

ALMA MATER STUDIORUM – UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN
TRADUZIONE, INTERPRETAZIONE E INTERCULTURALITÀ

Ciclo XXXIII

Settore Concorsuale: 10/M1 – Lingue, Letterature e Culture Germaniche

Settore Scientifico Disciplinare: L-LIN/14 – Lingua e Traduzione – Lingua Tedesca

TRANSLATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES
IN EUROPEAN ART MUSEUMS

Presentata da: Sandra Nauert

Coordinatore Dottorato:

Prof.ssa Raffaella Baccolini

Supervisore:

Prof. Christopher Rundle

Esame finale anno 2021

Abstract

One aspect of globalisation has been a significant increase in international visitors to many museums around the world, challenging museums to cater for an increasingly diverse audience in more than one language. As observed by a number of scholars (Liao 2018, Cranmer 2016, Neather 2012), more research is needed on the role of translation practices in the museum context.

Adopting an action research approach and drawing on qualitative interviews with translation-related staff from a range of European art museums as well as with translation service providers, this study sets out to investigate translation practices and policies in art museums. By adopting the perspective of museums, and their methods in commissioning, managing, and checking translations, the focus of this study is put on organisational and managerial aspects of translation, and the ways in which these contribute to the overall quality of their translations. How are translation projects handled? How are quality requirements communicated? How are multilingual communication strategies agreed upon? How is translator feedback handled? And which tools are employed to efficiently undertake these tasks?

The objective of the research is twofold. On the one hand, it seeks to provide a descriptive analysis of existing translation practices in art museums. This also includes a grid of the key features of the management of translation tasks, which serves as a means to measure the degree to which museums apply them. On the other hand, the study aims to propose potential enhancements in three key areas: project management, quality assurance and translation technology, within a quality model. The purpose of the model is to improve existing practices which lack systematicity and efficient collaboration.

Translation practices in museums are addressed within a customer-based perspective of translation quality, referring to quality standards for translation ISO 17000 and ISO/TS 11669, thus implying a functionalist approach. In response to the needs and experiences of the interviewed museum staff, a set of guidelines is proposed as a useful instrument for museum professionals involved in translation-related tasks.

Acknowledgements

The achievement of this doctoral thesis was only possible thanks to the support and collaboration of many people helping me navigate and explore new strands.

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to my supervisor Prof. Christopher Rundle who guided me through this experience of discovery. His continuous support and motivation, his deep insight, and patience throughout the project were invaluable. My gratitude extends to Prof. Marcello Soffritti for his precious support and guidance during the first two years of my studies. Thanks are also due to my department for the generous funding.

I would like to express my great appreciation to the external revisors, Prof. Joselia Neves and Prof. Robert Neather, for their precious contributions and thought-provoking comments.

I gratefully acknowledge the fruitful collaboration with both museum professionals and translation service providers, who generously engaged in this research. Their contribution and provided insights were essential in generating results. A special thanks is due to Luna Venturi-Wellington from Art & Culture Translated for her deep insights and dedicated participation.

I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Museumsakademie Joanneum for giving me the opportunity of an in-residence study period, allowing for deep insights and exchange with diverse museum staff.

My gratitude also goes to Prof. Patrick Leech, who has inspired me to undertake studies in the field of museum communication. Thanks are also extended to Heidrun Geryzmisch-Arbogast, who first introduced me to “academic thinking”.

My acknowledgements would not be complete without mentioning my research colleagues, who were of great moral support during this profound experience.

Finally, I am indebted to my family and friends, who were always there to support me in moments of difficulty. To Ruben for his love and support. To my daughter Irene for giving me joy every day.

