folaron and Buzelin 2007; Moghaddam 2012), media translation (Weber 2016), and cognitive aspects of translation (Risku and Windhager 2013). In addition, there are a number of studies which have combined Bourdieu’s concepts with ANT (Abdallah 2014; Bogic 2010; Buzelin 2005; Hekkanen 2009). Buzelin (2005:214–5) concludes that Latour’s and Bourdieu’s theories share some common ground and may complement one another, as ANT may add an understanding of processes to Bourdieu’s emphasis on structures.

To a lesser extent, scholars of translation have applied Giddens’ structuration theory (Rooyen 2013; Tipton 2008) and Luhmann’s social systems theory (Hermans 2007; Tyulenev 2009, 2012, 2014; Vermeer 2006) to explore translation and interpreting. The above-mentioned approaches differ in their ideas about how social worlds are structured, and all have contributed specific perspectives and concepts to TS which facilitate an enhanced understanding of various aspects of translation and interpreting. For more details on how TS
has adopted sociological concepts, and for an overview of how translation has been of interest to sociology, see Buzelin and Baraldi (2016).

Approaches of this kind carry with them the limitation of being only applicable to isolated issues. Most sociological research in TS has been restricted to selected concepts from more comprehensive sociological theories. Examples of such a selective approach are Bourdieu’s concepts of field and habitus, which have been used to explain distinct phenomena in translation and interpreting. This approach fails to acknowledge the significance of the links provided between the totality of concepts in sociological theories and attaches little importance to the relevance of the contexts surrounding the investigated phenomena.

Sociological studies on translation have traditionally focused on translators. The position occupied by the translator in sociological research into translation varies; some studies do not have translators as their central research object, while others focus explicitly on them (e.g. Chesterman 2009; Dam and Zethsen 2009a; Jääskeläinen 2007). Studies focusing on translators have been criticized for failing to sufficiently account for the contexts in which translation takes place (Kuznik and Verd 2010:28), and whilst it has been suggested that other actors in translation production be studied (Chesterman 2009:20), these have not yet received much attention from translation scholars.

The approach employed in this research aims to take the two research gaps which I pointed out above into consideration by following the sociological tradition of studying translation production as an integrated activity, i.e. in the context in which it takes place, and by studying actors other than translators. In short, my study focuses on a group of PMs who work in an LSP in the UK and I investigate how these PMs manage translation projects with regard to achieving quality in both the translation process and the finished translation. Therefore, my research contributes a different perspective on the translation process, namely that of PMs. The PMs who participated in this research work with freelance translators on a regular basis and were interviewed on a number of aspects regarding their relationship with them. Translators do not therefore occupy a central position in my analysis. Still, my research provides a context for studies on translators who work with LSPs and enables us to develop an understanding of the role played by PMs in the creation of quality.

The body of research that turned out to be most suitable to the integrated analysis that I am undertaking in this thesis is the sociology of practices, also
Introduction

known as practice theory (e.g. Nicolini 2012; Reckwitz 2002; Schatzki 1996; Shove et al. 2012: see chapter 2 for an overview). A strong advantage of practice theory is the integration of ideas from various traditions, e.g. ANT and Bourdieu’s praxeology, which all lend themselves to the exploration of connectedness. Exploring relations between a range of entities in the translation production process is at the heart of this thesis.

In short, my research is informed by the second generation of practice theories (Reckwitz 2002; Schatzki 1996; Warde 2005), which assumes that social structures are constituted by actions carried out by people. Such actions are always part of practices, which determine what people must do. In turn, people structure practices by reproducing patterns of actions every time they engage in a particular practice. The social is understood as a nexus of practices and it is therefore presumed that people engage in practices all the time. A second characteristic of practice theory is the significant role of objects or materials in constituting social structures (see section 2.1.2). These are seen as contributing elements, and practices could not be enacted without them. The concept of technologies-in-practice (Orlikowski 2000), i.e. people’s integration of specific materials into enactments of practices (see section 2.1.3), affords further insight into how materials form part of the social.

Materials are one group of elements on which people draw in their enactments. According to the classification of Shove et al. (2012), which I adopt in this thesis, the remaining two groups are elements of competence and elements of meaning (section 2.1.2). Competence refers to how people understand their engagement in practices as well as to their knowledge about how to enact practices. Meaning can be summarised in terms of the objectives which people have when they engage in a practice. Overall, people enact the three types of elements in a certain way, so as to reproduce the structures of a practice.

I conceptualise the translation production process as a practice, and my objective is to make a theoretical as well as a methodological contribution to existing knowledge in TS. The main aim of this research is to investigate how a practice-theoretical approach to translation production enhances our understanding of project management and translation quality in the production network. Since practices are based on the idea that people carry out actions, or do things, I will refer to the practice under study as managing translation projects, rather than translation project management. In addition, I aim to
evaluate how framing translation processes as a social practice provides us with a new perspective on the subject. In particular, the research will investigate how the concept of quality is defined by a group of PMs who took part in this case study and how they negotiate their idea of quality in translation production networks.

The notion of quality has been discussed in various ways over the past decades and there seems to be no consensus on how to approach it (see section 1.2 for details). Recent suggestions to shift the focus from the quality of translation products to the quality of the entire production process provide another perspective than earlier work which tended to focus on quality assessment. I agree with these new suggestions, as the production process has certainly got an impact on the translation product. I argue that quality is an aspect of translation that can only be achieved through active collaboration of all actors in the production network and I investigate how such collaborations are structured in terms of quality assurance (QA) procedures.

The overarching research question guiding this project is *How does conceptualising translation project management as a practice enhance our understanding of the role of project management and translation quality in production networks?* The corresponding research questions are as follows:

i. How do PMs enact the practice of managing translation projects?
   a) Which elements are significant for the PMs’ practice, and how are these elements enacted?
   b) Which technologies-in-practice do PMs enact with CAT tools and ERP software when they work on translation projects?

ii. How does the practice of managing translation projects impact on translation quality?
   a) How do PMs define translation quality?
   b) Which structures of managing translation projects do PMs enact in order to ensure translation quality?
   c) How do the PMs’ interactions with other practitioners in the translation production network contribute to translation quality?
Introduction

I intend to examine these questions by analysing an empirical data set which I collected in an LSP in the UK, and which consists of fieldnotes from observations and interview transcripts (see chapter 3). Despite the use of ethnographic methods, I do not situate my research within the tradition of ethnography. My investigation is founded on the concepts of translation production network and translation quality, and draws on practice theory to analyse the data. The first research question will be dealt with in chapter 4 in which I investigate the elements of managing translation projects, as well as the PMs’ integration of two information technologies (CAT tools and the ERP system) in their enactments of the practice. The second research question will be addressed in chapter 5 in which I analyse the PMs’ understanding of translation quality, their actions and activities to achieve satisfactory outcomes with regard to quality, and their interactions with other practitioners in the production network in order to control the quality of translation products.

Chapter 1 introduces the conceptual foundations of the thesis and explains how translation production can be framed as a network involving several actors. The term production network has been defined by Abdallah (2012) as a triadic constellation in which an LSP interacts as an intermediary between a client and a translator. Risku (2006) notes that production networks may also include additional actors such as other LSPs and suppliers. Moreover, my thesis analyses the role of non-human components, namely information technologies, in translation production. As this thesis focuses on the PM as part of the production network, chapter 1 then continues with an outline of the translation process from the PM’s perspective, on which I will build in my analysis of translation project management as a practice (see chapter 4). Finally, this chapter contains a discussion of the notion of translation quality which has been approached in TS in different ways. I adopt a definition that allows for grading of the overall quality of translations and that is not solely based on the quality of translation products, but also considers the quality of the translation process. This conceptualisation of translation quality informs chapter 5.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of practice theory, based on which I propose an analytical framework for applying practice theory to translation project management. I outline the theoretical foundations of the thesis by providing an overview of the sociology of practices, and by introducing the concepts of practice theory which inform my analysis.
Chapter 3 introduces my data set and discusses the methodology that was used in the analysis. My findings are based on empirical, qualitative data gathered through workplace observation and semi-structured interviews. During the observation, I took fieldnotes which were written up electronically and expanded after each day of fieldwork. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Both types of data were then analysed for themes in relation to my research questions, and salient examples were selected for illustrating the discussion in chapter 4 and chapter 5.

In chapter 4, the PMs’ activities are theorised and empirically studied as a practice. Taking my assumption made in chapter 1 that translation production is a networked and complex process as a starting point, I investigate the activity of translation project management from a practice-theoretical perspective based on my data set. My analysis suggests that managing translation projects is part of a larger complex of practices, and emphasises the socio-material nature of this practice, which highlights the role of information technologies for translation production. In addition, I demonstrate that the PMs enact the practice in context-dependent and emergent ways, and that access to the practice is restricted.

Chapter 5 expands the analysis with the notion of quality. It seeks to establish the structuring mechanisms behind translation quality by analysing how the PMs understand the concept, and how they perform the practice of managing translation projects in order to achieve translation products of sufficient quality. I propose that the PMs adopt a relational approach to quality, and I demonstrate this by studying some of the aspects which define quality, and how these are connected to one another. As client satisfaction serves as the ultimate criterion for satisfactory quality, I finally argue that the PMs’ approach to quality is shaped by the notion of translation as a service.
Translation as a production network

The organisation of translation work has changed considerably in the last decades. Generally, there has been a shift from the clearly structured relationship between the translator and the client towards a less central organisation which may consist of a much greater number of actors involved in translation production. Although it seems that experienced freelance translators especially aim to work for direct clients\(^1\), as these kinds of business relationships generally leave the translator with more freedom in negotiating rates, project requirements and the like, a large proportion of translation projects is carried out via LSPs.

In this chapter, I situate my research in the field of TS, discuss the two main concepts underlying this thesis, and show the research gaps which my study intends to fill. In section 1.1, I define the notions of network and network actor, and introduce the concept of translation production network by examining a range of features which are characteristic of workplaces of PMs, in particular workplace activities, the role of information technologies and some contextual factors surrounding translation production. Starting out with a view on the whole network, the perspective is subsequently narrowed down to translation project management, on which I will focus in this thesis. I suggest that project management is firmly embedded in the larger nexus of translation production. My study analyses the production process from the PMs’ perspective, in order to start filling the gap of research on actors other than translators.

Section 1.2 focuses on the notion of quality which informs my analysis. I situate my study in recent debates on quality as a relational concept. This section provides us with the theoretical background required to enhance our knowledge of how quality is achieved in translation project management. I conclude that translation quality is always relative, and mainly defined by the interplay between competent actors, material resources, and external specifications by clients.

1.1 The translation production network

The notion of network features in some of the sociological approaches to translation which I have outlined in the introduction. As the notion has been used in several disciplines in different ways, it is necessary to clarify what I understand by the term. Network studies have contributed valuable insights to translation. A number of scholars have theorised translation, or aspects thereof,
as a network to gain new insights. The basic idea behind a network is that of connected entities (Folaron and Buzelin 2007:606). Among the most salient concepts which have been applied in TS are Latour’s (2005) actor-network (Buzelin 2005, 2007), and Bourdieu’s (1977) concept of field² (Gouanvic 2005; Inghilleri 2005a; Simeoni 1998). I will briefly introduce the notion of the actor-network, as this is required in order to understand how it differs from translation production networks, the concept which I adopt and expand in this thesis for conceptualising and situating my research in TS. For a more comprehensive overview of the development of network studies and its applications in TS, see Buzelin and Folaron (2007) and Risku et al. (2016).

From an ANT perspective, any research begins with the actors, who perform certain actions and thus create relations with other actors, which then result in a network. As Law (1992:381) states, ‘the social is nothing other than patterned networks of heterogeneous materials’, so-called actor-networks. These are heterogeneous because they consist of different materials which, taken together, form constellations that may be regarded as networks. Humans are not, in principle, considered different from non-human actors. Law (1999:3) uses the term entity instead of actor to emphasise the fact that actor-networks may contain all sorts of components. By default, all ‘entities take their form and acquire their attributes as a result of their relations with other entities’ (ibid.:3). There is a constant interplay between human and non-human entities, in which none could exist without the other. The relations between these entities generate networks, which in turn produce actors. Hence, ‘an actor is a patterned network of homogeneous relations, or an effect produced by such a network’ (Law 1992:384). In short, an actor is always a network, and a network is always an actor. This assumption, with an emphasis on relationality, challenges inherent dualities such as human - non-human in the social order.

The concept of the translation production network has been proposed by Abdallah and Koskinen (2007) and was further defined in Abdallah (2012, 2014). Abdallah (2012) has conducted extensive research on translators in production networks. Similarly to Abdallah (2014), I use the concept of production network

²Bourdieu (1977, 1990) emphasised the interplay between the position of an agent in a field with the structures governing that field, and assumed that an agent’s actions are predictable to some point. A field consists of relations between an agent and their surrounding structures (see also Buzelin 2005:200), and Bourdieu and Wacquant (1994:97) defined it as a ‘network or a configuration of objective relation[s] between positions.’
to define the context in which the activity to be researched is embedded. She conceptualises the production network as the structure in which translators are positioned. In this research, the translation production network serves as the backdrop against which the activity of managing translation projects takes place. It should be noted that it is not my aim to analyse a whole production network, as this would be beyond the scope of this thesis.

Generally, production networks are defined as ‘a set of inter-firm relationships that bind a group of firms into a larger economic unit’ (Sturgeon 2001:11). As per this definition, the economic aspect serves as the connection between the network entities, i.e. firms. Abdallah and Koskinen (2007) build on Sturgeon’s definition by conceptualising the relationship between the translator and an LSP as a production network, and include clients so as to suggest a triadic configuration. Their definition extends Sturgeon’s (2001) concept with freelancers, who are part of an economic unit. Abdallah and Koskinen (ibid.) propose a shift from horizontal networks in which there is direct contact between the client and the translator, to vertical networks in which an LSP acts as an intermediary between these two entities, to which I will refer as actors in this thesis (see figure 1.1). Constellations of this kind have been labelled, for instance, production network (Abdallah 2012, 2014; Abdallah and Koskinen 2007) and network economy (Buzelin 2006; Folaron and Buzelin 2007; Risku et al. 2013).

Figure 1.1: Shift from client-translator dyad to translation production network

Abdallah (2010) also suggested to include the target audience who is generally the (intended) consumer of the translation. However, the usefulness of including the target audience or consumer remains unclear, as those who consume translation products are often different from those who commission translation projects.
Production networks and actor-networks are different types of networks. Production networks can be distinguished from actor-networks as ‘factual’ (Abdallah 2014:113), i.e. they are constellations of human entities, namely people or companies, whereas actor-networks are configurations of human and material entities, which may also include immaterial actors such as skills. Furthermore, instead of ‘following’ the actors (Latour 2005:12, 237) and focusing on the materiality of networks, production networks start with the economic activities to be followed. In the context of this thesis, their focus is on the activity of translation production, and it can be determined who is involved in this activity. Abdallah (2014:113) notes that actor-networks exist within production networks but whereas actor-networks reveal themselves during the activity of researching them, I take the production network as the starting point of my investigation. Once actors have been identified, translation production networks can be mapped to visually represent relations between actors and provide an understanding of who is part of them.

Admittedly, this definition of translation production networks with a focus on the economic unit is a narrow one, as it excludes all kinds of translation which are organised in a different way, such as voluntary translation. However, its specificity is useful for understanding the setting on which I focus in this study. As mentioned above, I intend to draw on an expanded version of Abdallah and Koskinen’s (2007) concept. In my opinion, their notion lacks the complexity which is evident in empirical research on constellations of this kind. In the remainder of this section, I will consider the multi-faceted nature of translation production networks, so as to redefine the concept.

Abdallah and Koskinen’s (2007) definition of production networks is based on a limited number of network actors. They define three actors, i.e. the translator, the LSP and the client. Their definition keeps the economic relation between entities as the basis for translation production networks, but they include people as well as the LSP as diverse entities. Actors are defined in relation to the question of who is involved in translation production, and the constellation clearly favours human actors if it is assumed that translators have a PM as their contact person in the LSP.

The literature suggests that translation production networks can be highly complex and that their structure may vary across translation projects (Risku et al. 2013, 2016). Variation is a significant feature of production networks, as
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A new network emerges for every translation project, but there also seems to be some shared common ground. Risku et al. (2016) analysed three different translation networks from the perspective of the translator, and found that they consist of many connected actors, both human and non-human (e.g., software or departments). Their study demonstrates that translators do not work in isolation, but that their work depends on communication with other practitioners, and that the network actors are to some extent dependent on one another (ibid.:247). In conclusion, these networks are complex and characterised by interdependent actors.

As regards the question of whether non-human entities should be considered as part of production networks, I take the view that they play a significant role in the translation process, but I do not regard them as network actors. Although I will analyse translation project management as a socio-material activity by investigating how technologies are integrated in project management (see section 2.2), my understanding is that translation production networks consist of human actors, i.e. the people who are involved in the production of translations.

Depending on the project size and the time available to complete the job, a number of translators with the same TL may be required, as has also been observed in the localisation industry (Karamanis et al. 2011). The complexity in production networks can increase if further intermediaries are involved in translation processes. To give an example, Kushner (2013) notes that online market places like ProZ.com which charge fees for the negotiation of translation work sometimes act as an additional intermediary between the translator and the LSP. Another example is subcontracting translation work to another LSP, which then commissions one of the freelance translators on its database (see Risku and Dickinson 2009). This process may occur, for instance, if a certain TL is required which does not form part of the languages offered by a particular LSP. In addition to the complexity of production networks, Risku and Dickinson (ibid.) acknowledge that client companies also vary in terms of specialisation, size and structure. LSPs might have to deal with multiple contact persons, and sometimes the contact can be a department or a partner firm of the client, such as an advertising agency (ibid.).

The above examples imply that translation production networks are more complex than those defined by Abdallah and Koskinen (2007) and Abdallah
The study on translators’ networks by Risku et al. (2016) gives a more realistic picture of the actors in translation production networks. However, only a little research on actors other than translators has been carried out so far. This thesis aims to extend our knowledge of translation production by focusing on the LSP. I will now outline the various strands of research into the most typical actors in translation processes, as found in the literature, discuss the necessity of studying PMs and provide an outline of translation project management, before I adapt Abdallah and Koskinen’s (2007) concept of translation production network with regard to the actors in translation production.

1.1.1 Actors in translation networks

With production networks being of increased importance to the translation industry, professionals in LSPs play a crucial role for translation production. The corporate structure of LSPs differs widely across the industry. Some LSPs employ only PMs and outsource translation, proofreading and other language services to freelance linguists, whereas others operate with in-house translators and/or other specialists, or with a combination of employees and freelancers.

In recent years, translators have received a considerable amount of attention in TS (Chesterman 2009; Dam and Zethsen 2009a) and research indicates that the translation profession is perceived differently by scholars and the industry. The translators’ role in translation production consists mainly of translating textual material, but this task would not be possible without a number of surrounding activities. Before translating can begin, negotiations between the translator and the commissioner of the project usually take place, and after the translation has been delivered, a certain amount of work is necessary before the project can be finished. Translating is therefore embedded in a nexus of activities. The contexts surrounding these activities have not been sufficiently studied, and I aim to suggest a framework which can account for contextual factors of translating.

Some research has investigated how the translation profession is perceived by others. Studies have shown that professional translators employ highly specialised skills (Abdallah 2012; Dam and Zethsen 2008), which are not necessarily acknowledged by client companies that make use of translation services. Translation is often perceived by amateurs as an activity which merely requires
language skills in the TL but to regard translation processes purely as a linguistic transfer is an oversimplification that does not account for the complexity of such processes (LeBlanc 2013; Risku 2004). Abdallah (2012:35), in this context, speaks of ‘two different ethical systems, that of utilitarian business ethics and that of translators’ deontological ethics as outlined in the various codes of conduct provided by professional associations.’ Moreover, the work of Dam and Zethsen (2008, 2009b,c, 2010, 2011) suggests that the profession is sometimes also perceived as a low-status one by translators themselves. They tend not to receive the same recognition for their work as other professionals whose job requires a similar level of specialist skills. A possible explanation for this finding might be the position which translators currently seem to occupy within production networks. Abdallah (2012) found that translators’ agency is restricted within these networks due to unequal access to information and divergent goals between translators and their commissioners. Thus, they seem to occupy a rather marginal position, and tend to be invisible in the translation industry (Abdallah and Koskinen 2007; Dam and Zethsen 2008; Jääskeläinen 2007). I agree with the perceived restrictions regarding access to information, as LSP act as stakeholders in the translation process which gives them access to certain information that remains inaccessible to translators. However, my view is that perceiving translators as marginalised depends on the perspective one takes. I propose to shift the focus to the different activities performed by translators and to relate these to the activities carried out by other actors in translation production networks. Such a viewpoint might help us to understand translating as a distinct practice within the context of translation production. Moreover, it frames translating as an interdependent activity, and thus acknowledges its importance for the production of translation products. My suggested approach has implications for defining power relationships too and might thus offer an interesting starting point for any investigations into the translator’s position in production networks.

Scant attention has been devoted to PMs in production networks (see also section 1.1.2). There are only a few studies which investigate the role of PMs. Risku (2004) and Risku et al. (2013) have investigated translation management processes in a longitudinal study. Their research shows that PMs are highly dependent on technological developments which affect the formats and volume of translation projects and require competence in specialised computer
programmes such as project management software and translation memory (TM) systems (Risku et al. 2013:40). Their main responsibility is the organisation of translation work and the coordination of tasks between the different actors who work on a translation project. In order to increase the efficiency of translation project management, processes tend to be standardised. Business communication and work usually take place and are logged electronically via a project management system and/or the use of email, so as to ensure joint access to projects and information (ibid.:41). Risku et al. (ibid.:42) also observed that business communication can be limited to a range of permissible languages by a company policy, so that potentially all PMs in the LSP could work on all projects.

Although a degree in translation is often perceived as advantageous to PMs, expertise in translation and foreign language skills are not always a premise for working in this position. At the same time, PMs do not have to undergo formal project management training to access the role. This is also reflected in the European standard for translation services, ISO 17100:2015 Translation Services – Requirements for translation services (British Standards Institution 2015), which has superseded the EN 15038:2006 standard (British Standards Institution 2006). The standard states that PMs can acquire their competence either formally or informally, and remains vague on how such competence can be gained.

In many cases, translations delivered to an LSP by the translator are then sent out to a different person who carries out some form of quality control (QC). The terms that are used to refer to this type of actor vary from revisers to proofreaders and reviewers, and there is a general lack of clarity on the responsibilities of these actors. The above-mentioned ISO 17100:2015 standard (British Standards Institution 2015) uses the terms check, revision, review and proofreading as part of the translation process. In accordance with the standard, a translation check means that the translator examines their translation for correct use of the TL and completeness of the translation, and ensures that project specifications have been met (ibid.:10). The term revision (ibid.:10–11) refers to checking the target text (TT) against the source text (ST) and must not be carried out by the translator. A review relates to a monolingual check of the TT and should examine whether the TT follows the required genre conventions in the TL (ibid.:2,11). Proofreading follows
all editing such as a check, revision and review; it applies to the TT only and involves final corrections (British Standards Institution 2015:3). According to the standard, revision is compulsory, whereas review and proofreading are obligatory (ibid.:11). Bearing in mind that the definitions provided in the document are an attempt to clarify what the various terms refer to helps us to develop an understanding of the processes involved in translation checks. For further details on the ISO 17100:2015 standard see section 1.2.

The LSP which took part in this research was not certified to this standard at the time of fieldwork and had not adopted the terminology provided in the standard. To refer to a bilingual check of the translation, the participants of my study employed the term proofreading, but the responsibilities of proofreaders were not formally defined. In the following, I will refer to the person who examines the TT after the translator has delivered their translation, and who carries out a bilingual revision as the proofreader.

There is very limited research on proofreading in TS (e.g. Künzli 2006). Künzli (ibid.) has investigated the correlation between time spent on this task and the quality of the final translation product. The study found that proofreaders who are paid on the basis of word count aim to spend as little time as possible on the job, but an analysis of actual revisions suggests that proofreading yields better results, i.e. higher overall quality, fewer additional errors and fewer errors that have been missed, if more time is spent on the task (ibid.). This finding has implications for the quality of the final translation product, which can often only be achieved at the proofreader’s expense, or may otherwise result in ethical conflicts, as outlined by Abdallah (2012). As regards competences of proofreaders, the ISO 17100:2015 standard (British Standards Institution 2015:6) stipulates that they must have the same competences and qualifications as translators, as well as experience in translating and/or revising texts in the subject area into which the translation falls. Both translators and proofreaders must have translation competence as well as linguistic and textual competence in the languages from and into which they translate, research skills, relevant knowledge of the target culture (TC), technical expertise and subject knowledge (ibid.:6). In addition, they must hold a translation degree from a higher education institution, or have extensive professional experience of working as a translator (ibid.:6). The only additional competence a proofreader needs to have is therefore translation and/or revision experience in the subject
The role of clients in translation production has scarcely been addressed in the literature. Whilst they may easily be seen as initiators of translation processes, the significance of the quality of the resources they provide for the production process has been largely neglected. It has been suggested that the quality of the ST they provide has an impact on the translation process (Risku and Pircher 2006). If a ST is legible, flawless and unambiguous, it is more likely that the translator will not have to contact someone regarding ST issues. A good ST can therefore save time in the translation phase because clarification may not be necessary. Nevertheless, STs and supporting materials are often of low quality (Abdallah 2010:20,25). Risku and Pircher (2006:259–60), for instance, observed that STs were received by the LSP without a translation brief, in non-modifiable formats, or containing errors, and they also found that supporting materials did not correspond to the ST. Such problems may lead to interruptions of the workflow even in the early stages of translation production, particularly if salient issues are affected. They can cause a delay in the delivery of the translation, which might entail significant costs for the client.

Again, it remains unclear where the responsibility lies for preventing difficulties such as those mentioned here. According to the ISO 17100:2015 standard, which stipulates that the LSP ‘shall ensure that the source language content is analyzed to ensure efficient and effective performance of the translation project’ (British Standards Institution 2015:9), PMs are responsible for evaluating the ST before it is sent to the translator. On the contrary, it would be conceivable that translators perform such an analysis before the translation is commissioned, so as to support project management by providing an assessment of the condition of the resources, especially if the PM does not have good command of the source language (SL). Industry practices may vary considerably, and there is a lack of empirical research on how preparation is tackled. The PMs’ full overview of translation projects works in favour of assigning this responsibility to them. They can assess STs before these are submitted to translators of their choice, they can provide information to the client, give advice on ST preparation, and they have the required IT infrastructure and software at their disposal to pre-process translation projects (Risku 2006). Drugan (2013:104) also stresses that ST analysis before the translating starts can prevent issues during the translation phase. Even if PMs happen to be unable to carry out an initial
assessment of the ST, they still have a responsibility for advising clients on their translation projects, as clients may not have a clear understanding of translation (Drugan 2013:133). By informing clients about the requirements for a smooth workflow, PMs create a solid basis for ensuing processes. By communicating a realistic idea of translation and by keeping clients well informed about the progress of a translation project, PMs can ensure that translation products meet the client’s expectations. This is important, because complaints can cause further workload and costs for all actors involved in the translation process. In the next section, I will further discuss production stages.

1.1.2 The translation project life cycle

To date, little research has been conducted on translation project management and the different production stages which are part of this professional activity. Risku’s (2004) study of an Austrian LSP is probably still the most extensive publication in this area of TS. The collected volume by Dunne and Dunne (2011) comprises a number of contributions covering various aspects of project management for translation and localisation purposes. In addition, some other smaller studies on specific aspects of project management exist, such as a qualitative study on various aspects of localisation by Karamanis et al. (2011), Rodríguez-Castro’s (2013) study on the relationship between translators and PMs, and Olohan and Davitti’s (2015) paper on trust in project management. With a few exceptions (e.g. Risku 2004), it remains largely unclear of which specific activities this professional practice consists. The question to be answered in this section is therefore: What do PMs actually do? The short answer to this question is that they manage translation projects. Project management, however, is a complex task which is often characterised by a need for adaptation, due to the uniqueness of every ST and specific requests of individual clients.

Project management positions are available in a diverse range of business areas. Translation projects are unique in several respects, as they are usually tailored to the individual needs of clients from a variety of business sectors. Translation production is always commissioned by specific clients, for specific purposes, and under specific requirements. Furthermore, the particularities of an ST influence the translation process, for instance, if the ST contains terminological errors which may be corrected by translators (Kubánek 2013), and unexpected circumstances may occur at all times during the project (Dunne
The individual nature of translation projects is further supported by a lack of standardised procedures for their completion; not only may work instructions differ from LSP to LSP but individual PMs use different strategies to fulfil their tasks. Another dimension that adds to the uniqueness of translation projects are the freelance translators who tend to be generally free in their choice of working methods, although LSPs may demand the use of particular CAT tools. Finished translations are usually characterised by a distinct wording of the TT, as different translators would most probably produce dissimilar translations, if given the same ST. Bearing these considerations in mind, accounts of production processes of single translation projects may be markedly different, and even more general descriptions should always be seen in relation to the context from which they emerged.

As there are significant differences in how translation projects are managed in LSPs, it is hardly possible to generalise from the procedures of single LSPs. I will, however, provide the reader with an understanding of the activities commonly carried out by PMs, which will serve as the context for my analysis in chapter 4 and chapter 5. The following outline of the translation project life cycle is based on Risku’s (2004) study, the activities described in Matis (2014), as well as my own experience of working as a PM and my observations at the LSP which took part in this research. The book by Matis (ibid.) focuses heavily on her own work experience and describes translation project management in relation to the translator’s activities. Although it is not an academic publication, I decided to include her book in this thesis, since it constitutes one of very few available accounts of the translation project life cycle.

Based on empirical data which was collected with a focus on project management in an Austrian LSP, Risku (2004) identifies five phases of which translation production consists. These production phases are very similar to the processes at the LSP which participated in this research and are therefore reproduced here to provide the reader with an understanding of the PMs’ workflow. Risku’s (2004) case study provides valuable insight into the LSP’s work routines which were recorded in meticulous detail. Each new project begins with an order placement (‘Auftragsvergabe’), which involves preparing a quotation and registering the project on the database. The second phase, the commission (‘Auftragserteilung’), includes selecting a translator and providing them with the purchase order (PO), the ST and, where applicable, supporting
documents. The subsequent phase is TT design (‘Zieltextgestaltung’) during which the translator prepares the translation and, if necessary, forwards enquiries to the PM. This phase is followed by the correction phase (‘Korrekturphase’) during which the TT may be edited, proofread or set and finally delivered to the client. The final phase consists of accounting (‘Abrechnung’), which finishes once the invoice has been paid by the client, and it also comprises telephone reminders of the purchase and external accounting. In the remainder of this section, I discuss salient aspects of the different stages of the production process, which are illustrated in figure 1.2, in more detail.

![Figure 1.2: The project management cycle](image)

At the start of every new translation project is a translation request for one or more STs of which one or several TL versions are requested. Clients require translations for several reasons, and often translation work is part of larger projects that are carried out by clients. Since most LSPs consider in-house translator positions to be unviable from an organisational and financial point of view, such work tends to be outsourced. Clients in need of a translation approach the LSP to obtain a quote which helps them to calculate the cost and
thus, every translation project begins with a request for quotation (RFQ).

The preparation of source files (SFs) is often carried out with the objective of estimating the cost of a project and preparing a quote for the client. A common procedure in many LSPs is to determine the word count, as this can be used to calculate translation costs. Word counts can either be obtained from the counting feature in word processors, or by using a CAT tool. Word processors do not always provide accurate figures, for instance, if the SF contains text boxes, or if the text has been copied over from otherwise inaccessible file formats such as PDFs. Counting words with the help of a CAT tool offers the benefit of counting multiple files at once, and takes repetitions in the ST into account. Repetitions are determined by TM software, which saves segments of the ST together with a translated segment in the TT and can thus ‘remember’, and accordingly suggest, translations of the same or similar segments when they come up again. TMs are based on segmentation algorithms that split up the text into segments, which are clearly visible in the CAT tool editor. The translator enters the translation for the segment, and the translation is stored in the TM. If a similar segment occurs later on in the ST, or is already in the TM, translation suggestions are offered by the software based on previously entered and stored translations.

In order to determine repetitions, the PMs create a new project in the CAT tool from which they can later on generate project packages for each TL in cases where the translation project is carried out with a CAT tool. Projects may contain multiple SFs and TMs. The CAT tool provides a total for the word count of the ST file(s), as well as figures for repetitions which give the number and proportion of identical and similar segments in the ST. If a TM was used, the CAT tool also compares the ST against the TM, and indicates the number and proportion of matches which the use of this TM will yield. There are several types of matches; full matches are identical segments in the ST and the TM, whereas fuzzy matches indicate that a ST segment is partly contained in the TM. These figures can be used by the PMs for calculating so-called weighted word counts for which values of less than one unit are assigned to repetitions and matches, and thus result in a lower overall word count. It is generally assumed that translators will need less time to process matches, as they just have to check the existing translation rather than providing a new one, and they are therefore paid less for matches. The use of such calculators applies only
to translating, as repetitions are usually excluded from proofreading because this is ‘an entirely manual process and is subject to the inherent limitations of human memory’ (Dunne 2011:138).

Quotations provided by LSPs vary in detail but tend to take different factors into account. Matis (2014:14) recommends that a ‘base analysis’ be conducted for new translation projects. Such an analysis may consider the type and scale of project to be carried out, as well as the services requested by clients (see below), the tasks to be carried out by suppliers, i.e. translators, proofreaders or other linguists, as well as the anticipated time scale and turnaround times, and finally, the resources needed to complete the project. This information can then be used to provide a quote.

Pricing is a key stage in the project management life cycle, as clients are usually price-sensitive and they will often compare quotations from different LSPs. Therefore, the quote must state an acceptable price for the client, in order for the LSP to be successful in the bidding process. Clients are commonly charged the amount agreed via a PO rather than the actual costs incurred by the translation process. This puts the PMs under pressure to carry out projects within a fixed profit margin, and therefore accurate quoting is of utmost importance. Detailed examples of how prices can be worked out by both PMs and freelance translators, as well as examples of quotes, are provided in Matis (ibid.:38).

If a project goes beyond the quotation stage, the next step is the order confirmation by the client. At this point, the PMs have to make an informed decision on the allocation of human resources. Very often, translation projects have more than one TL and thus require the allocation of multiple translators. In many LSPs, linguistic tasks such as translating and proofreading are outsourced (ibid.:105). In other words, PMs commission freelance translators and other suppliers to perform linguistic or technical tasks. Translator selection presupposes a clear idea of the skills which are required for a particular ST, so that the most suitable translator can be selected. Information about translators can be retrieved from a number of sources, or obtained from colleagues (see section 5.2.3).

Sometimes, the delivered translation serves as a ST for another TL, as translation from certain languages may be cheaper as compared to the original SL. When this route is taken, the production process contains two translation
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phases. Because the PMs have to wait for the TT to be delivered, this cost-cutting procedure is only suitable for projects with sufficient turnaround time. Apart from translation, clients may request additional services like proofreading. Another service which can be organised by many LSPs is desktop publishing (DTP), which, in the translation industry, is an ‘umbrella term for adaptation of non-text or presentational aspects beyond mere text, such as tables, bulleted lists, graphics, pie charts, scanned images, photos, advanced diagrams, and so forth’ (Dunne 2011:137). Like proofreading and translating from one of the TLs of a project, DTP work is a downstream process and must therefore be allocated sufficient time in the production process.

In the translation industry, delivery procedures vary considerably. Depending on the procedures of the LSP, deliveries from translators may be preceded by various kinds of enquiries concerning the translation project, whereas some LSPs may prefer comments or delivery notes attached to the TT. After the translation has been prepared and checked, deliverables are commonly sent to clients via email. After the delivery, PMs may still have to follow up on their projects. Occasionally, clients request that amendments are made to the TT after delivery. Invoicing clients can be part of project management too but whether this task is done by PMs or accounting staff depends on how the LSP usually handles it. For more examples on how translator queries may be handled and for an outline of delivery scenarios, see Matis (2014:133, 171, 199).

In this section, we have looked at some of the activities in which PMs commonly engage at work, although not all described activities are necessarily part of each and every translation project and procedures vary significantly across the translation industry. Following from this, there are three points to be concluded. First, translation production is still characterised by a strong human component, as most steps in translation production require some form of human input. Despite the heavy reliance on technology, translation products are still crafted by translators who choose words in the TL, and are shaped through the involvement of proofreaders and PMs. Kushner (2013:1245) illustrates this for the activity of translating by emphasising that certain tasks have to be ‘subcontract[ed]’ to the human mind. Second, translations are tailor-made products. Every project is based on a unique ST and is made to order considering the client’s individual requirements. That is not to say that there are no rules for translation production. When managing projects, the PMs
draw on a toolkit consisting of technology, guidelines and competences, which sets the course for single projects, but which also allows for a certain flexibility. Third, it is assumed that the successful completion of a translation project reinforces the business relationship between the LSP and the client, and that clients who are satisfied with their translation products tend to commission further projects. As this is usually the preferred outcome for LSPs, PMs not only manage translation projects but they also work hard to establish good relationships with clients. Since there are a number of mandatory and optional steps in translation project management and repeat commissions are the ideal business scenario for the LSP, I propose that translation production follows a cyclic pattern (see figure 1.2). The following section extends the discussion of the PMs’ activities by dealing with the organisational factors surrounding the PMs’ work.

1.1.3 Organisational contexts of translation production

Translation workplaces have been substantially transformed by technological developments over the past two decades (Drugan 2013; Risku et al. 2013). Translation is part of global business, and the translation industry must constantly adapt to the changing and growing demands of numerous branches. The processing time for preparing translations is often expected to be as short as possible and communication takes place mainly electronically and across global distances, not least enabled through the implementation of information technology (IT).

New technologies and continued changes to existing technologies have altered how PMs and other translation professionals carry out their tasks. On the one hand, technological transformations place certain demands on language professionals working in the translation industry, who are usually expected to be able to use specialised software, such as CAT and TM tools and project management or ERP software. The increasing use of portals, through which a number of LSPs offer their clients constant access to translation services, and through which translation jobs are managed, places further demands on translation professionals (see below). The ongoing development of such software requires language professionals to regularly participate in training activities in order to keep up with new software features and versions. In addition, new developments such as the implementation of cloud computing, notably in
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Connection with machine translation (MT) (Garcia 2012; Kenny and Doherty 2014) are constantly changing the translation industry. Likewise, media skills demonstrating familiarity with website building or interactive networking are of increasing importance among translators’ skills (Risku et al. 2013:43). On the other hand, technological developments have resulted in an increasing demand for translation, both with regard to the volume of text to be translated as well as to the range of TLs needed (Drugan 2013:11). In order to satisfy the demand, new technological developments, such as the implementation of MT, are constantly needed. The translation industry is thus driven by technological developments, but also contributes to advancing new technologies.

Organisational changes in translation work have certainly increased the complexity of translation processes, but only a few effects of this shift have been explored to date. Some research has been conducted on the interaction of translators with translation technology but to date, there are only few attempts to conceptualise such interaction. An example is the theoretical framework proposed by Olohan (2011, 2016), who conceptualises translators’ interactions with TM software following Pickering’s (1995) model of agency. LeBlanc (2013) investigates how the use of TM software impacts on translation practices. The results of this study suggest that the mandatory use of such software tends to lead to a disregard for translation quality and restricts translators in their decision-making (ibid.). To my knowledge, however, no attempts have been made so far to study how PMs in the translation industry interact with technologies, and how such interactions are linked to processes of translation project management. The impact of new and further developed technologies has not been sufficiently explored. My analysis provides insight into this issue and demonstrates that these technologies take on a crucial role in translation production.

The emergence of production networks has also affected the way in which professionals involved in translation production communicate with each other, and I draw on Quan-Haase et al.’s (2006) study on the use of instant messaging (IM) in a high-tech organisation to conceptualise these changes in communication practices. Quan-Haase et al.’s (2006) research is interesting because it provides a framework for studying communication tools which can be applied to different organisational settings. In general, there has been a shift from using rich media (Quan-Haase et al. 2006), for example face-to-face (FTF) conversations and
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telephone, to using lean media (Quan-Haase et al. 2006) such as email, online platforms and IM. Rich media are characterised by a considerable extent of social presence of the people involved in the communication, that is to say there is an awareness of who the others are (ibid.). Lean media, on the other hand, reduce social presence and leave us with a restricted idea of our communication partners (ibid.). Admittedly, the study was conducted a decade ago and since then, new technologies have emerged and further transformed the way in which professionals communicate in their workplace. Nevertheless, this study provides a useful framework for analysing communication in organisations and can potentially be extended to other technologies.

There are only few studies which have considered aspects of communication in translation workplaces (e.g. Risku and Pircher 2006; Rodríguez-Castro 2013). As far as I am aware, studies have only focused on translators’ communication. Perspectives of other translation professionals are only available indirectly via the translators’ accounts. It has been acknowledged that the way in which communication is handled has an effect on the relationship between translators and clients. Translators sometimes prefer the dyadic relationship with clients because communication and feedback on their work is perceived to be better and they feel they have more control over the translation process (Drugan 2013:136). Aspects of communication are also relevant for studies on translators’ networks. Very little is known about how translators interact with other translators. For translators, the interaction with other linguists via online communities such as ProZ.com and TranslatorsCafe.com or LinkedIn groups plays an increasing role in providing access to professional collaboration and communication, as well as exchanging knowledge (Risku and Dickinson 2009:57). McDonough (2007:796–8) suggests that online communities can be categorised into profession-oriented, practice-oriented, education-oriented and research-oriented networks, or a combination of any of these. Online communities thus serve a variety of purposes and might compensate to some degree for the lack of other translators’ social presence, which some translation professionals in production networks are facing, because they are located in a remote position within production networks. Ten years have passed since McDonough (ibid.) conducted her study, and technologies have progressed significantly. New devices such as smartphones or tablets have become widely available and it remains largely unclear how translators use new technologies like
social media. Interestingly, there is some evidence that FTF communications still seems to be relevant in some contexts. For instance, ProZ.com organises so-called Powwows™ which are local events across the globe where people can meet outside the virtual world. In addition, there are various national and local professional networks for translators.

LSPs which outsource most parts or all of their translation work are dependent on different media to communicate with translators across distances. The employees of the Austrian LSP studied by Risku (2004) communicated with translators and clients mainly via telephone and email; faxing and postal services were used to a lesser extent. It should be noted that Risku’s (2004) book was first published in 2004, and that her data was collected nearly 20 years ago, when technologies did not yet offer many of the features that are available today. However, some of her findings are still valid, such as the observation that the telephone tends to be used in situations where the communication partners have not previously known each other or when they have different levels of knowledge. For example, new clients will often call an LSP, while existing clients tend to send emails instead (ibid.:149). In many LSPs, PMs are still committed to use personal, individual formulations in their email correspondence, which may be seen as an effort to establish a feel for social presence when using lean media. This was the case in the LSP which took part in my research and I also observed this in the LSP in which I worked as a PM, as well as for the LSPs for which I translated.

The use of lean media makes interactions across geographical distances possible without delay. The main implications of this development are faster turnaround times and lower costs for translation services. Interaction between clients, the LSP and its suppliers tends to take place electronically, mainly via email and online portals. Portals have been used for exchanging files and for communicating with other actors in translation production for about 20 years. They are websites which are connected to the LSP’s ERP system or client relation management system, and thus facilitate automated processes between the systems, which would otherwise have to be carried out manually by the PM. Their use helps to reduce the workload for PMs because clients can submit translation requests and files, which are then automatically uploaded onto the LSP’s server, and the PM is notified that a new request has been received. Subsequent parts in the project management life cycle are carried out in this
way too, for example by sending out automatic notifications to translators that a new job is available, and files are then downloaded and uploaded by the translators. The use of portals is a common practice in the translation industry, although some LSPs, including the one that I researched, currently prefer other communication methods because there tends to be very limited or even no social presence, which makes it difficult to build relationships.

Based on my own experience as a translator and from conversations with other freelance translators, two main criticisms are that the use of portals shifts the workload from the PM to the translator, who has to log on and take on part of the administrative tasks involved in a translation project, for example signing up for or declining jobs, updating the project status and uploading files. Second, it renders the relationship between the PM and translators or clients even more impersonal, as messages are standardised. The conflict over saving time and loosing personalised communication was also evident in Risku’s (2004) study. The employees interviewed by Risku (2004:170) expressed concerns about the planned introduction of a project management system which would send out notifications about new translation jobs automatically, in a less personalised way. Such concerns may provide an explanation as to why some LSPs still prefer to communicate mainly via email instead of using a portal.

Within some LSPs, it is common to use lean media such as email and IM for internal communication. Prior to my PhD studies, in 2011, I worked as a PM in an LSP in which IM was an established part of the communication among co-workers. The use of IM was also common practice in the LSP which took part in my study. Quan-Haase et al. (2006) introduced the term local virtualities to account for the fact that people employ lean media although they are based in the same location. They found that the main applications of IM are information exchange for the purposes of asking simple questions, seeking clarification, arranging meetings and phone calls, as well as serving as one type of media in conversations that take place via multiple channels at the same time (ibid.).

Although the use of lean media may result in denser collaboration networks by making people feel connected to each other, it has been shown that complex knowledge and problem-solving are better mediated via rich media (ibid.). Furthermore, social relations have an impact on the use of computer-mediated interaction. Its use is determined by the intensity of the relationship of the
users or the fact that people work on the same project (Quan-Haase et al. 2006). The results of the study by Quan-Haase et al. (ibid.) suggest that in order to profit from lean media, users need to be presented with opportunities to develop an idea of the social presence of the individuals with whom they are interacting.

As can be seen from the above, the way in which PMs communicate with translators and clients changes over time, as technological developments facilitate new ways of communicating. Further research into the communication in production networks is needed, for instance, to determine how people in production networks communicate, and to establish whether the use of lean media prevents personalised communication between the people who are involved in translation processes.

The way in which people carry out their tasks within translation production networks has an effect on levels of trust between network actors. The emergence of production networks has not only influenced how translation professionals interact with technology and how they communicate with each other; it has also been suggested that the relations among members of in-house teams are different from those with remote actors in terms of trust. For instance, Karamanis et al. (2011) observed that the members of an in-house team employed effective strategies for accessing internal resources and resolving problems. Due to a lack of trust, these strategies failed when communication outside the team, for instance, with freelancers, was required, and the authors conclude that the use of resources is affected by trust (ibid.:47). Similarly, Drugan (2013) found that the allocation of jobs to either in-house or freelance translators may depend on the significance of the translation. She observed that very important jobs, such as high-risk translations were more likely to be done by in-house staff, whereas less important translations tended to be outsourced more frequently (ibid.:120–1). Although these examples of problem-solving and outsourcing may be specific to the organisations in which they were observed, they still illustrate differences in trust levels between in-house staff and freelance suppliers. Trust levels between LSPs and translators tend to be low.

Also, previous research gives rise to the supposition that the relationships between the network actors impact on the workflow (see Abdallah 2012). The significance of trust is also highlighted by Olohan and Davitti (2015), who found that trust must be managed well by PMs in order to run a successful LSP.
Similarly, Abdallah and Koskinen (2007) identify trust as a prerequisite for functioning networks. Interestingly, the authors do not presuppose face-to-face contact as a requirement for building trust. Instead, they claim that trust-building involves shared goals and clear information of all actors (ibid.:677-8). Their research, however, indicates that in translation production networks, information is often not communicated clearly, and they criticise that translators are not usually involved in negotiations about product requirements (ibid.:678). They conclude that trust among the network actors supports the production of translations, whilst the absence of trust serves as an explanation for the ‘conflict between [translators’] professional ethics and the demands and practices of their working life’ (ibid.:680). That research indicates that translators are currently facing challenges of working in production networks, especially with regard to their professional status. However, Hansen and Rasmussen (2013), who conducted a study on outsourcing in a multinational IT corporation, suggested that the relationship between the buyers (of translation) and translators may change over time in terms of the level of trust and the knowledge shared, or the complexity of the assignment. Their study did not focus on the translation industry, but it is still relevant to my thesis because the organisations they studied translated some of their documentation. Their findings indicate that trust requires time to develop, and this raises questions about how translators and LSPs work together. To my knowledge, there are no studies which investigate such relationships.

Translation production is bound with outsourcing in several ways but there are only few studies which have investigated this phenomenon in the translation industry. There is a consensus that outsourcing of translation work plays a crucial role in today’s translation industry and that LSPs are a main provider of translation services (Abdallah 2010; Kuznik and Verd 2010). In-house translators work mainly for specialised LSPs which can afford to employ translators because only specific types of translation are produced, and a limited range of language combinations is offered. The advantages of this strategy are better control over the workflow, more opportunities for translators to collaborate on projects FTF and higher confidentiality and data security, as sensitive STs can be stored on the LSP’s server and confidential information is not passed on to third parties. Most LSPs, however, offer a broad range of translation services in many different subject areas and language combinations.
and thus require a more flexible workforce. Some LSPs operate with both in-house and freelance translators. From the client’s point of view, outsourcing occurs when translation work is subcontracted to an LSP. LSPs, in turn, act as buyers of translation which subcontract parts of the translation production process to a number of translators. The translation industry has adopted outsourcing to freelancers as a common strategy for dealing with varying levels of workload (Kushner 2013:1242). This development was facilitated, among other things, by technological developments (Hansen and Rasmussen 2013:655).

Hansen and Rasmussen’s (2013) study provides a rare insight into how translation is perceived by people from outside the translation industry. Interestingly, Hansen and Rasmussen (ibid.:659) found that one of the organisations they studied classified the translation of user guides as a task with low complexity, which tended to be outsourced to several loosely connected translators and usually the offer with the lowest price was accepted for the job. This has implications for the balance of power between the buyer of translation work, e.g. a client or an LSP, and the translator. The buyer’s power consisted of making decisions on job assignments, as well as control over information flow and access to data (ibid.:660). This finding is highly relevant to the translation industry in two respects. On the one hand, it emphasises that low rates are often a key factor for successful bidding. As rates decrease with every additional level of subcontracting, very poor remuneration may occur at subsequent levels if the initial buyer is offered translation at a low cost. There is some evidence of decreasing rates for translation services (Abdallah 2010:27, 28). On the other hand, this finding may help us to understand the basic principles of the freelance translation market. To a certain extent, translators are dependent on PMs for being assigned work. Additionally, translators are not always provided with an appropriate level of information or access to relevant resources, which are both necessary to fulfil the assignments to a good standard. Supporting this argument, Hansen and Rasmussen (2013:661) found that translators believed that fragmented knowledge can have a negative impact on product quality which may be enhanced by fast and efficient communication, the inclusion of positive feedback, and information about the product and its intended use. As has been acknowledged, this is also true for the translation industry (Abdallah 2010:20).

Another point raised by Hansen and Rasmussen (2013:662) is that trans-
lators sometimes use low rates or additional effort as an investment to future long-term collaboration with the buyer. Translators may bid for jobs at low rates so as to be offered translation jobs, hoping that a successful collaboration on a first project may result in a future collaboration with the LSP. Translators may also spend more time on such a job than they usually would in order to produce an excellent translation. According to Hansen and Rasmussen (2013:662), this places the buyer at an advantage, but from the translator’s perspective the advantage can be mitigated, for instance, by accepting jobs from several buyers. The question of how translators may gain or keep control over their agency has been investigated by Abdallah (2010:33–8) who found that translators employ various strategies, for instance, adapting the length of the time spent on a translation according to the rates offered, performing less well than they would be able to if they had more time or higher pay (prioritising practicality over idealism), and leaving an LSP (if in-house) or stopping to work for a certain LSP. The last strategy can be brought to an extreme if translators decide to pursue a different career path, as has been observed by Risku (2004:119). On the contrary, translators’ specialisations which might cause a lack of alternatives for the buyer can lead to a more interdependent relationship (Hansen and Rasmussen 2013:662). Thus, specialising in certain areas and/or target languages seems more likely to put translators in a strong position to negotiate appropriate rates and to be assigned future jobs.

1.1.4 Redefining production networks

The definition of production networks by Abdallah (2012, 2014) and Abdallah and Koskinen (2007) seems a good starting point for thinking about how translations are produced. In its most basic form, clients commission LSPs with the translation of STs, and LSPs subcontract the task of translating to freelance translators, or, if available, in-house translators. However, several issues arise from this basic constellation.

First, the reduction to only three network actors does not account for the complexity which, according to the literature, characterises translation production today. Risku (2004:240), for example, found that large translation projects with multiple TLs can involve more than 30 people. Based on the above discussion, I propose to expand the number of actors in production networks accordingly (see figure 1.3). My figure replaces the vague party of the LSP with
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a PM, as clients tend to be in touch with a specific person. The PMs, who are usually associated with the practice of managing translation projects, occupy a role in the production network which is dissimilar from that of the LSP. The role occupied by the LSP in translation production networks is varied, since it involves not only project management but also the acquisition of new clients and translators, accounting, quality assurance and so forth. My notion of a production network can accommodate the actors who are dealing with these tasks, as has been done for the vendor manager (VM).

The client takes the position of project initiator. For clients and translators alike, the network structure of the LSP tends to be rather opaque. Clients, especially major ones, may be familiar with some of that structure, for instance, because they had been negotiating not only with the PMs but also with members of the business development team.

Dotted lines indicate that a contract or commission is awarded to another party, and the arrow indicates the direction of this relation (X commissions Y). Usually, little or no communication takes place between these parties between concluding and ending the contract for a certain project, whether contracted from client to LSP or subcontracted from LSP to another LSP. Production processes within a second LSP or beyond are opaque to the PM, and such actors appear in light grey circles. Solid lines without an arrow illustrate relations between actors within the LSP, as the PMs regularly collaborate with their colleagues (see also chapter 4). Solid lines with an arrow, i.e. from PM to linguist, point out an external collaboration, as linguists are often not employed by the LSP. Dark blue circles signify the minimally required actors, i.e. the PM and a linguist, whereas light blue circles indicate optional actors. This linguist can be either a translator, a proofreader, post-editor or any other linguist, whereas a light blue circle illustrates optional actors. The designation of linguist has been chosen to account for a greater variety of actors. The inclusion of the VM will be discussed in section 5.2.3. We can see from figure 1.3 a resulting star-shaped production network which unfolds around the PM, as they act as coordinators of translation projects.

In addition, production networks take various shapes for each new project, and look different from the perspective of various actors. They may include more or fewer actors and relations between them, and they can be empirically studied, as was done by Risku et al. (2016).
Second, the relevance of ST quality as discussed above and, more generally, the fact that clients provide critical resources which pass through the translation production process justifies the question as to whether clients should be understood as part of translation production networks. In my opinion, the inclusion of clients in the configuration requires careful consideration. Clients are the only party in the production network as an ‘economic unit’ (Sturgeon 2001:11) who are not making profit. It could be argued that they act as initiators of translation projects by requesting translation services, and they can be defined as part of an economic unit because they provide the finances for translation projects. Furthermore, they generate crucial resources which enter the production process, and as we will see below, their specifications significantly shape how translations are produced. In conclusion, their position appears to be different from the other network actors but I believe that their inclusion is imperative for translation production networks.
Third, the above discussion demonstrates that production networks are rather complex constellations, a fact which cannot be accounted for by the graphic representation of a specific production network, which only illustrates who is part of such a constellation.

Finally, I argue that the individual components of the production network can be unpacked and will reveal further complexity, and I will demonstrate this for the PM component in chapter 4. In order to understand production networks, it is not sufficient to map them. Instead, I propose to analyse the practices which take place within production networks, so as to capture the complexity by which they are characterised (see section 1.3 and chapter 2 for more details).

1.2 Quality in the translation industry

Translation scholars have traditionally approached the notion of quality in translation by assessing finished translations based on a number of linguistic aspects. Academic models of translation quality are usually text-based and tend to focus on the notion of linguistic, functional or normative equivalence, and their application is often based on very complex procedures. House (1997), for instance, proposed a text-based model which compares ST and TT based on a number of categories in order to arrive at an evaluation of quality. In translator training, similar procedures, referred to as translation quality assessment (TQA), are commonly used for evaluating students’ performance. It has been acknowledged that there is always a subjective dimension in TQA and that the use of vague categories like major and minor errors does not allow for consensus on the notion of quality (Drugan 2013:37). Another criticism is that such text-based approaches often rely on lengthy assessment procedures which would not be feasible in real-world scenarios in the translation industry. Thirdly, this approach is also problematic because it does not usually consider contextual information about the production circumstances of the translation (ibid.:36).

Only in recent years has there been an increased interest by academics in the processes surrounding the preparation of translations. Drugan (ibid.), who conducted extensive research on translation quality by investigating how it is managed by large LSPs, concluded that academics and practitioners of translation tend to approach the concept of quality in fundamentally different
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ways, as the intellectual pursuit which drives academics cannot be justified by industry representatives. Academics are interested in exploring the matter from a theoretical point of view, whereas professionals require something more tangible that they can apply in their professional practice. Accordingly, professional models theorise quality from a different starting point; they aim at contributing to quality throughout the translation process, rather than assessing finished translation products, and take into consideration time constraints and budget, which play a significant role in translation practice. In the translation industry, translation products are assessed in the context of QC but the motivation for evaluating quality is to make sure that products are of the required standard, and to reassure clients that they will receive a product which is worth its cost (Drugan 2013), rather than measuring how close a text is to perfection. QC plays a subordinate role and tends to be based on errors which may have repercussions for payment and/or reputation, or even lead to severe consequences such as legal action. The industrial approach is commonly referred to as quality assurance (QA) and it ‘encompasses all (…) aspects of achieving and measuring quality, including planning, QC and TQA’ (ibid.:76). Overall, QA aims at ensuring that there are procedures in place during the translation process which help to achieve quality.

The translation industry has adopted a variety of models on which assumptions about quality are based. Drugan (ibid.) distinguishes between top-down and bottom-up approaches. The aim of top-down approaches is the efficient use of resources, i.e. an interplay between the choice of appropriate translators and tools, as well as the adaptation of workflow, processes and structures for optimal output. Bottom-up approaches, on the other hand, are shaped by the people who participate in translation. They are characterised by sharing resources and a strong feedback component and differ from top-down models in a higher level of trust among the participants and scope for admitting weaknesses and errors (ibid.:176).

Regardless of the approach taken, i.e. top-down or bottom-up, the scope of QA applied to individual translation projects may vary significantly. The models outlined by Drugan (ibid.) consider all stages of the translation process. At one end of the spectrum is the maximalist model (ibid.:128–33) which focuses on human instead of automated processes and stipulates bilingual revision (comparison of ST and TT). Translators are carefully chosen according to strict
criteria, and business relationships are often based on long-term collaboration. Unlike other models where feedback to translators tends to be given only if their work does not comply with the expected standard, the maximalist model includes a positive feedback element. Being timely, costly and inefficient, its applications within the industry tend to be limited to high-risk and sensitive contexts. According to Drugan (2013), other models in use differ in the type of QA, e.g. bilingual revision or revision of the TT only, human vs. automated checks, as well as in the extent to which QA measures are applied (from none to full range). They can furthermore be differentiated on the basis of their criteria for choosing new translators and the extent to which staff hierarchies are established. Drugan (ibid.:154) found that features of several QA models are often combined in practice. Therefore, individual approaches to translation quality can be negotiated for each project.

The translation industry has adopted a very practical and at the same time flexible approach to translation quality that does not regard quality ‘as an end goal in the profession or something which is merely to be assessed, but an ongoing process which can always be refined, improved or achieved more efficiently (i.e. the same quality level at reduced cost)’ (ibid.:77). Industry models are applied by translation professionals to real projects on a daily basis and thus prove extremely viable under economic conditions. Professional models strongly reflect the view of translation project management of translation as a service, taking relevant contextual factors such as client requirements, budget and time frame into account. These approaches deflect the fundamental criticism against academic models for being subjective and vague by providing a more comprehensive view of translation quality and offering practicable and flexible solutions.

It is not my intention to develop a model for translation quality, or assess the quality of particular translations. According to Drugan (ibid.:37), the development of a universal model would not be possible, as ‘value judgements’ are used in processes of QA, and translation quality is subject to ‘relativity’, depending on the production circumstances of a translation. When it comes to assessing quality, there is a ‘huge diversity in real-world needs and requirements’ (ibid.:37), which I will further explore below.
1.2.1 Quality as a relational concept

Despite the focus of QA on procedures, it cannot be denied that the quality of the resulting product defines the success of a translation project. A relatively new approach in both academic and professional models is the idea of quality as a relational concept. Instead of assuming a universal translation standard, it has been proposed to introduce quality levels that correspond to the intended purpose of a translation product (Abdallah 2012; Jääskeläinen 2007; Risku and Pircher 2006). In academic approaches to translation quality, the function of the TT has played a role in skopos theory (Vermeer 1989), according to which the aim (or skopos) of the translation commission is understood in terms of fidelity to the ST and ‘intertextual coherence’ (ibid.:223). Such a functional approach to translating defines a particular relation between the ST and the TT but it has been noted that there is still only one level of translation quality to be aimed for in these approaches, i.e. a ‘good’ (Drugan 2013:38) translation. As noted above, this idealistic approach to translating fails to account for the economic reality of the translation industry and may thus lead to different goals among the actors in a production network, which may create a potential source of conflict (Abdallah 2012:32).

As an alternative, Drugan (2013:42) proposes that translations should rather be ‘good enough’ for their intended purpose: ‘When translation resources are limited, aiming for the highest quality translation is wasteful if all that is needed is a summary of content before an imminent meeting’ (ibid.:42). Such a ‘fit for purpose’ (ibid.:42) approach renders translation quality relative in two ways; first, in terms of the quality level, and second, with regard to the scope of the TT. It may be debatable whether summarizing content can still be considered a translation or should rather be called an adaptation, but this example illustrates the point that quality of translation products is relative in the translation industry. A clear benefit of the implementation of quality levels is the ability to provide translation services according to different time spans and within a range of budgets, i.e. to offer translations on a fast turnaround basis at higher rates than translations with a slower turnaround. However, the translation industry seldom adopts such an approach. It has also been claimed that preparing translations according to these levels presents translators with some difficulties (ibid.:180) because in order to achieve a specific level, all actors need to be aware about the definition of ‘good enough’ (ibid.:42) in a particular...
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project, and translators may have to give practicality priority over professional idealism, i.e. be willing to prepare translations that are of sufficient quality for a specific purpose (Abdallah 2010:36).

As a solution to the practical problem posed by the definition of such levels, the implementation of a quality classification system has been proposed according to which actors in the production network can develop a shared definition of quality (Abdallah 2010, 2012). Essential information such as ‘knowledge about the target audience, any other source material, and, when necessary, information about the product’ (Abdallah 2010:20) shall be obtained from the client prior to starting work on a specific project. In my opinion, the LSP and the client occupy unequal positions in such negotiations, with the LSP having a leading role in obtaining relevant information and guiding the client on the most suitable service, and the client being dependent on the PM’s expertise. According to the classification system, appropriate quality levels must be negotiated at the start of each translation project between the LSP and the client. Although I agree with the idea of negotiating details of the translation process, I reject the concept of clear-cut quality levels. My viewpoint is that translation products will show variations in quality depending on their production circumstances, and I am convinced that clients will eventually come to a compromise over quality in their willingness to receive translations by the required deadline or within a certain budget. However, I doubt that labelling translation products based on a certain quality level would prove successful, as the LSP would have to advertise some of their products as inferior. In my opinion, a classification system is therefore unsuitable for use with clients.

A flexible quality classification system as proposed by Abdallah (2010, 2012), however, has the potential to align LSPs’ and translators’ expectations of quality so that they can work towards the same goal in a translation project but it is limited to the specification of translation products and does not address any aspects of QA in translation processes. The latter have been considered by translation standards such as the European standard for translation services, ISO 17100:2015 Translation Services – Requirements for translation services (British Standards Institution 2015) and the similar American ASTM F2575 Standard Guide for Quality Assurance in Translation (ASTM International 2014). The European standard constitutes an initiative to standardise translation processes in the European context but it should be noted that it is
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voluntary; LSPs may seek compliance and certification through regular audits. The standard regulates the translation process rather than the product but leaves scope for how its requirements are met by LSPs. It was exclusively designed for translation services, and does not cover interpreting.

The ISO 17100:2015 standard outlines qualifications of PMs in very vague terms, i.e. by stating that PMs shall have ‘a basic understanding of the translation services industry and a thorough knowledge of the translation process, as well as master project management skills’ (British Standards Institution 2015:7). Project management and translation procedures are described in more detail, and include the LSP’s responsibility for preparing the ST for translation (ibid.). Thus, the standard provides some valuable guidance on how translation processes may be carried out in order to produce translation products of sufficient quality levels. However, certification to this standard does not oblige the LSP to offer exclusively translation services which meet the requirements but only translations which have been prepared according to the requirements can be certified accordingly. For instance, an LSP may still offer translation only, in which case a revision will not be carried out and the translation service will not include the additional cost of this process.

LSPs may also be certified to the European standard for quality management, ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management Systems – Requirements (British Standards Institution 2008), as was the case with the LSP which took part in my study. This process-based standard is not specific to the translation industry and certification may be sought alongside the ISO 17100:2015 standard. In short, the ISO 9001:2008 standard relates to quality management systems implemented to meet client requirements and to enhance client satisfaction. It recognises the role of the client in translation production and LSPs must continuously review and improve their system and document processes in order to demonstrate conformity with the standard. This can be done, for instance, by seeking client feedback and implementing it in future translation projects.

Both of the standards emphasise the importance of determining client requirements and therefore stress the diverse nature of translation projects. The varying extent of resources (e.g. time and budget) available for a translation project, the diversity of different types of STs and the potential complexity of translation processes further complicate the implementation of a general quality standard. Therefore it seems unlikely that it will be possible to design
a QA model which is applicable to all types of translation (Drugan 2013:30), a conclusion which further emphasises the relationality of translation quality. In the remainder of this chapter, I consider factors which affect the quality of both the translation process and ultimately, the translation product.

1.2.2 Prerequisites for translation quality

In this section, I discuss a number of aspects which contribute to translation quality, as outlined in the literature. In short, translation projects must be organised among a number of competent actors as well as suitable resources, and be effectively organised in order to successfully achieve a certain standard of translation quality. The workflow can only be smooth if everyone works cooperatively towards a shared goal, if trust and support among the actors are available, tasks are clearly allocated, and access to relevant information is provided. Assuming that translation production takes place in a network of various actors, these different factors are strongly dependent upon one another and the influence of single aspects extends over the entire production network.

In production networks, a number of different actors collaborate on translation projects and each actor may contribute different skills and knowledge. Specialised professional skills are crucial to satisfactory process outcomes (Drugan 2013:63; Risku et al. 2013:45) and comprise not only linguistic ability, but also translation management skills as well as the proficient use of various resources. Translating requires cooperation management, self-organisation, research skills, the ability to select and analyse information, as well as a clear idea of what the TT should look like (Risku 2004:55, 59). Project management comprises logistics, administration, preparation of the ST, mediation between the client and translator, quality control, and potentially translator recruitment and accounting (ibid.:137). PMs often deal with several projects at any one time, and usually one PM is assigned per project (ibid.:141). The skills required of translators and PMs vary considerably and are an excellent example of how different actors contribute individual sets of competence to a project. As their skills are tailored to their different roles in the production network, they must be competent in fulfilling their functions. Especially for freelance translators who work on their own, it is often not possible to seek advice from colleagues, so expertise is key to the success of a project.

Material resources play a significant role in translation production. As
mentioned earlier, translation workplaces usually offer a range of information technologies which help actors in translation production to work more efficiently. Some of these technologies are widely used in contexts other than translation, e.g. word processors or email and calendar software, whereas others, such as CAT tools, are specific to translation. Drugan (2013:93–5) identifies a variety of tools which support QA processes, the organisation of translation projects, research and terminology management. Tools can assist humans in improving quality through automatic checks of figures, as well as sharing of and access to resources like TM software, and can thus have positive effects on the quality of translation processes and products. Nevertheless, tools can also have a negative impact, e.g. if they limit translators’ access to editing false matches in a TM, and their applications are limited. Therefore, the emphasis is, on the one hand, on the quality of resources (Drugan (ibid.) refers to the GIGO principle: garbage in, garbage out) and, on the other hand, on their correct use. For some tools, ongoing training may be required, which can be regarded as a continuous investment in competence of using certain technologies. The noticeable interplay between material resources and the actors’ competence is a significant contributor to the workflow of a project.

Apart from competent actors and appropriate material resources, translation quality depends on effective collaboration, which requires that the actors in a production network pursue a shared goal. The idea of effective collaboration extends the interplay between individual actors and technologies to the level of interaction between various actors. Quality can only be achieved through a joint effort of all actors:

[T]he definition of quality by the various actors together, in collaboration with each other, is the focal requirement in production networks that consist of multiple actors. In such a collective undertaking, normativity and a clear definition of the various actors’ rights and duties, or ethics, is absolutely mandatory. Trust and co-operation, as well as the quality of the process and product, all improve when the actors know the extent and the boundaries of their accountability. (Abdallah 2012:36–7)

Translation production is framed as a joint effort by numerous people who have different functions in the production network which all contribute to the making of the translation product. In this undertaking, mutual trust and support of the
network actors are key factors behind functioning networks. Olohan and Davitti (2015:22) found that the careful balancing of trust relationships with translators contributes to the economic success of LSPs, as it is used as a strategy to attain shared goals. Trusting enables network actors to be frank about their concerns without sanctions being imposed against them, for instance, if they experience difficulties while they are working on a project. If they can openly voice these concerns and are offered support rather than being refused work on future projects, difficulties may be overcome jointly. With this in mind, active collaboration on translation projects requires the cooperation of all actors (Abdallah 2010:41). Everybody needs to know their responsibilities in this endeavour and be willing to support the process as best as they can.

In a network configuration where the PM acts as an intermediary between the client and all other actors, the PMs are usually the translators’ only point of contact from whom to obtain resources for and information about translation projects. The fact that translators cannot usually contact clients is generally perceived as negative for translation quality (Drugan 2013:30), since information can only be obtained indirectly from the client via the PM, and this constitutes a process which may cost valuable time and which causes additional workload for the PM. Sometimes, translators may contact clients directly in order to ask for relevant information or to enquire about issues which may arise while translating (my own experience, see also Abdallah 2010:21, 28). In both configurations, the communication of a mutual understanding of quality and access to necessary information are crucial for the success of translation projects. However, current practices in the translation industry fall far short from this ideal because expectations regarding the quality of individual translation projects are usually not sufficiently communicated to translators (Abdallah 2010; Drugan 2013).

So far, I have considered essential prerequisites for translation quality which start out from the LSP’s perspective. Finally, it is worth noting that quality is also determined by the time and budget available for the completion of a project, as these place significant constraints on the project design in professional contexts, and these are usually stipulated by the client. Individual projects need to be tailored to the client’s needs and organised accordingly, so as to meet the requirements. Dunne and Dunne (2011:120) devise a simple yet effective formula for how time, cost and quality are connected in translation production: ‘fast, good, cheap: pick any two.’ This formula precisely summarises the LSP’s
dilemma over having to provide good and fast service at competitive rates and will be further discussed in chapter 5.

1.3 Conclusion: Translation as a network

In this chapter, I have discussed the conceptual foundations which will inform my analysis of the practice of managing translation projects and quality in translation production. Translation project management takes place in the context of production networks. This chapter has emphasised the complexity of translation production and stressed the significance of demonstrating competence, interacting with technology and working collectively with other actors in production networks which, in their most basic form, consist of a client, a PM and a linguist. In order to arrive at a more representative conceptualisation of translation production, I have suggested to extend the production triad by taking further actors into account. Based on my survey of the literature, I have suggested to integrate additional actors, i.e. other linguists, VMs, PMs and further LSPs in production networks. I will reinforce my claim based on empirical data in chapter 4. Due to the fact that such networks emerge for every new translation project, it is not possible to develop a general model of translation production. As Risku et al. (2016) has shown, translation networks for specific projects can be empirically studied and mapped. This enables us to determine which actors are part of them, and how these actors are connected.

To justify my investigation of translation project management, I have shown that only translators have received a considerable amount of attention by translation scholars. More research is needed on other actors, since PMs, proofreaders, clients, etc. are interdependent in translation production and there is a clear need to investigate translation production processes in order to determine how each actor contributes to a satisfactory product, i.e. a translation that is of sufficient quality. My research aims to fill this gap by investigating how PMs contribute to translation production. My study extends existing research on production networks carried out by Abdallah (2012), as she focuses on translators. By concentrating on PMs, my project contributes significantly to filling the knowledge gap about another actor in production networks.

Furthermore, previous research on translation project management has focused on PMs' workplace activities (e.g. Risku 2004) and provided descriptions of the skills which are required for translation production (Risku and Dickinson
Very little is known about how such activities and skills are carried out. In contrast to research on translators, our knowledge of PMs’ integration of technologies in these activities is very limited, despite the fact that technologies play a crucial role for translation production. The objective of my thesis is to investigate how PMs carry out project management, especially how they interact with CAT tools and ERP software, and how their practice is related to other practices of translation production (chapter 4). This approach is in line with what Nicolini (2012:237) describes as ‘zooming in’ and ‘zooming out’. He explains that, in order to make sense of specific practices on the local level, one should take the global level, i.e. the wider implications of a practice, into account (ibid.:235). By investigating managing translation projects as a specific practice of translation production and acknowledging that it is linked with other production practices, we can understand how it affects, and is affected by, these practices. The approach I adopt has a strong focus on the doings of people, a point that will be discussed in chapter 2. I argue that zooming in on managing translation projects affords an understanding of the doings within translation production networks.

I have shown above that quality is a central concern in the translation industry. As with translation project management in general, there is a lack of research on translation quality. Previous studies have failed to acknowledge the role played by clients in shaping an understanding of translation quality. The extensive study by Drugan (2013) of QA models in the translation industry affords an understanding of how QA is implemented. My research aims to add to this by analysing how PMs understand quality, what defines it and how it is achieved in the practice of managing translation projects (chapter 5). To this end, I adopt an integrated approach to quality which takes production circumstances of a translation into account. Product quality is always relative; there is no one-fits-all approach. Thus, translation quality becomes a question of the effects of the interaction between individual actors in the context of production networks. Accordingly, the unit for assessing translation quality is the translation process taking place across the production network, rather than the product. Following the literature, I argue that it takes, among other things, some effort by all actors in translation production networks to effectively communicate a notion of translation quality in order to achieve the type of quality commissioned by a client. In other words, translation production is
Translation as a production network

a complex activity in which various actors who have skills and knowledge, resources such as CAT tools, as well as effective organisation of translation projects in terms of collaboration, trust and support are interdependent. Such an approach emphasises the interaction and interdependency between actors in production networks. In the following chapter, I theorise translation production as a nexus of practices, as this framing will enable me to conduct an analysis of quality in translation project management against the backdrop of the translation production network.
2 | Theorising translation project management as a practice

In this chapter, I develop a theoretical approach to studying project management in translation production networks. For this purpose, project management is regarded as a situated, socio-material practice. In order to obtain a deeper insight into the practice of managing translation projects, I will draw on ideas from practice theory. My study applies a sociological framework which allows for a range of activities related to translation production to be explored, as well as for an investigation of how these activities are structured and embedded in larger complexes of practices. This chapter outlines the main tenets of practice theory, theorises processes of translation production as a practice, and explains how practice theory can be used for analysing processes of quality assurance in project management as a set of interconnected practices.

2.1 Practice Theory

Theories of practice date back to the early 20th century. According to Schatzki (2001), the initial development of practice theory was influenced by a variety of contributions from philosophers like Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Taylor, social theorists such as Bourdieu and Giddens, cultural theorists, for instance, Foucault and Lyotard, as well as theorists of science and technology, for example, Pickering and Latour. These earlier developments of practice theory are referred to as the first wave, or generation, of practice theorists, and provide the basis for the second generation of practice theorists who are currently expanding this work (see Postill 2010). Among the most influential scholars of the second generation are Theodore R. Schatzki (1996), Andreas Reckwitz (2002) and Alan Warde (2005).

The second generation of practice theorists have applied their approach to a diverse range of areas. To mention but a few applications, scholars have analysed consumption practices (e.g. Warde 2005, 2014; Shove 2003) and domestic practices, for instance, the practice of eating (Warde 2016), cleaning practices such as washing and showering (Shove 2003), and the practice of Nordic walking (Shove and Pantzar 2005). Another area of application is workplace studies, which include research on how technologies are used in organisations (Orlikowski 2000), or how time features in organisational life (Orlikowski and Yates 2002). The former applications illustrate the applicability of practice theory to a broad range of practices, whereas the latter relate directly
to my research, as I will analyse the workplace activities of a group of PMs from a practice-theoretical perspective.

Practice theory comprises various traditions which cannot be integrated into one comprehensive theory of practice, as the different traditions partially show contradicting features and thus appear to be incompatible with each other. Despite these contradictions, Nicolini (2012:214) identifies some predominant aspects that are common to all practice-theoretical approaches, namely that:

(i) the social is constituted by actions rather than by individuals, and the focus is thus on what people do, and not on the people themselves (see also Reckwitz 2002).

(ii) theories of practice share the assumption that the body and materials, or objects, occupy a pivotal role in the construction of the social. Both the body and materials are constitutive elements of practices because they actively contribute to their structuring and restructurings.

(iii) individuals adopt the role of carriers (ibid.) of practices, meaning that they actively engage in these all the time. As a consequence, agency and agents are recognised in terms of ‘initiative, creativity, and individual performance’ (Nicolini 2012:4), notions which emphasise their active involvement in different practices, and account for innovative potential as well as differences in performances.

(iv) social worlds are inhabited by practices, which define what practitioners must do, say, feel and expect when performing actions in order to display a sense of what is acceptable in the context of a particular practice.

Nicolini (ibid.) acknowledges the restrictions imposed by single practice-theoretical perspectives and proposes a toolkit approach that combines different viewpoints in order to overcome these limitations. I have adopted the toolkit approach in this study and I will make use of concepts from various traditions of practice theory in order to carry out my analysis of managing translation projects, in which I emphasise the social aspects of this practice and acknowledge the role of materials in constituting social structure. To begin, I outline the theoretical foundations which will inform my analysis. Notably, I draw on a conceptualisation of social order which is based on Giddens’ (1984) principle of structuration, and I adopt Orlikowski’s (2000) concept of technologies-in-practice, as well as Orlikowski and Yates’ (2002) idea of temporal structures. I also follow Shove et al.’s (2012) classification of elements, as well as their
2.1.1 Social order and practices

Practice theory, like mentalism, textualism and intersubjectivism, is a form of cultural theory which defines the formation of social order through ‘shared knowledge’ (Reckwitz 2002:245) of communities. Members of a cultural community share certain understandings and mutually accepted forms of behaviour of the practice they perform. Social order is manifested in the interplay of their ever evolving behaviours.

By the term social, Schatzki (1996:14) understands all features in relation to coexistence, which he defines as ‘a hanging-together of human lives that forms a context in which each [life] proceeds individually.’ Practice theory approaches the social from a postmodern perspective by assuming ‘constellations of particulars’ (ibid.:5). That is, social order is regarded as a dynamic structure in which people’s biological ability to act through their bodies and their culturally acquired capacity to do so in practice-specific ways coincide, and which becomes observable through the actions people carry out when engaging in a practice. In addition to performing purposeful acts, individuals continuously express mental states through their bodies in the domain of the social, where they co-exist with other individuals who understand their expressions, and in which they interpret others’ bodily expressions (ibid.:22–5). The activities of an individual again impact on other human beings, and thus, ‘everyday actions are consequential
in producing the structural contours of social life’ (Feldman and Orlikowski 2011:1242).

At the same time, social structures recreate practices. This idea stems from the communities of practice approach which assumes that practice and community are mutually constitutive (Shove et al. 2012:68). Proponents of communities of practice mainly place emphasis on the people who are part of the communities, and prioritise the community as structuring entity. Practice theory, however, gives priority to the practice and assumes that nothing pre-exists that practice. The power assigned to practices appears to be mitigated by the practitioners’ repeated engagement in practices, and the opportunities offered by each new performance of the practice. On the one hand, practitioners may follow practices in their extant form and thus reinforce existing structures. On the other hand, the set of required materials and competences (see also section 2.1.2) to carry out the practice normally may not be available in a particular instance, so that performances can be innovative and, if successful, alter the practice. For instance, individuals arrange locations in which practices are performed in ways that enable them to engage in suitable activities. This two-way perspective makes practice theory a powerful explanatory framework.

In the context of this study, we may consider a number of cultural communities, such as PMs, translators or, more generally, translation professionals. From a practice-theoretical perspective, we shall pay particular attention not only to how they perform practices like managing translation projects, translating STs or producing translations, but also to how these behaviours produce certain social structures among and between them, and how these practices are interrelated. The relational approach to translation quality as outlined in chapter 1 gives rise to the supposition that quality is affected by the production process, which in turn is influenced by the way in which individual actors participate in translation production. In order to understand the repercussions of producing translations in a collaborative way on the quality of translation products, we must take specific social structures into account.

A specific form of social structures which is highly relevant for this thesis is temporal structuring. In line with the principle of structuration, time, like the social, is contemporaneously seen as a structuring and structured entity. Orlikowski and Yates (2002:689) understand time as ‘[c]onstituted by, as well as constituting ongoing, human action.’ Temporal structures are implemented
via practices, which reproduce these structures (Orlikowski and Yates 2002:689). In similar vein, Boudreau and Robey (2005) draw on the notion of temporality, which was originally proposed by Emirbayer and Mische (1998), who understood human agency as always shaped by the past, present and future (Boudreau and Robey 2005:4). In other words, experience of having enacted a practice in the past shapes how a practice is performed in the present, and it is also structured by a vision of what practitioners aim to achieve in the future. Thus, a practice-theoretical perspective accounts for the question of how people construct time at a local level through what they do, as well as how time structures their actions by considering the influence on the practitioners’ actions.

Practitioners may enact several temporal structures at the same time. ‘Enacting multiple different temporal structures in their ongoing practices affords individuals the opportunity to experience a variety of different temporal rhythms. Through such engagement they may experience the tension created by temporal conflict’ (Orlikowski and Yates 2002:687), since some temporal structures may not, or hardly, be compatible with one another. As a result, enactments could be slightly changed, so as to reconcile conflicting temporal structures. However, Orlikowski and Yates (ibid.:686) state that

‘[t]he repeated use of certain temporal structures reproduces and reinforces their legitimacy and influence in organizational life. Because such temporal structures are often routinely and unproblematically drawn on, they tend to become taken for granted.’

Temporal structures which cause conflicts in enactments may be deeply embedded in practices, and routinely drawn on so that problematic structures may form part of routine enactments. In addition, temporal structures depend on other social structures of the practice, which must also be accommodated in enactments of a practice. Therefore, even though the enactment of specific temporal structures may be problematic, changing routinised enactments is therefore not easily accomplished. It requires much effort and repeated enactments of modified structures to implement changes to routine enactments.

2.1.2 Elements of practices

Practices are complex entities of components which enter into specific relations in order to form particular structures. These components are commonly referred
to as elements, and this section aims at familiarising the reader with the elements involved in practices. According to Reckwitz (2002:249), a practice is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.

This quote emphasises practice theory’s action-focused approach by stressing that people carry out activities routinely. It points out the relational nature of practices and succinctly summarises which types of elements are typically involved in practices. Furthermore, it illustrates that practice theory recognises that the social comprises a material dimension. Reckwitz’ (2002) classification of elements constitutes only one set of categories that have been suggested and it is useful for beginning to understand how elements are integrated into practices.

Another example would be the tripartite division into materials, competences and meaning put forward by Shove et al. (2012), which I follow in this thesis. In both taxonomies, materials appear as a distinct category and I agree with these being a separate type of element because, unlike theorists who challenge inherent dualities such as human – non-human in the social order I do not support the view that humans should be considered in the same way as non-human actors. As for the remaining types of elements, i.e. competence and meaning, I agree that there are differences between bodily and mental activities, but as I will show in this section, practice theory does not necessarily differentiate between them because they are closely linked to one another. I will further explore the three elements below. I will focus on materials and elements of competence, as these are the most pertinent in my research. The last category, elements of meaning, will also be addressed in short, but they are less relevant for my study.

\[1\] An example of this perspective would be ANT, in which networks are regarded as effects of particular materialistic orders which structure social relationships. As explained in section 1.1, ANT does not, in principle, differentiate between human and non-human actors but instead purports that all elements in the social order may likewise contribute to its structure.
Materials

Practice theory considers things, or objects, of any kind as an essential part of practices (Reckwitz 2002). Shove et al. (2012:23) label these elements *materials*, so as to refer to ‘objects, infrastructures, tools, hardware and the body itself.’ Practice theorists do not regard the body as different from other materials because, generally, it has no precedence over non-human entities, as it can be used in various ways to suit a diverse range of practices. Nonetheless, the body is distinguished from bodily activities, i.e. actions performed through the body (see following section). Materials can be exploited so as to fit the purposes of practitioners, and are therefore used with a specific understanding of their function within the practice. Practitioners have precise concepts of objects and know how to use them for particular practices, and do different things with the same objects (Schatzki 1996:116).