Contents

List of Figures	vii
List of Tables.....	ix
1 Introduction	1
2 Theoretical Framework	4
2.1 Audience-centred communication in museums	5
2.1.1 Constructivism – A holistic approach to museum communication	5
2.1.2 Multiple perspectives: considering diverse audiences’ needs	6
2.1.3 Museum texts and art discourse.....	7
2.2 A multicultural perspective to museum communication.....	10
2.2.1 “Translating” for local linguistic communities.....	10
2.2.2 Communication strategies approaching international museum audiences	11
2.3 Managing museum translation: interaction between different professional communities	12
2.3.1 Museum-translator divide: different perspectives on translation, different intercultural awareness	13
2.3.2 The museum discourse community: anxious negotiation of differing expertise.....	14
2.3.3 Overcoming boundaries: efficient dialogue and translation project management.....	15
2.4 Quality management in the translation industry: the case of museum translation	17
2.4.1 Quality assurance: a process-based approach.....	17
2.4.2 An integrated approach to translation quality management	19
2.4.3 Project specifications, client specifications	22
2.4.4 An agile, customer-based approach to translation quality management ..	24
2.5 Are existing translation quality standards relevant for translation practices in museums?	27
2.5.1 International quality standards for translation: ISO 17100, ISO 11669, ASTM F2575-14	27
2.5.2 Quality standards for translation policies in official institutions.....	31
2.6 Translation technology and efficiency applied to museum translation.....	33
2.6.1 Computer-aided translation tools.....	34
2.6.2 Terminology management	36
2.7 Digital heritage studies: integrated content management in museums	40
2.7.1 Digital heritage	40
2.7.2 Integrated content management in museums.....	41

3	Research Design and Methods	43
3.1	Research questions	43
3.2	Action Research: Towards guidelines and best practices	44
3.3	Qualitative interviews: Gathering diverse perspectives	47
	3.3.1 Interviewing staff of art museums	48
	3.3.2 Interviewing staff of language and translation service providers	60
3.4	An alternative method of data management and analysis	63
	3.4.1 Collecting data: from notetaking to <i>case summaries</i>	65
	3.4.2 Organising and analysing data: the <i>Zettelkasten</i> method	66
3.5	A grid of key features: analysing translation policies in art museums	69
3.6	Qualitative validity	72
	3.6.1 Strategies of qualitative validity	72
	3.6.2 Checking the validity of the results: questionnaires and follow-up interviews	73
	3.6.3 Language and translation issues	75
4	Results: Interviews with museum staff	77
4.1	[Theme 1] Involving the multilingual audience	78
	4.1.1 Multilingual audience: defining the language policy	78
	4.1.2 Digital channels to engage the multilingual audience vs. the concept of “Aura”	83
4.2	[Theme 2] (Multilingual) communication strategies	87
	4.2.1 Content creation in art museums: the curator role	87
	4.2.2 Creating multilingual content in art museums	90
4.3	[Theme 3] Approaching translation in art museums: quality expectations	94
	4.3.1 Translation quality as understood by art museum staff	95
	4.3.2 Translating art – the art of translation: the importance of writing style ...	99
4.4	[Theme 4] Translation management: assembling a translation team	104
	4.4.1 In-house staff: single person vs. systematic approach	104
	4.4.2 Concept of “trusted translators”	107
4.5	[Theme 5] Managing translation quality: lack of a systematic approach	111
	4.5.1 Checking translations in-house: the desire to keep control	112
	4.5.2 Co-constructing quality: the importance of an efficient dialogue	117
	4.5.3 Losing control: terminological consistency	121
4.6	[Theme 6] The use of technology: managing translations efficiently	125
	4.6.1 Underestimating translation technology	125
	4.6.2 On everybody’s lips: digital content management	129

4.7	Critical reflections – a dialogue between research and practice	131
5	Results: Interviewing translation service providers	133
5.1	[Theme A] Enhancing collaboration: dialoguing with art museums	134
5.1.1	Importance of detailed project specifications and related materials.....	134
5.1.2	Need for an exchange of expertise, open dialogue and trust	136
5.1.3	Advising on a multilingual communication strategy	138
5.1.4	Advantages of an interdepartmental approach to translation in museums	140
5.1.5	Benefits of an exclusive collaboration.....	141
5.2	[Theme B] About the usefulness of CAT tools in art translation.....	142
5.2.1	Enhancing project management.....	142
5.2.2	Translation memory tools	144
5.2.3	Centralised terminology management	146
5.3	[Theme C] Approaching art translation: a TSP perspective.....	147
5.3.1	Contextualising art: from cultural adaptation to transcreation	147
5.3.2	Addressing an international audience: simplification as enrichment	149
5.3.3	Critical reflection: a collaboration between museum and translation professionals.....	150
6	Analysing and developing translation policies in museums	152
6.1	Developing a grid of key features to analyse translation policies in (art) museums.	152
6.1.1	Translation management.....	153
6.1.2	Translation quality	156
6.1.3	Translation technology	158
6.1.4	Synopsis: grid of key features.....	160
6.2	Results: assessing translation policies of 25 European art museums.....	161
6.2.1	Translation management: towards a systematic, coordinated and central approach	161
6.2.2	Translation quality: towards a standardised quality assurance.....	165
6.2.3	Translation technology: towards efficiency.....	167
6.2.4	Summary of the results	171
7	Quality in museum translation: a proposed set of guidelines	172
7.1	Developing a set of guidelines	172
7.1.1	General notions	172
7.1.2	Key features of translation policies in museums	174
7.1.3	Translation practices in museums: key competences of in-house staff..	175