As outlined in chapter 1, translation production involves the use of several materials. Risku (2004:149), for instance, found that at the LSP which she studied, objects such as telephones and emails played a significant role in the communication between translation professionals and clients, orders were processed with the help of software, dictionaries and post-it notes, and projects were managed through lists, forms, databases and files. This list, which is by no means exhaustive, gives an idea of the variety of materials involved in translation production. Information technologies constitute an indispensable part of the translation production process. On the one hand, such technologies enable the processing of ever growing volumes of data, for instance, through a TM or an MT tool (for an overview of how these technologies were introduced into translation practice, see Garcia 2012). Thus, technology is supportive in meeting the increasing demand for translated text. On the other hand, technology also facilitates communication across a distance, so that people who work together on a translation project do not have to be in the same location to produce a TT. This is especially the case with CAT tools providing collaborative features2. In conclusion, material enactment is crucial to practices of managing translation projects and translating.

Materials like technologies can be modified by people who enact practices.

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2 memoQ, for instance, offers IM and real time updates of resources drawn upon by all team members (see http://localisationdemo.kilgray.com/faq/collaborative-translation, last accessed 05 January 2017).
The notion of modification refers to changes which are either made to the technology itself, or to its material properties. Orlikowski (2000:409) explains that ‘users often add to or modify the technological properties on hand (…) to fit their particular requirements or interests.’ An example of such modification in the translation industry is the continuous development of CAT tools. The 2015 version of memoQ, for instance, offers better integration features with other CAT tools as the previous version by reading comments from SDL XLIFF files\textsuperscript{3}. As a second example, the AutoSuggest feature of SDL Trados 2017 now supports some Asian languages\textsuperscript{4}. Improving features of a CAT tool and adding more languages can both be seen as modifications of the technology.

Orlikowski (ibid.) further distinguishes between artefact modification, as described above, and modification of enactments, i.e. changes to how practitioners engage in a practice or how they carry out activities. Whereas the first type may result in ‘noticeable changes to the data and/or tool aspects of the technological artifact’ (ibid.:422), the latter may entail the ‘reinforcement and enhancement of the structural status quo (…), as well as noticeable improvements to work processes’ (ibid.:422). Modifications of enactments change the way in which a practice is enacted, as practitioners draw on the altered structures following such modifications. Practice theory can thus account for the fact that practices change over time, as it assumes a constant state of flux which depends on the context surrounding individual elements. Practices reach certain states, but develop constantly and they ‘are not hermetically sealed off from other adjacent and parallel practices, from which lessons are learned, innovations borrowed, procedures copied’ (Warde 2005:141). To provide an example of how artefact modifications in the translation sector have changed translation practice, we may consider the effect which the introduction of TM software had on the practice of translating. For early users of TM tools, ‘translation became a completely different activity’ (Garcia 2012:454).

Practice theory also presumes adaptability in the combination of particular elements so as to facilitate the flexible and responsive, situated use of materials. In other words, enactments may be modified depending on the contexts in which they take place. However,

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[s]aying that use is situated and not confined to predefined options does not mean that it is totally open to any and all possibilities. The physical properties of artifacts ensure that there are always boundary conditions on how we use them. (Orlikowski 2000:409)

Materials are always integrated into a practice and provide structure for it, as there are limits as to what can be done with them, and as they determine how certain things are done. In the translation industry, artefacts are modified by members of production networks like translators and PMs, but also by practitioners of other practices, such as the developers of CAT tools, and thus practices of translation production are interconnected to a wider set of practices. At the same time, translation professionals may use their initiative to adapt their performances of translation production practices in terms of their use of materials, for instance, when material modification is not possible.

Competence

Practice theorists have used a range of terms to refer to various elements of competence. Shove et al. (2012:23) do not specifically mention bodily and mental activities in their classification but instead summarise elements of competence as ‘forms of understanding and practical knowledgeability.’ I will accordingly subdivide them into understanding and knowing. I begin this section with a brief outline of the sociological origins of competence. I then move on to the principle of the interconnectedness of body and mind, before I discuss elements of understanding and knowing.

Elements of competence bear similarity to Bourdieu’s (1990) concept of habitus. As mentioned in the introduction, Bourdieu’s work has been applied to TS to investigate the political and cultural aspects of translation in society (e.g. Gouanvic 2005, 2010; Inghilleri 2005b; Simeoni 1998; Vorderobermeier 2014). Here, I want to focus on how the concept has provided insight to practices. Bourdieu (1990:53) defines habitus as a ‘system of durable, transposable dispositions’, i.e. the competence which is embodied in people’s activities, thinking and knowledge. Once these are enacted, i.e. put together into a specific constellation, they form a field which creates a practice (Nicolini 2012:55). In practice theory, the concept emphasises the strong relation between practitioners and the structures within which they engage in practices.

Despite proving useful for thinking about practices, the concept has been
criticised from a practice-theoretical view. Nicolini (2012:56) explains that the acquisition of habitus occurs as a ‘by-product of participation in daily activities’ and argues that the notion does not focus on element of understanding, which tends to result in practitioners’ unsatisfactory accounts of their practice. Nicolini (ibid.:56) concludes that practices cannot be fully accounted for, as habitus cannot consider change, mediation and reflexivity in appropriate detail because there are no materials and reflexivity is only considered in terms of the researcher (ibid.:66–68).

Elements of competence are manifested in bodily and mental activities, which are inherent elements of practices with close links to one another. Therefore, practice theory does not separate body and mind (Schatzki 1996), but instead aims at uncovering how they are interconnected. Bodily activities occupy a pivotal role in practice theory, which defines the relation between practices and the body in a distinctive way. Routinised behaviour is usually concomitant with specific movements of the body, which Reckwitz (2002:251) refers to as ‘bodily performances’, and through which practices and thus social structure become visible, observable entities. Routinised behaviour comprises any form of physical activity carried out in a certain fashion which can be recognised as part of a specific practice, and it includes the interaction with materials and other practitioners for particular purposes, which is highly pertinent to this study. By observing what PMs do at their workplace, we can seek access to the practice of managing translation projects via bodily performances.

Through the human body, practices are enacted not only physically but also mentally by way of activities such as understanding and knowing (ibid.:258). Like bodily activities, mental activities are determined by practices which specify appropriate actions against the backdrop of particular practices. Unlike bodily performances, mental activities are not directly observable but may be explored, for instance, through interviews which focus on eliciting how practitioners understand a practice. All forms of mind are deeply embedded in bodily activities, and an analysis of practice must therefore set out to investigate how bodily and mental activities, as well as the use of materials are linked to one another (ibid.:258).

Elements of understanding are a common feature of practice-theoretical approaches. The ability to adequately understand the activities performed by others is highly pertinent to establishing social order (Schatzki 1996).
tioners do not act in isolation but co-exist with other practitioners and react to one another’s activities. Bodily expressions therefore bear context-specific significations which have to be interpreted against the practice in which they occur. This means that these expressions carry meaning which can only be derived in relation to their context. Departing from the idea that successful participation in a practice depends on one’s ability to discern actions in particular ways, we would also assume that making oneself understood by others through appropriate behaviour and reactions serves a decisive role for engaging in practices. For instance, commissioning the preparation of a TT is part of the production process over which clients and PMs have the authority (Risku 2004). By accepting the quote, the client delegates the task to the LSP which subcontracts the work to the translator. In other words, receiving any accepted form of confirmation of the quote in the context of project management is understood by the PM as agreement on the proposed project, and it means that the client enters into a legally binding contract. At the same time, the PM is now authorised to place the translation order with a translator by sending out a PO. This action, in turn, can be understood by the translator as an offer for work, and accepting the order establishes a contractual relationship between the LSP and the translator. A correct understanding of actions and displaying intelligible behaviour towards others structure and restructure the social world, and create specific patterns of order at any one time.

Elements of understanding are crucial to any practice, as they are involved in evaluating the normative standards of a practice. A practice can always be recognised by other practitioners if it is performed according to these standards. As Warde (2016:83) notes, such standards can be understood as ‘shared templates and normative understanding of acceptable ways of conducting events.’ Communities of practitioners, i.e. all practitioners who engage in the same practice (see Shove et al. 2012:67), share understandings of a practice, and are aware that they must perform a practice in line with its template, if their enactment is to be understood as an instance of this particular practice. Standards are normative because they determine how a practice should be performed. Enactments will always be slightly different from one another (see also section 2.1.5), but there is a range of acceptable performances (Warde 2016:83) which meet normative standards.

The last element to be considered is knowing. As we have seen in chapter 1,
translating is a complex activity which requires specialised professional skills (see Abdallah 2012; Dam and Zethsen 2008), and engaging in this practice may bring internal rewards to proficient practitioners. Practitioners behave in certain ways because they have undergone cultural socialisation in a particular field during which they acquired the relevant expressions that may be used when occasions arise (Schatzki 1996). The above-described processes of acting and understanding exemplify that practitioners have practice-specific know-how at their disposal, i.e. they know which activities to undertake in the context of a practice in order to be intelligible to others, and they possess the necessary skills to perform these actions. When people react to their environments, various levels of skill can be expressed in their actions (Rouse 2011:650), as can be determined through observing bodily activities and elicited by studying mental activities.

There are no specific training programmes for PMs in the translation industry and expertise on translation project management tends to be developed through on-the-job training (see also Rodríguez-Castro 2013). Often, LSPs hire staff with a background in translation, and experience in project management is desirable but above all, PMs must have the necessary skills rather than expertise. From a practice-theoretical perspective, PMs acquire skills and know-how by participating in project management, and while gradually gaining expertise in managing translation work, opportunities arise to put into practice what has been learned. Second, there is a remarkable degree of individuality involved in project management, as one LSP may carry out its business in a strikingly different way from other firms and even within the same company, project teams are often created anew for each project. The diversity of managing translation projects across LSPs can be understood in terms of ‘differences between groups of people with regard to their understandings of a practice, the procedures they adopt and the values to which they aspire’ (Warde 2005:139). Groups of practitioners are changeable constellations, and are composed of individuals who have followed different career paths.

This implies that skills are not a static construct but develop over time, which ultimately leads to differences in skills among practitioners. Schatzki (1996) suggests that everyone has an individual set of bodily expressions and style, to which he refers as a ‘repertoire of spontaneous bodily reactions’ (ibid.:60). Warde (2005:139) explains that ‘agents vary in their understandings,
skills and goals and that the relationship between these three components also varies. Thus, whether a person successfully takes part in a practice depends on whether they have adequate bodily expressions at their disposal, and whether they are able to transform these into an appropriate action, should the opportunity arise. Such reactions are termed spontaneous because they occur in response to particular occasions, and towards other people’s actions. People are perceived as part of a group as long as their actions can be understood by others (Schatzki 1996), and this form of human understanding is essential to all processes of interpretation (Rouse 2011:646). Based on these points, we would assume that PMs would be able to react to situations which are part of their practice with specific actions, and that this behaviour is in some way meaningful to other people who participate in the same practice. Practices presuppose certain forms of understanding which require practitioners to regard materials, other people and themselves in practice-specific ways (Reckwitz 2002:253). Practitioners usually know how to use material resources for the purpose of the practices in which they engage, and understand other practitioners and themselves in relation to these practices.

**Meaning**

The last element to be explicated is meaning. Shove et al. (2012:23) define meaning as the ‘social and symbolic significance of participation at any one moment.’ Other practice theorists have described these elements as the suitable emotions and desires, or emotionality (Reckwitz 2002:254). These elements are part of our understanding of the practices in which we engage, and influence what we intend to achieve and which emotions we should experience and express towards other practitioners. In the context of managing translation projects, the former aspect, i.e. the intended achievements, turned out to be relevant to my analysis of how the PMs assure translation quality. It should be noted that the practitioners pursue certain objectives, but that these are contemporaneously stipulated by the practice. Warde (2005:137) notes that ‘[p]ractices, rather than individual desires, we might say, create wants’, so there is a strong emphasis on the practice as the structuring entity. By engaging in a particular practice, we are motivated by certain desires and, at the same time, aim to avoid contradictory outcomes (Reckwitz 2002:254).

Warde (2005) refers to elements of meaning as rewards which are provided
by practices, and which can be gained through engaging in a practice. He distinguishes between internal and external rewards, whereby ‘rewards internal to practices are partly a function of the complexity of the particular practice’ (Warde 2005:143), meaning that intricate, or complex, practices are the more rewarding, since there is more to be achieved by practitioners than in less complex ones. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that ‘some practices can be seen as more complex than others because they offer more levels at which opportunities to experience flow can be found’ (ibid.:143), whereby flow refers to a feeling of satisfaction. A balanced level of task difficulty, i.e. neither too easy nor too difficult, can have an impact on the sense of satisfaction experienced by practitioners who have successfully accomplished a task, as their ‘level of proficiency in a practice is a major determinant of psychic reward’ (ibid.:143). Their feeling of satisfaction is stronger if the activity takes considerable effort to complete. Warde (ibid.:143) further notes that ‘the external rewards to be gained by any individual are a function of the prestige of the practice’, i.e. that higher esteem can be earned from reputable, respectable practices.

Although emotions and desires are not the focus of this thesis, analysing emotionality is potentially useful for studying how people perceive and experience their role as practitioners, and for analysing motivations for participating in a practice. In TS, studies on translator status (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 2009b,c, 2010, 2011) suggest that translating is of a low professional status. It seems that translating is often perceived as a practice with scant external social rewards, as degrading translators’ activities to a simple linguistic transfer deprives them of the reasonable opportunity for obtaining decent external rewards from this practice.

2.1.3 Agency

The concept of agency in practice theory has close links to Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory, which regards practices as crucial for constituting society. Unlike theories of practice, structuration theory has been applied to TS, albeit to a very limited extent. Tipton (2008) has investigated Giddens’ (1984) notion of ‘reflexivity’ in the context of public service interpreting by analysing reflexive practices in asylum interviews. Rooyen (2013) has studied the translation of radio news from the perspective of structuration theory. She found that translator and translation constitute a duality (see below), and that news
Translators draw on their agency to select and to alter radio news. Despite the fact that Giddens’ (1984) work has been well received and further developed in many disciplines, its application to TS is currently limited to only a few elements of his theory.

Many ideas from Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory can be found in practice theory too. As briefly mentioned at the beginning of section 2.1, agency can be best understood in terms of initiative. Giddens (1984:9) suggests that agency ‘refers not to the intentions people have in doing things but to their capability of doing those things in the first place.’ According to Giddens (ibid.:9), agency is achieved when agents draw on rules and resources to implement specific actions. In this way, rules and resources enable agency (for a detailed discussion of rules and resources, see ibid.:17–25). Practice-theoretical concepts show striking resemblance to Giddens’ (1984) notion of agency. Practitioners draw on a set of competences, materials and meanings when they engage in practices, which can be seen as rules and resources in Giddens’ (1984) terms. From a practice-theoretical view, practitioners’ access to elements enables them to carry out certain activities, and they do this by forming relationships between the available elements.

Establishing relations between the elements of a practice is an ongoing process with no definitive end point because they have to be actively and continuously formed by the practitioners (Shove et al. 2012:24). This idea stems from the concept of duality as outlined in structuration theory, stating that structure and agency are mutually constitutive, i.e. that social structures determine people’s interactions, or their agency, but that structures are at the same time formed by these people (Giddens 1984:25). Duality assumes a certain balance between structure and agency, as neither has priority over the other (see Rooyen 2013:496).

Another resemblance between practice theory and structuration theory can be found in terms of the recurrence of actions. Giddens (1984:17, 25) explains that structure and agency are reproduced on a regular and recurring basis. This focus on regularity can also be found in practice theory, which demonstrates a strong focus on routine enactments. Thus, both approaches feature a repeated reproduction of social structure.

Applied to practice theory, this means that elements shape other elements of a practice, and that practices are transformed when enacted repeatedly.
2 Theorising translation project management as a practice

and over time (Shove et al. 2012:32,39). The difference between the two approaches is that they define notions of structure and agency in different ways; while structuration theory locates structure in things like rules or resources, practice theory conceptualises it as practice, or interrelated elements of practices. Practices structure the social because they determine how people do things, and at the same time people reproduce this structure because they engage in practices. In structuration theory, agency is understood as the ability of humans to act (Giddens 1984), whereas practice theory considers people as carriers of practices, that is to say that people are believed to have less active agency, and that structure is instead formed by the elements of a practice which come together in certain ways. In other words, people do not engage in activities in any way they want to, instead a practice requires them to act in specific ways.

The practice serves as an entity which determines how people enact it, and such performances of the entity reinforce the practice’s structures (see section 2.1.5 for more details about practices-as-entity and practice-as-performance). It should be noted that any ‘[p]erformance in a familiar practice is often neither fully conscious nor reflective’ (Warde 2005:140). This tallies with Giddens’ (1984) notion of reflexivity, which is ‘grounded in the continuing monitoring of action which humans display and expect others to display’ (Giddens 1984:3). In her study on interpreted asylum interviews, Tipton (2008) demonstrated that interpreter mediation can impede the asylum seekers’ reflexive practices, as they cannot continuously monitor discursive action. Practitioners do not usually have the intention to do what they are doing when they engage in practices, and they are not always able to articulate why they were carrying out particular activities at a certain time. A useful distinction made by Giddens (1984) is between practical and discursive consciousness: ‘Discursive consciousness refers to the ability to describe our actions in words, while practical consciousness refers to actions that agents take for granted and are unable to express in words’ (Rooyen 2013:497). In Giddens’ (1984) terms, practical consciousness prevails over discursive consciousness in practice-theoretical approaches, as the focus is clearly on the activities carried out by people.

As noted above, practices have normative standards. When practitioners comment on their practices, they demonstrate an awareness of such standards, and this awareness is also evident when people assess other practitioners’ performances of practices (Warde 2016:43). Practice theory therefore ‘revises
the hyperrational and intellectualized picture of human agency’ (Reckwitz 2002:259), and instead “decentres’ mind, texts and conversation. Simultaneously, it shifts bodily movements, things, practical knowledge and routine to the centre of its vocabulary’ (ibid.:259).

Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory has been subjected to considerable criticism. A general criticism is that Giddens’ (1984) work leaves much room for interpretation, as it is based on abstract concepts which were brought together from several other social theories (see for example Held and Thompson 1989). Stones (2005) argues that, although Giddens acknowledged that his theory is distant from, if relevant for empirical research, he never set out to explore the relationship between his theory and the consequences that arise from applying it to empirical research. The issue arising from this is that structuration theory has limited value for understanding in situ phenomena.

Furthermore, Stones (ibid.) explains that Giddens only used empirical examples to illustrate how selective concepts are relevant to empirical research. This approach, Stones (ibid.) argues, overlooks the complexity which characterise phenomena in the sphere of the social. He concludes that

> the emphasis on ontology-in-general and on using empirical research simply to illustrate or look for discrete structuration concepts provide the criteria by means of which Giddens can safely ‘cherry-pick’ from his empirical material, choosing not to select the parts that don’t suit his purpose. The concepts he wants to illuminate or flesh out empirically dictate what is selected. (ibid.:38)

Subsequently, strong structuration theory set out to define the relationship between the ontological and empirical levels.

Thompson (1984) notes that the concept of rules is too broadly defined, so that it remains largely unclear what it means to draw on a structure. As a result, Thompson disagrees with the definition of social structure as rules and resources. According to him, rules and resourced must be differentiated, as different individuals have access to different rules and resources. Therefore, social structure is more varied than suggested by Giddens’ definition: ‘the restrictions on opportunities operate differentially, affecting unevenly various groups of individuals’ (Thompson cited in Stones 2005:48).

Structuration theory has been extended so as to address this criticism. For instance, proponents of strong structuration theory introduced the ‘quadripartite
circle’ (Stones 2005:9) to account for different elements that form part of the duality of structure and agency. Such a distinction is also available in practice theories. Practice theory mitigates this criticism with a strong focus on empirical data collection and a clearer definition of elements, which can be seen as rules and resources.

Some criticisms of structuration theory also apply to practice theory. Most importantly, critics have questioned the interdependence of structure and agency. They contend that structure and agency are unequally involved in processes of structuration (see for example Whittington 2010). Practice theory, like structuration theory, assumes that structure and agency are mutually dependent. Such a coalescence may distort the analysis of the mechanisms that underlie the construction of social structure, as they are said not to correspond to what can be empirically found in the world.

As mentioned above, the role of material agency in practice theory differs from that of other sociological approaches. ANT does not draw a clear distinction between material and human agency but regards them as equally contributing elements. Structuration theory does not accommodate material agency at all, and thus gives priority to human agency. Practice theory limits human agency but does not foreground material agency either. Instead, practices are regarded as the building blocks of a society in which people are seen as so-called crossing points (Reckwitz 2002:256) of practices. Reckwitz (ibid.:256) explains that various practices ‘cross’ because individual people carry out multiple practices, and therefore they constitute a site where different practices traverse. Practitioners are therefore links, or crossing-points, for practices. The practitioners’ agency remains important for developing an understanding of practices.

Agents display initiative in behaving in routinised ways, yet their behaviour is always an individual performance, as single instances of bodily expression may vary from other expressions in similar circumstances (see also section 2.1.5). In this way, practice theory allows for creative behaviour to be expressed by practitioners, for instance, if none of the existing expressions in their repertoire appear to be appropriate reactions. At the same time, routinised behaviour may be altered in specific situations so as to achieve a desired result, and thus there is potential for innovation in practices. Warde (2005:141) explains that ‘[c]onventions will usually be to some degree contested, with some practitioners
typically still attached to prior codes of conduct, while others, perhaps of a new generation, seek to replace current orthodoxies with new prescriptions.’ Practitioners use their agency in their own performances to either reinforce existing structures, or to introduce innovations, and there might be scenarios where well-established structures co-exist with more contemporary ones.

Giddens’ (1984) work has been extended by Orlikowski (2000), who is critical of the fact that structurational perspectives are unable to account for how technologies are changing, and how they are being used by practitioners, as these assume that technologies eventually reach a state of stabilisation, a claim which restricts the emergence of social structure to the technology’s development phase. Since empirical evidence contradicts this assumption, she proposes that ‘technology structures are emergent, not embodied’ (ibid.:407, emphasis mine), meaning that structures arise from practitioners’ engagement with technology, rather than being inherent in the technology. Such a view facilitates an analysis of ‘how it [human action] enacts emergent structures through recurrent interaction with the technology at hand’ (ibid.:407). She terms such enactments technologies-in-practice, which are defined as ‘sets of rules and resources that are (re)constituted in people’s recurrent engagement with the technologies’ (ibid.:407). Boudreau and Robey (2005) also comment on this process as reinvention, i.e. the development of alternative practices to carry out processes where the technology does not provide the properties to do so. Materials are thus deeply embedded in practices, as they are being routinely used by practitioners to recreate social structures. At the same time, their material properties influence the practitioners’ activities.

2.1.4 The principle of interconnectedness

Connectedness expresses a key idea of practice-based approaches, as single practices are contingent upon one another and in its totality, a web of practices constitutes social structure (Nicolini 2012:3). Research into practices can therefore account for aspects such as the interplay between actions in the context of a practice and the significance of local instances for practices on a global level. Practice theory provides a number of concepts with regard to how practices are related to others. First, they can be connected through elements which travel from one practice to the next, and they do so in distinct ways (Shove et al. 2012:47). The location of elements, the possibility of their transportation
and the practitioners’ opportunities for accessing them are characteristic for their distribution. Some elements, like materials, can be physically moved from one place to another and be used for practices in different places (Schatzki 1996:116; Shove et al. 2012:56). By way of example, translators and proofreaders may have to complete checklists of translation requirements and return them to PMs in order to ensure that certain steps have been followed in the translation production process, and to create a record of this procedure to which can be referred. For translators, such lists serve as a final reminder about the quality requirements imposed by the LSP, whereas the LSP uses them for purposes of QA and documentation. For purposes of QA, various translation resources such as glossaries, TMs and termbases are created, updated, modified and passed on to other practitioners during the translation process so as to organise, translate, revise and proofread STs and TTs. These resources travel through practices of translation production and provide a connection between them.

In order to move elements of competence, practitioners can make use of their existing knowledge and transfer it to a different practice, if necessary in a modified way, and knowledge can be preserved either in people’s minds or in written or other form (Shove et al. 2012). Elements of competence in translation production are sometimes preserved in guidelines which specify how tasks should be completed, but more often knowledge is passed on directly from one practitioner to the next. It appears to be common practice in translation production that translators may work as proofreaders for other translation projects, and although translating and proofreading both involve working on a translation product, these practices differ from each other, for instance because the first involves text production and inevitably working with a ST, whereas the latter is ideally restricted to reviewing the translation and does not necessarily require the involvement of the ST. In these two practices, competence for translating can be partly transferred to proofreading. Understanding the practice of translation is helpful to proofreaders, as this provides them with an idea how the translation product that they review should look. For instance, translating involves the correct spelling of the text, so proofreaders would look for this in the translation. If they are supposed to consult the ST and compare the translation against it, they could use translating competence in the form of their knowledge of the SL in order to evaluate whether it has been rendered accurately.
Meaning travels depending on ‘successive, multi-sited, processes of de- and re-classification’ (Shove et al. 2012:56), i.e. the meaning attached to a practice can be replaced by another meaning, it may vary in different places, and can change over time. Translation production links various practices through the overarching purpose of producing a product which fully conforms to the client’s requirements, and translation professionals engage in these practices as part of their jobs. This understanding can be specified for different practices of translation production, which may have more or less direct links to particular translation products. Managing human resources, which includes the selection of suitable translators for the database, for instance, is not usually related to particular translation projects whereas choosing a translator for a specific job takes place with the details of that job in mind.

Second, practitioners can act as crossing points between practices if they are engaged in multiple practices at a time, and in doing so they link different activities and practices with one another. Translating as a practice, for instance, might involve subordinated activities such as research prior to, during and after producing the TT; the outcomes of research might be turned into translation resources like glossaries which can be consulted during translation, and possibly afterwards in order to check for consistency. By engaging in researching, creating resources and translating, the translator provides a point of connection between these activities and enacts them as a practice, as a number of elements come together in a specific and routinised way. When handling a translation project on behalf of an LSP, the translator interacts with a PM. Via these two people, practices of translating and managing translation projects connect and can form a larger complex of practices, i.e. translation production.

Conversely, it has been suggested that practices can link practitioners. Following ideas from the communities of practice approach, Shove et al. (ibid.:67) suggest that individuals who are connected through a practice form a community of practitioners. This can be helpful in thinking about translation professionals and clients, who all contribute to the process of translation production, as a group which is linked by being engaged in the same practice complex (see below), translation production, even if they perform different activities and practices. Similarly, we may speak of PMs, translators and proofreaders as members of such communities. However, it should be noted that a communities of practice approach gives priority to such networks of people, whereas practice
theory is based on networks of practices, i.e. observable enactments of various elements.

Two useful concepts proposed by Shove et al. (2012) are bundles and complexes of practices. Shove et al. (ibid.:81) explain that ‘bundles are loose-knit patterns based on the co-location and co-existence of practices. Complexes represent stickier and more integrated combinations, some so dense that they constitute new entities in their own right.’ These two concepts help us to analyse the relation between managing translation projects and other practices, such as translating and translation production.

2.1.5 Practice-as-performance and practice-as-entity

A useful analytical distinction pointing to the fact that enactment is a necessary feature of practices is between practice-as-performance and practice-as-entity (ibid.). Shove et al.’s (2012) categories bear resemblance to the distinction suggested by Schatzki (1996:96) between the nexus of practice, i.e. the linkages between what people do and say, and performance of practice, i.e. the actual carrying out. Practices-as-entity serve as a kind of analytical category as this designation refers to practices from a theoretical perspective, through which they can be explored in terms of their structure and the elements of which they are constituted. The idea of practice-as-performance, on the other hand, has close links to Reckwitz’ (2002) concept of bodily performance, as it refers to instances in which practices are enacted by practitioners, and in which all required elements become linked and are thus visible and recognisable as particular practices by co-practitioners. As Warde (2016:46) notes, ‘[p]erformances are best seen as continual improvisations within more or less precise or fuzzy parameters which permit confirmation that each displays sufficient similarity to be recognizable as an example of that particular Practice [sic].’ Performances are always local and temporary instances of enactment which can be different from one another even in the same setting, as single elements can be replaced with others in performances (Shove et al. 2012:86–7). Variation of performance does not constitute a problem as long as the actions can still be understood by others, so there is a range of acceptable actions. It has been proposed that individual enactments should be understood against the backdrop of the totality of enactments (Rouse 2011:645), that is to say that single instances of performance must be related to the practice as an entity.
Variation in practices-as-performance is to be distinguished from differences between practices-as-entity. In other words, different groups of practitioners carry out disparate actions in performing a practice which can nevertheless be discerned as a specific one. This point can be illustrated with an example from the practice of eating. People usually vary the components of their meals during the day (variation in practice-as-performance in relation to temporal structures), but there are also local differences in the compositions of meals (differences in the practice-as-entity), as the culture in which meals are consumed influences the choice of food items (Warde 2016:67–8). Therefore, more than one option of how to do things may exist, so that we can speak of a ‘co-existence of alternative practices (...), differing conceptions of or perspectives on the same practices, and ongoing contestation and struggle over the maintenance and reproduction of cultural norms’ (Rouse 2011:646). This notion of co-existence applies to practices which either serve the same or very similar purposes and are linked by this similarity.

Understanding competing practices-as-entity as co-existing is useful for conceptualising production practices in translation workplaces because often, a vision of the translation product exists but it is not specified how a certain level of quality will be achieved and thus, practitioners may engage in translation production in different ways. Product quality in translation has many contributors, and it has been suggested that there is often a lack of product specifications (Abdallah and Koskinen 2007:682). How quality is achieved in managing translation projects differs widely across the translation industry, and thus, we can assume that various practices-as-entity co-exist, which result in some form of recognisable translation product.

In order to persist, practices need to be performed, for practices that are no longer enacted may disappear. In order to understand this process it may be helpful to regard elements as dynamic units whose interplay can have significant repercussions on a practice. New elements entering an existing practice may displace or repress other elements (Shove et al. 2012:58). If no longer required for a particular practice, elements might vanish entirely, remain unused for some time or be integrated in other practices (ibid.:35). The various types of elements often disappear from practices in distinct ways; whilst materials may remain unused but still be present, parts of competences are likely to go missing if not enacted, and meanings can even more easily fall into oblivion (Shove
et al. 2012:60,62). Thus, the persistence of a practice depends on a certain internal stability regarding the elements which form part of it. If elements are part of several practices at the same time, they can serve as connecting entities between these practices (ibid.:112). However, the significance of performances goes beyond persistence, as they are also of vital importance for the creation of social structure. Performing practices is essential to the emergence of the social because through enactments, they become observable entities which have consequences. As Rouse (2011:644) puts it, ‘rules, norms and concepts get their meaning, and their normative authority and force, from their embodiment in publicly accessible activity.’

2.2 Conclusion: Researching translation through practice theory

As can be seen from the above discussion, practice theory has built on many sociological traditions. Some of these have been applied to TS, notably concepts from Giddens’ structuration theory and Bourdieu’s notions of field and habitus. However, as the above discussion has shown, a selective application of these concepts has significant limitations and is insufficient for answering the research questions guiding my study. Moreover, Bourdieu’s concept of field has limited relevance for my research. Due to these limitations, my research is informed by practice theory, as it draws on concepts from different traditions and develops these further where necessary.

A limitation arising from the application of practice theory is implied by Nicolini (2012:214) when he lists rather broad features inherent in all practice theories. Practice theory is a broad field with even contradictory traditions within the field. The toolkit approach proposed by Nicolini (ibid.:214) conceals these contradictions by suggesting that there is a tool in the toolkit on which one can draw when encountering an issue. In light of this, it appears difficult to remain critical. At the same time, the toolkit approach enables researchers to overcome the problems posed by single traditions.

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of practice theory, which constitutes the theoretical framework for my analysis of translation project management in chapter 4 and chapter 5. As mentioned in the introduction, I have decided to use a gerund form to refer to the practice, i.e. managing translation projects, as practice theory focuses on what people do. My suggested term
2 Theorising translation project management as a practice

for the practice puts the accent on the activities outlined in chapter 1, rather than on the PMs who actively engage in these. Practice theory supplies the concepts which are needed for analysing practices within translation production networks.

I will finish this chapter by outlining how practice theory can be applied to researching aspects of translation. Since this perspective is mainly about what people do, it requires empirical data on people’s actions. In this thesis, I analyse an empirical data set which I collected via workplace observation and semi-structured interviews with a group of PMs in an LSP (see chapter 3 for details), and my analysis is based on the activities which the PMs carry out on a daily basis, as well as on their perceptions of these routines. The PMs are conceptualised as carriers of managing translation projects, who are actively engaged in a nexus of various activities. Taken together, the resulting data set will provide insight into the practice of managing translation projects by identifying the elements involved in this practice, and by investigating how these elements are reproduced and connected so as to form performances of the practice.

I am particularly interested in how the PMs enact specific technologies in their role as practitioners to ensure the quality of translation products, and will I frame such integrations of technologies in the practice of managing translation projects from a socio-material perspective. This perspective enables us to analyse how the body and materials constitute the social structures in which translation project management is enacted. My analysis will be informed by Orlikowski’s (2007) study on the materiality of work in organisations, in which she explains that a socio-material approach enables us to move beyond the investigation of people’s interactions with technologies by regarding these as ‘entangled’ (Orlikowski 2007:1437) in practices. She stresses that ‘socio-materiality is constitutive, shaping the contours and possibilities of everyday organizing’ (ibid.:1444). A socio-material approach recognises that technologies contribute to the constitution of the social, and gives visibility to the role of technologies in the PMs’ enactments.

As explained in section 2.1.3, practice-theoretical approaches assume that material elements significantly contribute to the constitution of social structure, which facilitates an analysis of material enactments. My interest in the practitioners’ enactments of technology as part of managing translation projects
is founded on the impact of their integration in the practice on translation quality. I have explained in the previous chapter that technologies play a significant role in translation production and that translation technologies are part and parcel of both translating and managing translation projects. It has also been acknowledged that the use of translation technologies has an influence on the quality of translation products. However, it has neither been sufficiently explored how these technologies are integrated by PMs in their work practices, nor how other forms of technologies are used in relation to translation quality in translation project management, and therefore my analysis not only investigates how PMs make use of CAT tools but also takes another technology, namely the ERP system, into account. I have chosen to carry out an empirical study to establish how the PMs carry out technologies-in-practice with CAT tools and an ERP system. This framework acknowledges the emergent nature of such enactments, and emphasises the socio-material nature of managing translation projects.

The fundamental principle of practice-theoretical perspectives that practices are interconnected through elements, practitioners and enactments affords an investigation of the links between individual practices, which can help us to better understand how practices are embedded in a wider social structure. What tends to be perceived as extraneous factors of translation production can be theorised as part of these practices. For instance, client specifications may be understood as shaping the practice of managing translation projects. As has been shown in chapter 1, the PMs’ activities take place in the wider context of translation production. I have explained that managing translation projects is interconnected with other practices such as translating, and I therefore propose that translation production be theorised as a complex of practices, which allows us to consider managing translation projects as a subset of practices within translation production. Practice theory may enhance our understanding of how project management is implemented in translation production; not only by classifying the various procedures which are part of it, but also by establishing how these procedures are connected to one another, as well as how they are embedded in a wider context of related practices.

Finally, the application of a practice-theoretical approach constitutes a progression from the notion of translation production network, as outlined in section 1.1. Whereas network approaches afford the mapping and labelling of
relationships between components of a network, practice theory facilitates an investigation of these relationships and sets them in the context of a practice. Moreover, it enables us to perform analyses of the different practices which are enacted within production networks. As I will do in chapter 4, it is possible to deconstruct practices into their elements and investigate how certain elements are enacted in reproducing the practice. The approach can also be applied to exploring relations between practices, again with a focus on how elements are performed, how they travel and are modified. In chapter 5, I analyse how performances of the practice impact on a specific aspect of the practice, namely translation quality.
3 | Data and methods

This chapter connects the conceptual and theoretical foundations, which have been laid in chapter 1 and chapter 2, with the data analysis, which is given in the next two chapters. In the following, I present the methodology which I adopted to collect and analyse my data set, which provides an original insight into the workplace of PMs. It is a unique case study of how PMs in an LSP engage in practices of managing translation projects.

In section 3.1, I explain how I selected my setting, i.e. the LSP in which I carried out workplace observations and semi-structured interviews to collect an empirical data set. In section 3.2, I introduce my research setting. I discuss the methods of data collection in section 3.3. Next, section 3.4 addresses the ethical issues arising from my research design and outlines how these were addressed. Finally, section 3.5 explains the process of data analysis and explicates how the themes which inform the following chapters were determined.

3.1 Case selection

I studied the practice of managing translation projects in the case of a UK-based LSP, which I call languages@work in this research. This type of setting, i.e. an LSP, was chosen because I considered it to be a location where the practice of managing translation projects was enacted. In combination with ethnographic methods, case studies provide the researcher with an opportunity to analyse a particular case in the context in which it is naturally embedded in great detail, and they allow for flexibility in exploring the research subject (Susam-Sarajevo 2009:38; Hammersley and Atkinson 1989:3). This approach is well suited for studying translation workplaces, as it enables the researcher to experience a setting in its natural occurrence first-hand through their presence in it. Also, case studies facilitate an in-depth exploration of the research object, due to the possibility of triangulation, i.e. the combination of various methods of data collection (see also section 3.3 for more details). In this section, particular emphasis is placed on the topic of access as a key challenge of carrying out a case study on an LSP, as well as on how I dealt with this.

One of the main difficulties of researching translation production practices empirically in the context of a workplace study arose from having to obtain permission to observe and interview a group of research participants. Before providing details on how I accessed a specific research setting, i.e. how I obtained permission to collect data in a particular LSP, I would like to further
explain why I decided to focus on this actor in translation production. Initially, I had planned to not only collect data in an LSP, but also to seek permission from that LSP to contact those clients who commissioned the translation projects on which the PMs were working while I observed them. The reason behind this objective was to include the clients’ viewpoint on the translation services received by the LSP under study, which would have added a different perspective to the issues discussed in chapter 4 and chapter 5. I had hoped that the inclusion of clients would result in an even richer account of processes in translation production networks than provided by an analysis of the LSP only. An obvious benefit of collecting data directly from clients would have been an insight into how they perceive translation services, an area which is currently under-researched in TS.

However, my intention to conduct interviews with an LSP’s clients would have posed considerable challenges in terms of the LSP’s relationship management with the respective clients. By authorising such research activities, the LSP would have had to secure permission from clients for my research activities to be conducted. It also needs to be taken into account that that LSP would have had to leave me in charge of any such research, which would have meant a lack of control on their side. Although such considerations are purely hypothetical, it should be acknowledged that these circumstances would have borne a risk of impacting on the LSP’s corporate relationship with that client.

Upon further reflection, there would have been practical implications arising from this decision. As the same ethical principles would have applied to clients as to any other group of research participants, I would have had to ensure that these principles were fully met. Clients of an LSP are often located far away from the translation company and would have had to set aside resources to deal with processes of providing informed consent, take part in interviews, etc. As I may not have been able to conduct interviews on-site, alternative ways would have had to be found. To make interview data from clients valid, considerations of how they use translation services, and the practicalities of their using the services of an LSP would have had to be taken into account. For example, client companies differ in size and sector, in the extent to which they outsource translation services, in the frequency of such use and so on. Finally, client companies would have benefited less from the research than an LSP. To conclude, for practical reasons outlined above, my initial intention to include
clients as research participants could not be pursued. However, my decision to not include the client perspective could be mitigated by the fact that my data set contains some evidence of how the PMs perceive the clients’ viewpoint.

To identify a suitable research setting, I set a number of selection criteria for the LSPs that were going to be invited to take part in my research. Businesses were only included if they had existed for at least five years, as it was assumed that this period of time would have been sufficient to have established work routines, which were of significant interest to the research. Eligibility criteria required LSPs to offer translation services in multiple language combinations and subject domains so as to exclude specialised LSPs, and these services had to be offered to corporate as well as private clients. The rationale behind this criterion was the assumption that a large proportion of LSPs tallies with this profile, and would therefore be representative of the translation industry. I chose to exclude LSPs which consist of individual translators who manage translation projects for various clients, as I wanted to observe a number of PMs who do not translate. The company size was accordingly set to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which employ between 10 and 50 full-time staff. The reason for choosing this type of business was my interest in researching the practices of PMs who carry out a broad range of tasks, and it was assumed that SMEs would not, unlike large multinational LSPs, share out the PMs’ tasks between specialised PMs. Furthermore, I intended to avoid observing the workplace practices of PMs who translate regularly as part of their job, because I suspected that this might pose problems regarding the distinction between practices of managing translation projects and translating. Also, I was interested in the relations of the PMs’ practices with other practices of translation production, and it appeared logical to focus on the activities of PMs who were exclusively managing translation projects. Finally, LSPs had to be located in the UK’s Northwest, since I had to commute between my workplace and the fieldwork site.

Eligible LSPs who matched the selection criteria were identified from two sources; a first search was carried out via the Institute of Translation & Interpreting (ITI) directory of corporate members, and further information about LSPs was retrieved from their company websites. The ITI directory of corporate members provides limited search functions but gives an overview of the members, which I used as a point of reference for determining the businesses
3 Data and methods

which are listed in the UK. As the directory cannot be searched for location, business size or trading time, I used a search engine to find out which of these LSPs were based in the local area, and consulted their websites. Next, I compiled a list of 6 eligible LSPs to be contacted informally via email one after the other to establish if they were interested in participating, before approaching them with full documentation. Initially, I decided that the LSPs were going to be provided with general information about the aims of the research, as well as a few details about what their participation would involve. A total time of six months was stated for the data collection, with an estimated four to six weeks of observation to be spent in the research setting at the beginning of this period, followed by interviews at the end of the data collection phase.

The first LSP that I contacted declined my request due to concerns that the research would interrupt the employees’ workflow and thus have a negative impact on the company’s operation. Despite an exchange about the project both via email and telephone, the owner of the LSP felt that research activities would not be compatible with the day-to-day business. This experience pointed out the importance of integrating my activities into the LSP’s workflow, and thus, a subsequent request for participation that was sent via email to another LSP, languages@work, provided the potential participants with an amended version of the details about what the research would entail, so as to give them a clearer idea of how they would be part of my study, and to increase my chances of catching their interest. In addition, it was emphasized that organisational matters of the research design could be agreed between the LSP and the researcher, in order to integrate the research activities into the LSP’s workflow. The LSP was given the opportunity to specify the exact times as to when the workplace observations and interviews would be carried out. The aims of the research, as well as the methods were not negotiable. My request was met by languages@work with a positive response from the beginning.

In addition, it became clear that languages@work were keen on participating in my study for another reason which I had not considered. In the past, another researcher who used similar methods of data collection was present at the LSP to carry out another study, and the management of languages@work was interested in establishing links with the university. My impression was that the LSP’s previous experience of having accommodated a researcher had a positive effect on my request to conduct similar research, and this was a motivation
which I had not anticipated.

To further benefit from their participation, languages@work was offered to access the results, so as to increase the LSP’s awareness of how their work practices facilitate translation quality in the context of the distributed nature of translation production. An initial, informal meeting was held with the business owner to inform them in more detail about my research objectives, the planned research process and the use of results. In addition, we discussed how my research activities could be best integrated in the LSP’s daily operations and how we would organise my data collection. In particular, languages@work was concerned about the amount of time I was planning to spend in the setting, since the business owner anticipated that my presence would prevent the employees from focusing their attention on their tasks, at least for some of the time during which they would be explaining to me what they were doing, or while they were being interviewed. After some negotiations, we agreed that I could conduct about ten days of workplace observation, and carry out up to two hours of interviews with each participant.

The agreements between me and languages@work were formalised in a second meeting with the business owner and a manager. The manager signed my consent form (see section 3.4), and on the business owner’s request, I signed a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to protect the LSP’s interests. The NDA related to all information and materials which were not publicly available. While I was carrying out my research, I had access to several types of confidential information; for instance, I could identify some of the LSP’s clients, saw specific client data and read parts of potentially confidential STs. In addition, I learnt how languages@work operates; I saw documents outlining certain procedures and got an idea of rates charged to clients and paid to translators. By signing the NDA, I agreed to not disclose such information to anyone else, or to use it in any way that would be disadvantageous for the LSP. The NDA also prohibited the use of company materials such as documents, as well as taking pictures or making electronic recordings.

Obtaining a signed NDA with languages@work did not have repercussions on the dissemination of the collected data after I had analysed it. We had entered into a mutual agreement, and their signing of my consent form gave me permission to use such data for research purposes, i.e. I could present it at conferences and seminars and use it for publishing my thesis and publications.
3 Data and methods

The terms of the NDA committed me to ensure that any reporting of the data preserved the anonymity of the company and the research participants, and that data was handled securely in terms of privacy and confidentiality. For more details on how I adhered to ethical principles, see section 3.4.

It was agreed that I would arrange mutually convenient timings for the observations and interviews via email with the manager. Following the meeting, the respective employees who were going to become my research participants were informed about the planned study by their manager, and were provided by her with participant information sheets (see appendix A), which I had forwarded to her. This way, the participants had a minimum of three days, i.e. the time between receiving the information sheets and the start of the first workplace observation, to decide if they wanted to take part in the research. Between the meeting and the start of the first workplace observation, I had been in contact with the manager via email, and she provided me with progress updates on the recruitment of participants. She agreed to distribute consent forms to potential participants on my behalf prior to the start of the observations and interviewing. The VM, the proofreader, the DTP specialist and five of the PMs agreed to take part and remained committed for the duration of the research.

3.2 Research setting

languages@work is a typical small LSP and employs a workforce of about 30 in several offices in the UK and Europe. The staff consists of the management, a number of PMs and other employees like proofreaders, DTP operators, business development and vendor managers, IT support and accountants. Translation work is outsourced to freelance translators who are based all over the world. My research was carried out in two different offices in the UK\(^1\), to which I will refer as site 1 and site 2. In each of the two research sites, staff members were working in an open-plan configuration, in which every employee had their personal desk with a desktop computer and a telephone, and both offices were equipped with a shared printer. Another shared feature of the two sites was their location in office buildings in which other companies were situated, and which offered reception areas and shared kitchens that were used by all companies.

Most of the project management was carried out at site 2. Only one of the PMs, Colin, was based at site 1. Site 1 was the workplace of some of the

\(^1\)The exact locations of the two research sites have been left out intentionally, so as to preserve the anonymity of the company.
IT staff, the DTP operators, the VM, the business development team and the accounts team. Management staff was based in both of the two locations. The business owner was based at site 1, and the manager who was present at my second meeting with languages@work frequently travelled between the sites but was based at site 2. Apart from most of the PMs, the proofreaders and some of the IT support staff were also located at site 2. I observed a variety of staff working at each of the two sites, including the proofreader, Oliver, and the DTP operator, Andy, but narrowed my focus to the PMs’ and the VM’s activities after the initial observations.

Staff in the two offices were communicating frequently and used various media for having conversations and exchanging files and information. During the data collection phase, I observed numerous instances in which employees were calling someone located in a different office to discuss aspects of their work. I also observed that members of staff were sending or forwarding each other emails, sometimes with attachments but files tended to be exchanged via a server, so informing one another of server locations of files could be regularly observed. Finally, all employees were using IM for communication. Aspects of communication will be further discussed in section 5.3.2.

My first day of workplace observation took place at site 1. I had been informed by one of the two gatekeepers, the coordinating manager, that I would be received by one of the business development managers on my first day of workplace observation, as the coordinating manager could not be there on the day. As mentioned above, she was based at site 2 but travels regularly between the offices. The business development manager had been asked by her to coordinate my research activities on the day.

One of the reception staff members in the building informed languages@work that I had arrived and the business development manager collected me from the reception area and we went to the office together. Site 1 consisted of a rectangular room with large windows to one side and desks to both sides of the room. The door was located at the end of one side of the room, so that upon entering the office, one had an overview of all desks. The business development manager briefly introduced me to the other employees working in the open-plan office and asked the PMs if I could sit with him to observe his activities. The PM agreed without hesitation and offered me to sit next to his desk from where I could see his screen. Sitting next to rather than behind him allowed me to
not only see what he was doing, but also facilitated conversations so he could explain the activities he was carrying out and I could ask questions.

My first day at site 2 proceeded in a similar way. Upon my arrival, I reported to the reception staff and was collected from the reception area by a member of staff. The coordinating manager was present at the site and gave me a quick tour through the premises before introducing me to everyone in the office. The layout of site 2 slightly differed from site 1, as the desks were arranged in clusters rather than to the sides of the room. Again, I was allocated a PM to sit next to.

My initial impression at both sites was that the employees seemed courteous and slightly reserved, which I interpreted as a natural reaction to my presence in the offices, in my capacity as researcher, with the employees being unfamiliar with my research activities. However, they appeared to quickly adapt to my presence and seemed keen on accommodating my activities into their working day. The introduction at the beginning, I believe, helped the participants to adjust to the new situation and greatly facilitated my development of a good rapport with them.

I usually spent several hours focusing on one person’s activities before observing another person. I spent most of my time observing the five PMs\(^2\) Sophie, Max, Annika, Colin and Karolina, who were present in the office on the days I carried out my data collection. The PMs’ age ranged from 24 to 55 years at the time of the observations, with a median age of 28 years and an average age of 32.4 years. The PMs had between 0.75 years and 26 years of work experience in the translation industry, with a median work experience of 5 years and an average of 7.95 years. They had worked for languages@work between a few months and 7 years, with a median of 1.5 years and an average of 2.7 years. They were native speakers of four different languages (see table 3.1).

I also spent a considerable amount of my time at languages@work with the VM, Emily, who is responsible for recruiting suppliers and updating the company’s supplier database. At the time of the workplace observations, Emily was 27 years old, had worked in the translation industry for 4 years and had been with languages@work for 2 years. For short periods of time, I also observed the proofreader and the DTP operator but only the PMs’ and the VM’s activities were included in the study, as I decided to focus on the PMs’ practice, which

\(^2\)Pseudonyms have been used for all participants, see section 3.4.
3 Data and methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>age (years)</th>
<th>years of work experience in the translation industry</th>
<th>years of work experience at languages@work</th>
<th>native language</th>
</tr>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
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<td>Annika</td>
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<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>German</td>
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<td>7.95</td>
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<td>2.47</td>
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Table 3.1: Project manager statistics

has close links with the VM’s practice (see section 3.3 for more details).

My overall impression of languages@work was that of a workplace in which phases of concentrated working were sometimes interrupted by friendly conversations that seemed to ease the working day. To provide an example, one afternoon, a manager was showing pictures of snowy landscapes that were taken on a recent trip. As a result of this, everybody in the office briefly interrupted their tasks and joined the informal conversation. languages@work thus appeared to be a busy workplace with a pleasant working atmosphere.

The friendly character of this working environment and the open-plan layout of the offices were significant features of accessing the setting. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1989:59, 61–2), the term access is not restricted to physical access to the research site; it also denotes the establishment of relations with the research participants. During my initial email exchange and the two meetings with the company owner and the manager who coordinated my research activities, I began to build a rapport with my gatekeepers at languages@work, which presumably already influenced how my research activities and focus were understood by the participants, as these two people communicated my research plans to them.

3.3 Methods of data collection

My data collection consisted of two stages, namely workplace observation and semi-structured interviews, which were used as complementary methods of data collection. Both of these methods are commonly used in ethnography; however, I do not suggest that my study is ethnographic in nature but drawing on ethnographic methods proved valuable because these helped me to pursue
an exploratory investigation in an authentic environment. To outline the I begin this section with a brief discussion of how ethnographic methods have been used in TS.

Research using ethnographic methods in TS has focused on a number of different aspects of translation workplaces. A significant contribution to applying ethnography in TS has been made by Koskinen (2008) who studied organisational and aspects of visibility of translators in the European Commission by combining observation, focus group interviews and text analysis. A second example is an investigation of literary translation production in a number of Canadian publishing houses by Buzelin (2006, 2007).

Various workplace studies that apply ethnographic methods have been conducted on translators and LSPs in contexts other than institutional and literary translation, for instance, the aforementioned research by Abdallah (2010), as well as the work by Risku (2004, 2006) and Risku et al. (2013). Ehrensberger-Dow (2014) also carried out a comprehensive study of translators at their workplace in an LSP, which combined observation with interviewing and other methods like computer logging, screen recording and eye tracking. Other examples of research on translators using ethnographic methods include a small-scale study carried out by Hébert-Malloch (2004), for which she videotaped a freelance translator at work for a period of five weeks to study translators' daily routines, and a case study by LeBlanc (2013) on the relationship between technology and translator satisfaction and status that combined observational and interviewing techniques. Karamanis et al. (2011) employed similar methods to investigate the effects of collaboration on trust in localisation projects.

Furthermore, there are a few studies on translation workplaces that focus on actors other than translators, such as Pedersen’s (2016) PhD thesis in which he investigates a transcreation agency, or the work of Risku (2004) who observed PMs in an Austrian LSP in order to investigate the role of artefacts in translation production. Another example of a workplace study of PMs which uses ethnographic methods is Olohan and Davitti (2015) who observed and interviewed PMs in several LSPs in the UK so as to investigate trust in their relationship with other actors in the production process.

The above-mentioned body of research does not represent an exhaustive list of workplace studies of translation but this selection illustrates the application of ethnographic methods to in situ collection of empirical data in translation.
workplaces, and it is representative of the fact that previous studies, with a few exceptions, tended to focus on translators.

Ethnographic methods such as workplace observations and interviews offer some advantages for studying translation. First, they enable us to investigate a broad range of aspects of translation (and translation production) in a socially situated way (Flynn 2010:116), i.e. in the contexts in which these activities occur. Unlike research that takes place under experimental conditions, research using ethnographic methods is often conducted in the field, i.e. in authentic environments. The researcher can experience the field first-hand, and may engage closely with the research subjects over an extended period of time, as was the case in Koskinen’s (2008) study. In my case, the time that I could spend in the setting was limited by the LSP’s conditions of taking part, as outlined above, as well as the limited amount of time I could spend away from my workplace.

Doing research in authentic environments does not necessarily mean that participants are entirely unaffected by the researcher’s presence; in fact, my impression was that the participants of my study required some time to get accustomed to having a researcher in the setting, as I have explained above. However, I also felt that these participants, once I had observed them for a while, were immersed in their tasks most of the time and did not focus on my presence. It seems therefore reasonably safe to assume that, even though my presence may have affected the participants’ behaviour to some extent, my data set is representative of their work routines.

Second, research using ethnographic methods is often of an exploratory nature and the collection of data takes place in a relatively unstructured way because phenomena are studied in authentic settings, so that the course of the research may not be exactly predicted (Hammersley and Atkinson 1989:3). It is therefore used for developing rather than testing theories by establishing concepts, categories and their relationships from the data (Hübscher-Davidson 2011:7). Research settings are structured by the actors who are part of them, and by the practices in which the actors engage. This set-up provides the researcher with a chance to explore the research subject from the participants’ perspective, rather than conducting the research on predefined assumptions. The exploratory nature of my research was mainly evident in choosing the ERP system as an area of focus in my observations, and subsequently as one
of the technologies in my analysis. Unlike CAT tools, the use of ERP systems by translation professionals has not been discussed in the literature, and was therefore not an obvious area of focus. However, this type of software, which is used for managing information, resources and accounts is a vital aspect of the PMs’ daily work. The extensive application of this technology by the PMs emerged as a potential area of focus only during the observations, whereas the use of the second technology which I analyse, CAT tools, was anticipated before I started my fieldwork. Another example which illustrates the exploratory nature of my study was my decision to spend a considerable amount of time observing the VM. While observing the PMs, it became apparent that the VM’s activities were highly relevant to their practice, so I observed her practice too. Some of her activities were also included in my analysis because they enabled me to consider how practices of managing translation projects are embedded in a wider nexus of practice entities.

Empirical research involves representation and inevitable focusing on specific issues. All data is collected from the researcher’s perspective, with specific aims in mind, and subsequently presented in a particular way. When I began to observe the employees at languages@work, I had already worked as a PM in a similar setting and found myself comparing the PMs’ activities to my own work experience. I had read publications from other research in similar settings, and these also shaped my perspective on the PMs’ practice. My research activities were further structured by my research aims, and I therefore focused on observing particular activities, took notes on the issues that appeared relevant to my study and asked questions about specific aspects of the practice (see also section 3.3.1). Naturally, this meant that I disregarded all aspects which seemed irrelevant to me during the workplace observation, in my notes and during the interviews. Accordingly, my analysis is based on excerpts rather than all the data I collected. The results of my analysis, provided in chapter 4 and chapter 5, are presented in text form, transforming the practice-as-performance into a practice-as-entity in written form.

Third, various ethnographic methods can be combined in the process of data collection. Combining workplace observation with semi-structured interviews enabled me to study practices of managing translation projects in two distinct ways, and provided me with an opportunity to validate findings and discuss salient aspects from the first stage of the data collection in the interviewing
phase. In addition, the fact that the research was carried out in two offices of languages@work, and with several PMs (and the VM), further contributed to ensuring valid findings.

3.3.1 Workplace observation

As practices are observable in what people do, observation constitutes an appropriate method for studying practices. Nicolini (2012:218) suggests that observation complements other methods of investigation such as interviews, and that it should be part of a practice-theoretical enquiry. At the beginning of the data collection phase of my research, I carried out 9 non-consecutive days of workplace observation between December 2014 and January 2015, totalling about 60 hours.

Overall, my workplace observations progressed from initially paying attention to broader aspects of managing translation projects to more specific features of translation quality within the practice. In the beginning, I made ‘descriptive’ (Spradley 1980:73) observations. Such observations aim at answering particular questions and are made from a certain perspective (ibid.:73–76). My objective was to look for answers to my research questions by observing how the PMs engaged in managing translation projects. My interest lay in activities that formed part of managing translation projects, as well as on activities related to these practices and the use of material objects by the PMs. In retrospect, such a broad focus turned out to be too wide with regards to the limited time I spent in the setting, as I devoted at least two of the days to entirely descriptive observations of the general activities of the PMs. It cannot be denied that making this kind of descriptions helped me to accustom myself to the activity of making fieldnotes, but afterwards I found that these fieldnotes mainly confirmed what other researchers had already established, and what I had experienced myself when I was working as a PM. It may be argued that this data is still valuable, as it confirms previous findings but in hindsight, it would have been more suitable to narrow the focus of enquiry from the start of the observations, and to focus on the particularities of the selected case.

From descriptive observations, I moved on to making ‘focused’ (ibid.:105) observations. This type of observation focuses on specific aspects of the initial questions (ibid.:105), and it appeared to be useful once I had gained an overview of some of the activities which the PMs carried out. In particular, I observed how
Data and methods

the PMs were implementing translation quality while performing their practice. While they were repeatedly engaging in a number of activities that were part of the practice of managing translation projects, their use of technology emerged as an interesting theme from these observations. I had noticed that several types of technology were crucial to the practice, and therefore narrowed my interest further to ‘selective’ (Spradley 1980:128) observations, which concentrate on more isolated issues of the object under study (ibid.:128). In my case, I observed how the PMs used technology in their attempts to implement translation quality.

During the observations, I took fieldnotes which I typed up, completed with additional details and expanded with analytical notes after each day of observation. The decision to take handwritten notes was made for reasons of practicality and for the benefit of the participants. The setting did not allow for a laptop to be carried around and it was assumed that handwritten notes would also be perceived as less threatening by the participants. The process of typing up manual fieldnotes and making analytical notes presented me with an opportunity for reflection before the next day of observation, and helped me to identify questions and themes, which again guided my focus for the observations. Overall, the observations provided approximately 30,400 words of fieldnotes.

The method of observation presents the researcher with various possibilities in the degree of participation. Spradley (ibid.) distinguishes between several types ranging from non-participation to complete participation. Non-participation means that a researcher does not engage with the people who are observed (ibid.:59), whereas complete participation applies to contexts in which the researcher is a full member (ibid.:61). I assumed a ‘passive’ (ibid.:59–60) observer role at languages@work, i.e. I was present in the setting but did not actively take part in any activities of managing translation projects, and my interaction with the participants was limited to the times when they were not too immersed in their practice. My role was that of the researcher who had come in to learn about the participants’ practice rather than that of a specialist in project management. This was evident, as the participants regularly explained to me what they were doing, offered to answer any questions and apologised when they were too busy to talk to me. I also maintained that special status by arriving later and leaving earlier than everybody else and sitting next to or often behind the participants so as to observe what they were doing and
record their activities in the form of fieldnotes. According to Spradley (1980), the researcher also assumes a different role, as, even if they may participate in the activities they observe, they are more aware of aspects characterising the situation because they pay attention to these and use ‘a wide observational focus’ (ibid.:56) that includes more than would be immediately relevant to a situation.

3.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

In October 2015, when the observational data had been analysed, I returned to the setting to conduct a total of 10 semi-structured interviews with 4 PMs and the VM, which amounted to 357 minutes of recordings. Only four of the five observed PMs were interviewed, as one of them had left the LSP by that time. The VM was interviewed, as her practice had turned out to be closely linked to managing translation projects. All interviews were audio-recorded and fully transcribed afterwards.

The interviews took place on the company premises in social areas away from the open-plan office. This setting created a comfortable atmosphere away from the interviewees’ desks and ensured that the interviews were conducted in a private and confidential manner between the researcher and the interviewees. For the recordings, I secured the participants’ permission to place a voice recorder on the table, which constituted an unobtrusive and uninterrupted form of recording, and which was turned on at the beginning of each interview and turned off at the end. None of the participants seemed to experience any discomfort with the interviews being recorded.

In order to ensure that the audio recordings were of sufficient quality, I had adjusted the settings of the recorder and tested it under similar conditions. I avoided the use of an external microphone, since this would have been more intrusive and the quality of the recordings was adequate for preparing transcripts, even though I had to listen to some stretches of recording several times.

I used a semi-structured interview approach, i.e. the interviews followed an interview guide (see appendix B) with a number of topics to be covered, and I asked each participant similar questions. This approach allowed me to compare the interviewees’ responses during the process of data analysis. In terms of content, the interviews focused on several aspects of the practice of managing translation projects. It was assumed that the practice-as-entity
could be recreated from the participants’ accounts of their performances of the practice.

Due to the busy working environment, the interviewees could only spend limited time away from their desks and I therefore decided to carry out two shorter interviews with every participant instead of one longer one. The first interview was mainly based on the PMs’ enactments of materials and interactions with other practitioners, as these topics had emerged as key themes from the analysis of the fieldnotes. The interviews opened with a brief overview of the participants’ career paths, in which I learned about their degree qualifications and previous work experience as PMs, and continued with their ideas of skills and knowledge needed for translation project management. This data was invaluable for investigating the constituent elements of the practice. I then asked about the interviewees’ collaboration and communication with other people such as colleagues and translators, before moving on to how they use the two main information technologies that were identified in the fieldnotes, namely CAT tools and the ERP system. The first interview concluded with a discussion of initiative. The second interview was based on the concept of translation quality. It explored the PMs’ understandings of quality, as well as the interactions between quality and technologies and the links between quality and competence.

The interview themes had emerged from the observations, as I had started to code and analyse my fieldnotes before I began to interview the participants (see section 3.5 for more details on how I analysed the data), and they were also based on salient aspects in the literature on translation project management, quality in translation, and practice theory. For instance, the exploration of the elements involved in practices of managing translation projects played a crucial part in the first interviews, and a focus was on enactments of CAT and ERP software as two major material elements, as these had emerged as a key concept from my analysis of the fieldnotes. Overall, it proved to be helpful that I had already developed a good rapport with the interviewees, and that the interviews were exploring topics that we had started to discuss in the observation phase.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Ethics is part and parcel of responsible research involving human subjects. The nature of the collected data therefore necessitated critical engagement
with research ethics at an early stage of the project. Ethical approval was sought for this project prior to undertaking any fieldwork, and was formally obtained in November 2014. In this section, I comment on how potential issues were assessed and which solutions were suggested to guarantee that adequate precautions were followed in order to ensure that the research was carried out in an ethically responsible fashion.

The provision of informed consent was ensured by the circulation of a participant information sheet (see appendix A). The document, written in a question and answer format, explained the research in non-technical terms, since it had to be accessible to persons without an academic background in TS. As explained in section 3.1, one of the managers sent the participant information sheet to the employees before the research began. In my initial meeting and email exchange with the management, I had emphasised the importance of the employees having access to this information but I had no control over, or access to, the communication process between the management and the employees. The form contained the contact details of me and my supervisor, so that the employees could discuss any further queries directly with the researcher and/or her supervisor. However, none of them made use of this opportunity. Preceding the interviews, the participants were informed about the purpose of these and were provided with the interview topics but they were not given the actual questions prior to the interviewing process. The consent form that was signed by the participants explicitly stated the participants’ right to withdraw their permission to use the data at any time and with immediate effect, without having to provide any reasons for their decision, and it was designed to formally document the process of informed consent. As mentioned above, none of the participants decided to make use of their right to withdraw from the research.

Secure data handling in terms of privacy and confidentiality constitutes a major aspect of research ethics. During the data collection phase and the process of analysis, it was crucial to protect the participants’ privacy and ensure a confidential way of handling data. Manual and digitised fieldnotes, audio recordings, transcripts and all materials resulting from the analysis were securely stored and were only accessible to the researcher and the research supervisor. To protect the LSPs’ interests, especially client-related data, the researcher had signed a confidentiality agreement (NDA) prior to the start of the data collection.
3 Data and methods

The final cardinal principle to be applied was anonymity. A key factor in conducting the research was to ensure that the participants’ identity would remain anonymous in any form of publication resulting from the research. Instead of the participants’ names, pseudonyms were employed for all participants and the company name, and direct quotes were used only in such a way that did not allow for the identification of individual participants. Details of how the data was processed will be discussed in section 3.5.

3.5 Process of data analysis

The first step in my analysis was to render the data anonymous by using pseudonyms for all instances in which names of people were mentioned. I also decided to make names of technologies anonymous and used fictitious names for the CAT tools and the ERP system. As I had digitised my data, I was able to substitute real names for pseudonyms using the replace function in the word processor. I then colour-coded my fieldnotes by person by changing the font colour according to the person to which the note related. This facilitated an easy identification of the person to whom a theme or keyword referred, when using the search function in the word processor. To enable the identification of the source of a particular fieldnote excerpt or interview quote in the thesis, I introduced a referencing system for my data. Source documents were referenced with a four-digit number followed by two letters. The numbers identify the corresponding document, RN indicates a fieldnote document and the letter I signifies interview, followed by the initial of the person who was interviewed, e.g. IS stands for interview with Sophie.

Next, the data set was thematically coded based on my research questions. Instead of using a grounded theory approach as proposed by Hammersley and Atkinson (1989), the coding was influenced by my research questions, which had emerged from my engagement with the literature in TS and from an understanding of practice theory. In other words, my research questions pre-existed the process of coding, and I approached the data set with my research questions in mind, and added codes related to themes, i.e. elements of practices, enactments of materials, modifications, understandings of quality, and interactions between practitioners. The coding was carried out in a word processor, using the comment feature which later on enabled electronic searching for themes. This process was repeated as new themes emerged, and finished
once no new themes were discovered.

Based on the literature reviewed in chapter 1, I had started from a number of assumptions on which I based my research questions. My underlying assumption was that PMs engage in the practice of managing translation projects and I was interested in determining the elements of the practice, so as to be able to produce an account of the practice-as-entity. The emergent character of the data collection posed a considerable challenge in this endeavour. As noted earlier, data collected in the field is often of an unpredictable nature and therefore, a common feature of ethnographic research is that the focus may have to be shifted, or even changed, as one’s initial assumptions may prove wrong or the previously set focus cannot be researched in the setting (Hammersley and Atkinson 1989). After I had gathered my observational data, I therefore slightly revised my research questions, so as to reflect the significance of the two main technologies employed by the PMs. Both CAT tools and the ERP system were named as specific technologies once I had identified them as the most salient ones in my research setting. My observation that the PMs were drawing heavily on the two technologies confirmed the assumption made in the literature that information technologies are crucial to translation workplaces, and confirmed that claim for my setting.

At the same time, my focus shifted towards the PMs’ enactments of these technologies. Rather than focusing on the technologies themselves, I was interested in finding out how they are used by the PMs, and I decided to draw on CAT tools and the ERP system as two examples of studying the socio-material aspects of managing translation projects. Practice theory provided me with the necessary concepts for analysing such interactions, which focus on the interplay between a person, or practitioner, and a technology. Both entities are contributing to interactions, and therefore the result are socio-material enactments of technologies by practitioners, so-called technologies-in-practice. The focus on socio-material enactments is reflected in the introduction of the technologies-in-practice concept to my set of research questions. Still, I was also concerned with the PMs’ interactions with other practitioners, as I assumed that translation production is a collaborative effort.

As a second big theme, translation quality had emerged as a salient issue from the literature and had been selected as a research topic for my thesis. My aim was to take the vantage point of practice theory to approach this topic from
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a new perspective. Therefore, my inquiry of translation project management as a practice informed my analysis of translation quality. I focused on selected instances in which the PMs enacted aspects of translation quality, and this method enabled me to study quality in translation not just as an abstract concept, but to understand it as emergent from the practitioners’ activities.

In sum, my research questions strongly guided the thematic analysis of both my fieldnotes and interview transcripts. The analysis of the fieldnotes began during the phase of observation, when I typed up, expanded and added analytical notes to them, which reflected a practice theory-inspired reading of my data set. In the process, I made a note of provisional findings, and wrote down any emerging questions and areas which required further attention. These could then be followed up on the next day of fieldwork. Between the two stages of data collection, I studied the whole set of fieldnotes, developed a provisional structure for my analysis, as well as a set of answers to the research questions, and identified areas which needed further research. This information was used in the development of the interview guide.

The interview transcripts were also analysed for answers to my research questions. I looked for similarities and differences in the participants’ accounts and organised the data accordingly. During the analysis, I wrote analytical memos and used spider diagrams to make sense of the data I had gathered. Finally, I organised my data into key concepts and sub themes I had identified, and organised these according to their relevance for the object of study. In addition, I established if and how these themes were linked to one another.

The process of data analysis involved focussing on certain themes, and leaving out others. This selection process was guided by my research questions, for which I required answers. Themes that appeared not be related to my research questions after careful interpretation were not included in the analysis which can be found in the following chapters. An example is the DTP operator’s collaboration with other employees. Although I spent some time observing this employee, his involvement in translation production seemed to bear no significance for the projects on which the PMs worked while I was observing them. Thus, I decided to not pursue this further, and instead focused on other forms of collaboration.

I will finish this chapter with an evaluation of the methodology I employed. The adopted approach offers a few significant advantages. A considerable
benefit derived from this methodology was that it allowed for flexibility. As mentioned above, carrying out fieldwork may reveal unexpected aspects which were not considered in the original set of research questions. It is therefore ideal for research of an exploratory nature. Second, my aim was to investigate translation project management as a practice, and therefore I required direct access to the PMs’ activities. The data set that I collected allowed me to explore various elements of the practice by using different methods, and thus provided me with suitable accounts in the form of fieldnotes and interview transcripts. Furthermore, such an approach may be applied to varying scope. It can be employed to study individual aspects of the practice or encompass the practice as a whole, with all its features. Undertaking a full-scale enquiry of practices of translation production, or even the complete practices of managing translation projects would have exceeded the scope of this PhD project, and therefore I restricted my scope to a study of the most salient elements which constitute the practice of managing translation projects and an investigation of the socio-material nature of the practice (see chapter 4) before I concentrated on the aspect of translation quality within this practice (see chapter 5).
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Chapter 4 and chapter 5 set out to answer the overarching research question of my project, i.e. how does conceptualising translation project management as a practice enhance our understanding of the role of project management and translation quality in production networks.

This chapter is divided into three main sections which discuss the answers relating to the research questions enlisted under question 1, i.e. how do PMs enact the practice of managing translation projects. The analysis starts from the view that translations are manufactured in production networks, as defined in chapter 1. This view enables me to conceive of translation project management as a highly context-dependent activity. To provide insight into my research questions, I investigate how a group of PMs at languages@work employ two types of technologies, i.e. CAT tools and an ERP system, in their workplace. To this end, I conceptualise translation project management from a practice-theoretical perspective. The analysis will be supported by providing data excerpts, i.e. interview data and fieldnotes from the participant observations from both research sites.

Before discussing my observations of specific enactments of technology within the practice of managing translation projects, it is necessary to demonstrate how the PMs draw on various elements when reproducing the practice of managing translation projects. In section 4.1, I will therefore examine research question 1a, i.e. which elements are significant for the PMs’ practice, and how are these elements enacted. In chapter 2, I defined practices as the interplay between material elements, elements of competence and elements of meaning. As explained in section 2.1.2, communities of practitioners draw on sets of these components in order to enact the structures of any given practice. Through repeated enactments, a practice becomes a ‘routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other’ (Reckwitz 2002:249). Based on examples from my data set, I deconstruct the practice of managing translation projects in terms of its constituent elements, as such an investigation will enhance our understanding of the activities that this practice involves.

Together, section 4.2 and section 4.3 aim to answer research question 1b, i.e. which technologies-in-practice do PMs enact with CAT tools and ERP software when they work on translation projects. Such interactions can be studied through the technologies-in-practice framework proposed by Orlikowski (2000), as outlined in section 2.1.3, and be extended with notions of temporality.
(Boudreau and Robey 2005; Orlikowski and Yates 2002) of such enactments, as introduced in section 2.1.1. A technologies-in-practice framework presumes that practitioners enact technologies in recurrent ways but ‘while habitual, routinized, and institutionalized patterns of using a technology may be evident, these are always ongoing accomplishments’ (Orlikowski 2000:412). The structures enacted with materials are therefore not inherent in the technology’s properties, meaning that what the PMs do with such materials is not a final form of enactment, but instead evolves around highly particular contexts and is therefore emergent. I investigate which structures the PMs enact with the two tools mentioned, provide explanations for why a technology may be used in different ways and identify some of the factors shaping such use. The notion of temporality helps us to understand present enactments in the context of their past and future (Boudreau and Robey 2005:14). This is critical for my analysis since the PMs were using a new ERP system at the time of the workplace observation, and their interactions appeared to be influenced by past experience of technologies-in-practice with an ERP system.

In section 4.2, I investigate how the PMs enact elements of competence in relation to CAT tools and the wider practice of managing translation projects. My analysis suggests that the PMs enact CAT tools in ways which support processes of project management, and I therefore suggest that these tools act as a material resource that can be employed to engage in the practice. Furthermore, I argue that the PMs draw on elements of competence, and that these elements are constantly monitored, assessed and updated when necessary. The purpose of section 4.3 is to analyse the PMs’ integration of the ERP system into their practice. My analysis indicates that the use of the ERP system is always dependent upon the context in which such enactments take place, and that it is based on the competence of the PM. In addition, my analysis demonstrates that the PMs modify this technology when they are managing translation projects.

Chapter 5 will examine how the understanding of project management as a practice enhances our understanding of translation quality. As we will see, the PMs show a clear understanding of translation quality, which is reflected in their expectations of working with translators. They enact a number of structures that are directed at achieving high product quality. These enactments involve the integration of technological resources, such as translation memories (TMs)
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and term bases, as well as the interaction with other practitioners.

4.1 Elements of managing translation projects

I begin my discussion of project management as a practice with a deconstruction into its constituent elements. As a starting point, I will briefly revisit the notion of enactment, as introduced in chapter 2. As Shove et al. (2012:21) explain, ‘social practices consist of elements that are integrated when practices are enacted.’ Based on this claim, it can be hypothesised that PMs manage translation projects by combining various elements in such a way that the resulting enactments represent managing translation projects. Taking this assumption even further, it can be inferred that the PMs’ repeated and routinised enactments result in the reproduction of the practice. As outlined in chapter 2, the PMs’ actions are, at the same time, structured by the practice, as it determines what they must do in order to manage translation projects, as well as how they must carry out these actions. In this section, I will examine how such reproduction is conducted. My aim is to investigate how the PMs define various elements of project management and which elements feature in my data as the most significant ones.

In section 2.1.2, I proposed to divide elements into materials, meaning and competence, and to subdivide competence into understanding and knowing. The observations and interviews sought to establish the PMs’ views on what these elements consist of in relation to their enactments.

Materials

During my fieldwork, I observed that the PMs were enacting a large number of material objects, such as desktop computers and telephones. Desktop computers provide them with entry points to a comprehensive technological infrastructure which consists of a variety of applications and resources for managing translation projects. Generally, these different applications and resources serve a range of purposes, from communication to organisation and administration. Accordingly, they can be enacted as part of communicative, organisational and administrative practices.

For the following analysis, I have selected the ERP system and CAT tools as the most striking materials (see also section 4.2 and section 4.3), as these proved to be the most significant ones in my research setting. My selection was based on the views expressed by the PMs during the interviews and the
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relevance of these tools for project management. I observed that the PMs enacted the ERP system time and again to carry out various steps in the management of translation projects. However, one unanticipated observation was that this technology was only mentioned by the PMs during the interviews upon probing. CAT tools, on the contrary, were brought up by most of the PMs as a critical material in project management. For instance, Karolina explained that PMs 'are fairly literate in terms of understanding what [the] translation process involves, of the tools that are available in the market' [1910IK]. In acknowledging that PMs should be able to use CAT tools, this comment implies that they are important for project management.

A possible explanation for the unexpected pattern of not mentioning ERP software may be that the PMs are not conscious of the fact that they enact the ERP system on a very regular and routinised basis, as was evident in the observations. On the other hand, they might be aware of these enactments but not understand them as part of managing translation projects. In my opinion, the former explanation seems more likely, as, from a practice-theoretical point of view, practitioners tend to adopt certain ways of doing things without necessarily reflecting on their performances all the time. In any case, the observations suggested that enactments of the software are inextricably linked with performances of managing translation projects.

Competence

Karolina’s comment that PMs are ‘fairly literate in terms of understanding what [the] translation process involves’ [1910IK] indicates that PMs understand managing translation projects as part of the wider nexus of translation production practices. Karolina thinks that PMs have an understanding not just of managing translation projects but also of the related practice of translating, which enables them to be in charge of the production process. Her statement may indicate only a general understanding of translating (‘understanding what [the] translation process involves’), but it certainly demonstrates awareness of surrounding practices. Other comments about how the PMs understand the practice suggest that they see themselves as organisers of the production process. Colin regards project management as ‘a general organisational role’ [1910IC]. Both these utterances reflect the PMs’ view that they are handling a number of processes as part of the practice.
In addition, they reported how they understand their role in relation to other parties involved in the production process. The most significant insight in this respect was that project management appears to be based on the dimension of the client. Talking about this issue, one PM noted that he believes the ability to ‘sense how the customer is feeling’ [1210IC] to be important for the production process, as this skill helps him to ensure client satisfaction. All of the PMs seemed to display a clear tendency towards client-centred behaviour, which is also evident in the following example, in which Colin uses his initiative to effect a change of the standard wording on quotes that are sent out to all clients.

[I]t used to be (...). ‘Your translation will be completed by a native speaker who specialises in your area.’ (...). I think, if I was a customer that just sounds like some sort of rubbish that they put, just to...So, I suggested changing it, so that now we have to manually edit it every time but depending on what sort of text it is, it’s now: ‘...who specialises in medical technology branch’, or something like that. Just because I think then that shows that you’ve made the effort to actually look and see at the quote stage. [1210IC]

Colin’s suggestion to improve the text on the quote can be understood as an attempt to improve the level of service quality provided to clients. As explained in section 1.2.1, languages@work is certified to the ISO 9001:2008 standard (British Standards Institution 2008), which explicitly stipulates that client satisfaction shall be ensured by meeting their requirements and continuously improving services. This understanding is clearly evident in the PMs’ comments and actions. In addition, it is strongly linked to elements of meaning, which determine the provision of good customer service as one of the PMs’ aims (see below).

Another dimension of understanding involves the PMs’ relationship with translators. One PM reported ‘collaboration with translators’ [1210IC] as part of managing translation projects. However, this point was only contributed by a single PM and therefore seems to be less prevalent than the importance of good relationships with clients. The PMs’ relationship with translators will be further discussed in section 5.2.3 in the context of translation quality.

Turning now to the question which elements of knowing are crucial for
managing translation projects, I identified language skills and knowing how to use CAT tools as particularly significant areas. Interestingly, the PMs’ opinions on the extent to which knowledge of a foreign language forms part of project management differ considerably. Colin considers language skills to be very important, as, in his opinion, they demonstrate to clients competence of the LSP in handling translation projects.

I would not feel comfortable being a project manager in an engineering company, whereas I think, a lot of project managers in engineering companies probably have engineering degrees, and in that sense, you know, I have (...) a linguistic degree, so in that sense, it makes... it makes more sense for me to work in this industry.

[1210IC]

His statement indicates that he understands knowledge of languages as the subject knowledge required for the role of PM. After all, translation always involves a number of languages. For Karolina, an understanding of languages is important too but for her, the importance stems from an understanding of one’s own practising rather than from a customer-oriented perspective. Sophie, on the contrary, does not see languages as necessary but admits that they can help with understanding and checking ST and TT. According to these views, it is likely that a link exists between project management and linguistic skills.

A second area of knowing which the PMs pointed out in the interviews were CAT tools, and this is in keeping with my observation that the PMs frequently employ these tools. Their understanding of CAT tools appears to be specific to managing translation projects, as they do not use these tools for translating text, but for purposes of handling STs and TTs as they travel through practices of translation production. Knowledge of CAT tools is further discussed in section 4.2.

Surprisingly, none of the PMs pointed out project management skills as a necessary element of knowing. A possible explanation for this outcome might be that translation PMs do not have to undergo a specific formal training, as discussed in section 1.1.1 and section 2.1.2. Unlike translators who are under increasing pressure to hold a translation degree, PMs have not usually received specific training in project management and therefore do not have the required vocabulary at hand to speak about their practice in such terms.
Meaning

The final element to be discussed in this section is meaning. Providing good customer service by delivering satisfactory translation products emerged as a salient theme from the analysis of the PMs’ aims in the production process. As shown above, the PMs understand their position as a ‘customer service based role’ [1910IK]. On the one hand, elements of meaning are standardised (see section 2.1.2), as they form part of the organisational culture at languages@work, and they determine to which ends the PMs are supposed to enact the practice. On the other hand, they are intrinsic to managing translation projects, since the rewards to be earned from the practice in terms of providing good customer service are twofold, as the PMs derive both internal and external ones from their engagement. Internal rewards can be earned from completing translation projects to the client’s satisfaction, and enactments can be especially rewarding if a project required substantial effort to complete. External rewards may be gained from the client’s positive appraisal of the PMs’ work, and are, in the broader context, also linked to positive staff appraisal for having enacted this element of meaning correctly.

A second element of meaning resulting from my analysis is cost effectiveness. The PMs seem to be driven by a desire for keeping down production costs and increasing their profit margin, and they achieve this aim by organising their projects based on cost-effective strategies. The following example in which one of the TTs of a project serves as the basis for translation into another language illustrates such a strategy.

The English translation will serve as the ST for a translation into simplified Chinese (all other TTs were translated from German), as translation from English is cheaper than from German due to a higher number of available translators with this language combination. [1210RN]

This example illustrates cost effectiveness as an element of meaning, and demonstrates how the PMs contemporaneously enact various elements. For instance, they draw on elements of competence in their organising of the workflow, in this case knowing that translation from one specific language is more economical than another language, and adapt their performances accordingly. In addition, they employ material elements such as CAT tools
in their practice to offer cost-effective solutions. Cost effectiveness therefore structures the practice based on organisational principles, as the PMs are encouraged to keep production costs down.

Although cost-effectiveness was regularly enacted as an element of meaning by the PMs, my data lacks a focus on the aspect of budget which was emphasised by Dunne and Dunne (2011) as a salient aspect of translation production. My impression was that the PMs adopted a cost-effective approach, but a focus on cost was seldom evident in comments, as could be seen from a rare use of words such as budget, margin etc., as well as from my observations that they did not discuss rates with translators. A possible explanation for this observation is that the PMs at languages@work do not normally negotiate rates with translators, as this falls into the VM’s area of responsibility, who agrees fixed rates with translators before they work on any projects (see also section 5.4). The PMs then draw on this information as part of their routinised enactments. For them, budgeting was just one of many elements in their performances of managing translation projects.

This section set out to answer research question 1a, i.e. which elements are significant for the PMs’ practice, and how are these elements enacted. In summary, I suggest that CAT tools and the ERP system act as important materials for this practice. The PMs understand their practice in relation to wider production practices, and see themselves as the organisers of the production process. They perceive their performances as highly related to client satisfaction, and it could be shown that their relations with translators structure the practice in a less significant way. As we have seen, the PMs’ perceptions differ on whether knowledge of a foreign language is a critical element of knowing, but consensus was reached on knowing how to use CAT tools as a salient element. As regards elements of meaning, there was little evidence of cost effectiveness as an element of managing translation projects in the PMs’ accounts. Although this element appeared to serve as an organisational principle at languages@work, in the same fashion as providing good customer service, it seemed that the PMs enacted it less often than the VM.

All in all, this section has provided a first overview of the most important elements which are enacted as part of managing translation projects. My analysis extends previous studies which have outlined the activities in which PMs engage (see Risku 2004), especially by providing original insights into
how project management is understood from the perspective of PMs. The significance of the ERP system has not been emphasised by prior research but will be investigated below, as it forms part of the PMs’ routinised enactments of the practice. In the sections that follow, I discuss all types of elements further, specifically with a focus on material enactments with technologies.

4.2 Enacting CAT tools

In the next two sections I discuss the PMs’ enactments of two specific materials, i.e. two different CAT tools and an ERP system, by drawing on the technologies-in-practice framework proposed by Orlikowski (2000). As outlined in section 2.1.3, the term technology-in-practice refers to an individual, routinised enactment of a technology, which (re)produces social structures (ibid.:407). In the context of managing translation projects, where information technologies and the ways in which they are exploited by the PMs are subject to constant change, the concept of emergent structures enables us to analyse how the PMs’ enactment of technologies reproduces social structures, as these interactions are ‘the sets of rules and resources that are (re)constituted in people’s recurrent engagement with the technologies at hand’ (ibid.:407). I therefore propose to conceptualise the PMs’ enactments of CAT tools and ERP software as technologies-in-practice.

My data reinforces Orlikowski’s (2000) claim that technologies-in-practice are reproduced based on practitioners’ competence and the properties of the technologies. In other words, the PMs draw on both elements of competence and material resources when they enact these technologies. Moreover, I observed that the use of technologies is always contingent on the organisational structures of languages@work, as the PMs’ performances tend to be in line with company guidelines. Finally, I propose that enactments of technologies are contingent upon communities of practitioners.

4.2.1 CAT tools as material resource

I start my discussion of technologies-in-practice by examining how the PMs enact CAT tools (see section 4.3 for an analysis of the ERP system as a technology-in-practice). CAT tools are a software designed to support the translation process and they are also used in the wider production process by proofreaders, PMs and some of the clients. languages@work has incorporated two different types of CAT tools into its organisational infrastructure which
provide different features. One of the tools, which I will call Lingo, is a server-based CAT tool that has been available on the market for over 20 years. The other tool, which is henceforth called Webtrans, is a cloud-based tool that was introduced to the market about 6 years ago. Through recurrent enactments in their managing of translation projects, these tools have become part of the PMs’ infrastructure.

Based on my observations, I identified three ways in which the PMs enact CAT tools, which will serve as the starting point for my investigation of technologies-in-practice. My claim is that the PMs draw on Lingo and Webtrans as material elements for managing their projects and they frequently enact technologies-in-practice with these technologies to either analyse project files, create project packages or finalise such packages before delivery. All of these activities are commonly carried out as part of SF preparation or preparation of the target file (TF) for delivery.

First, the PMs use CAT tools for the analysis of SFs. As outlined in section 1.1.2, they perform a file analysis prior to quoting on a text which determines the word count of the ST, as well as the number of repetitions which the text contains, so as to determine the price of a project. The majority of the PMs were recurrently observed performing file analyses, as illustrated by the following fieldnote excerpt. ‘Colin briefly checks that the files which the client has sent are the same as for the last quote, then [he] imports the new ones into the Lingo project and runs an analysis’ [2601RN]. All observed instances were carried out with a CAT tool, either Lingo or Webtrans. The information obtained via this process is subsequently used to calculate the cost based on language-specific rates per word. It can thus be suggested that analysing SFs forms part of the PMs’ technologies-in-practice with CAT tools. CAT tools are used as a material in the PMs’ recurrent and routinised performances, and produce social structures in the sense that they are embedded in the organising of translation project management.

Second, the PMs employ CAT tools for administrative tasks, as they prepare STs before they send them out to translators. The following examples from my data set illustrate the process of creating packages.

He then creates the Lingo package (using a client-specific TM and the ST). [1201RN]

She adjusts the project settings in Lingo, opens the project file in
the editor and creates project packages (one for each of the two TLs which are fr and nl). [1501RN]

Project packages are sent via email to translators, and returned to the PMs as return packages, which contain the TF(s) and a TM. I observed many instances in which a PM ‘imports the return package into Lingo and scrolls through the file. (...) He saves the file and updates the xls. He then sends the review package to the proofreader’ [1201RN]. Such review packages are also returned to the PMs after the proofreaders have finished their review of the TT of a specific language. The technologies-in-practice enacted with different types of packages, i.e. project packages, return packages and review packages, are forms of artefact modification which are typical for managing translation projects. These routinised modifications support the PMs in achieving standardised processes of handling the translation product at its various stages, and keeping a record of these intermediate products by saving the packages in a project folder.

Third, the PMs prepare such packages for delivery, which is also an administrative process frequently performed. Before translation products can be handed over to clients, the packages have to be finalised, i.e. the TFs must be created and TMs are updated. We can see this process in the following fieldnote: ‘As all translations for one of yesterday’s jobs have been delivered, Karolina sets out to finalise the project in Lingo’ [0701RN]. Karolina had waited for various packages to be returned, as the project had several TLs. Another PM ‘imports a return package to Lingo (en-se), finalises it, opens both the source file and target file (docs), scrolls through them and sends the translation to the client’ [1601RN].

A few issues in relation to finalising occurred during the observations. In one case, the PM received an email from ‘a client who had complained that some lines of the translation were not legible’ [1501RN], and this issue was passed on to other team members to investigate. This issue might have been caused by an error in the finalising process. Two other instances were observed in which the PM encountered difficulties during the process. For example, Max handled a return package in which a tag was missing, and this had prevented the creation of the TFs. He resolved the issue by inserting the tag manually. In the outlined cases, routine enactments did not result in satisfactory outcomes, and performances had to be modified by the PMs in order to reproduce structures
of managing translation projects.

Technologies-in-practice with CAT tools are deeply embedded in the routinely enacted structures of managing translation projects. My analysis is in accord with the claim that tools, in bringing together various functions, assist PMs in planning, preparing and managing translation projects (Drugan 2013). I have provided empirical evidence for the tasks performed by the PMs at languages@work and have shown that the PMs carry out routinised artefact modifications as a standardised process, as well as modify their enactments if this is required to reproduce the structures of their practice.

4.2.2 Emergent structures of competence

Having explained the relevance of CAT tools as material elements, I now scrutinise how managing translation projects is performed drawing on these and other elements. To this end, I investigate how understanding and knowing which are elements of competence (see section 2.1.2) figure in the PMs’ enactments, and subsequently, how such competence is built into the materiality of the translation product. I argue that the technologies-in-practice which the PMs enact require an ongoing assessment and constant acquisition of elements of competence, as the PMs have to evaluate if they have sufficient elements of competence at their disposal, or if they need to integrate additional ones, or replace existing elements with new ones. Furthermore, I suggest that the PMs’ technologies-in-practice are shaped by interactions with other practitioners, as their routinised enactments may be modified by sharing elements of competence with them.

Building repertoires of competence

Practice theory assumes that practitioners have an understanding of the activities in which they engage (Schatzki 1996; Reckwitz 2002) and according to Orlikowski (2000:409), the ‘[u]se of technology is strongly influenced by users’ understandings of the properties and functionality of a technology.’ The previous section has demonstrated that the PMs enact CAT tools in order to reconstruct the structures of managing translation projects. This observation supports the idea that they have an understanding of the processes carried out with these tools in relation to the practice, and I now consider how these elements entered the PMs’ enactments. Schatzki (1996:60) explains that practitioners have a ‘repertoire of spontaneous bodily reactions’ which they have gradually built
up. My analysis of the interview data suggests that the PMs had built such a repertoire of competence to use both of the CAT tools at various times and in numerous locations, namely either as part of their university degrees, in previous jobs, on-the-job training or a combination of any of these.

### Table 4.1: The PMs’ career paths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Degree qualifications</th>
<th>Previous positions as a PM</th>
<th>Has been with languages@work for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colin</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>BA (languages)</td>
<td>1 (4 years)</td>
<td>15 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>BA (languages)</td>
<td>1 (3 years)</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MA (translation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karolina</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>BA (interpreting)</td>
<td>1 (unknown)</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MA (translation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(20 years)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the interviews, I asked the PMs to give information on how they became PMs, and all of them referred to their academic qualifications and/or career paths. An overview of that information is displayed in table 4.1. As the PMs reported, the majority of them hold degrees in linguistic subjects. Colin started to work as a PM after he had finished his BA degree in languages, and Sophie began her career as a PM after she had completed an MA degree in translation. Karolina’s background was originally in interpreting and she had worked as an interpreter and interpreting coordinator before she became a PM. Max, the oldest among the observed PMs, is the only one without a linguistic background. Commenting on his career, he said: ‘My route was different to everybody else’s because I haven’t got a degree’ [1910IM].

All of the younger PMs felt that having studied for an academic qualification in languages or translation was significant for accessing the practice of managing translation projects. It can thus be assumed that some of the competence acquired during this activity is perceived to be critical to their practice. This points to the fact that access to the practice is limited, and that the practice is characterised by certain standards of access. That is to say that accessing the practice is only possible for those practitioners who have at least some form of
competence prior to their participation, and that access must be granted by stakeholders such as the person offering a position to a particular applicant. Thus, participating in managing translation projects is restricted to particular individuals. Admittedly, one of the limitations of my study is that my data cannot provide details of which elements of competence were acquired by studying for the degrees.

In addition, the PMs’ accounts indicate that standards of access may change over time. The fact that Max experiences his route as different may be the result of changes in the practice over time, which has not always required a degree in languages or translation. As reported by Max, only experience was needed to engage in the practice, whereas the younger PMs noted degree qualifications as necessary requirements. This reflects a change in standardised patterns of accessing the practice and demonstrating competence. A relation to the temporal aspects mentioned above is evident in this example, which illustrates that the way in which a practice can be accessed changes over time.

On the question whether the PMs had gained previous work experience in similar roles before they started at languages@work, I found that all of the PMs had previously worked for other LSPs before they took on their current jobs. The three youngest PMs have had similar work experiences. Colin reported just under four years of work experience as a PM in an LSP abroad, and had been with languages@work for 15 months. Sophie also held a position as a PM in another company before she joined languages@work 18 months ago. Karolina had worked in her current role for 2.5 years, and like the other PMs, she had one previous position as a PM. Max’s career path, however, had always been tied to languages@work. He took on an admin position 27 years ago, stayed with the company, that was under different ownership back then, and progressed from a work placement to his role as a PM through ‘hands-on experience’ [1910IM]. He had worked in his current job for seven years and stated that the profession ‘has completely changed’ [1910IM] in terms of the technological side, as back in the late 1980s, when he started working as a PM, ‘computers had only just come in’ [1910IM] and ‘hardcopies’ [1910IM] were the norm. The shift he describes appears to be consistent with other research which found that technologies have transformed translation workplaces.

An interesting observation emerging from this account is that the PMs had several years of work experience in their profession, and had thus been
participating in the practice of managing translation projects for some time. Participation is a crucial concept in practice theory, as it enables the progression to competent practitioners by engaging in activities, or, as Max puts it, through ‘hands-on experience’ [1910IM]. It has been acknowledged that learning takes place through participation (Nicolini 2012:80), and therefore, work experience is a fundamental way of becoming a competent practitioner. In similar vein, Schatzki (1996:105) refers to ‘immersion’ as a prerequisite of participation, meaning that one has to participate in a practice in order to be able to enact it. This is reflected in the PMs’ accounts, who described their previous work experience as relevant for progressing to their current positions.

Another important observation based on the information which the PMs provided about their work experience is that they were exposed to different educational inputs and working environments, and had thus developed highly individual sets of competence. This applied to all of the PMs. It has been claimed that processes of training and learning, as well as changing jobs transform the way in which people enact practices (Orlikowski 2000; Shove et al. 2012). This claim indicates that participation over time and exposure to different working environments changes the PMs’ repertoires of elements. This was evident in the PMs’ comments on how their current enactments were guided by slightly different standards than at other companies for which they had worked in the past. By way of example, I will discuss differences in their experience of task variety and working pace in the following section. Conversely, individual repertoires determine how practices are enacted, and thus there is potential for change. In other words, despite the standards surrounding a practice in a particular location (e.g. a specific LSP), enactments are still characterised by differences in performances of individual PMs, as their repertoires differ from that of other PMs, and by repeatedly enacting innovative structures, practices might change.

Variations in understanding project management

Differences in the PMs’ individual repertoires were notably evident in their understanding of managing translation projects, and I will demonstrate this based on two examples from my data. To identify elements of understanding, the PMs were asked to outline the differences in their current jobs as compared to their previous positions. One outcome resulting from this question is that
managing translation projects appears to be performed differently in the various LSPs in which three of the PMs worked, especially with regard to variety of tasks and working pace.

With respect to the PMs’ views of the variety of their tasks, I found that their role at languages@work tends to provide them with a greater variety of responsibilities. As we can see in table 4.1, Colin, Sophie and Karolina had begun to work as PMs and changed employers once in recent years. Commenting on his experiences, Colin said:

Well, in practical terms, this job is more all-encompassing. So, in my previous role there was a split between salespeople and project managers, they were two separate departments, so I was only really responsible for managing projects, and only really had contact with clients in exceptional cases where I needed to ask them a question urgently or something like that where the sales team couldn’t act immediately. Whereas here, your role is, you know, more or less fifty-fifty between salesperson and, yeah, and... and the project manager. [1210IC]

As can be seen from this account in which Colin contrasts his previous job with his current role, he used to regard managing translation projects as separate from dealing with client-related issues, as indicated by the ‘split’ he describes. Now, his understanding has shifted to regular and more frequent interaction with clients but he still considers ‘project managers’ to be distinct from ‘salespersons’ since they perform different tasks. He reported that his current job title, account manager, designates a role which encompasses the tasks of both, PMs, as well as salespeople. Overall, his tasks are now more varied, as the PMs at languages@work deal with a broader set of responsibilities than the PMs at his previous company.

What can be seen in this example is that the practice of managing translation projects shows variety in performances, depending on where it is enacted. It appears that LSPs have adopted different structures to be enacted in terms of the activities to be carried out by the PMs. Also, designations of job titles vary across LSPs, as explained by Colin.

Karolina reports a similar experience to Colin. She used to work for a very large LSP in the UK before she joined languages@work. Talking about her previous position, Karolina said:
I think when you work for a big company, you have a very specific job role and you do very specific tasks. It’s very rare that you go outside of the primary list of tasks. I was working on one specific account, therefore I knew exactly what I was going to do. In terms of being here, we are a small company, we (...) deal with all sorts of requests. So I think, the main difference is that my tasks here are more varied. I do more other things in comparison to my previous work. [1910IK]

Karolina’s set of tasks at her previous workplace seemed to be even more limited than Colin’s, as she was responsible for ‘one specific account’, which means that she was dealing with only one client. Therefore, she did not have to take into account the requirements of different clients. Her remark that she ‘knew exactly what [she] was going to do’ indicates that there was little variation in the way she was managing her projects, and that her tasks were clearly defined. At languages@work, translation projects tend to be of a less predictive and routine nature, as each project is tailored to the client’s specifications, and therefore, Karolina’s tasks are more varied.

Sophie, too reported that she took on additional tasks when she started at languages@work. She used to work for an LSP that dealt with direct clients only, who had negotiated fixed rates. Therefore, her company did not have to compete for rates with other LSPs, and Sophie did not have to quote on projects, as rates were already agreed with clients.

A greater task variety, or a wider set of structures that can be enacted at languages@work, is ultimately connected to elements of meaning, as a larger number of elements of understanding is available for the PMs to draw upon in their performances. It mainly affects the internal rewards to be gained, as the PMs at languages@work deal with a bigger complexity of structures than in their previous companies, which has to be mastered so as to experience satisfaction from participating in the practice.

As far as work pace is concerned, my analysis suggests that it may also vary across LSPs, as indicated by Sophie. She explained that her previous company had ‘different expectations in terms of speed’ [1910IS]. In that LSP, projects had to be put through faster, since negotiations did not take place because rates had already been set, as outlined above. Overall, she describes her working experience in her previous job as ‘more fast-paced’ [1910IS] with
The practice of managing translation projects is enacted differently across LSPs. Depending on how the practice is structured, it requires the PMs to not only carry out different sets of activities, but also determines how much time may be spent on these.

The issue of work pace was also mentioned by Max, although in a different context. He stated that ‘deadlines were a lot longer’ [1910IM] and clients ‘less demanding’ [1910IM] when he started to work as a PM 27 years ago. A possible explanation for this might be the fact that technological developments have altered the materiality of managing translation projects, as was pointed out above, and, as a result, the practice-as-entity has changed. Interestingly, in his summary of how his current role is different from previous ones, Max stresses that all positions he held over the last three decades could be understood as managing translation projects, as the tools of the trade, or, as Max puts it, ‘managing it, it comes in and goes out’ [1910IM] haven’t changed. Hence, it could conceivably be hypothesised that managing translation projects has been a distinct, yet changing practice. The practice has broadly served the same function, i.e. organising the translation of an ST, but has been enacted in varying ways over time.

Overall, my analysis indicates that the PMs draw on a repertoire of competence which they have built over time and in various locations. Managing translation projects is thus contingent upon the place in which it is enacted, in this case, the LSP for which the PMs work. This finding is in keeping with the claim of practice theory that there tends to be differentiation across practices in adopted procedures (Warde 2005:139). My data has confirmed this for working pace and variety of tasks in the practice. On the one hand, the concept of differentiation provides some explanation as to why translation project management is enacted similarly across the industry, but varies in its details from company to company. On the other hand, differentiation could be understood as a contributing factor to the ongoing acquisition of competence, since the above examples have shown that the PMs’ job changes tended to transform their understanding. Their adaptation to a new work environment required them to develop their understandings of project management. Being only one aspect of competence, elements of understanding certainly contribute to such development but they are not sufficient to demonstrate that enactments
depend on building competence. Therefore, I will now discuss knowing as another group of elements.

**Organisational structures of knowing**

Having discussed repertoires of elements and how understanding may be acquired and transformed through enactments over time and in different contexts, this section seeks to investigate how elements of knowing contribute to the practice. As Nicolini (2012:5) points out, ‘knowledge is conceived largely as a form of mastery that is expressed in the capacity to carry out a social and material activity.’ Knowing is thus reflected in the PMs’ ability to manage translation projects and to enact CAT tools in the context of translation project management. In order to be able to do this, they enact the features provided by CAT tools, and exploit them to manage translation projects, based on a number of other available materials such as SFs and TMs.

CAT tools play a significant role in the translation production process and the PMs share an understanding that CAT tools are crucial for their role. Their understanding not only reflects the significance of CAT tools as a material, as discussed above, but illustrates also an awareness that knowledge of how to use them is needed. For instance, one PM stressed the importance of knowing how to use CAT tools by explaining that ‘[y]ou can’t get away with not knowing how to use a translation tool if you’re a project manager’ [1910IS].

Like elements of understanding, elements of knowing are influenced by organisational structures. When asked what they had to learn when they started their current position, a common view amongst the PMs was that they had to adapt their practice to the requirements of languages@work. One example of such adaptation is the use of supporting documentation in translation projects, as explained by Colin.

I guess, something which we maybe do here a bit more differently is the...We quite often use style guides and things like that, maybe more parallel texts, which make projects sometimes more challenging because obviously then, when you check you need to check that everything has been adhered to. [1210IC]

When he started his job at languages@work, Colin was required to employ additional materials in his enactments of project management which led to a ‘more challenging’, or more complex process. In order to complete this process
successfully, he had to learn how to integrate these additional resources in his technologies-in-practice that he enacted with CAT tools. These interactions also included handling projects in a way that ensured that ‘everything has been adhered to’, i.e. that supporting documentation had been used correctly in the translation process. Colin describes a new level of task difficulty in the practice standard he encountered at languages@work, which he experienced as challenging when he took up the position, but this new standard provides him with a new opportunity to experience satisfaction if the challenge is mastered (see section section 2.1.2). Changing jobs can therefore be internally rewarding.

A second example of how elements of knowing had to be adapted to the requirements of languages@work was mentioned by Karolina. In a comment about what she had to learn when she started her role in the company, she reports that she had to develop her knowledge of using CAT tools.

The biggest difference was that, in my previous company, we had a dedicated person that dealt with all our CAT tool requirements. So, starting from analysis to sending out the packages, getting the packages back and so on. So, I didn’t really have to deal with that over there. When I came in here, I got more involved in the CAT tool process. [1910IK]

The two above examples outline areas of knowing that are relevant for managing translation projects, i.e. how to use certain materials like supporting documents and CAT tools in the production process. In both cases, the PMs had to modify their existing repertoire of knowing to reproduce the organisational structures of languages@work, since the LSP manages projects in a more all-encompassing way than the businesses for which Colin and Karolina had previously worked. Moreover, these examples provide additional evidence for my claim that the acquisition of knowledge is an ongoing and not a linear process, as these elements may be developed when required throughout a practitioner’s career, in this case after the PMs had started a new job. Sophie describes this process in terms of ‘learn as you go’ [1910IS]. Similar to elements of understanding, knowing may change if the circumstances permit this, and these changes emphasise the emergent structure of technologies-in-practice with CAT tools.

Modifications of repertoires have so far been considered in terms of differentiation, i.e. by considering that practitioners may have to enact different
4 The practice of managing translation projects

structures in a new location, but over time, practices also exhibit emergent structures in one and the same location. To illustrate this point, I will analyse a comment on the implementation of another CAT tool as an example of potential future acquisition of knowledge. As mentioned above, languages@work has only adopted Lingo and Webtrans. The PMs enact technologies-in-practice with a specific set of material resources, as they only draw on the ones that are currently part of their infrastructure. In the following excerpt from my interview data, Karolina emphasises the demand for new technologies to be implemented by the LSP and the need for gaining competence in using these new technologies, so as to stay competitive in the market. At the same time, she explains that it needs to be carefully considered whether it is worth adopting a CAT tool and undergo a certain training, as there is always a risk that elements of competence vanish before they can be employed.

[W]e want to introduce more CAT tools to be more versatile. I think, there is a need for more training on technical things but again, you know, you need to think about whether this is something that will be productive because you can get the training on specific CMS but you might not use it for two years and then your knowledge and training that you’ve invested becomes absolutely out of date because things change so quickly. [1910IK]

The demand for new technologies to be implemented in the future as materials that is expressed in the above statement illustrates the ongoing change of the LSP’s technological infrastructure, and it emphasises the need to become knowledgeable in their use, as the technology as a material is not sufficient for successful implementation. languages@work has to make strategic decisions on which tools to adopt so as to stay competitive. As outlined in section 1.1.3, the translation industry is driven by constant technological developments and contributes at the same time to new technologies, as their use is critical to translation production. Karolina acknowledges that elements of knowing about certain tools may have limited economic value if they are not put into practice immediately, since they can vanish very quickly. As pointed out by Shove et al. (2012:60), elements of competence must be enacted in order to be preserved. Training needs must therefore be carefully considered, as it might be risky to invest time and money in building competence that might turn out to be unprofitable.
An example of currently high-risk investment into modifying the PMs’ repertoires of knowing is the LSP’s decision to defer training on MT. languages@work expects a future demand for MT but is careful about investments in training, as the current state of the market does not justify spending certain resources on building competence in this area. As reported by the PMs, the LSP has acquired material resources for this endeavour but is reluctant to invest time in the PMs’ competence.

The planned introduction of MT in the long-term was also addressed in the following quote, which illustrates an awareness of the necessity of keeping up to date with new technological developments, but also shows some resistance to undertaking training activities.

We are just making first steps in machine translation, and as much as we are all against it, you know, I think, this is how the business is going and there is no running away. And I’d rather face it and get a head start, and know how things work and be prepared when it actually gets to hit us. [1910IK]

Karolina displays a sophisticated understanding of the requirements of her role as a PM in relation to the demands of the translation market, as well as an awareness of the sometimes limited validity of competence. Her utterances reflect a willingness to build a repertoire of knowing, and a readiness to contribute ideas to what kind of training may be needed. Her account indicates that she reflects upon the timeliness and validity of her knowing, which she might modify by acquiring new elements of competence.

However, Karolina’s statement indicates some resistance as well. She still seems to be uncertain about how to implement the new elements into her practice, and she expresses hesitation and reluctance towards the new technology (‘as much as we are all against it’). On the one hand, resistance may be caused by the fact that the example of implementing MT reflects an early stage of competence acquisition in a new area, as the LSP is only at the beginning of making MT part of their processes. On the other hand, this development may transform the practice of managing translation projects, and it would be possible that this causes the PMs to experience feelings of uncertainty which result in resistance. The introduction of MT to practices of translation production is a remarkable example of a current change in these practices, in which we can experience how different elements interact with
one another. In this example, we can witness a time in which the practice is changing, i.e. towards including MT as an activity. As we can see from Karolina’s account, this change causes resistance, unlike other, smaller changes that may go smoothly.

Drawing on our understanding of current debates in TS, we can see why this change produces some friction. The debate of MT occurs often in conjunction with the argument of making the translator’s job redundant. Such a development, in turn, could significantly impact on the PMs’ practice too and, in the worst case scenario, make their position superfluous as well. This meaning may affect how the PMs feel about the introduction of this new technology, and understandably cause resistance from their perspective. On the contrary, it may develop into a useful resource and create new competences, and thus acquire a more positive meaning later on. At this point in time, one does not yet know how MT will be understood.

So far, my analysis has focused on the actions of individual PMs and in fact, I observed that they mostly rely on their own repertoires of competence when they enact technologies-in-practice. This observation is in line with the claim that PMs tend to work on their projects independently (Risku 2004). However, in contrast to earlier findings, my data indicates that the PMs tend to collaborate on projects with their colleagues if they require elements of competence which exceed their own repertoires. One such example of drawing on the expertise of other practitioners is seeking help from Marc, the engineering assistant who is responsible for all matters regarding CAT tools. He provides the PMs with advice and guidance, and thus acts as a resource of knowing about CAT tools on which they can draw. The following fieldnote excerpts illustrate this point. Sophie and Marc are located in the same office, and I observed numerous instances in which Marc was asked to come over to a PM’s desk to provide support. For example, I observed how ‘Sophie asks Marc a question and he goes over to her desk to show her how to do something in Lingo’ [1501RN]. In this case, Sophie did not have sufficient resources of knowing at her disposal, so she decided to draw on Marc’s repertoire to be able to perform the activity.

Colin is located in a different office, and thus has to resort to other ways of communication to access Marc’s repertoire of competence. In this excerpt, he gives Marc a phone call, and they simultaneously set up remote access to
Colin’s computer, so that they can work together on a technical issue.

Colin encounters a problem which he can’t resolve on his own, so he calls Marc to seek advice. On this opportunity, I can observe him using [instant messaging] to provide Mark with access to his desktop. They discuss the issue, it looks like Marc explains something and finally they determine what the problem is. Finally, Colin creates the review package. [1201RN]

The example further illustrates that practitioners resort to a network of other practitioners so as to access missing elements in their performance, and it demonstrates that materials like telephones and information technologies, may be enacted in this process. A third example of drawing upon other practitioners’ repertoires of competence when enacting technologies-in-practice with CAT tools is the joint creation of packages, as illustrated in the example below.

Colin emails Marc a link to the server location of the file, as well as the names of the files to be translated. He asks Marc to prepare the project for him. (...) Via email, Marc returns a link to the Lingo project that he has created for Colin. (...) Colin opens the project file that Marc created and creates a review package which he emails to the translator. [2101RN]

In this example, Marc performed a modification on a material for Colin, who was not able to carry it out himself. These examples are only two of many observed instances that demonstrate how the PMs draw on Marc’s competence in order to resolve technical problems. This observation was further corroborated by a comment from Colin, who mentioned in the interviews that Marc is the person to be contacted if he has questions about specific issues: ‘Sometimes, there are more sort of underlying issues which I don’t really know (...) what’s happened to them. And then I need to send it off to our technical expert and he can (...) always sort that out’ [1210IC]. Therefore, managing translation projects appears to be a practice which is mostly enacted by a single practitioner, but often relies on practitioners’ joint performances to be successfully enacted.

Another type of advice that was frequently sought by the PMs was support on how to carry out certain processes. Again, this shows that the PMs resort to others’ repertoires of competence when the required elements are not available to them. For instance, one PM addressed all employees in the office when she
encountered a problem with a quote: ‘Then Sophie seeks advice from everybody in the office. She is issuing a quote for a client, but there seems to be a problem’ [0801RN]. A second example of seeking advice from colleagues occurred in the process of selecting a translator for a project: ‘Colin asks Emily how to find a specific type of information about translators in Sky\textsuperscript{1}’ [2101RN]. The two above examples demonstrate that the PMs frequently draw on the expertise of colleagues when they need help with a work process. Their colleagues serve as an easily accessible source for elements of knowing, and can thus act as a resource for expanding the PMs’ repertoires, since they might learn new ways of doing things by asking their co-workers for help. As opposed to other forms of learning and training, this mechanism is immediate, cheap and efficient, and it is reinforced by the LSP’s organisational culture, as drawing on other people’s expertise and sharing knowledge is highly encouraged by the management of languages@work.

To summarise, we could say that the PMs’ competence is shaped by the organisational culture at languages@work, as was especially evident for elements of knowing enacted with CAT tools. The enactment of such competence is often contingent upon other elements, such as material objects and resources. It could be shown that structures of knowing are emergent, as they may be modified by PMs who perform the practice in different locations, or by changes within the practice. It could further be demonstrated that the PMs reconcile missing elements in their repertoires by drawing on their co-practitioners’ competence, and this gives rise to the assumption that managing translation projects relies on a community of practitioners.

4.2.3 Reconciling meaning and structures

A third group of elements enacted by the PMs in managing translation projects, and subsequently, in their technologies-in-practice, are elements of meaning. These elements constitute the aims or the values which the practitioners seek to achieve (see also section 4.1). As I have shown above, cost effectiveness and good customer service appear as the most pertinent elements of meaning in my data. As I will demonstrate below, the PMs enact these elements in their technologies-in-practice, and I will explore their enactments based on three examples: the process of pricing, decisions on who should provide resources and

\footnote{Name of the ERP system used by languages@work, see section 4.3.}
the monitoring of translation progress. All of these examples demonstrate that
technologies-in-practice may not always be smooth, as elements have to be put
together into complex sets for every single performance. Elements of meaning
seemed to be particularly susceptible to interferences, i.e. their enactment was
more likely to cause problems than the enactment of other elements.

One example of how technologies-in-practice are enacted together with
the element of cost effectiveness is the process of file analysis in combination
with weighted word count calculators (see also section 1.1.2). As outlined in
section 4.2.1, the PMs employ two CAT tools to run analyses of their translation
projects to determine word counts and the number of repetitions in a ST, which
are then used for pricing purposes. They often enter the results of the analysis
into weighted word count calculators that consider repetitions in a ST and
thus reduce the total word count of a translation, as clients are charged and
translators are paid for lower word counts. Such technologies-in-practice are
usually enacted to keep down translation costs, i.e. to reduce the amount
charged to the client and the number of words for which the translator will be
remunerated.

However, I also observed one considerable instance in which this strategy
was devised by a PM so as to increase the profit margin of the project in an
attempt of justifying his own time spent on preparing the SFs for translation,
as he had formatted the text himself.

Colin creates a new project on Webtrans (...) and runs an analysis
of these files. He enters the results into a weighted word count
calculator. (...) He says that the client will be charged for approx.
15,000 words although the result of the calculator is approx. 12,000,
and he explains that this is how he gets paid for doing all the format-
ting the night before (= preparing files). He selects a translator for
the job and writes an email to her in which he specifies that the
three texts (...) consist of approx. 12,000 words. [2101RN]

In the above example, Colin increases the profit margin of the project at the
expense of the translator, because the LSP will be paid by the client based
on a higher number of words than will be charged by the translator. This
performance shows the ethical dilemma of the PM, who is under immense
pressure of providing cost-effective translation services to clients, but at the
same time, is committed to achieve a certain profit for the LSP, and thus enacts
the practice in such a way that the translator gets remunerated for fewer words than the client was charged for by the PM.

Practice theory only provides limited explanation for the PM’s behaviour. This performance is significant, as the PM’s enactment of Webtrans and the weighted word count calculator constitutes an unexpected technology-in-practice, as it partly contradicts the other main element of meaning, namely providing good customer service, because the translation could have been quoted at a lower word count. Following Nicolini (2012:48–9), the PM could have chosen to carry out a different procedure, but according to practice theory, certain actions make sense in relation to the context in which they occur. Further insight can be gained from studies of ethics. Drugan and Tipton (2017:121) explain that ethics manifests itself in ‘socially responsible action’ which can challenge and potentially change the existing social order. Linking ethics and social structure emphasises the importance of the practitioners’ impact on the practice. Drugan and Tipton (ibid.:122) conclude that ethics ‘can never be ideologically neutral and its invocation always confers an obligation to determine whose responsibility, to whom and for what.’ In the above example, the PM carried out the technology-in-practice in the interest of the LSP, so as to maximise the profit margin. Elements of knowledge in the PMs’s repertoire coincided with the need to increase the profit, producing a ‘disordering effect’ (Nicolini 2012:49) on the practice. In other words, this behaviour can be interpreted as challenging the existing social order which demands that low rates are offered to clients, as the PMs are competing for clients on an international market with fierce competition.

The observed interaction does not entirely correspond to the standard structure which would be to use weighted word counts to be able to offer cost-effective translations to clients and thus stay competitive. From a practice-theoretical point of view, a repeated enactment of this modified structure may eventually lead to its reinforcement, and ultimately change the standard of managing translation projects. However, chances are that the desire to provide cost-effective translations to clients may prevent this modification to become routinised, as clients might decide to commission a different LSP, should that company be able to offer the same service at lower price.

My second example of how technologies-in-practice are enacted with elements of meaning is the suggestion made by Sophie that translators could buy
4 The practice of managing translation projects

their own licenses for Webtrans. Sophie explains that languages@work currently holds a number of licences which can be borrowed by translators when they are working on a project. Such a sharing of licences with translators offers these the benefit of not having to invest money in the CAT tool, as is currently the case with Lingo.

[W]e’ve got to pay a subscription for it and we bought so many licenses, and then we lend those licences to translators when they need them and take them back. (...) [W]hat I suggested is, maybe, we can ask them to pay for their own licence, and then we don’t have to give them a licence. So, that’s one option. It’s just little things like this that you just, you know, you’ve experienced before, just because I’ve had...I’ve done that in my other companies before.

Sophie’s initiative in proposing the introduction of new structures into the practice illustrates how elements of meaning may be enacted in different ways across locations in which the practice is performed. Her statement indicates that her understanding clashes with how managing translation projects is structured at languages@work. She thinks that providing software licences for translators is an unnecessary expense. A possible explanation for this divergence is that Sophie has ‘experienced’ work environments where translators had to buy their own licences, as this was the case at her previous workplace. Her repertoire of understanding structures of managing translation projects is not in accord with the elements of meaning available in the setting of languages@work. This observation confirms the association between enactments of a practice and time, as suggested by Boudreau and Robey (2005) and discussed in section 2.1.1, as Sophie’s understanding was shaped through her past experiences. Boudreau and Robey (ibid.) claim that temporality is significant for enactments, as these are shaped by practitioners’ past performances, as well as by an idea of what aims might be achieved through them in the future. The PMs’ past work experience has shaped their current practices, and they may build on this to develop further.

A last example of how technologies-in-practice may require the reconciliation between elements of meaning and understanding is Colin’s exploitation of Webtrans for the purpose of tracking the progress of translation projects. He reported that he prefers the cloud-based application, because it enables him
to track the progress of projects and facilitates better interaction, as files can be directly submitted. As progress can be tracked by the PM at any time, Colin feels that Webtrans provides him with more control over the translation process.

[I]t has happened a couple of times where I’ve seen that translators have to deliver 5,000 words on Tuesday afternoon and on Monday lunchtime I look and they’ve only done 500 (...) and I emailed them just to ask how the project’s going. I don’t specify that I’ve looked and seen that they’ve only done a few hundred words of this big project. [1210IC]

Colin’s performance indicates his knowing of the features of the technology that help him to enact the reported technology-in-practice. The design of Webtrans and his enactment thereof enable Colin to manage his projects in a timely manner, as he can possibly prevent delays by contacting translators before the delay has occurred. This behaviour serves his desire to maintain the schedule, and this, in turn, facilitates the timely delivery of the translation product. Thus, progress monitoring may also contribute to client satisfaction.

However, using a cloud-based tool like Webtrans may interfere in the practice of translating in various ways. First, Colin notes that he does not disclose his activities to the translators whose work is being monitored, since this might cause some friction. It seems that he is aware of the resistance which such a disclosure may evoke with the translators, as it intrudes upon their practice in terms of their independent time management. Their work autonomy may potentially be restricted by a sense of surveillance, which Colin’s activities might cause. Similarly, the fact that the PMs have access to drafts of the TT may cause translators to feel uncomfortable about using such tools. A related point of concern is that translators may want to be able to access their previous work in future projects. A second issue that may result in the translators’ resistance to enacting cloud-based CAT tools such as Webtrans is the LSP’s potential access to data on how much time translators need for translating a ST, which could potentially have repercussions on their remuneration. Third, translators must have the elements of competence required to use these tools, and as there are several tools available on the market, not every translator may feel competent to use Webtrans. Overall, it seems that Colin’s appreciation of more control over the translating process may oppose some translators’ understanding
of their practice. In spite of the potential issues arising from enactments of cloud-based CAT tools, such technologies-in-practice also offer some advantages. As was noted by Colin, these tools are interactive, i.e. resources such as TMs can be accessed and updated live by all translators working on a project, and all data is directly submitted to the LSP, which means that the risk of data loss is minimized. In addition, the enactment of cloud-based tools can resolve some legal issues around confidentiality, as data remains exclusively on the LSP’s server.

To conclude section 4.2, we could say that managing translation projects is a practice with restricted access, which is performed in various ways across different locations and relies on a community of practitioners. Based on the example of technologies-in-practice with CAT tools, it was shown that the PMs perform numerous modifications, either in the form of artefact modification, or modifications of enactments, in their performances. It was demonstrated that elements of competence underlie such interactions, and that competence evolves over time and across locations. More importantly, I have suggested that managing translation projects is only accessible to practitioners who have already got relevant elements in their repertoires. The reported technologies-in-practice were shown to be emergent, i.e. the enacted structures were changeable, a fact which could be explained with the concept of differentiation. Emergent structures were also observed in instances in which elements of meaning interfered with other elements. Finally, there was some evidence that the PMs are not always working on their own but are surrounded by a community of practitioners with whom they share elements of competence. This could especially be demonstrated for elements of knowing, which tended to be determined by the organisational culture of the LSP under study.

4.3 Enacting the ERP system

This section investigates the PMs’ technologies-in-practice with the ERP system. Specifically, it sets out to determine how the system is enacted by the PMs based on their repertoires of competence and the organisational context of languages@work, and how modifications of the technology figure in the PMs’ enactments. Before proceeding to this discussion, it is necessary to briefly explain what an ERP system is and what the PMs use it for. These systems are ‘designed to integrate major business processes’ (Boudreau and Robey
2005:5) into the organisational infrastructures of all types of companies, and are therefore not specific to the translation industry. Still, they are employed as a crucial technology in translation project management, where they are used by PMs for the organisation of the translation production process. The PMs at languages@work employ an ERP system, which I will call Sky, mainly for administrative tasks and information retrieval. Examples of use consist of entering essential data on clients and translators, as well as information about translation projects, including their status, and employing the system for issuing standard documents required for each project, such as quotes, POs and invoices.

During the observation period, languages@work was in the act of switching from another ERP software to Sky. The switch had been decided by the management of the LSP, because the management had grown in the past years and had extended its business to other countries. The PMs reported that they belonged to teams working for clients in different countries, e.g. the German and the French team. At the time of the observations, Sky had just gone live and most of the PMs had started to work with the new system. Among the PMs whom I observed and interviewed, only Sophie was not yet using the new ERP software, but like the other PMs, she participated in training sessions, as her team was going to use Sky at a later stage as well.

As mentioned above, ERP systems were developed to fit a wide range of business types. Sky provides an extensive range of features, and can be tailored to different kinds of businesses before its implementation. As Boudreau and Robey (2005:5) explain, ERP systems ‘allow little modification once the adopting organization’s business rules are configured in the software.’ When I carried out the observations, languages@work had already adapted the ERP software to its requirements, for example by implementing translation project-specific fields for word counts and language combinations. Although the customisation process of Sky will not be discussed in detail here, since the focus of this section is on the technologies-in-practice that were enacted with it by the PMs, it should be borne in mind that altering this technology’s features can be seen as modifying behaviour. However, the artefact modification that had already been performed was an upstream process which had taken place prior to the implementation, and had not been undertaken by the PMs, who were faced with the tailored system. Admittedly, the PMs reported that their feedback
on possible modifications had been taken into account by the technical team who had customised the system, but the PMs could not carry out this kind of modification themselves and had to work with the system in its current settings.

From the beginning of my workplace observation, it was apparent that changing to Sky had caused considerable disruption to the workflow of the LSP, due to unforeseen problems, and staff members in various departments were working hard to determine what exactly had gone wrong and fix the problems. The PMs were mainly affected by missing information on the database, and were using both systems, the old one and the new one, alongside one another because it had not been possible to transfer all data at once. They attempted to work on their translation projects as usual, but as they often had to refer to both systems to retrieve the required information it took them longer than normal to complete processes. In order to fix the problem of missing information, the PMs had to inform specific employees about such problems who would then enter missing data or fix system issues. As mentioned above, however, the setting up of Sky is not the focus of my research, which instead aims to establish how the PMs were enacting the system in its state at the time of the observation. I therefore restrict the following discussion to the PMs’ perspective on the ERP system. This section analyses three key factors that contribute to structuring their technologies-in-practice: situated use, user competence and modifications.

### 4.3.1 Situated use and mutual structuring

As we have seen in section 4.2, the PMs’ performances are always partly determined by the organisational structures of languages@work. Accordingly, technologies-in-practice are always situated enactments of technologies, as interactions take place in the context of one or several practices, and often within a given technological infrastructure. The PMs enact the ERP system as part of managing translation projects, which is embedded in other practices of translation production. Situated use, i.e. the integration of a technology-in-practice into larger organisational and technological structures may limit the range of possible enactments (Boudreau and Robey 2005; Orlikowski 2000), and therefore regulates how technologies may be employed. In this section, I discuss how the PMs’ use of the ERP system and their wider practice structure and are structured by technological properties, the organisational culture of languages@work, as well as the wider institutional context in which managing
The practice of managing translation projects takes place.

My first example illustrates the PMs’ use of specific technological features in Sky to complete particular processes. As mentioned in chapter 2, situated enactments tend to be characterised by integrating limited features of a technology into performances, and such enactments depend on the practitioners’ purpose of using the technology (Orlikowski 2000). At any one time, the PMs regard some properties as part of their structure but not others, meaning that they are enacting only part of the available features. I found that this applies to situations in which the PMs carry out individual processes of project management, for instance, when preparing quotes for clients. This point is illustrated in the following example.

Max opens Sky and creates a new project. In the project form, he adds the contact details of the client (name and email address) as well as the date the project was created and the expected delivery date. He enters a description, SL (en) and TL (it), the service required, ‘required skill’ (subject area) and the number of words. He retrieves a price list from the old ERP system and then enters the price and total to the project in Sky. He creates a quote. [1601RN]

In this example we can see that, although Sky offers a wide range of features, the PM uses only specific ones while he is engaging with it to generate a quote. Max enters information and creates a document, but he does not, for instance, retrieve information in this process. His technology-in-practice is structured by his aim of preparing this document.

What is remarkable about this technology-in-practice is that Max performs a very effective interaction with Sky, which reflects his drawing on elements of competence. He understands that he must carry out the action in relation to the production process, i.e. at which stage it constitutes a meaningful thing to do. Also, his performance indicates that he knows how to prepare a quote, as we can infer from his very effective course of action. He does not try out how interactions with Sky produce certain results, but instead, he carries out very purposeful processes resulting in specific responses from the ERP system.

The second example on which I draw is the note feature in Sky, which enables the PMs to send messages to other users via the system. Currently, the PMs use this feature exclusively for communication with the accounts department, as illustrated in the following fieldnote excerpt. In order to proceed
with his project, Max needs Paula’s permission to grant the client a credit limit and therefore sends her a message. As had been decided by the management of languages@work, such requests must now be sent through Sky. This decision is illustrative of the standardisation of the practice, which regulates how it should be engaged in. Max follows this rule and chooses to send the requests using the software.

Via a note in Sky, Max asks Paula whether he can go ahead with another project. As she has given him permission to go ahead with the project for which he had earlier requested permission, he changes the project’s status to ‘order’ [1601RN].

Again, Max only interacts with a specific feature of Sky in a routinised and effective way in order to elicit a certain response, i.e. to have Sky send a message to another user.

A second observation from my data on the use of the note feature is that the PMs’ enactments are structured by the organisational culture of languages@work, as its application to the communication with the accounts department is determined by a company guideline. The PMs explained this to me when I was observing them, and Colin also mentioned ‘the fact that we communicate with accounts via notes in Sky’ [1210IC] in one of the interviews. The PMs understand how this process works, and know how to carry it out with the materials at hand. The availability of the note feature, together with the LSP’s instruction to use Sky, rigidly structures the communication process between the PMs and the accounts team.

Another point worth mentioning in relation to the above example is that technologies can differ in terms of whether or not they are integrated, since this technological property helps us to establish a basic distinction between technologies-in-practice with the ERP system and those with CAT tools. Max’s technology-in-practice with Sky is an example of an interaction with an integrated technology, as the messages feature is embedded in the ERP software, meaning that other technologies are not required for the communication with the accounts department. To clarify this point, we can compare his enactment with some of the other PMs’ technologies-in-practice with CAT tools outlined above, which always involve the use of other technologies like email software or weighted word count calculators. The advantage of integrated technologies is that the exchange is archived in the system and can easily be retrieved and
referred to when necessary because a record of that communication and other information are stored in the same place.

The above example has illustrated how organisational structures shape the practice of managing translation projects by stipulating which technological features are to be used for completing a process. As I will show now, the enactment of technological features may also be restricted by company guidelines, as indicated by the following account, in which Colin describes automatic file uploads of quotation requests from clients to Sky as a possible application.

The last company I worked at, the sort of equivalent system that they used, it was a lot more interactive. So, we, for example, have an online quote tool, so customers upload a file (...) and then we basically, so the account managers, get sent a link to that file and download that file, whereas, at my last company, we had the same thing but the file that the client uploaded was automatically registered into what their equivalent of [Sky] was, so that the project was already there and you could have a look at it. [1210IC]

Colin’s technologies-in-practice are situated enactments, as they are structured by the rules that are dominant at languages@work. From his account of how managing translation projects was performed differently at his previous company, it is evident that his repertoire of competence contains elements of understanding which lie dormant, since he cannot currently enact them. It has been noted that elements, or traces thereof, may remain in repertoires even if they are not actively embedded into a practice (Shove et al. 2012:34–35). Colin’s comment suggests that the present range of applications of Sky’s features could be expanded to other processes, which are currently not available because the management of languages@work has not agreed to them. As explained by Orlikowski and Yates (2002:687), ‘deliberate attempts at change initiated by a single person or small group are only successful when members of the broader community accept and enact the newly mandated structures.’ Colin, who was the only PM who described such an application during my fieldwork activities, neither has the necessary resources at his disposal to make such decisions, nor does there exist a sufficiently big critical mass at this stage to effect the implementation of this innovation. However, should the organisational rules change at some point, Colin might reactivate his understanding in the future.

Further evidence of how the practice shapes the PMs’ performances could be
found in the fact that languages@work is certified to the ISO 9001:2008 standard (British Standards Institution 2008), and must adhere to a number of procedures stipulated in the standard, which is implemented via the quality department at languages@work. Karolina explains: ‘[T]he core procedures have been set out by our quality department. We are an ISO certified business as well, so we can’t just change the core things as we please, it has to be discussed and approved’ [1910IK]. The ISO certification determines how particular work processes are to be completed, and these stipulations travel in the form of elements of competence that are passed on from the quality manager to the PMs who then adopt these elements in their practice. This mechanism is significant, as it points towards a normative standard of managing translation projects, which impacts on organisational structures, and, accordingly, performances of individual PMs. Warde (2016:46) explains that standards institutes, by ‘codifying proper procedure’, contribute to the coordination of practices, but that the mere existence of such standards does not guarantee acceptable performances. The adherence to them must be enforced by accompanying structures, such as monitoring and checking by others. Their function is ‘didactic’ (ibid.:84), as they provide practitioners with guidance on how to improve their performances. ISO certifications are an example of how external specifications can shape organisational structures, as well as individual enactments of a practice.

The way in which standards such as the ISO 9001:2008 shape organisational practices contributes to building an organisational culture which extends over different offices of languages@work. One of the PMs explained that a shared organisational culture can be difficult to build and maintain if employees are based in different locations.

I mean, we’re still after all, one company and there must be something that keeps us...I don’t want to say brand standards but it really is, we want to make sure that we all work in the same way, that we follow the same procedures, we have the same structure in our work and I think it is much harder to do without being able to see how others work as well. [1910IK]

The above quote suggests that normative standards can be derived by individual practitioners from observing other practitioners. During the observations, it was evident that the PMs draw on similar sets of understanding when they manage their translation projects, and attach a certain importance to engaging
in the practice in similar ways. This finding is important for understanding why LSPs across the world have varying operational structures. They operate independently from one another, as there is currently no regulatory body that would impose such structures on them, and they may not share details of their organisation with other LSPs.

The fact that the two sites were sharing elements of a unique organisational culture were also evident in shared discursive practices across the sites I observed. The PMs tended to use specific words when referring to their workplace activities, which were not always immediately clear to me. During the observations, I made a note of some of such jargon that was used by the PMs. One example would be the designation for potential clients, so-called ‘prospects’ [RN0701]. Another example occurred when I observed a PM who was working on the pricing of a project: ‘Sophie considers negotiating a particular rate with the translator just for this client (...)’, which she calls an ‘account-specific rate” [RN0801].

Differences between the two research sites in terms of organisational culture can only be marginally addressed in this thesis, as my data set does not allow for a comprehensive analysis of these. What can be said is that the PMs were unevenly distributed across the sites, as only one of them worked in site 1. The PMs in site 2 had the opportunity to discuss their work with other PMs in the same office. An interesting observation was that the PM in site 1 was frequently on the phone with the staff in site 2. It seemed to me that geographical distance did not prevent collaboration between the PM in site 1 with the staff based in site 2. To me, site 1 and 2 felt different in terms of work environment. Each site was the workplace of one of the managing directors of the company, but whereas this person was located in a separate room in site 1, the manager was based in the same office as the other employees in site 2. As a result, it seemed to me that there was a stronger sense of hierarchy in site 2.

Organisational structures may also be externally shaped by client specifications, as these determine how translation projects must be organised, so as to obtain the desired product, or follow a specific process. One of the PMs pointed out that translations are unique products which are produced in a ‘dynamic setting and no two requests that you get are the same’ [1910IK]. From a practice-theoretical perspective, this dynamic can be explained by framing client expectations as elements of meaning which travel via practitioners, and
Finally enter the practice of managing translation projects. Since these elements of meaning may differ, their effect on enactments can vary, resulting in differences in performances which accommodate client specifications.

Product requirements were not prominent in the observation data but were discussed with the PMs in more depth during the interviews (see also chapter 5). My data indicates that clients do not tend to express expectations about translation products clearly. Instead, the PMs must be able to estimate what the client wants so as to ensure delivering translation products of satisfactory quality. Talking about this issue, Colin said:

[Y]ou just need to be able to sense how the customer’s feeling, whether it’s from... via an email, from... just, sort of, sometimes bad things they don’t say. You have to get a feel for whether or not they are happy, whether or not there are things they feel we could do better. [1210IC]

This form of competence sets the PM’s role apart from that of the client, because the PMs have elements of competence at their disposal which help them to understand what a client needs, and they know how to translate these needs into practice by entering into particular performances. They have an understanding of what can be achieved in the production process and can draw on this understanding when making decisions on what would be the best option for the client. As Colin remarks, the elements of meaning that are conveyed by the client have to be acquired through ‘a feel’, by ‘[sensing]’. The acquisition process is therefore largely subjective and requires the PM to read between the lines. The PMs also draw on elements of knowing, since they have knowledge of how their understanding can be put into practice. They organise their translation projects accordingly, for instance, by stipulating which activities are to be performed, or by passing on elements of knowing and meaning to translators by spelling out the desired outcomes, so that the translators can engage in their practice accordingly. In doing so, the PMs combine a variety of elements, including those elements of meaning that were passed on to them by the client. Finally, their enactment of material elements complements their performances, as managing translation projects is often mediated via such elements.

Process requirements were evident in the whole data set and my analysis suggests that they mainly relate to turnaround times and translation costs.
To illustrate the former, I provide a comment from Karolina, who explains how she understands a fast turnaround: ‘[I]f you get a request from a client [at] 4.55pm, and they need it first thing in the morning’ [1910IK]. The client requests that the product is delivered overnight, outside the normal hours of operation. This specification concerns the process quality of the production process, and does not specify any properties of the translation product. In order to meet this requirement, the PMs may enact specific elements of knowing, such as commissioning translators in a different time zone who can prepare the translation during their normal working hours. In this case, Karolina would ‘know that [she’s] got translators in the United States that just started their day’ [1910IK] and thus commission a US-based translator with the project.

The latter client expectation, i.e. the cost of the translation, was indicated by the observation that a ‘potential new client had previously turned down an offer because he found it too expensive’ [0801RN]. Clients normally include translation costs in their decision whether to accept a quote and to commission languages@work with a translation project, and this factor has to be accommodated by the PMs in their practice. On the other extreme, I observed projects in which clients were not ‘price-sensitive’ at all, ‘you can charge them whatever you want and they’ll just pay it’ [1201RN]. Translation cost, as determined by the client, is often a significant element of meaning in managing translation projects. The PMs can enact the practice accordingly, for instance, by excluding certain activities such as proofreading from the production process, or enacting material resources like CAT tools. Their repertoire of competence acts as a useful resource for achieving particular aims like a fast turnaround or low cost.

Thus, the provision of translation services can be tailored to client requirements because the PMs enact managing translation projects with elements of meaning which originated from the client.

My data provides evidence for mutual structuring mechanisms, as were described in Giddens’ (1984) principle of structuration. Through their enactments, the PMs recreate the structures of managing translation projects. My analysis has shown that they integrate the ERP system in their practice by enacting specific features, so as to elicit particular responses from the system. I have demonstrated that such performances rely on the interplay between individual repertoires of competence, materials and elements of meaning, and I have pointed out how the PMs enact integrated and non-integrated technologies.
The specific ways in which the PMs repeatedly use technologies and the specific circumstances in which they use them recreate the structures of their practice. At the same time, the PMs’ enactments are structured in several ways by the practice-as-entity. The first aspect which emerged from my analysis is the availability of material resources. The PMs’ enactment of the technological properties of the ERP system was found to be prescribed or restricted, as demonstrated through a few examples. This could be explained with structures originating at organisational level, i.e. with rules set by the management of languages@work. It could also be shown that the organisational level, in turn, is shaped by external structures to some degree, as was evident in the example of ISO certification. Finally, my analysis has provided insight into how the practice is structured by elements which enter the practice via clients, and I have identified turnaround time and translation cost as the most salient elements. Providing good customer service is part of the PMs’ professional ethics, and they strive for client satisfaction, as outlined in section 4.2.2. Naturally, not all client expectations are realistic but I observed that the PMs tend to advise clients on realistic expectations, negotiate rates and feasible turnaround times, and sometimes go out of their way to provide the best possible service to the client.

It can be seen from this analysis that managing translation projects is a complex undertaking which takes place in a highly situated context. The PMs’ enactments are dependent upon their own repertoires of competence, but are further shaped by the availability of materials, as well as external factors such as elements of meaning, organisational and institutional rules of enactments, all of which have to be accommodated in every performance.

4.3.2 Transforming repertoires and changing practices

As was shown in section 4.2, technologies-in-practice are based upon a set of interconnected elements of competence, and the previous section has established how technologies-in-practice are affected by the context in which they take place. This section extends the discussion of competence provided in section 4.2 to enactments of the ERP system. First, I investigate how the PMs make the transition from changing their repertoires of elements to accommodating these changes in their enactments. Second, I analyse how this transition enables the PMs to perform modifications of the ERP system, and how Sky has transformed
their routinised enactments of managing translation projects.

The introduction of Sky was implemented in a top-down approach, based on the decision of the management. This points towards an unequal power relationship between the management and the PMs. However, the PMs were highly motivated to integrate the new ERP system into their performances of the practice, as the enactment of the previous system had become frustrating, especially for the process of creating invoices (see below). The benefits they derived from using the new system seemed to balance aspects of unequal power.

The first point to be discussed is how the PMs acquired and integrated their repertoires of competence in relation to the implementation of Sky. As noted in section 2.1.2, the ways in which technologies are used ‘is strongly influenced by users’ understandings of the properties and functionality of a technology’ (Orlikowski 2000:409). Thus, the PMs had to adapt their understanding and knowing to the new technology, so as to skilfully manage their projects.

The implementation of Sky was accompanied by regular formal training sessions, which were conducted by Hannah, a senior member of staff, and two sessions were observed during fieldwork. As these sessions were conducted for the PMs and other employees in different offices of the LSP, they were carried out remotely with desktop sharing software and telephone conferencing, so that PMs in different locations could take part in them. During these sessions, the PMs were taught how to use the ERP system’s features relevant for managing translation projects, and were expected to then apply their newly acquired knowledge to their own projects.

The following fieldnote excerpt illustrates a training session, which was conducted while I was observing Oliver, one of the proofreaders. Hannah was located in the same office.

Hannah begins to explain how to find translators on the database and (...) I realise that a training session on the ERP system that has only been introduced three days ago has just started. Oliver interrupts his work, everyone is quietly listening to Hannah. She addresses issues on database management and retrieval of data (translators, rates, adding so-called ‘prospects’ [potential clients] and customer price lists). Hannah conducts the session from her desk with desktop sharing software (her screen is visible on everyone’s screens). (...) Hannah makes references to manuals, and the
training finishes with a brief question and answer session. [0701RN]

The training sessions tended to be relatively short and focused on specific features of the ERP system, in the above case on data retrieval. Being short, they could easily be integrated into the PMs’ workflow, and their focus was on conveying elements of understanding and knowing, i.e. presenting the technology’s available features, and demonstrating how to perform certain activities with them.

The management’s decision to conduct formal training for Sky exerted pressure on the PMs to engage with the new software, and ensured that competence could be acquired in a standard fashion among the PMs at languages@work. The significance of this example lies in the fact that a whole community of PMs with individual repertoires of competence that had emerged over time and across locations in a non-standardised way (see section 4.2) received the same training. The formality was further supported by the availability of manuals, to which the PMs could refer after the sessions.

I observed that the integration of their newly acquired elements of competence in their enactments of project management seemed to take place only gradually. The process of integration was shaped by ‘social influences on individual enactments’ (Boudreau and Robey 2005:16), as the learning process that followed the implementation of Sky was characterised by mutual support of the PMs and other employees. During the observation, the PMs frequently sought help from Hannah outside the training sessions and asked their co-workers questions about what had been covered. For example, one PM who was located in the same office as Hannah, ‘creates a new project and asks Hannah to come over to help with a question on the new PM system’ [0801RN]. In this case, the technology-in-practice could not be enacted without the help of the co-worker, as some required elements were not available to the PM, so they had to draw on other practitioners’ repertoires, so as to integrate new elements into their own repertoires. In other words, the PMs were not immediately able to apply their knowledge. This issue, which occurred repeatedly during the observations with several PMs, indicates that formal training may not suffice to build competence, but that informal forms of learning, such as conversations with colleagues, are also needed. Such interaction within a network of practitioners requires initiative by the PMs, and can be seen as an approach to actively build competence. These elements can then be integrated into future enactments of
The practice of managing translation projects

technologies-in-practice.

Repeated enactments, in turn, enable the PMs to reinforce their newly acquired competence and develop routinised ways of doing things, and in fact, they already seemed to be able to carry out specific processes in Sky effortlessly. A possible explanation for this observation might be that they had already developed sufficient competence for some processes but not for others. This result is consistent with the claim that ‘levels of practice come within reach as competence develops’ (Shove et al. 2012:71). Whereas the first enactments of certain processes in Sky tended to be arduous tasks for the PMs, subsequent enactments were characterised by less effort and finally, we would expect technologies-in-practice to become routinised enactments. Another explanation for the differences in observed ‘levels’ of practice can be found in Boudreau and Robey (2005), who suggest that enactments change over time, as they are always dependent on their temporal contexts, too. According to this, how an enactment turns out is contingent upon practitioners’ assessments of how they currently perform their practices in relation to how they enacted them in the past, and how they would like future performances to be (ibid.:15). Thus, the PMs are driven by a motivation of what they want to achieve with the technology-in-practice (future), and they base their current actions upon previous learning experiences or enactments (past), which shape their current enactment (present). Overall, this is how we can observe progression in enactments of a practice over time.

A final point to be made about the introduction of Sky has to do with productivity. In line with the findings of Boudreau and Robey (ibid.), the implementation of the new ERP system entailed an initial period of reduced productivity, before eventually contributing to more efficient work processes. Reduced productivity was due to time spent on training, learning and asking questions, as outlined above. When I returned to the LSP to interview some of the PMs, a few months had passed since the implementation of Sky and a common view among the PMs was that the majority of problems that were evident during the observations had been resolved. Karolina, for example, reported that ‘most of the issues were resolved really quickly. There are some bits and bobs that we now have but it’s mainly to do with the programming and coding, nothing that affects us in our daily operations’ [1910IK]. Her statement reflects routinised technologies-in-practice from the PMs’ perspective. The
introduction of Sky has also resulted in more efficient processes as compared to the use of the previous system, as summarised by Colin.

Processes, just such as creating a quote, creating an invoice, looking for translators, those things can now be done with three clicks. Whereas, previously, in our old system, it was...you had to spend...Particularly for creating invoices it was a total nightmare, like, you had to spend five minutes entering information, click through about six different screens and the user interface. [1210IC]

As we can see from this account, Sky has changed how the PMs carry out processes, how they enact the ERP system. They now spend less time on these processes, which will be further discussed below, and can therefore be more productive.

In the second part of this section, I will now turn to the question of how the PMs modify the ERP system and how the introduction of Sky has transformed their enactments of project management. As discussed in section 4.2.1, Orlikowski (2000) distinguishes artefact modification from modification of enactments. The notion of artefact modification refers to changes that are made to the technology itself, or to its material properties, and that may transform the artefact as a result. An example of such modification is the adaptation of Sky to the requirements of languages@work, which was briefly mentioned in the introduction to this section. Another example, which is performed by the PMs, would be the task of entering data into the system, whereby they add information that is relevant for the management of translation projects. This type of modification was frequently observed, and is illustrated in the following fieldnote excerpt: ‘He opens Sky and creates a new project. (...) In the project form, he adds the contact details of the client (name and email address) as well as the date the project was created and the expected delivery date’ [1601RN].

The second form of modification, as outlined by Orlikowski (ibid.), are modifications of enactments, i.e. changes to routinised performances. Technologies-in-practice have the potential to either reinforce the structures of a practice, if routinely enacted, or can enhance recurrent patterns by introducing modifications. Below, I discuss various enactments that lead to changes in existing structures, as they occurred during the observations or were evident in the interviews. Overall, modifications of enactments were performed in two areas: processes and communication.
One process which was significantly affected by the implementation of Sky, and which was mentioned by several PMs, was the activity of issuing invoices. As mentioned above, this process is carried out through the ERP system. The PMs reported that, prior to the availability of Sky, it took them considerable time to issue an invoice. The following example illustrates this process, and it also shows that creating invoices for clients who communicate with the LSP in a language other than English used to cause additional work.

[Colin] checks the amount of the invoice against the information in the project folder as it would cause additional work to correct the amount if it was incorrectly entered. Then he opens the ERP software to create the invoice. (...) After having created and saved the English invoice, Colin opens a template in the required language and enters the data from the English version, saves the version in the required language and sends it to the client by email. [1012RN]

It had not been possible to effectively carry out the activity of issuing invoices after the requirements on the software had changed with the LSP’s expansion abroad, which made it necessary to provide invoices in various languages. Previously enacted technologies-in-practice were no longer effective, and therefore the PMs had reinvented (see section 2.1.3) their interactions with the system by manually entering information. This observation confirms the claim made by Boudreau and Robey (2005:13) that practitioners enact innovative technologies-in-practice in order to ‘compensate for what they [consider] deficiencies within the system.’ This temporary workaround became redundant with the introduction of Sky. Through the use of Sky, two aspects have changed; first, the amount of time spent on issuing invoices has decreased tremendously and second, the ERP system provides the properties that were needed to deal with the new demand for invoices in various languages.

A second process which was modified by the implementation of Sky and which was mentioned by the PMs was the resources search. Sky offers enhanced search functions for resources. Emily and Max stress that translator profiles are structured more clearly and information can be retrieved more easily. In addition, important information can be highlighted in a search, as we can see in the following example:

If, say, someone’s doing a resource search, I can add a note that sort
of would come up in that search, saying, if someone’s not signed an NDA, so confidentiality agreement (...) I can make it so that that’s highlighted for people more clearly so that...so they know if they’ve got a client where they’ve got an NDA in place, they don’t approach that translator with the file. [1210IE]

This example illustrates that Sky has the required properties for highlighting information, on which users can draw if they know that this feature is available, and if they understand how to use it. In this way, the technology has changed technologies-in-practice. At the same time, the interviewee notes that she ‘can make it’ that information is flagged, which points towards her agency in the process. Thus, the resources search becomes a two-way interaction between the system and the user.

Another area in which Sky has caused changes in the PMs technologies-in-practice is communication, as discussed in section 4.3.1. The PMs emphasise that the system’s introduction has changed how they communicate with the accounts department, as it comprises a note function through which messages can be sent to the accounts team from within the ERP system. Instead of sending them emails or instant messages asking them to perform a credit check on a client, they would now make a note on the ERP system. Karolina explains: ‘So, if I need a credit check to be done, I no longer need to send a huge request to finance, I can put all the information in Sky and just ask finance to do it’ [1910IK]. The introduction of a new ERP system has thus reduced the number of emails sent between departments, and at the same time made information on credit limits centrally accessible via the system. This new way of communication benefits the PMs, as they can save time.

To sum up, we can say that the PMs went through an initial phase of formal training on Sky’s features and functionality, which was followed by individual, active learning. We have seen above how ‘learning, sharing and carrying are typically and perhaps unavoidably transformative, both of the practitioners involved and of the practices they reproduce’ (Shove et al. 2012:73). The implementation of Sky has enabled the PMs to develop their repertoires of competence and changed the way they manage their projects. In my analysis of the training sessions, I have shown that it is not sufficient to know what a technology can do and understand how it works, but that repeated enactments significantly contribute to processes of learning and the reproduction of the...
practice. I have therefore demonstrated that repeated enactments are as significant as the availability of elements for practices. My analysis indicates that the continuous availability of informal support further enhanced the development of competence. Taken together, learning and repeated enactments enable practitioners to make the transition from acquiring elements of competence to integrating the elements into their enactments and ultimately, increase productivity. Overall, building knowledge and learning new ways of doing things help the PMs to develop as professionals, and have the potential to change the practice of managing translation projects.

4.4 Conclusion: Complexity in production networks

The starting point of my thesis was the claim made by Abdallah and Koskinen (2007) that translation production takes place in production networks. They examined the translators’ role in this configuration, and this chapter has extended our knowledge by focusing on the LSP’s role in translation production. Overall, I have provided empirical evidence for the claim that technology is inextricably linked to translation project management, a claim that has so far only been made for the activity of translating (Drugan 2013; Risku et al. 2013).

First, I have answered research question 1a, i.e. which elements are significant for the PMs’ practice, and how are these elements enacted. To this end, I have deconstructed the practice into its constituent elements, based on empirical evidence from my data set. My analysis has found that CAT tools, a non-integrated technology, and the ERP system, which serves as an integrated technology, are used as material elements on which the PMs frequently draw to organise their translation projects. My analysis has emphasised the socio-material nature of the practice, as technologies are an indispensable part of translation project management. The PMs understand their activities in relation to the production process and regard their practice mainly as an organising, client-centred role. This is a significant finding, as it provides some explanation as to why translators often find themselves in the dark about the processes that take place within the LSP. The PMs’ position in the production network is greatly structured by their relations with the client, but less so by relations with translators. As regards elements of knowing, all the PMs displayed knowledge of the properties and functionalities of technologies, and there was general consensus among them that knowing how to use CAT tools is
essential for their practice. However, perceptions on whether knowing another language constitutes a necessary element differed, and specific knowledge of project management was not mentioned by any of the PMs. Meaning is strongly associated with the ideas of cost effectiveness and providing good customer service, a finding which might result from elements of meaning crossing over from the clients’ into the PMs’ repertoires.

Next, I have conceptualised the PMs as carriers of managing translation projects and analysed how they enact the practice with a focus on competence and information technologies as material elements. I have shown that the PMs reproduce project management by enacting materials, elements of competence and meaning in routinised ways.

The analysis has also revealed that individual enactments are characterised by a degree of variation, which can be explained by the observation that the PMs who draw on the same materials have been recruited to the practice in different ways, and thus have different repertoires of competence. The value of such variation is that it bears a potential for change, since it provides the practitioners with a wide array of elements on which they could draw. Apart from differences between the PMs’ enactments, there is variation among the enactments of each of the PMs. My data confirms the point acknowledged in the literature that technological changes transform the translation industry, and it could be shown how such changes affect the PMs’ enactments. Thus, enactments are always emergent in relation to the context in which they take place, and carry potential for innovation.

Second, I have addressed research question 1b, i.e. which technologies-in-practice do PMs enact with CAT tools and ERP software when they work on translation projects. The specific technologies-in-practice enacted with CAT tools were file analysis, package creation and finalising packages. They serve the purpose of organising the translating process that is subsequently carried out by translators. In relation to the ERP system, it was found that the PMs recreate structures of managing translation projects through purposeful interaction with selected features of the technology, so as to elicit particular responses. The ERP system is therefore employed for organising project management, as it constitutes a resource which the PMs use for entering and retrieving data on translation projects, clients and translators, as well as for creating standard documents like POs. A contribution of this chapter is that it is the first study
The practice of managing translation projects which highlights the importance of an ERP system for translation project management. The technologies-in-practice with CAT tools differ from those with the ERP system in terms of their integration with other materials; whereas CAT tools tend to be enacted together with other materials, the ERP system is often enacted on its own, as it is an integrated technology.

Technologies-in-practice require the enactment of elements of competence with material resources. As mentioned by Orlikowski (2000), technologies-in-practice are emergent, and the PMs’ interactions with CAT tools and the ERP system are no exception in this regard. The changing nature of material elements and transformations of their repertoires of competence affect the way in which they enact these technologies, and render their performances contingent upon time. This finding is in keeping with the claim of Boudreau and Robey (2005) that temporality structures such enactments. The materiality of managing translation projects is volatile and constantly shifting, and may affect the temporal procedures of the practice, as was the case for the activity of issuing invoices, which now takes less time to do.

It could be shown that the PMs’ enactments of the ERP system are based on selected properties of the technology, and that they perform routinised artefact modifications when creating packages. They carry out these activities in order to recreate the structures of managing translation projects, and modify their routine enactments if necessary. Modifications of technological artefacts have the potential to change the practice of managing translation projects. My analysis has demonstrated this for the case of the ERP system, which had been introduced for the purpose of rendering work processes more efficient as compared to the previous system, and then customised to meet the requirements for optimal organisation of translation projects. As a result, the PMs had to modify their repertoire of competence in order still to be able to engage in the practice. Managing translation projects and modifications of technological artefacts influence one another, as the practice presents the key demands on technologies for successful engagement, and the use of technologies has the potential to transform aspects of the practice. The ERP system thus structures the PMs’ enactments.

My analysis indicates that the practice-as-entity also structures the PMs’ performances because technologies-in-practice are always situated enactments of material elements. I have shown that integrations of CAT tools and the ERP sys-
The practice of managing translation projects is embedded in the specific organisational setting of languages@work. Their enactments are shaped by organisational structures, which depend on external specifications like product quality, turnaround time and translation costs, and are in turn recreated by technologies-in-practice. The organisation process of translation projects that emerges as a result from the PMs’ enactments ideally meets external specifications. Thus, technologies-in-practice are significantly shaped by the practice of managing translation projects and at the same time, they contribute to the reinforcement of existing structures.

In this chapter, I have addressed the first part of my overarching research question, i.e. how does conceptualising translation project management as a practice enhance our understanding of the role of project management in production networks. A first point to be made in this respect is that a practice-theoretical framing facilitates a better understanding of how PMs access the practice and how they participate in it. I have found that access to managing translation projects is restricted, as certain elements must already be present in repertoires in order to become a carrier of the practice. This is a significant observation, since it has implications for translator training. As we have seen, most of the PMs had completed degree programmes in languages or translation, which enabled them to build basic repertoires that were required for accessing the practice.

Having said this, we have also seen, in the example of the training for the ERP system, that acquiring elements is not sufficient for being a practitioner. Immersion is a prerequisite for participation, which then contributes to the development of competence. This is significant, as ‘levels of practice come within reach as competence develops’ (Shove et al. 2012:71), and thus the PMs may gradually become experts. The process of competence acquisition could be demonstrated in a number of examples of how the PMs restructured their technologies-in-practice after they had started to work at the LSP. Their work experience has enabled them to develop their competence through participation in managing translation projects. Through the repeated enactment of technologies, they adapted their repertoires of competence to the organisational structures of languages@work. In this process, they also resorted to other practitioners’ competence. The PMs’ joint participation in the same setting provides some explanation as to why the PMs at languages@work have
similar repertoires of competence, and this may help us to understand why their enactments resemble one another. ‘A community of users engaged in similar work practices typically enacts similar technologies-in-practice, where through common training sessions, shared socialization, comparable on-the-job experiences, and mutual coordination and storytelling, users come to engage with a technology in similar ways’ (Orlikowski 2000:411). In other words, they exploit networks of practitioners to determine how knowledge is constructed, and how it is circulated. Thus, the PMs’ technologies-in-practice are all enacted in similar ways.

From a practice-theoretical viewpoint, we can conceptualise translation production as a complex of practices in which elements of competences and materials are exchanged between practitioners of a variety of subordinated practices. Therefore, the practice of managing translation projects can only be understood against the wider context of translation production. Conceptualising project management as a practice enables us to determine the material and mental resources on which the PMs draw when managing translation projects. We can therefore not only see what the PMs do, but this approach also enables us to understand how and why they are doing it. When carrying out work processes with materials such as CAT tools and the ERP system, they tend to do this based on their understanding of project management as the cost-effective organisation of translation production in a client-focused way, and they draw on elements of knowledge about technologies and languages.

Secondly, the proposed theoretical framing affords conceptual gains in understanding, as it helps us to grasp and describe changes in practices, which are a critical feature of managing translation projects. As has been noted elsewhere (Risku et al. 2013), the translation industry has been and is being transformed by technological changes, and a practice-theoretical perspective may enable us to better understand how such changes take place, and how PMs deal with them. A significant finding with regards to changes in the practice was that structures of competence are emergent, i.e. the PMs’ repertoires are acquired gradually, and may be modified over time. This has been illustrated notably on the example of the implementation of a new ERP system as a material entering the practice, in the course of which formal and informal ways of learning, as well as material resources were used together with participation and repeated enactments in order to enable progression. Progression was evident
in the fact that the introduction of a new material resource to the practice had changed enactments.

The third aspect to be raised with regards to the question of how practice theory enhances our understanding of project management is complexity. Complexity begins at the individual practitioners’ level, as they have to enact a variety of elements in specific ways. Sometimes, elements that have been introduced from elsewhere, e.g. client expectations, must be integrated in the PMs’ repertoires. The organisational level also feeds into this complexity, as it structures the PMs’ performances from the opposite direction and provides a community of practitioners, an observation which is often overlooked in the literature, where it has been claimed that PMs generally work on their own (Risku 2004). It could be demonstrated that they draw on other practitioners’ repertoires of elements to enact technologies-in-practice, and thus I propose that managing translation projects is a joint effort. On a different scale, the practice of managing translation projects intersects with bundles of other practices, notably with translating, but also with less obvious practices like accounting and the client’s practice.

As was evident from the PMs’ accounts of previous work experience, managing translation projects notably diversifies in relation to the variety of tasks and working pace across LSPs. Differentiation could be found in terms of knowing, which appeared to be structured by the organisational level, i.e. the LSP determines which elements are to be integrated by the PMs into their performances. It is worth noting external structuring mechanisms which are involved in the reproduction of the practice, since they provide structures of managing translation projects on a more global level. An example that I discussed was the ISO certification that regulates which structures are enacted by the PMs. All of these factors make up the complexity of the practice. From a practice-theoretical point of view, we can better understand how this complexity comes into being, as well as the driving forces behind it.

To conclude, I revisit the notion of production networks and argue that information technologies such as CAT tools and ERP software be acknowledged in the production process, as they shape and are shaped by production networks. My study therefore extends the notion of production networks and provides a valuable contribution to our knowledge about the role of technologies in the translation process. This approach also gives us the tools for scrutinising the
factors that shape project management and thus facilitates an analysis of the broader context of which the practice forms part. In this way, we can investigate the significance of translation project management for the production network, in which PMs are tightly integrated.

Based on my understanding of production networks, I argue that PMs are indispensable for translation production. With very small projects, it might be conceivable to circumvent the LSP as an actor in the production process, but all observed instances related to projects with several TIs, a large amount of words to be translated within limited time, and often additional required services (e.g. proofreading, DTP), which could not have been met by a single freelance translator. Clients set the requirements for translation work, and their expectations, such as product quality, turnaround times and translation costs can be met by the LSP. As can be seen in figure 1.3, translation production networks are star-shaped, which means that the PM provides a connection point between the actors in translation production. Moreover, this type of actor has a specific repertoire of elements at their disposal, which sets them apart from other actors. For instance, the material element of a translator database and elements of knowing about which translators are suitable to work on certain projects enable the efficient allocation of human resources. Single translators, on the other hand, usually lack those elements and are therefore unable to provide the same service to a client. Thus, PMs are tightly integrated into translation production.

This chapter has raised a number of questions about collaboration and quality. We have seen that the PMs tend to work on their own projects individually but that they rely on collaboration with other practitioners to complete their tasks, for instance, when dealing with complaints about translation products. The provision of good customer service, for which the PMs strive, includes the delivery of satisfactory translation products, and in order to achieve these, they organise their projects in specific ways, collaborate with other practitioners and use certain technological features. The following chapter will address the question of how quality is achieved in the practice of managing translation projects, both in the translation process and product.
5 | Quality assurance in production networks

This chapter sets out to answer the second part of my overarching research question, i.e. how does conceptualising translation project management as a practice enhance our understanding of translation quality in production networks. It addresses research question 2 (and subquestions), i.e. how does the practice of managing translation projects impact on translation quality. It extends the discussion of technologies-in-practice by investigating how the PMs enact technologies in relation to translation quality and seeks to establish the effect that the organisation of production networks and the structures of the practice of managing translation projects have on the quality of translation processes and products.

As explained above (see section 1.2), there is no consensus on the notion of translation quality in the literature. This chapter opens with an analysis of the PMs’ understanding of the topic. Specifically, I investigate their notions of product and process quality, as well as the significance of a relational approach to quality in the PMs’ accounts, as these appear to be predominant concepts in the literature (e.g. Drugan 2013). Section 5.1 addresses research question 2a, i.e. how do PMs define translation quality. My analysis demonstrates that the PMs regard both process and product quality as significant and that there is evidence of a relational approach to quality in their work. Accordingly, they carry out QA procedures, which I discuss in more detail in the remainder of the chapter.

My analysis indicates that the relational approach to quality is contingent upon three defining factors that I analyse in section 5.2. The first factor involved is the time available for the project. Second, quality is defined by customer service and client satisfaction. In other words, a translation product is of appropriate quality if the client regards it as satisfactory. As client satisfaction serves as a criterion for satisfactory quality, I argue that the PMs’ approach to quality is shaped in the broader context by organisational culture, as explained in chapter 4. Third, the selection of appropriate translators for a project seems to have a major influence on the success of a project.

Section 5.3 and section 5.4 seek to answer research question 2b, i.e. which structures of managing translation projects do PMs enact in order to ensure translation quality, and research question 2c, i.e. how do the PMs’ interactions with other practitioners in the translation production network contribute to translation quality. These last two sections of this chapter investigate how
the PMs engage in project management to achieve satisfactory outcomes with regard to translation quality. Overall, my analysis suggests that they enact particular technologies-in-practice and collaborate with other practitioners in the production network in order to control the quality of translation products, and they do this mainly for purposes of QC (see section 5.3). Such enactments include checking parts of the TT before delivering it to the client. A second activity in which they engage, but to a lesser extent, is TQA (see section 5.4). From the PMs’ perspective, this is enacted if presented with complaints by clients but it is also applied in the wider production process by the VM to ensure that translators maintain a certain quality standard.

5.1 Definitions of quality in translation project management

This section paves the way for the following ones by investigating how the PMs define translation quality. During the interviews, they were asked what a good translation is for them, so as to establish how they understand quality in translation production. Their accounts were then compared against the framework described by Drugan (2013), as outlined in chapter 1.

To begin with, an interesting observation was that the PMs seemed to experience some difficulty in defining the concept, as indicated by preliminary utterances such as ‘What is good quality in a translation, bloody hell. That’s a difficult question.’ [2010IS] and ‘in terms of translation, a lot of it is very subjective, isn’t it?’ [2010IK] These utterances corroborate previous research which found that quality in translation is a rather vague concept. The PMs tended not to answer the question immediately, but required some time to think about their replies. The definition of good quality appeared to be challenging.

The other PMs’ answers to this question followed a similar pattern. After initial hesitation, the PMs tended to provide simple definitions at first, but then developed their statements into more complex accounts that qualified their introductory replies. This discourse pattern was evident among all PMs. My analysis indicates that they understand quality of translation products first and foremost as a set of textual properties, namely accuracy of the translation, correct spelling and appropriate style, as implied by their first responses to the question of how they define a good translation. According to Karolina, for example, a good translation is

free of sloppy errors, such as misspellings or things that show that
there was a lack of concentration or someone hasn’t checked their work after they’ve done it. I think, good quality translation is something that’s accurate, it’s translated fully, so nothing is omitted and it reads well. [2010IK]

The other PMs’ answers to this question referred to the same textual features. Sophie, for instance, said: ‘It goes really in order of: accurate translations, correct spelling and good style, probably, I would say’ [2010IS].

The textual properties mentioned by Karolina relate to the quality of translation products but interestingly, she also mentions aspects of the process. In her view, a ‘lack of concentration’ and not checking the work after completion result in translation errors, which are then evident in the translation product. Her comment thus points towards the role of the translation process in shaping the final product.

The textual properties identified by the PMs, perhaps apart from correct spelling, are not easily ascertainable. Correct spelling is a relatively clear-cut concept that can be easily achieved and assessed by careful proofreading and the use of spell checkers, and that is expected in every single translation project. The term accuracy, however, denotes mainly the complete and exact representation of the ST, according to the PMs. Completeness can probably be measured by comparing the number of units or segments, sentence constituents or whole sentences but exact representation constitutes a more vague and imprecise category. Style, due to its complexity, is an even more fuzzy concept.

A possible explanation for the PMs’ difficulties in summarising translation quality is the difference between doing a practice and talking about it. Practice theory, like structuration theory, assumes that practitioners do not usually actively reflect on their practice when carrying it out in routinised ways (Nicolini 2012:48). They may therefore struggle to put into words what they are doing in an expert way on an everyday basis. The interview process forced the participants to articulate their practice in spoken discourse, and they may have resorted to available discourse structures which they had acquired at some point in their careers. As my data set does not contain sufficient data on discourse practices to confirm the origin of the PMs’ utterances, I can only conjecture why they talk about quality the way in which they do. The textual properties mentioned by the PMs bear striking similarity to discourses on translation. Since most of the PMs had formally trained as translators, they might have
learned these patterns as part of their training, or later on in their careers. What can be inferred from this observation is the importance of participant observation, as this method facilitates access to practices in situ.

Straightforward replies such as the one given by Karolina tended to be qualified by the PMs in relation to specific translation projects. After having spontaneously explained translation quality as a set of textual properties, some of the PMs described quality as subjective. Further discussion of the topic revealed that the appropriateness of the textual properties of a particular TT depends on the intended purpose of the translation. Hence, the established features are not categorical and therefore easy to measure, but must always be seen in relation to a particular translation project. This tallies with a relational approach to quality, as outlined in section 1.2.1, and corresponds to a ‘fit for purpose’ (Drugan 2013:42) definition of product quality. Based on two examples, Colin explains how translations can display significant differences in textual properties and may still be regarded as of good quality.

[I]t depends on what sort of text it is. If it’s a technical text explaining how a piece of machinery works (...), certainly accuracy is, I’d say, the main thing that is necessary for a good translation. On the other hand, we do do some copywriting, particularly for marketing agencies, then obviously accuracy in the sense of making sure that every single word from the source text is in the translation is less necessary in a copywriting job. It’s more about conveying the feeling and the meaning and the general point of the text. [1410IC]

Marketing texts served as the prime example of translations in which deviations like the one described by Colin were mentioned, and similar qualifications were made in relation to literary translation by other PMs. Several of the PMs constructed their accounts in this way, which points towards an opposition between accuracy and style. Going back to the above comment, Colin explains ‘accuracy in the sense of making sure that every single word from the source text is in the translation’ [1410IC]. His definition of accuracy refers to the extent rather than the content of the translation, and I believe that style simply relates to the linguistic means by which the content is rendered. Therefore, I think that accuracy and style are not mutually exclusive but that they complement one another in contributing to translation quality.

What can be understood from this discussion is that the concept of trans-
lation quality is far from precise. The way in which the PMs talk about quality lacks clear concepts, and my analysis emphasises that it is important to examine not only what they say about the topic, but also how they construct their utterances. The PMs reflect on translation quality in vague terms; the concept is described by some of them as a ‘subjective’ dimension of the translation production process, as well as in terms of the dependency of individual translation projects on a specific purpose. Despite the fact that the PMs draw on a particular vocabulary to describe aspects of quality (e.g. the terms accuracy and style), the way in which they construct their accounts when they talk about the concept suggests that quality is a vague concept in the context of translation. Their initial hesitation indicated this, and even their progression via a simplified to a more complex account only revealed limited aspects of translation quality, which were mainly textual features of the translation product.

Comparing the PMs’ understanding of translation quality to that of translators, as discussed in the literature, reveals a major difference between these two groups of professionals; the PMs at languages@work do not advocate an absolute approach to the definition of quality, which was found to be pertinent to translators’ perceptions of quality (Abdallah 2010). Translators tend to understand quality as the standard of their delivered products, and Abdallah (ibid.) found that they tend to strive for high quality in their products. The PMs, on the contrary, define product quality in terms of a ‘fit for purpose’ (Drugan 2013:42) approach, since the finished translation has to meet its intended purpose, as we have seen above. For the PMs, quality is thus a relational concept rather than an absolute one. In line with the economic realities of each individual translation project, expectations of product quality can therefore vary. However, my data does not support the concept of quality levels, as suggested by Abdallah (2012). Instead, my analysis points towards a variation in textual properties across different text types, as the PMs appear to prioritise varying textual features in different genres.

All in all, I suggest that the difficulties in defining translation quality stem from a too narrow understanding of the concept. The PMs seemed to focus almost entirely on product quality, although the importance of process quality was mentioned by one of the PMs. There was some evidence of a relational approach to translation quality, which I will discuss in more detail in the following section, as this section has not provided a comprehensive answer to
the question of how translation quality is defined. As we will see in the following section, taking into account a number of defining factors may prove helpful in thinking about translation quality.

## 5.2 Defining factors of translation quality

As outlined in section 1.2, previous studies have found an interdependence between actors and their skills or knowledge, resources such as technologies, time and budget, as well as the organisation of translation projects in terms of collaboration, trust and available support (Drugan 2013; Abdallah 2010). The significance of the actors’ skills and knowledge for translation production networks, which can be seen as elements of knowing and understanding in practices of translation production, was discussed in chapter 4, where I concluded that repertoires of competence are in constant interplay with material elements and elements of meaning at an individual, organisational and institutional level.

With regard to translation quality, my analysis revealed time, client requirements and the process of translator selection as the three defining factors which seemed to be the most salient to the PMs, and I will discuss these in this section. The first characteristic is the time available to complete the project, and I will frame this time as temporal structures (Orlikowski and Yates 2002), which shape and are shaped by the PMs’ practice, in section 5.2.1. This is followed by a discussion of client requirements, as introduced in chapter 4, where they have been conceptualised as elements of meaning (section 5.2.2). Finally, in section 5.2.3, I analyse the process of translator selection, which I will frame as an activity that is carried out jointly by the PMs and the VM at languages@work.

### 5.2.1 Time

As explained in section 1.2, time is one of the prerequisites of translation quality. The importance of a sufficient amount of time to complete a translation project to a satisfactory quality level has been acknowledged (Dunne and Dunne 2011) and the PMs in my study seem to generally agree with this requirement. At the same time, however, they explain that time to work on individual projects is usually limited for two reasons. The first one are fast turnaround times requested by clients which often result in ‘tight deadlines’ [1410IC] for translation projects. The second reason are limits to the time that the PMs can spend on their projects, as illustrated by the following interview excerpt.
there is only a certain amount of time we can spend on each project. In an ideal world, we are all control freaks and we like to polish things but as you get busier, the less time you have to do things yourself. [2010IK]

In the following, I will investigate how quality, which relies on time to some extent, can be achieved in a context where time tends to be limited by drawing on the concept of temporal structuring (Orlikowski and Yates 2002). To this end, I define time as ‘experienced through the temporal structures people enact in their recurrent practices’ (ibid.:689). Temporal structures play a significant role in the PMs’ practice, as these shape and are shaped by their actions when they are enacting the practice of managing translation projects. I will begin my analysis by discussing project deadlines as a dominant temporal structure, and then investigate how the PMs enact this structure in their practice.

The PMs enact a number of temporal structures in their practice. The most significant ones are project deadlines, which can be seen as a ‘closed, deadline-bound structure’ (ibid.:694, emphasis in original). They are closed structures because they are directed at a specific point in time, usually defined in date and time format, which serves as an effective structuring mechanism. This point is negotiated and set at the beginning of each new translation project, and it is expected that translators deliver by the specified (translation) deadline, so that the PMs can deliver the finished translation product to the client on time. The PMs’ experience of time is both ‘clock-based’ (ibid.:690) and ‘event-based’ (ibid.:690), as they relate events such as being commissioned with a translation project, commissioning freelance translators and delivering translation products to the clock by setting (and meeting) project deadlines, which are based on calculations of how much clock time will be required to complete a project. On the one hand, the PMs enact this temporal structure by organising their projects in such a way that the deadline can be met, and thus reproduce that specific structure. On the other hand, the project deadline structures the PMs’ practice, as their enactments are organised around this temporal structure.

Project deadlines are very powerful temporal structures. Ultimately, they are set by the PMs, but a practice-theoretical view affords additional insights into how these structures work. On a local scale, the PMs have an understanding of the organisational structures of languages@work, which may require them to
reach a specific turnover every month. Thus, they draw on elements of knowing and material elements to facilitate fast turnaround times, which were described in the above example as ‘a certain amount of time we can spend on each project’ [2010IK]. Their performances, however, are routinised enactments of the practice which depend on corporate structures. Not only are project deadlines driven by corporate structures, but also by client demand. As explained by one of the PMs in the above example, translation projects tend to have ‘tight deadlines’ [1410IC], as clients usually require their translation products quickly. This aspect, which significantly determines the temporal structures enacted by the PMs, is beyond their control. It originates from outside the LSP, and demonstrates how managing translation projects is influenced by the wider context in which the practice takes place.

Moreover, the PMs routinely enact a temporal structure which they cannot easily alter, as it is not only performed by the PMs at languages@work, but is drawn on by numerous PMs across the translation industry. As Orlikowski and Yates (2002:696) explain, ‘[t]he larger the size of the community enacting a particular temporal structure, the more difficult it should be to change.’ Since tight project deadlines are characteristic for the translation industry, it seems hardly imaginable that this structure would be changeable. In addition, changes would require ‘explicit and considerable effort’ (ibid.:688), which was not evident among the PMs at the time of the observation. A practice perspective thus helps us to understand how project deadlines, which are enacted by the PMs as temporal structures, structure and are structured by their practice, and provides explanations for why these structures are dominant in the translation industry.

I will now turn to the question of how temporal structures are connected to quality in translation production. The PMs’ acceptance of corporate temporal structures was evident during the observations, and could be confirmed by my analysis of the interview data. I noticed that the PMs were very busy most of the time, and never had any downtime during their working days. To give but a few examples, they had to ‘place projects urgently’ [2101RN, also 1501RN and 0801RN] and regularly prioritised their most urgent tasks, as was evident in activities such as checking inboxes [1012RN] or taking ‘a moment to prioritise the most urgent tasks and [making] a note on his notepad, listing the five most important tasks’ [2101RN]. Those lists were also edited by the PM
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during the working day, as priorities shifted. These examples illustrate that the PMs tended to take their rigid temporal structures for granted, and arranged their practice around tight deadlines and in ways that facilitated them to spend limited time on individual projects.

In one of the interviews, Colin contends that good quality is still achievable: ‘Even with tight deadlines, we are still always committed to delivering good quality’ [1410IC]. His comment reflects the contradiction between tight deadlines and good quality, which has been acknowledged by Dunne (2011). However, my analysis indicates that the PMs are still able to achieve an acceptable level of translation quality in their routinised enactments, and I propose that this is possible because they adopt a relational approach to translation quality, which is defined by the intended purpose of a translation, as well as the notion of project-specific quality (see section 1.2). In other words, good product quality is seen as a translation that is usable by the client under the given circumstances of a project, not necessarily as an absolute concept. For languages@work, the fit-for-purpose approach, which only requires quality of a ‘good enough’ level in a particular project (Drugan 2013:180), appears to be relevant.

A desire for perfection, however, is not completely absent from my data. Karolina, in the example provided at the beginning of this section, admits that ‘[i]n an ideal world, we are all control freaks and we like to polish things’ [2010IK], but in the day-to-day business of languages@work, the PMs have to give practicality priority over professional idealism, however desirable it would seem to spend more time on managing individual translation projects. From a practice-theoretical perspective, when considering that more time could be spent on translation projects, the PMs have to reconcile various temporal structures in their enactments. As explained in section 2.1.1, practitioners may simultaneously draw on several temporal structures in their practices, and can, as a result of this, experience a feeling of tension because temporal structures interfere with one another (Orlikowski and Yates 2002:687). For reasons explained above, the PMs cannot simply change their enactments of the practice, which structures their performances, but they may still feel a tension when recreating the dominant temporal structures at languages@work.

Potential conflicts caused by clashing temporal structures tended to be reconciled by objectifying the dominant structure of tight project deadlines. As was noted in section 2.1.1 and demonstrated via empirical data above,
temporal structures appear tightly integrated into practices because they are repeatedly and routinely enacted to reproduce the practice, and are at the same time reinforced by these enactments. They appear as legitimate and influential in the practitioners’ organisational life, and tend not be questioned (Orlikowski and Yates 2002:686). Orlikowski and Yates (ibid.:686) call this mechanism ‘objectification’, as the practitioners tend to be unaware of the effect of temporal structures on their practice, or their potential for initiative which could change their practice. They enact this temporal structure routinely, in their capacity as skilled practitioners, and they have material resources and vast repertoires of competence at their disposal. That is, they take tight project deadlines for granted and successfully integrate these in their practice by exploiting materials such as TM software, which can support productivity and consistency (LeBlanc 2013), and they make use of elements of understanding, knowing and meaning in order to organise the production process based on fast turnaround times. Thus, routine enactments of temporal structures can enable translation quality.

Although the corporate temporal structure of languages@work is very rigid and puts considerable pressure on the PMs, it is not necessarily stable, as the PMs frequently resort to workarounds or improvise to implement a specific translation project, activities which can be understood as variations of the structure. An example of an improvised enactment of a temporal structure occurred during the observation with regard to selecting a translator for a translation project. Translators are selected by the PMs according to strict criteria:

So far, my impression was that Colin usually pays much attention to assigning jobs to translators who indicated that they are competent in the specialist area, as I saw him checking translator profiles for this type of information, and because he had also explained to me that he selects translators based on their specialisms. [2101RN] In this project, however, the PM was urgently looking to place the project with a translator, as the deadline was fast approaching. He had already contacted a couple of translators, who had all declined to take on the work. Therefore he decides to loosen his selection criteria, and prioritises availability over subject area specialism:
He explains to me that the translator is not a medical specialist but that he did the proofreading for the report and that he will get a TM with the package that he can use for the medical terms. It seems like Colin doesn’t consider this translator to be an ideal choice, but as he has to place this job urgently, he contacts the translator. [2101RN]

This example illustrates how a workaround may be used to achieve the end point of the enacted project deadline, namely a timely delivery. Colin relies on the translator’s repertoire of competence, and provides as many material resources as possible to make up for the lack of specialism in the required area. In order to enact the closed temporal structure, so as to meet the delivery deadline, Colin rejects a more suitable choice of translator, and compensates for his decision.

The restrictive and contemporaneously enabling nature of temporal structures (Orlikowski and Yates 2002:686) is evident in this example. Here, the enactment of the project deadline possibly constrains product quality, since selecting a translator who does not specialise in the subject area can result in translation errors (see section 5.2.3 for more details on how translator selection affects translation quality). At the same time, the PM’s enactment enables the timely delivery of the translation product, which, in turn, contributes to client satisfaction, as discussed in section 4.1. Client satisfaction can be regarded both an aspect of process quality, as would be the case with timely delivery, and product quality, if referring to the client’s acceptance of the final translation product.

Finally, we can conclude that temporal structures have an impact on translation quality, as their enactment constrains and enables characteristics of process and product quality. One the one hand, accepting tight deadlines means that the PMs restrict the work on a certain translation project to a limited number of weeks, days or even hours. In most cases, the enactment of this closed structure leads to sufficient product quality but one PM admits that time pressure can have an adverse effect on product quality: ‘Sometimes, the jobs are really, really rushed and you can see [that] the quality slips with the time pressure’ [2010IK]. If this happens, the enacted temporal structures constrain translation quality. On the other hand, the enactment of tight project deadlines can be understood as driven by client demands, and thus provides
further support to my claim that the client plays a significant role in structuring the practice of managing translation projects. Enacting tight deadlines enables process quality in a sense that the client receives the translation on time, and this aspect of process quality can be more important than a flawless, polished translation product. In the following section, we will look at client requirements in more detail.

### 5.2.2 Client satisfaction

In section 4.1, I discussed how the PMs strive to achieve client satisfaction by providing good customer service and delivering satisfactory translation products to their clients. In this section, I will continue my discussion with a focus on how aspects of client satisfaction are related to translation quality. The significance of client satisfaction has been acknowledged by Drugan (2013:39), who explains that ‘[w]hen translation is seen as a service, quality assessment depends on customer satisfaction.’

The importance of client requirements for translation quality was evident in my analysis of the interview data, as can be seen from a comment by Karolina who thinks that ‘translations are often very subjective. It’s down to style or some very specific requirements’ [2010IK]. The definition of translation quality evolves around specifications by clients, which are not always explicitly provided (see section 4.3.1). In addition, the vagueness of the concept is evident in the word ‘subjective’, which was also used by Max in a comment about what a good translation is.

> It’s something that’s correct, reads well and that the client likes...ultimately the client likes. It’s very subjective though. I don’t think there is ever gonna be somebody saying: ‘That is the perfect translation’, because it doesn’t exist. What’s perfect to someone, somebody else might not like in terms of style or the sort of technical things, they may just say no we prefer that sort of thing. I don’t think you will ever gonna get a perfect translation. [2010IM]

Max’s idea of translation quality relates to the translation product, and mirrors the textual properties described in section 5.1. However, his comment emphasises client satisfaction as the most salient factor for translation quality, as suggested by his use of the word ‘ultimately.’ Like Karolina, he understands...
quality as a ‘subjective’ concept, and his comment suggests that there can be no standard way of defining it. What defines a good translation therefore depends on the context in which it is used, on the preferences and requirements of the client, and on the PMs’ and translators’ ability to get these just right in the translation production process. Thus, quality is a relative concept.

Furthermore, product quality might not serve as the most important criterion for a good translation. My data set contains some evidence of instances in which the client needed the translation very urgently, and within a time frame which exceeded the capacities of a single translator. The enactment of this temporal structure resulted in a variation of the normally enacted activities, as the PMs commissioned several translators of a single TL to work on different parts of the ST. An example of such an event is provided below.

Because even if those translators work with the same glossary, then the terminology, the most important terminology are all the same, obviously still every translator has their own style which, then, if you have 4,000 words where section 1 reads differently to section 4, it’s not great for quality. But again, that’s, if clients are working to tight deadlines, that’s something that we just always inform them of in advance, and then that’s also then a sort of get out clause for us. [1410IC]

The PM explains that using a glossary as a material resource can support the consistent use of terminology in the translation product, but that there will still be obvious stylistic differences between the different parts translated by each translator. He acknowledges that this is ‘not great for quality’, meaning that the quality, if measured on the translation product, will not be as high as if only one translator had done the work. Clients, however, may accept this deficiency of the product if this enables a faster turnaround. In such a case, quality becomes a question of the translation process, as client satisfaction is then determined mainly by a timely delivery, and not by product quality.

In order to accomplish satisfactory translation products, the PMs must thus determine what is needed to complete a project to the client’s satisfaction for every single project they carry out. This is not a straightforward process, as we could see from my analysis in the previous chapter, which revealed that clients do not generally articulate their expectations about translation products clearly. Colin explains that ‘[y]ou have to get a feel for whether or not they are
happy, whether or not there are things they feel we could do better. [1210IC].

I believe that clients do not withhold this kind of information on purpose, but that they do not volunteer it because they are either not able to provide a specific account of their expectations, or because they do not realise how important this type of information is for the translation production process. Their inability to support the process by providing relevant information might be due to a dearth of experience with commissioning translations, or a lack of knowledge about how translations are produced, and what is needed in the production process.

The PMs tackle this issue by trying to elicit as much information from the client as possible. Karolina explains that this is usually done through targeted communication that seeks to establish what the client is looking for in a collaboration with languages@work. In addition, she aims to collect any potentially useful materials that could support the translation process for a particular client (this point is further developed in section 5.3).

When we first get a new client, we try to get as much information from them, whether they’ve used translation services before, if so, the things that they’ve done, they like it, or are they getting in touch with us because they were absolutely unhappy with the previous company. And we try to get as much reference material as possible, so we know where we stand. [2010IK]

The above example clearly illustrates how good communication supports product quality, a claim which has been made in the literature (Hansen and Rasmussen 2013; Abdallah 2010). In her account, Karolina describes several aspects which potentially support client satisfaction. An enquiry about previous experience of using translation services can provide insight about which elements of knowing a particular client has got. If they have such experience, clients might already be familiar with the overall process of working with an LSP. More importantly, asking about previous experiences might give the PMs some indication as to what the client looks for and values in such a cooperation. In addition, Karolina mentions that she asks for the subject areas in which translations are required. This information can then be used for purposes of translator selection (see section 5.2.3). Finally, she explains that she asks for material resources such as reference materials, which can also be used in the translation production process to produce a tailor-made translation for the client. The information
elicited from the client by the PM can be seen as elements of the practice, which are acquired by the PM at the beginning of the translation production process, and are subsequently transferred into the PM’s repertoire. The PM draws on these elements when enacting the practice, so as to reproduce it in a way that meets the client’s requirements. Good communication between the PM and the client may thus support good product quality.

5.2.3 Translator selection

The final defining factor of translation quality which I will discuss in this section is the selection of suitable translators for a translation project. Translators are usually specialised in specific subject areas and have individual writing styles. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the PMs choose a translator who can accomplish the product required by the client. In a comment about how translator selection can influence the quality of a translation product in a negative way, Karolina explains that unsatisfactory translation products can be the result of problems in the production process, as translators may not complete their work thoroughly enough, but also because the PMs may not choose translators carefully enough.

There are times when we receive something and it’s appalling but most of the time it’s down to the translator being very sloppy, or perhaps the account manager that was placing the job wasn’t...wanted just to place it rather than looking at the general picture. [2010IK]

Translator selection is therefore an example of how decisions in the translation production process can influence the quality of translation products, and highlights the importance of approaching the concept of translation quality not just from the product perspective, but also from the point of view of the production process.

As discussed in section 5.1, the textual property of style features in the PMs’ definitions of translation quality. They know in which subject areas translators specialise, and where their strengths lie. Karolina explains that you get to know what people are good at, you know, their...which text they would really translate well. You can find the best translator for marketing texts but if you send them something about tyres, they might not do that well just because it’s a different style. [1910IK]
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From a practice-theoretical view, product-based expectations are guided by elements of knowing, as the PMs know which translators can produce translation products of high quality in certain subject areas. They also enact such knowing through the ERP system, when they consult records of past performance, or the results of test translations. Through their repeated enactments of managing translation projects, they have acquired these elements of competence, which they enact when selecting translators for their projects. Such enactments relate to the translation production process from the PMs’ perspective.

Apart from producing a decent translation, my analysis revealed some further expectations of translators. These expectations are also process-centred but from the perspective of the translators. In a comment, Karolina describes those aspects of the translation production process which she believes contribute to good product quality.

A good translator, first of all, is a person who produces a good quality of work. So, when I think that I’ve sent something to a good translator I know that when I get the work back, I’ll get it on time, (...) I’ll receive a complete translation, (...) but I’m not likely to find missing translations or horrible issues that were not really communicated to me beforehand but then I receive a file with millions of comments that could have been done...resolved before. A good translator is someone who responds to queries and requests in a timely manner. A good translation...translator is a person who is easy to work with. I don’t mean people that are overly friendly but you do get a lot of attitude from people (...) So, translators responding in Caps Lock letters with lots of exclamation marks. [1910IK]

The importance of a timely delivery, as discussed in section 5.2.1, is further supported by this comment. Also, the textual property of accuracy which has been described by the PMs as one of the features of product quality, as introduced in section 5.1, is evident in Karolina’s account. In addition to these two aspects which have already been discussed, her reply suggests that she expects good collaboration skills of translators. She trusts them to raise any issues with the ST that may arise during the translation process with the PMs before the TT is delivered, so that potential problems can ideally be resolved by the delivery deadline. Translators should also be available for
queries during the translation process, as well as demonstrate professionalism in their communication with the LSP.

This last point includes an expectation of following a communication procedure when raising queries with the PMs. Karolina explains that this procedure ensures that the PMs can act faster when receiving an email from a translator, as she immediately knows to which project the email relates.

So, we try to encourage people to do things in a structured way, so if they’ve got queries, we do have a procedure to be followed. Otherwise, I get an email from a translator with no subject, I don’t know which job it relates to. I’ve got them working on seven different projects and then I need to spend 10 minutes trying to work out what they are querying. [1910IK]

If translators follow this procedure correctly, Karolina can better enact the temporal structures of managing translation projects. Not having to draw unnecessarily on precious time resources serves the closed temporal structures, therefore translators are expected to follow the procedures. In other words, the translators’ enactment of certain structures supports the PMs’ performances of managing translation projects. Process-based expectations thus relate to the enactment of particular structures by both the PMs and the translators, which can only be performed if the translators have the necessary elements of competence at their disposal. These elements must be transferred over from the PMs’ practice to the practice of translating, and because elements travel via practitioners, they have to be passed on from the PMs to the translators before they can be enacted. We can see from this example that the PMs and the translators act as crossing points (Reckwitz 2002), and that managing translation projects and translating form a complex (Shove et al. 2012) of practices, as they are dependent on one another. Elements travel between the two practices via the practitioners, and those elements constitute the communication between them.

When selecting translators, the PMs often draw on the competence of the VM, Emily. She is in charge of the translator database and deals with all applications from translators who want to work with the LSP. She decides which translators are going to be recruited to the supplier pool, in line with the current requirements of languages@work. She explains: ‘I don’t fill the database just with lots of translators, I fill them [sic] with people that we
need for different languages, based on what clients we’ve got at the time, what languages we’re getting from them’ [1210IE]. Like managing translation projects, her practice is thus also driven by client demand. To add to the database in a meaningful way, Emily draws on a thorough understanding of the purpose of her role, which is highly dependent upon other functions in the LSP. She also needs an understanding of the clients’ requirements in terms of the languages in demand. She describes her position as being interactive, as it involves a fair amount of communication with other employees, such as the PMs and the sales team, and with translators. In this way, Emily acts as a crossing point between the practices enacted by the different practitioners.

Emily’s practice intersects with managing translation projects in the area of translator selection, as she supports their search for suitable translators to work on their projects. In order to determine how her practice can support that of the PMs, Emily needs an understanding of the PMs’ practice. During the interviews, Emily noted that she used to work as a PM herself before she took on the role of VM at languages@work. She summarises the PMs’ practice in relation to her own as follows: ‘So, for me, when you’re project managing, the main thing that you’re trying to do in your day is place the work and I think it’s quite helpful having somebody else finding the resources for you’ [1210IE]. Through her previous work experience, she has acquired elements of understanding of managing translation projects, which help her to relate her practice to the one enacted by the PMs. She understands vendor management as a practice that supports managing translation projects by providing the required human resources, i.e. the translators which are listed on the database. Emily knows which translators are listed, or how to find suitable ones. Therefore, she has elements of competence in her repertoire which she then passes on to the PMs, who enact them when placing jobs with translators. Translators, in turn, then act as a crossing point to the practice of translating, which can be accessed by the PMs via the translators. Thus, Emily acts as a crossing point between between several practices, namely managing translation projects and translating.

My observation that the PMs regularly draw on Emily’s repertoire of competence suggests that vendor management is another practice which forms part of the complex of translation production. The way in which the PMs’ practice is structured at languages@work renders the link to vendor management a
necessary component, as the PMs are encouraged to draw on her elements of knowing. I have therefore included the VM in figure 1.3. Such corporate structures enable the integration of elements of knowing into the PMs’ practice, and thus strong links between managing translation projects and vendor management emerge. From Emily’s perspective, avoiding interference between vendor management and managing translation projects is one of her aims in this process, and she explicitly expresses her desire for the two practices to run smoothly together. She wants to ‘be of help to the project managers, so I just want to be able to get on quietly with what I need to do to help them in the background’ [1210IE]. Her comment provides further evidence for my claim that the practice of vendor management is firmly connected to managing translation projects via the complex of translation production, since it feeds directly into the PMs’ practice.

Vendor management is also linked to the practice of translating, and again, Emily acts as a crossing point to the latter. Similarly to the PMs, the VM demonstrates a clear understanding of the qualities a translator needs to have in order to successfully complete a translation job to the client’s satisfaction. Emily’s summary of these qualities highlights the translators’ ability to be professional, so...respecting deadlines and making sure that if you’ve got queries, that you do flag them up. And just being honest on the things that we...(...) If we aren’t sure whether a job is suitable for a translator, because...Is it maybe too technical for them, we’re not too sure. (...) There are some translators who we’ll approach because we know that if it is too technical, we trust them to just say: ‘Actually, no it’s not...it’s not within my expertise’ [1210IE].

Emily’s comment clearly reflects the PMs’ expectations of translators, which can be understood as shared elements of competence between managing translation projects and vendor management. She mentions a professional manner, the communication of issues and a timely delivery as aspects of translation quality but especially highlights the significance of the translator’s expertise in the required subject area.

Her comment points towards another dimension of how this last feature can be achieved in the production process; part of the responsibility lies with the translators, as they are expected to inform the LSP should the project
they are offered to work on fall outside their area of expertise. This was also
evident from the PMs’ perspective. Karolina explains that she ‘[doesn’t] think
of anyone who refuses work any less. I won’t think all day [that] they are a
difficult person. Not at all’ [1910IK]. The expectation that translators should
be open about not feeling competent to take on particular projects and the
VM’s and PMs’ positive attitude towards this can be explained from a practice-
theoretical perspective in terms of elements of competence. If the translators do
not have sufficient repertoires of competence, or in the case of CAT tools, the
material resources, at their disposal, their enactments of translating may not
be successful when they are unable to acquire or borrow the missing elements
during the translating process. To avoid this, it should be communicated to
the PMs that some elements are missing, and the practice cannot be enacted.
Therefore, the practitioners who are based in the LSP welcome openness about
the translators’ perception of their competence.

During the interviews, Emily raised an additional expectation of translators
which was not evident in the PMs’ accounts. Whereas the PMs tend to be
mainly concerned with translators’ ability to produce suitable translations, for
Emily, ‘being on top of things of the admin side’ [1210IE] is also a crucial aspect
in how translators should work with the LSP. According to her, this includes
‘telling people when you’re on holiday or if you’re going on maternity leave or
(…) if you’re fully booked for two or three months, if you’ve got a lot [of]
ongoing projects’ [1210IE]. Having this information supports Emily in enacting
her practice, as she can then draw on the information in her performances and
enact temporal structures more effectively, because she does not have to spend
time on contacting translators who are currently not available.

In summary, the defining factors of translation quality which I have in-
vestigated in this section relate to both aspects of the translation product and
aspects of the translation process. The enactment of temporal structures was
found to enable process quality but may constrain product quality. Also, it
could be demonstrated that the definition of quality depends on a number of
defining factors, and is therefore relational.

To conclude section 5.2, we can see from the above that elements of
competence prevail over other elements, when it comes to defining what is
understood by translation quality. Quality becomes a question of the interplay
between elements of competence and structuring mechanisms such as client
requirements and the organisational rules of the LSP. Finally, we have seen that enactments of managing translation projects are dependent on other practices and we can therefore conclude that managing translation projects, translating and vendor management form a complex of practices, in which the practitioners, i.e. the PMs, the translators and the VM, act as crossing points. This means that it matters how the translators and the VM enact their practices, as it affects the practice of the PMs, and ultimately the quality of the translation process and product, since elements travel between these three practices via the practitioners.

5.3 Quality assurance in production networks

The term QA ‘refers to systems put in place to pre-empt and avoid errors or quality problems at any stage of a translation job’ (Drugan 2013:76), and is thus mainly a question of process quality. The PMs at languages@work were employing a range of QA measures during the production process in order to ensure the quality of translation products. In this section, I will continue my analysis of technologies-in-practice by extending it to aspects of translation quality. In the first part of this section, I analyse how the technologies-in-practice enacted by the PMs with CAT tools enable process and product quality. In the second part of this section, I discuss the effect of their communication patterns on quality by theorising communication as an exchange of elements between practitioners of different practices of translation production.

5.3.1 Technologies-in-practice with CAT tools

As has been noted in section 1.2, the availability of suitable technologies is a prerequisite for translation quality. In chapter 4, I have shown that the PMs routinely enact a number of technologies in their performances of managing translation projects. A variety of technologies-in-practice with CAT tools are performed in the translation production process by both translators and PMs. Translators enact CAT tools when they translate the ST by using the CAT tool editor and TM software. In the PMs’ view, this technology-in-practice ‘supports complete translation, i.e. nothing is missed’ [1410IC] because the QA feature within the CAT tool flags up missing segments (see below), and thus it contributes to one of the defining factors of product quality which I discussed at the beginning of this chapter. In this way, ‘CAT tools (...) are an enabling tool because they allow you to be more accurate’ [1410IC].
An additional benefit of TM software was mentioned by Karolina, who explained that Webtrans stores the TM in the cloud, so that it is accessible for all translators who are working on a project, and who can thus produce a more consistent translation. However, she reported a case where the software did not save the latest versions of the TM. Her conclusion was that ‘technology is a great help (...) I think on balance, our life would be much more difficult without the technology but it does happen, machines fail just as badly as humans do, so it does happen from time to time’ [1910IK].

During the observation, one of the other PMs was also dealing with an issue which arose from a technology-in-practice with a TM. Different software applications use different algorithms and thus, segments created in one CAT tool may not be compatible with another one.

The translator has sent back an updated TMX file as well as six ‘cleaned-up’ doc files containing the TTs. In order to create a review package for the proofreader, Colin has imported the TMX file into [the CAT tool] and pre-translated the STs but due to different segmentation rules in [the translator’s CAT tool] and [the LSP’s CAT tool], some segments are empty. Colin has opened one of the target files in a window on the left-hand side of his screen and the [CAT tool] editor on the right-hand side and copies over the TT from the TF into the editor. [2601RN]

Further issues with technologies-in-practice with regard to translation quality were brought up during the interviews. As Colin explains, ‘translating segment by segment makes it a lot harder to sort of think about the sentence in context’ [1410IC]. He further noted that the enactment of this technology is sometimes not helping with ‘the style and the meaning and the feeling of the text, these sort of intangible qualities’ [1410IC], which are needed for marketing and literary translation, as discussed in section 5.1. This point was also evident in an interview with Karolina, who thought that

the whole concept of segment for segment translation, it’s sometimes suggesting a way of translating to a translator. I think, if we were to open a Word file and just overtype, sometimes the translation would look differently to when you open a Lingo file and you have segments and you feel obliged to follow the same pattern. [2010IK]
Apart from technologies-in-practice with TMs, CAT tools can also be enacted together with other materials. Karolina pointed out that ‘style guides and termbases can also be integrated. And the good thing about most of the CAT tools is that you can place reference materials within the packages’ [2010IK]. Colin also mentioned ‘parallel texts and (...) a lot of glossaries for our bigger accounts’ [1410IC]. However, Sophie noted that these types of materials are not normally enacted by the PMs, as their availability tends to be limited:

Or, unless you have any information from the client but you normally have to pass that on from the beginning of the project then, specific terminology, a specific style guide that you have, *usually quite rare*, and specific information that the client sends across or reference files. [2010IS]

Another feature of CAT tools which is regularly enacted by the PMs is the QA check. Karolina explains that enacting this feature impacts on the quality of the translation product, because ‘if you had similar segments, it will flag up when things are not consistent. We can also do a check against the previous jobs that we’ve done to make sure that there are no inconsistencies with previous projects’ [2010IK]. The enactment of the QA check during the production process thus supports product quality in terms of the consistent use of terminology.

Sophie explains that this is usually the final step in her checking of the TT. After she has read parts of the TT and done a spell check, she performs ‘a QA check with whatever QA tool I have’ [2010IS]. In a similar vein, Karolina said: ‘I think, all of us do a QA check in Lingo. I mean, for the languages that you don’t speak, it’s very... You can’t be as thorough but it still gives you a good indication on punctuation, on mistran... inconsistencies’ [2010IK].

The materials which are enacted by the PMs in their technologies-in-practice, either by using specific features of the technology or by integrating a number of materials in their enactments, have an effect on both the quality of the translation product, as well as the process. As we have seen, the technologies-in-practice with CAT tools are performed to achieve the textual properties outlined in section 5.1. In addition, their enactment reinforces the defining factors discussed in section 5.2. TMs, glossaries, style guides and termbases are all materials that travel via the different practitioners between several practices.
of translation production. They serve as a structuring device, as their enactment helps the PMs to achieve client satisfaction because their integration in the production process means that client preferences can be accommodated in the final translation product. The integration of those materials into managing translation projects and the practice of translating further supports client satisfaction and thus quality, with regard to time, as TMs are said to speed up the translating process. As noted by Drugan (2013:108), the quality of the materials which are enacted and their correct use, especially under time pressure and by inexperienced users, have an effect on the quality of the translation product. Nevertheless, there remains a risk of human error, for instance, in terms of segmentation-based errors (context) or accepting matches without careful assessment (ibid.:111). Therefore, translator selection features too in the technologies-in-practice, as the translators must have the necessary elements of competence in order to enact the CAT tools and other materials successfully.

5.3.2 Exchanging elements between practitioners

In the second part of this section, I will analyse the communication between the PMs and other actors in translation production networks as another set of structures which have an effect on translation quality. The PMs’ communication with other actors will be theorised as an exchange of elements between practitioners, which facilitates the travelling of elements between practices. These elements can then be enacted and modified by other practitioners.

Based on the workplace observations, it seems safe to assume that email software, telephones and IM are all enacted to exchange elements of various kinds. Even if employees are located in the same office, part of their communication takes place via emails and IM. IM seems to be reserved for internal communication; for communication with clients and translators, email seems to be the preferred channel. Emails and IM are part of the so-called lean media (Quan-Haase et al. 2006) that are characterised by not providing information about communication partners during the conversation (as opposed to FTF communication where one can see and hear the other person), therefore making it harder to establish strong relationships. As translation production practices are characterised by geographically dispersed practitioners, FTF scenarios are unlikely to happen on a regular basis. However, the enactment of emails as opposed to even less individual forms of communication such as portals and
connectors (see section 1.1.3) seems to afford relationships between the PMs, clients and translators which are strong enough to achieve translation products of sufficient quality.

STs enter production practices as material elements when the client provides them via email. Although it rarely happens, as explained by the PMs, clients may also provide reference files like pictures, or previous translations of similar texts which then serve as additional materials in the production process. As noted above, their quality can affect product quality (Drugan 2013:108). The ST and other materials travel via the client to the PM who enacts a technology-in-practice with a CAT tool, in which the ST is integrated into a project package. This package travels via an email to the translator, who enacts another technology-in-practice in order to translate the ST. Finally, the modified package is returned to the PM, who performs further modifications before delivering the TT to the client. Thus, material elements get enacted and modified in translation production practices.

Quality features in several ways in these performances. The enactment and modification of materials can enable or constrain translation quality, because if there are issues with the ST or any other material elements, these may cost valuable time in the production process to resolve until the ST can be fully translated, or they may impede the production of the TT, which constitutes a negative impact on the translation product. The quality of material elements also concerns technical issues with particular files, which can cost time to resolve. On the other hand, if the ST is of good quality and other materials are available to support practices of translating, this can be positive for both process and product quality.

A second aspect which is important for translation quality is the communication with other people, which I will analyse as an exchange of elements of knowing, as well as a means of structuring relations between practitioners. The PMs exchange such elements with a number of practitioners throughout their working days and they do this by enacting different technologies, namely emails, telephones and IM.

I observed that languages@work does not make use of automated communication with clients and translators as is the case in some other LSPs, where the RFQ and standard notifications are sent out automatically via a connector. The PMs at languages@work tend to write emails to individual translators and
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clients instead. Commenting on this process, Colin notes: ‘When I first started here, I remember being shocked at how much was done by email’ [1210IC], as his previous company had used a connector and a portal for communicating with other practitioners. Colin further noted that

>...emails are actually quite an inefficient method of communication, really. I mean, it’s good because it’s personal, every email has to be written specific, very particular. (...) But if you’re looking at it from an efficiency point of view, it takes a lot of time to write an email and even just writing ‘kind regards’ or ‘best, Colin’, (...) doing that 60 times a day writing 60 emails, is time that, you know, if that process could be automated in any way through a more interactive system, that would be good. [1210IC]

From a practice point of view, the use of individual emails instead of automated messages in the PMs’ enactments may require more time resources, as it takes longer to write a message than pressing a button which sends out messages automatically. This point is well reflected in the above comment. The additional time required for writing all these emails, however, is justified, as individual emails not only contain elements of knowing, such as information about the text type, remuneration etc., but also structure the relationship between the PM and the translator or client. This relationship is crucial for the quality of the translation production process, since product specifications and defining factors can be more easily negotiated.

Communication via email is generally worded very carefully, and the PMs spend a good amount of time on composing emails. In view of the fact that their opportunities for communication with translators and clients are rather restricted – in terms of frequency and available communication channels – the critical importance attached to this activity seems entirely understandable. The significance of communication is also evident in the following example: ‘Karolina sends out several emails with the same text (she calls this ‘cheating’) to the translators of the different TLs’ [0701RN]. Whenever the PMs followed this strategy, they stressed that this is not the standard way of approaching translators.

Apart from emails, the PMs and the VM were observed enacting telephones and IM as other technologies in order to communicate with each other, as well as with translators and clients. During the interviews, the PMs and the VM
explained that their preference for the different technologies to be enacted depends on the type of issue which they wish to communicate, or which is communicated to them. Emily, for instance, explains that she prefers to receive emails if there is a rather complex issue that she needs to deal with.

If it’s more like a to do list, like my inbox for me is like a to do list so, if it’s something that’s ongoing (...) I’ll keep that in my inbox whereas, if it’s just some information I need right away then I’ll just do it on IM but if it’s a task, if it’s something that I need to take time out of my day to do then it will be in an email. That tends to be how I do it. [1210IE]

In order to enact her practice, it is important to Emily to have continuous access to emails which contain elements of knowing. Emails thus serve as artefacts in the production process which preserve such elements, so that they can be drawn on when returning to a specific task later on in the working day, or drawn upon by other practitioners, for instance, when covering for a colleague. I observed one instance in which a PM was monitoring the inbox of a colleague, who was on leave. Thus, emails are not only available to individual PMs, but are integrated into the wider structure of the LSP. This is a mechanism which is relevant for the PMs too, as they keep information about product requirements, or elements of knowing about what should feature in a particular translation product, often in the form of an email. These elements need to travel further through production practices to the translators and possibly proofreaders who work on a project. Keeping them in a stable form, i.e. written down in an email rather than passing them on orally via a telephone, can thus facilitate translation quality.

The use of telephones for enacting technologies-in-practice facilitates an immediate exchange of elements of knowing and understanding among people in various locations, and is more direct than emails and IM because the practitioners can hear each others’ voices, which may have a positive effect on their relationship. It is also more immediate than communication via software and applications, as it facilitates real time conversations without delays of response. The latter point was evident in some of the interviews, in which both the PMs and the VM explained that they tend to phone others if they require an immediate reply.
I used it [the telephone] all the time as a project manager. I’d always call the translators to ask if they’ve got availability for jobs and things ’cause I just find, if you need an answer quickly. But a lot of the work I do, I don’t need an immediate answer from people, so, it’s quite disruptive to call someone when they have to break up from what they’re doing, so I try not to call unless I need an immediate answer, or if I’ve emailed someone and I’ve not heard back, I need an answer, then I’ll call them. [1210IE]

Phone calls are thus also considered a disruptive communication method by the interviewee and therefore do not tend to be the PMs’ preferred way of communication. Nevertheless, they are regarded the best option for discussions and detailed explanations, as they constitute an efficient way of exchanging elements of knowing and understanding, for instance, when negotiating or clarifying expectations regarding the quality of the translation process and product. Like conversations in person, speaking to somebody over the phone is a rich form of communication (Quan-Haase et al. 2006) which helps to manage relationships and establish a rapport between the people involved. This, too, can support product quality, as the practitioners may feel comfortable discussing potential issues in the production process, or bringing up any arising issues. A drawback to enacting telephones is that materials cannot be exchanged in this way, therefore phone calls are often followed up by emails which contain the required materials.

The significance of exchanging elements of understanding and knowing for structuring relationships with clients and translators was evident in my analysis. The observed PMs used a number of strategies for managing such relationships. For example, they spent time on the phone with translators to discuss aspects of translation projects and demonstrated that they were dealing with translator requests by acknowledging receipt of emails or providing updates which were not necessary for enacting their practice. When writing to translators, emails often included references to previous communication and/or emoticons, which can be seen as a way of building stronger relationships. This type of communication is different from work-related or project-related communication, and the fact that it was used regularly by the PMs suggests that structuring relationships with other actors in the translation production network is one of the factors which contribute to translation quality.
A third technology enacted by the PMs for exchanging elements is IM. The PMs stressed that they tend to use IM for less formal purposes, urgent issues that require an immediate answer, or less complex enquiries. This technology is restricted to use among the employees. As languages@work operates across several offices, IM is enacted in the communication between employees in different locations, but may also be drawn on as a substitute for face-to-face communication within each of the offices. Emily explained that such an exchange of elements of knowing and understanding is less disruptive when practitioners are particularly busy, as they can continue their enactments and deal with messages received in this way when they have time to do so.

A second type of enacting IM is for preserving elements of knowing. When asked how she communicates with other employees in the same office, Emily said that she would normally talk to them in person, but uses IM if she wants the elements of knowing which are exchanged in a conversation to be preserved in writing, so that she can keep them and refer to these elements at a later stage.

I tend to just talk to them. Unless I need to keep a record. Sometimes, when I’m asking for feedback, I’ll do it in Instant Messenger because then I’ve got a record of what they said and I’ll store it there. [1210IE]

This structure enables her to draw on these elements in future enactments, or to easily pass them on to the PMs, so that they can employ them in their performances. For example, when a PM approaches Emily with a request for advice on specific translators, Emily can return to the written feedback about the translator’s performance, forward the message to the PM, and they can draw on this to make a decision about whether or not to offer a particular translator to work on a project.

To conclude this section, we note that the PMs enact a variety of technologies-in-practice with CAT tools which facilitate the integration of the defining factors of translation process quality, as discussed in section 5.2. These enactments, in turn, enable the implementation of specific textual properties, and thus contribute to product quality. Second, technologies-in-practice are enacted so as to exchange elements between practitioners. Elements travel between practices of translation production and are enacted by several practitioners. In order to ensure quality in the production process, these
elements must be of good quality, as we have seen for material elements such as STs and other supporting files, and they have to be preserved, for example, by writing down process and product requirements, which serve as elements of knowing and understanding. A final point made in this section was the importance of technologies-in-practice for structuring relationships between the practitioners. As translation production can be understood as a complex of practices, in which a number of practices are dependent on one another, a good rapport between practitioners can have a positive influence on the quality of the translation process.

5.4 Translation quality as a collaborative effort

In this section, I will examine how the PMs’ links to other practitioners in the translation production network contribute to translation quality. In particular, and as an illustrative example of such collaboration, I will analyse how managing translation projects intersects with vendor management. This intersection is a crucial feature of the PMs’ practice, and is also significant in terms of the shared relation to the practice of translating.

As we have seen above, managing translation projects is part of a complex of practices and has close links to translating. We noted in section 5.2.3 that translator selection is one of the defining factors of translation quality, as an appropriate choice from the supplier pool contributes to the requirements being met. During the interviews, Sophie explained that it is important for translation quality to ‘choose a good translator that you can trust, or that has been tested’ [2010IS]. languages@work regularly assesses the product quality of their translators’ work, and the test result can be used as a source of knowing which translators would be suitable to work on a project. Her comment thus suggests that there are two ways of finding a suitable translator, either by enacting one’s own elements of competence, or by borrowing those elements.

To access these elements, the PMs work closely with the VM who ensures that new translators complete a test piece before they translate on any of the PMs’ projects. Karolina mentioned that ‘Emily does an excellent job of testing every linguist that comes on the job’ [2010IK]. Emily also samples the existing translators’ work on a regular basis. Karolina explains that ‘we review them every single year, so we review people, we say whether anything has changed, they are marked on several different categories, their timeliness, their accuracy,'
quality, speed of response to emails or queries’ [1910IK]. By carrying out TQA on either test pieces or regular translations, languages@work ensure a repertoire of elements of knowing on which the PMs can draw in their enactments, so as to choose appropriate translators for their projects, and thus assuring translation quality. Emily has a clear understanding of how her practice supports that of the PMs.

I’m collaborating with the project managers because they obviously want to make sure they are picking the best translators for their accounts and that they are giving the best service to their clients, so by sampling these translators’ work, I’m making sure that they are meeting our expectations. I’m helping them to make sure that they are delivering the service to their clients as well. [1210IE]

Her acting as a crossing point provides the PMs with the required resources for selecting suitable suppliers for their projects. Emily’s statement also reflects an understanding of translation as a service, highlighting the importance of client satisfaction.

Emily’s practice is linked to that of the sales team too. She often makes her decisions on who gets added to the database in consultation with employees in the sales team who win new clients for translation projects, so as to estimate the future demand for specific translator profiles. The sales team provides her with information about which translators may be needed, and Emily then procures these resources so that they are available for potential projects. Sharing information thus constitutes a transmission process in which elements of competence are passed on to vendor management. At the same time, the resulting translator profiles which are stored in the database are a crucial material for managing translation projects, as they allow for instant access to suitable translators once a translation project is launched. As time is a crucial factor in project management (Dunne 2011), it is of utmost importance that the PMs have these resources immediately at their disposal. Emily creates these materials, so that they are readily accessible when needed. Apart from that, she constantly updates the supplier database when new data on translators becomes available, such as up-to-date CVs, new skills or CAT tools, as well as information about availability, for instance, when translators are away on holiday or maternity leave. These updates ensure that the database contains reliable information and is usable at all times.
Obtaining and providing information are actions that connect the practice of vendor management with other practices of translation production. Her engagement in vendor management and the wider context of translation production defines Emily as a crossing point between these practices. Like the PMs, she takes part in several practices, which creates an overlap between them and facilitates the travelling of elements between these practices. In this way, the knowledge of the sales team travels via the VM to the practice of managing translation projects, and becomes available to the PMs as entries in the supplier database.

In her capacity as VM, Emily not only has responsibility for the supplier database. She also sees herself as the primary point of contact for the translators once they have been added to the LSP’s supplier pool:

I try to be just [an] easy contact person, so if they need anything, or they’ve got any questions, or they want to send an updated CV or tell me they’ve got a new sector. It’s just, so they’ve got one point of contact. [1210IE]

The PMs therefore do not have to deal with general translator enquiries and can focus on their projects. Emily’s role goes beyond the recruitment process and requires her to establish and maintain ongoing relations with translators. She repeatedly described herself as having a mediating role, as a ‘middle person between the project managers and the translators’ [1210IE]. In contrast to the PMs, Emily maintains close relationships with the translators. She defends her function as main contact person and takes responsibility for distributing relevant information to the team: ‘[S]ometimes I get an email that’s been forwarded to me and that person sent it to four or five project managers and I think: ‘(...) You could have just sent one email and then that would have been it.” [1210IE]

Emily’s relationship with translators also involves responding to general queries on CAT tools. She provides them with advice related to these tools, and by doing so, passes on elements of competence to them.

Sometimes, somebody is completely new to CAT tools. A translator rang me up the other day and said she realises she wants to now start using them and asked for advice on what tools we use. So I told...I was giving her advice: ‘Oh, we use these ones most and
CAT tools are a crucial material in translating, as many translation projects that are handled by languages@work depend on the use of these tools. By providing the kind of advice outlined above, Emily ensures that the translators have the material resources that are needed to process certain projects at their disposal, and provides suggestions as to how they can acquire the elements of competence which are needed to enact technologies-in-practice with CAT tools, so that the translators can be considered for additional projects. In the case of the above-mentioned translator, Emily adds: ‘[I]f all the jobs for certain clients go for a CAT tool, we can’t ever work with her on those accounts’ [1210IE]. For Emily, it is therefore important to be able to support translators through her sharing of elements of competences: ‘So like, like when that translator called me the other week asking about CAT tools, I’ve got that knowledge, I can help her out with it’ [1210IE]. At the same time, Emily believes that a profound understanding of these tools enables her to make informed choices about possible additions to the database, as having comprehension of the translators’ tasks helps her to make a judgement about their suitability for the job: ‘If I’m just contacting people without a full understanding of what I’m needing them to do, I’m not gonna be able to contact the best people’ [1210IE]. Recruiting translators with the required material resources and elements of competence has a significant effect on translation quality.

At languages@work, vendor management and managing translation projects appear as separate practices. Emily, the VM, is responsible for recruiting translators and for dealing with the administrative side of vendor management, while the PMs are looking after translation projects. It would be entirely conceivable for one and the same person to be responsible for both practices, as is certainly the case in many LSPs. languages@work, however, created the role of VM, so as to increase the productivity of the PMs and enhance their ability to focus on project management. Emily explains the benefits of splitting vendor and project management:

It means they can get on with their quotes (...) place the projects that they’ve got, and they can be more responsive then to their
clients, and the translators they are working with on existing jobs whilst I’m looking for these new resources for them. [1210IE]

On the one hand, the allocation of tasks to different parties saves the PMs time in managing translation projects and enables them to promote process quality, as they can dedicate time to communicating with the parties involved in their projects. On the other hand, smaller areas of responsibility facilitate the concentration of certain elements of competence. In other words, in an environment where project and vendor management are set up as separate practices, the practitioners are not forced to develop competence in both practices but can instead specialise in one or the other. This was also evident in my analysis. Emily explains that she is probably more trained than the PMs in identifying suitable translators by matching their profiles with project descriptions, as she sees numerous CVs on a daily basis.

Sometimes, when I’ve been away (...), our project managers have had to find somebody. Sometimes I look at that person’s profile [and I] think that, oh, they probably weren’t the best person to ask or, I look at their CV and think hmmm... But, but it’s just because I see so many CVs every day, so I get used to what a good profile looks like. [1210IE]

As a practitioner of vendor management, Emily has developed competence in identifying suitable translators. She clearly understands the assessment of translators’ skills as part of her expertise, and based on this, she provides the PMs with advice about appropriate translators. From a practice-theoretical perspective, sharing her knowledge is crucial in two ways. First, she acts as a crossing point for this knowledge, which constitutes an element of vendor management that travels, through being shared by Emily, to managing translation projects. Second, it affects the other practices in the complex of translation production, because translator selection has a direct impact on the translation product.

Another competence that distinguishes the VM’s role from that of the PM are negotiation skills, as rates are usually negotiated between the VM and the translators when contracts are made. Emily is ‘trying to get translators on the database that we can afford to work with’ [1210IE]. She adds information about rates to the database, and the PMs can use this information to calculate the
costs of their projects. A significant difference between vendor management and managing translation projects, however, is the available time to find suitable translators. Whereas Emily may decide to reject translators who apply to work with the LSP, and whose suggested rates are too high, the PMs are often under immense time pressure when they select the translators that are going to work on their projects. This may be problematic in cases where the suitable translators on the database are unavailable, and the PMs have to find a replacement quickly. In these situations, Emily still shows a strong commitment to cost effectiveness and claims that she tends to remain more objective when it comes to selecting affordable translators.

Because (...) I’m more distant from the actual project management side of it, our project managers are more keen to just, whatever rate someone quotes, they just accept it, or someone says: ‘My rates have now gone up to this amount’, and they just accept it because they’re desperate to place the project, whereas, because I’ve got some distance from that, I can be a bit more objective and be able to like: ’Hang on a second, they’re wanting a 20% rate increase over two years, that’s just too much!’ Whereas, because they really want to place the project, they’ll just... They’re more likely to just accept a price, whereas I’m like: ‘No, we need to like think about this if we agreed to that price. Only you can afford to use them on that one job. We might not be able to afford to use them on any other jobs and it affects your colleagues’ [1210IE].

In this kind of situation, Emily may ensure that structures of translation production are reinforced by intervening in the PMs’ performances of managing translation projects. Her insisting on enacting the practice according to the organisational standard of the practice has a normative effect on the PMs’ performances. Interventions of this kind prevent the PMs from enacting structure which fall short of the standard, and limit opportunities for changing future performances of managing translation projects.

Emily uses her communication and people management competence to support her co-workers in delicate situations where appropriate communication may serve as a means to prevent the escalation of a minor problem into a major one. She explains: ‘One of the many things I do is like, I help with, my colleagues they’re drafting emails, maybe [when] they’re difficult’ [1210IE].
Her aim in this is to mediate between the parties involved: ‘I try to make sure that there’s like good relations between everyone’ [1210IE]. Her intervention ensures that the structures of production practices are recreated in a way that allows the practice to persist, as neither expensive translators nor inefficient relationships between the PMs and the translators allow for the practices to be enacted effectively.

After having focused on the competences that connect vendor management to other practices of translation production, I will now concentrate on the material elements which are part of vendor management, and which travel through other practices of translation production. Emily enacts materials that are specific to her practice, such as a recruitment tracker that helps her to manage her own work. This file serves as a progress record of current translator applications, and is structured based on the different steps in the recruitment process. Emily refers to this file to remind herself at which stage applications of individual translators are, for instance, if they have submitted a test piece or signed a non-disclosure agreement. Once all steps have been completed, she adds the translators to the supplier database.

In addition, she draws on materials that are also enacted by the PMs but she enacts them in a way that is different from that of the PMs. For instance, she uses the ERP system mainly to add translators to the database and in doing this, provides the PMs with the human resources that they need to place their projects. In other words, Emily feeds information into the system, whereas the PMs retrieve that information from it. This includes the availability of translators in numerous language combinations and subject specialisms but also information about their performance, for example, in the form of sampling reports which are generated as a result of TQA on regular translation jobs. Apart from adding resources to the database and thus providing material elements to the PMs, Emily also supplies them with relevant elements of knowing relating to operational procedures of the LSP, as illustrated in the following quote:

‘If, say, someone’s doing a resource search, I can add a note that sort of would come up in that search, saying if someone’s not signed an NDA, so confidentiality agreement, I can add like...I can make it so that that’s highlighted for people more clearly so that...so they know if they’ve got a client where they’ve got an NDA in place,'
they don’t approach that translator with the file. Obviously, they can’t send that source file to that person. Or, if...if someone was used for...if someone was used for an urgent job, and they haven’t yet completed the QA process, I can write a note so it appears in the resource search for them, so it highlights that right away, so that person knows that person’s not yet completed the QA process’ [1210IE].

Another way in which Emily enacts the ERP system differently to the PMs is the use of some of its features. For instance, she claims that she does not usually draw on its note function, whereas the PMs emphasize this feature as an important change since the introduction of the new system: ‘So, the project managers and accountants communicate using notes all the time on this software. I don’t tend to. (...) But I know it’s used a lot by the rest of the company.’ [1210IE]
The practices of vendor management and managing translation projects thus integrate different features in their technologies-in-practice.

Emily further supports process quality in managing translation projects by having introduced specific materials to translation production, which the PMs enact in their practice. She designed forms that summarise information about clients. There are two versions, one for the PMs and one for the translators. These forms are meant to point out aspects that are significant for carrying out projects, such as ‘the main information, like who to contact, who are the main translators that you can use on the account or, is there a style guide.’ [1210IE]

For translators, the form is slightly different.

[T]hey can see there that there’s a style guide and there is a TM thing and they can see that information in one place. I think, another thing that you could put on the sheet is if, a client complained about a certain term, and they wanted another term to be used (...) you can put it on that form then, so if another translator who’s not worked on the account before, sees [that] this word in the TM has been flagged for this other word and that’s the one that the client complained about, then they know not to use that word. It just helps the translators making sure that they are delivering what the client expects. [1210IE]

The forms emphasise particular aspects for translation quality relating to
specific clients, for example, in terms of the terminology to be used. They are of an emergent nature, as the PMs can add to them, when they encounter new elements of knowing. The enactment of these forms affects translation quality, as they convey elements of understanding which are needed in order to meet client expectations, and which thus structure the enactment of managing translation projects. When drawn on by the PMs and translators, these elements of understanding enter the practice, and can be enacted so as to ensure that the translation product is to the client’s satisfaction. This is especially useful in terms of terminological preferences, as it helps to reduce part of the subjective dimension of product quality.

So far, I have only considered how the PMs’ practice depends on vendor management but my analysis revealed an interdependency between the two practices, as the PMs also support the VM by forwarding to her any feedback they have or receive on the translators’ performance. This constitutes an efficient strategy of collecting information about performance, which can then be redistributed to other PMs, as illustrated in the following example.

I call Emily quite a lot to ask her for her advice or recent feedback that she might have gotten about specific linguists because she does add new linguists on a weekly basis. If they are fairly new, before placing a job with them, I would always ask her whether she’s had any feedback. Whether there was anything for that person before we placed a substantial amount of work. [1910IK]

The PMs regularly access such elements of knowing before they place translation work with translators, as the feedback helps them to make appropriate choices, or reject unsuitable translators. Naturally, the selection process may not always result in good quality, and negative feedback about translators is also passed on from the PMs to the VM, who then deals with the translator, so as to investigate problems that arose from translator selection, and prevent similar issues in the future.

Emily often has conversations with the linguist to say was it outside of the area that you felt comfortable with translating, and sees whether there is anything that can be done to perhaps not put account managers at risk of getting bad feedback. [2010IK]

Such conversations depend on the PMs’ input, through which Emily can
develop an understanding of the situation and then draw on her own repertoire of competence so as to manage the relationship with the translator. The VM’s practice and managing translation projects are thus interdependent practices in the complex of translation production.

5.5 Conclusion: The structuring mechanisms behind translation quality

In this chapter I have focused on the analysis of quality in the translation production network. As we have seen, the PMs concentrate on comprehensive QA through a number of procedures that contribute to product quality, rather than the exclusive assessment of translation products. Thus, they adopt a QA approach that appears to be typical of the translation industry. As explained in section 1.2, this approach is not limited to the assessment of finished translations but instead ‘encompasses all other aspects of achieving and measuring quality, including planning, QC and TQA’ (Drugan 2013:76). The PMs clearly focus on how quality can be achieved in the translation production process, mainly by carefully considering the defining factors for specific projects (see section 5.2) and carrying out QC on their projects (see section 5.3). Measuring quality, on the other hand, is less important for their day-to-day work, and is mainly used for purposes of sampling and recruitment (see section 5.4). As acknowledged by Drugan (ibid.), previous academic models for assessing translation quality have failed to be applicable in the translation industry. My research takes the translation industry as a starting point and suggests that PMs do not primarily assess quality when processing products but rather do QA on processes in the first place; this has not been sufficiently considered by translation theory. There are only few publications like Drugan’s (2013) book, which address how PMs achieve translation quality.

In terms of the first subquestion of research question 2, i.e. how do PMs define translation quality, my analysis provides evidence for both a product and process-based definition of translation quality. My analysis has shown that the PMs define translation quality as a relational concept which is highly structured by their desire to provide satisfactory customer service. The enactment of project deadlines as a closed temporal structure facilitates cost-effective translation products and fast turnaround times, and thus enables the emergence of client satisfaction. Of particular interest is the dimension of the client in the translation
production process which was of significant importance to the PMs and has also been noted, for instance, by Drugan (2013:39). As clients determine the defining factors for each project, we can conclude that managing translation projects is structured by clients.

Returning to the triad of translation quality proposed by Dunne and Dunne (2011), I would like to suggest that it is possible to achieve all three segments, i.e. fast, cheap and of good quality, in a translation project by redefining the concept of quality. The triad is clearly based on product quality only, but as we have seen above, process quality can be equally significant for the success of a translation project. Understanding quality as a relational concept which is driven by client demand means that enactments of managing translation projects are partly structured by the entity of the client, and this assumption helps us to move away from an overly narrow concept of translation quality. The application of practice theory affords further insights into how client demand structures the PMs’ actions. Their enactment of temporal structures constrains and enables different characteristics of product and process quality. Constraints can be evident in terms of product quality if time is very limited. This has been acknowledged in the triad by Dunne and Dunne (ibid.). However, the enactment of a closed temporal structure, as was the case with the PMs at languages@work, sets limits to the time spent on projects and thus enables cost-effective translations and fast turnaround times, which can both be seen as features of the translation production process. If these prevail over product quality, fast, cheap and good become possible at the same time. With this in mind, framing the concept of translation quality from a practice-theoretical perspective affords us an enhanced understanding of the aspects which play a role for the definition of quality.

As regards subquestion 2b, i.e. which structures of managing translation projects do PMs enact in order to ensure translation quality, my conclusion is that technologies-in-practice enacted with CAT tools contribute significantly to translation quality. This claim differs from the idea that the availability of CAT tools per se enhance quality in translation. A practice-theoretical approach eschews the perception of tools as a static entity, and takes into account that materials are enacted together with elements of competence and meaning in emergent ways. It emphasises that it matters how such tools are used. Every single enactment of a CAT tool may differ from the previous one
and accommodate unforeseen performances of the practice-as-entity, for which practitioners can make up by modifying their enactments. The framework thus facilitates the view that quality is possible despite the fact that materials in translation production may not be perfect.

In addition, I have demonstrated how the exchange of elements between practices, and their subsequent enactment and modification, are fundamental to practices of translation production. The high dependence of managing translation projects on technologies-in-practice, and the enactment of a large number of material elements strongly emphasise the socio-material nature of translation production.

We have seen above that technologies-in-practice affect both process and product quality, as they aim to ensure that defining factors, as well as textual properties are achieved in translation production. Ultimately, such an achievement shall lead to client satisfaction, but if these technologies-in-practice deviate too much from the standards of the practice, clients may be dissatisfied with the PMs’ performance, and the translation product. Despite my suggestion that managing translation projects is usually enacted towards client satisfaction, it must be considered that performances are not always smooth. The PMs may perform their practice in such a way that it deviates from the normative standard, as we have seen above in a few examples. However, these cases are not problematic from a practice-theoretical perspective, as performances are characterised by variation. By drawing on broad repertoires of elements, PMs are flexible in their performances, meaning that problems are part of the practice. In the worst case, clients may sometimes be dissatisfied with aspects of the translation service or the product, and complain to the LSP. But even then the practice-as-entity contains possible enactments, like structures for dealing with complaints. Some examples of such performances were discussed above. Apart from these examples, I have not witnessed any major issues in performances of the practice during my fieldwork, as all observed and reported performances were close to the standard. This may either be due to a wide repertoire of elements and structures that is available to the PMs, or because I spent a relatively short time in the setting, during which no major problems occurred.

Regarding subquestion 2c, i.e. how do the PMs’ interactions with other practitioners in the translation production network contribute to translation
quality, my analysis suggests that translation quality, like translation production in general, is a collaborative effort. I have shown how managing translation projects intersects in particular with the practice of vendor management, and I have provided examples on the links between these two practices and the practice of translating by specifying how the practitioners act as crossing points.

Overall, my analysis has provided a comprehensive insight into how a practice-theoretical approach provides us with the theoretical means for analysing the complexity behind translation quality, both in terms of product quality and process quality, and thus helps us to better understand the structuring mechanisms which determine whether a translation project has been completed to a satisfactory standard. Finally, practice theory helps us to understand practices of translation production, such as managing translation projects, vendor management and translating as part of a complex of practices, because practitioners like PMs, the VM and translators act as crossing points at the intersections of these practices. These intersections enable elements to travel between practices. During this process, the travelling elements are enacted by a number of practitioners, and may be transformed. In the next and final chapter of this thesis, I will answer my overarching research question by considering how conceptualising translation project management as a practice enhances our understanding of the role of project management and translation quality in production networks.
Conclusions: Practices and quality in production networks

I will begin this section by answering my overarching research question, i.e. how does conceptualising translation project management as a practice enhance our understanding of the role of project management and translation quality in production networks. My aim in this thesis was to make a theoretical contribution to knowledge in TS, as well as a methodological contribution in terms of the application of practice theory.

By drawing on practice theory, I chose an approach that is grounded in the PMs’ practice. A practice-theoretical perspective shifts our focus from the practitioners to the practice. In other words, I investigated what the PMs were doing at their workplace in order to extend our knowledge of these activities. I have studied their practices-as-performance, so as to arrive at conclusions about the practice-as-entity, and I have conceptualised managing translation projects as part of the larger complex of translation production practices. In conclusion, my analysis has shown that managing translation projects and other practices of translation production are interdependent in translation production networks, and that translation project management is deeply embedded in the complex. I therefore claim that project management is a necessary aspect in most translation scenarios.

My analysis has revealed the collective and socio-material nature of this practice. I have discussed the interdependency of several practices and practitioners, and concluded that managing translation projects is a practice which is enacted by several practitioners. Even in LSPs with one PM, the enactments of this practitioner depend on other practitioners, such as translators. Practice theory emphasises the role of materials in such performances, and facilitates an analysis of how such materials contribute to translation quality, which I have shown for the PMs’ enactments of CAT tools and the ERP system.

A socio-material perspective recognises that translation project management consists not simply of a number of activities carried out by PMs, but that these activities depend on technologies, such as CAT tools and the ERP system. This perspective help us to understand technologies as part of the social, as they are inextricably linked with the practice. Returning to the claim that the translation industry has been transformed by technological changes, we can note that technologies of various kinds have changed the temporal structures of
practices of translation production.

In terms of how practice theory offers new insights into translation quality, I would like to highlight two points which I discussed in my analysis; the role of the client, and the routinised enactment of various elements and structures. It seems that the involvement of the client is currently underestimated in TS research. As outlined above, the client contributes to translation production by providing source materials, and by defining conditions of the translation production process. My study suggests that the client also plays a significant role in the temporal structuring of the translation production process. I have provided evidence for this claim by showing that fast turnarounds are achieved by enacting tight project deadlines as a temporal structure, and I have argued that the materials which enter the production process via the client affect the quality of translation products. I therefore suggest that a practice-theoretical view helps to explain why clients are significant for translation quality. Incorporating the role of clients in translation production chimes with ethical behaviour in the sense of Drugan and Tipton’s (2017) suggestion to understand translation in terms of social responsibility. From their perspective, focusing on a wider set of actors in translation production is ethical behaviour practice theory is helpful for explaining how translation is affected by its surrounding social structures.

My analysis has provided insight into how the PMs enact various elements and structures in order to achieve appropriate levels of quality in their translation projects. The emphasis of practice theory on routinised enactments indicates that experience is a critical factor in managing translation projects. The PMs reproduce their practice according to its normative standard, and thus reinforce its structures. Technologies-in-practice, for instance, are purposeful enactments of tools, which aim to elicit particular responses, and I have also demonstrated the significance of temporal structures for their performances. Such a detailed investigation of how elements and structures of managing translation projects are linked provides an enhanced understanding of how quality is achieved in translation production networks.

My analysis of how the practice can be accessed facilitates an understanding of training needs for translation project managers. Whereas the actors’ competence has previously been described in terms of professional skills (see section 1.2.2), my thesis offers a different approach which takes into account how such skills are integrated into the PMs’ performances. The approach emphasises
the importance of engaging in professional activities to develop competence. It shifts the focus from the notion of required skills to putting these into practice. In other words, it is not sufficient to teach students a set of skills, but they must be given repeated opportunities to apply these in realistic professional scenarios. This has been recognised by a strong influence of project-based learning in translator training since Kiraly (2000), and the importance of situated learning (see the recent special issue of The Interpreter and Translator Trainer by Maria González-Davies and Vanessa Enríquez-Raido 2016). The emphasis of practice theory on routine enactments could inform the scope of such practical tasks. In addition, practice theory stresses the importance of participation, and thus highlights the importance of work placements for translation students. Again, this has been acknowledged, as most non-UK Masters programmes which are members of the European Master’s in Translation (EMT) project have compulsory work placements, and such placements are also coordinated by the European Graduate Placement Scheme (EGPS)\(^1\). My study provides further support for the significance of project-based and situated learning, and provides justification for work placements in students’ professional development.

The focus on routine enactments offers new insights into how such learning and development could be structured. It emphasises the importance of repeated performances of the same practice for developing into competent practitioners. Through numerous enactments, translation students may progress from initial performances which deviate from the standard of the practice, to performances which resemble this standard and thus constitute acceptable enactments of the practice. My research has contributed insight into how managing translation projects is routinely enacted by a group of PMs but further research is required as to how exactly translators and project managers become competent practitioners.

My research may inform future design of curricula for translator training. It has been argued that translation quality plays a significant role in assessing students’ work, but that teaching students how to work more efficiently by using QA features and translate QA into practice constitutes a less common approach (Drugan 2013). Employers tend to criticise students’ limited skills in using QA tools (ibid.). These findings suggest a need to include aspects of translation quality in translator training in order to equip students with the skills that

\(^1\)see http://www.e-gps.org/ for details
are required by the translation industry. This presents some challenges for the academic world, as academic staff may not be entirely familiar with the latest tools. These kind of challenges might be compensated for by ongoing training or collaborations with practitioners.

After having explained how practice theory has made a contribution to analysing quality in translation project management, one could ask what my research contributes to practice theory. To my knowledge, it constitutes the first application of practice theory in translation studies and has therefore extended its scope of application to a different organisational setting. It is hoped that, through reflecting on the methodological and conceptual issues encountered, the thesis may inform the theoretical development of practice theory.

The issues that I came across in carrying out this study were mainly methodological, as my data set that emerged from the fieldwork was relatively small. What can be seen in my analysis is that data from the interview transcripts is more prominent than excerpts from fieldnotes. The reason for this is that in terms of significance for the research questions, the interview data contained more relevant instances. However, one problem caused by this is that the data is slightly biased towards the interview data although practice theory stresses the importance of collecting data in the field, preferably via participant observation. Nevertheless, I found it challenging to obtain sufficient data during my fieldwork and had to complement it with semi-structured interviews. As explained in the analysis, the transition from engaging in the practice to speaking about it in the interviews posed challenges for the PMs in defining translation quality. I argued that these difficulties arose from the shift to reflexive behaviour, which does not usually feature in routine enactments. Due to this observation, I would probably prioritise fieldwork over interviews in the future, so as to obtain more data directly in the workplace.

Also, my data set focuses only on limited aspects of the practice. During the analysis, I identified organisational culture and discourse practices as additional, potentially interesting points for analysing the practice of managing translation projects and translation quality. However, my data set does not allow for a thorough analysis of these, as I did not focus on those aspects at the time of data collection.

The theoretical body of practice-theoretical research, on the other hand, tended to be overwhelming. It was challenging to remain critical of the theory,
Conclusions: Practices and quality in production networks

as it seemed to cater for almost every aspect I looked at in this thesis. Practice theories are very comprehensive and cover a wide range of theoretical territory. In view of this, I found it difficult at times to select from the available concepts. Having said this, it needs to be acknowledged that my research questions mainly evolved based on readings about practice theory. I would have potentially chosen different questions if I had focused on other areas of practice-theoretical research.

Before I outline some avenues for future research, I address some of the limitations of my study. First, it is difficult to generalise from my findings. My data was collected in a single LSP, and practices of translation production are not standardised, or regulated to a large extent. However, the LSP was carefully selected and I believe that it is possible to extrapolate from my study to similar settings. The above-mentioned implications may not apply to all LSPs but they are certainly a valuable contribution, as only a few empirical studies have been carried out in PMs’ workplaces, and thus give valuable insights into how translation project management is performed in an authentic setting.

Another limitation of my research is that the observed performances and the performances described by the PMs in the interviews tended to follow the normative standard of the practice. Most performances appeared to be smooth, and whenever elements were not immediately available to the PMs, these could be acquired relatively easily, so that the practice could be enacted. As briefly mentioned in the conclusions of the previous chapter, enactments of the practice in the case of complaints were nothing other than a variant of the practice, which was routinely enacted by the PMs. The focus of practice theory on routine enactments thus provides a new approach for studying aspects that are perceived as negative in the translation industry. However, as no major issues with enactments were evident, it was not possible for me to include such performances in my analysis to see how a practice-theoretical framework can offer insights into performances that fall far short from the practice standard.

Lastly, the scope of this study is limited to one set of actors in the production network, i.e. PMs. Still, it is a valuable contribution to the field of translation studies, as it is, to my knowledge, the first in-depth analysis of their role in the production network. My analysis significantly enhances our knowledge of how they enact the practice of managing translation projects, and this understanding can be taken as a starting point for further investigations, which I discuss below.

In terms of the application of practice theory, a point of criticism that per-
sists is its seemingly boundless scope for application. It encompasses numerous, sometimes conflicting traditions, from which one can choose the most appropriate one to fit a specific research context. In addition, it is being developed by researchers in order to extend current theoretical boundaries and venture into new research territories. For instance, I overcame limitations in terms of conceptual analysis by drawing on the technologies-in-practice framework which had been developed as part of studies of organisational practices. In light of the many various traditions and continuous developments, it is difficult to remain critical of the scope of its applications.

To finish, I will provide some ideas of how future studies of translation can benefit from using a practice-theoretical approach. The application of practice theory permits the study of links between components of a practice, or even between a number of practices. It would be interesting to apply the framework to other practices of translation production, i.e. translating or proofreading. It is thus a powerful approach to questions which explore relations between different aspects of translation. The theory could also be employed for investigating differences in enactments of project management in companies across the industry, so as to arrive at a more comprehensive picture of the practice-as-entity.

Practice theory could also be used for studies on the organisational culture in LSPs and other translation workplaces. Drawing on the framework, it could be investigated how the infrastructures of a number of LSPs differ from one another. The scope of such research could be limited to the investigation of precise aspects of that infrastructure and would potentially allow for conclusions to be drawn about what type of workplaces there are in the translation industry.

On a smaller scale, the theoretical approach can be used to study single aspects of translating. First, Warde’s (2005) conceptualisation of intricate practices could be applied in studies of translator satisfaction, as it may provide some useful insights into the motivations of translators and other translation professionals. An approach for looking into these motivations could be the discursive practices employed by the professionals when they speak about job satisfaction. Such practices could be analysed via interview data.

Second, Orlikowski’s (2000) concept of technologies-in-practice might be used for examining how other technologies than the ones examined in my study are integrated into performances, and how translators and PMs enact new tech-
nologies, or how their enactments change when a tool’s technological properties are altered. The socio-material approach outlined by Orlikowski (2007) could be applied to other materials in translating and managing translation projects. It may provide interesting insights into areas of TS which investigate translators’ use of technologies, and complement research on human-computer interaction (e.g. O’Brien 2012).

Third, practice theory could inform research on bodily activities in TS. The emerging research area of ergonomics in translation (see Ehrensberger-Dow and Massey 2014; Ehrensberger-Dow and O’Brien 2015) has explored workplaces of translators in various settings. A practice-theoretical perspective could provide further insight into how the ergonomics of translators’ workplaces is connected to wider aspects of the practice of translating. In addition, workplaces of translation PMs could be integrated in such an investigation.

Finally, drawing on a practice-theoretical understanding lends itself to an analysis of how practices change over time, or are changing. Longitudinal studies may thus investigate how translation project management and other practices of translation production are transformed over time; an issue which is highly interesting, because the material side of these practices is constantly in a state of flux. The introduction of new technologies to translation affects how practices are enacted. An excellent example is the recent introduction of MT, which has not only changed the material nature of translating, but also requires adapted sets of competence, as it necessitates new elements of knowing and affects how the practice is understood.

To sum up, practice theory offers new theoretical insights to TS, as it allows for studying new things in a different way. Practice-theoretical research is grounded in practice and applicable to a wide range of contexts. It has engaged with a multitude of questions about how various practices are structured, and these questions are highly relevant to translation production. There is a substantial body of practice-theoretical concepts, which are still being developed to fill gaps in a growing body of studies which apply practice theory. A practice-theoretical approach is therefore not just another theoretical framework to be introduced to TS. It complements the theoretical and methodological frameworks which have been adopted by scholars in TS, and therefore complements the range of methodological approaches and therefore constitutes a valuable approach which offers new insights into aspects of translation and project management.
Bibliography


Bibliography


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Bibliography


You are being invited to take part in a research study that seeks to explore how quality assurance is understood and implemented in translation projects. The study is part of a PhD degree and will be conducted by a postgraduate researcher. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

The research will be conducted by Ms Melanie Foedisch, PhD candidate at the Centre for Translation and Intercultural Studies (CTIS), The University of Manchester.

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Title of the Research

Quality in Translation Production: An ethnographic study of collaboration networks

What is the aim of the research?

The research aims to study how quality is achieved through a collaboration of various professionals in translation projects. First, it seeks to explore how quality and quality assurance (QA) are understood by people working in the translation industry, as well as by those who use translation services. The research also aims at investigating how the professionals involved in translation projects implement QA procedures. The results of the study may be useful for tailoring translator training programmes (e.g. MA programmes) to the needs of the translation industry.

Why have I been chosen?

The company you work for fully matches the criteria for hosting this research. It is UK-based and has several offices across the country, as well as a suitable number of employees. This allows the researcher to explore the distributed nature of QA in translation projects and ensures manageable travelling times. Furthermore, the company is a well-established and experienced member of the industry. Finally, the services offered to clients are at the core of today’s translation industry. Therefore, the results of the research are likely to be representative for the translation industry.
What would I be asked to do if I took part?

In the initial stage of the research, the researcher will observe a number of employees in various locations of the host company in order to develop an understanding of how translation projects are handled and to identify key players in implementing quality in translation. Through observation and informal conversations, it is hoped to obtain some authentic insights into practices in the workplace. It should be noted that it is not intended to evaluate performance in any way, nor to disrupt workflows or inconvenience staff. The researcher will take notes throughout the observation.

At a later stage, the researcher will conduct interviews with selected employees, designed to discuss in more detail aspects of QA which have been observed, or to clarify such aspects. Interviews will last for a maximum of one hour at a time. In some cases, follow-up interviews may be helpful. Ideally, interviews will be audio-recorded.

Furthermore, the researcher may seek the host company’s permission to conduct such interviews with selected suppliers (e.g. translators) and clients who were involved in particular translation projects. The researcher may also ask permission to access relevant documentation relating to translation projects, such as QA-related guidelines, written correspondence, etc.

What happens to the data collected?

All data will be anonymised and stored securely (see below). For analytical purposes, it will be coded according to themes that emerge during the study. The data will then be analysed by the researcher in a qualitative and quantitative way. Findings of the research will be published in various forms (see below).

How is confidentiality maintained?

The data will be securely stored electronically and manually (in the form of researcher notes) for five years and can only be accessed by the researcher and the research supervisor (contact details are provided below). It will exclusively be used for the purpose of the PhD research, i.e. it will not be used in future research projects. All data will be made anonymous by use of pseudonyms that are only known to the researcher and the research supervisor. Any information provided during the research will be treated confidentially. Direct quotations will only be used in a way that does not allow for the identification of individual participants and may be checked by the participants before publication. After five years the data will be deleted.

What is the duration of the research?

It is intended to carry out participant observation for a total period of approximately four to six weeks between November 2014 and February 2015. The researcher will spend a number of consecutive days in different locations and/or with different participants (although observing full working days may not always be required). The exact times for observations can be agreed between the researcher and the participants.

The research will further comprise one or more interviews with selected participants. Interviews will not last more than one hour at a time (follow-up interviews may be required). Interview dates can be jointly arranged by the researcher and the participants, so as to fit the participants’ schedules, but should take place in January and February 2015.
Where will the research be conducted?

The research will be conducted at the company premises. If necessary, interviews may be conducted remotely.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Each employee will be asked individually whether they want to take part in the research. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself. Withdrawing your permission will not have any negative consequences for you.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

No, you will not be paid for your participation.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

The research will be published solely in academic contexts. The research findings will be published as a PhD thesis. Parts of the research, i.e. particular findings, may be presented at academic conferences and/or published in the form of articles in scholarly journals. Should you wish, the results of the study can be made available to you in the form of a presentation, report or other form of feedback.

Who has reviewed the research project?

The research project has been reviewed and approved by staff members through the University’s monitoring procedures for PhDs. Approval has also been obtained from the School’s Research Ethics Committee.

Contact for further information

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Maeve.Olohan@manchester.ac.uk

What if something goes wrong?

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093.

If a participant wants to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the research they should contact the Head of the Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.
**B | Interview topic guide**

There will be two interviews (approx. 40–60 minutes) with four project managers and the vendor manager. The interviews in each of the two offices will take place within a week, over two consecutive weeks. The interviews will be semi-structured, covering particular topics on each day. Day one will focus on collaboration as a theme, day two will be centered around quality. The overall research question to be addressed during the interviews is: What are the key concepts of collaboration (the object of study) and quality (and the impact of collaboration on quality) in project management (the activity studied, from the perspective of practice theory)?

Questions printed in black are research questions, the ones in purple are the possible interview questions.

**Theme 1: Collaboration and technology**

The introductory questions aim at reconstructing a bit of background knowledge about the interviewees’ career. The information provided will serve as context and source of explanation for differences in their performances.

- For how long have you been with this company?
- Could you tell me little bit about how you became an PM/vendor manager?
- What would I have to know to work as an PM/vendor manager? Which skills are the most important ones, in your opinion?
- Have you had previous jobs as an PM/vendor manager?
- How was the job in that company different from this one?

What is the PMs’ **definition of collaboration**, as in working with others towards an aim, not just interaction?

- In your job as an PM/vendor manager, how do you work together with others?
- I noticed that you sometimes work with other PMs, could you tell me more about this/give me some examples?

In order to collaborate on translation projects, it is necessary to **communicate**
with others. How is communication structured?

- When you communicate with other employees, what would you usually communicate via email, and how do you use IM?
- Can you give me an example of when you would use the phone?

How is technology used for collaborative purposes?

- I noticed that technology plays a major role in your job. I remember that there were some issues with Sky when I observed you in January. How is this going now?
- How has the introduction of Sky changed your job?
- In your opinion, how can technology support/interrupt the workflow, collaboration, communication?
- Can you think of the last time you experienced technical problems?
- Which parts of your job do not require technology?

What is the suppliers’ role in the production process and how can the PMs’ relationship with suppliers be characterised?

- What is a good translator? How should they work with you?
- Are there any translators with whom you work regularly? Thinking about one of them, could you outline how your relationship developed or changed over time?

Initiative and freedom in project management

- As you look back on the time you’ve worked for this company, can you think of any examples where you have contributed to how project management is done in this company?
- Would you like to do anything differently/change parts of how you do your job?

Recap, then:

- Is there anything you would like to address?
Theme 2: Quality

This session will start with a definition of product quality:

- In your view, what is a good translation and how do you get one as a project manager?
- Are translators rewarded for good work?
- Can you think of ways in which you use technology to enhance/ensure the quality of translations?

Which role does feedback play in the process?

- Can you give me an example of a case where the quality of the translation was not good? What happened?
- How do you deal with feedback on translations (positive and negative)?
- What kind of feedback do clients provide?
- How do you deal with negative feedback? Is it the translators who make changes or someone else?
- Is it important for you to forward feedback to the translators? Do you think it is important for the translators to receive feedback? How is feedback passed on to them?
- I’ve noticed that you make notes about the translator’s performance on the system, for instance, by keeping results of test translations. To me, this seems like a formal way of assessing their performance. How about more informal discussions?

Another link between collaboration and quality seems to be expertise: Other employees are asked for advice, also on translation products. Where are the boundaries of advice, when do overlaps occur? One example: Discussing translation products in case of disputes. How does expertise influence the quality of the translation product?

- When was the last time you sought advice from one of your colleagues? What was it about?
- How important are language skills in your job? Are they part of your
job? Would you be confident to assess translations yourself?

Recap, then:

- Is there anything you would like to address?