7.1.4	An interactive model of translation quality management in art museums ...	175
7.1.5	Defining client specifications	177
7.2	Validity of guidelines: practitioners respond	178
7.2.1	Results: questionnaire survey	178
7.2.2	Results: follow-up interviews	187
8	Conclusions	194
	References	198
	Appendices	207
	Appendix A: Interview guides	207
	Appendix B: Index, keyword maps, and examples of data insertion in analysis tool.....	213
	Appendix C: Thematic maps.....	226
	Appendix D: Questionnaires	230
	Appendix E: Proposed guidelines	236
	Appendix F: Acronyms of interview participants	274

List of Figures

Figure 1: Interface of Sublime Text: header containing tags and relations, right column containing keywords/tags.....	67
Figure 2: Interface of Sublime Text: right column containing index ordered by museum and topic, body containing the related part of the case summary	68
Figure 3: Trilingual website of the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe	80
Figure 4: Websites of the Kunsthistorisches Museum and the Rijksmuseum promoting the exhibition on Caravaggio which has been produced in collaboration	82
Figure 5: Website of the Uffizi Galleries: Views from around the world.....	86
Figure 6: Website of the Uffizi Galleries: Views from around the world – Leonardo’s ‘Adoration of the Magi’ in the view of a Chinese visitor	86
Figure 7: Website of the Uffizi Galleries: Views from around the world – A painting of the adoration of the magi in the view of an Iranian visitor	87
Figure 8: Expectations by art museum staff in terms of translation quality	97
Figure 9: Translator competences required by art museum staff.....	97
Figure 10: Exterior and interiors of contemporary art museums (Museion Bolzano, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Kunsthhaus Graz).....	100
Figure 11: Different digital channels of the Kunsthalle Mannheim displaying information deriving from a centrally managed server.....	130
Figure 12: Results for key feature – Coordination of in-house translation management	162
Figure 13: Results for key feature – Collaboration with external translators	164
Figure 14: Results for key feature – Translation project management: project specifications	165
Figure 15: Results for key feature – Process standards for quality assurance	166
Figure 16: Results for key feature – In-house review and feedback.....	167
Figure 17: Results for key feature – Translation management systems.....	168
Figure 18: Results for key feature – Terminology management.....	169
Figure 19: Results for key feature – Management and provision of TM and corpus data.....	170
Figure 20: Translation policies in museums: key features.....	174
Figure 21: Translation practices in museums:key competences of in-house staff.....	175
Figure 22: Workflow of translation quality management in museums.....	176
Figure 23: Translation projects in museums: Defining client specifications.....	177

Figure 24: Answers from 8 museum staff members to question 4 of the questionnaire survey 183

Figure 25: Answers from 8 museum staff members to question 5 of the questionnaire survey 185

List of Tables

Table 1: Details on the selected art museums and galleries: Details on the selected art museums and galleries.....	52
Table 2: Details on the selected participants and interview situations.....	55
Table 3: Research questions and corresponding interview questions for interviews with museum staff.....	57
Table 4: Examples of tailored interview questions	58
Table 5: Overview of selected TSPs and participants for interviews	61
Table 6: Research questions and corresponding interview questions for interviews with staff from TSPs.....	62
Table 7: Alignment of two processes inspiring.....	64
Table 8: Phases of data management and analysis.....	65
Table 9: Grid of key features for translation policies in (art) museums	71
Table 10: Objectives of grid analysis and research questions aligned.....	72
Table 11: Overview of museum staff members participating in the questionnaire survey.....	74
Table 12: List of participants performing follow-up interviews	74
Table 13: Questions included in the questionnaire for museum professionals	75
Table 14: Questions included in the questionnaire for professionals working for TSPs	75
Table 15: Multilingual communication strategies (adapted from Cranmer 2016).....	90
Table 16: Diverse types of content and respective departments in charge of handling translations	106
Table 17: Degrees of application (DA).....	153
Table 18: Key feature – coordination of in-house translation management	154
Table 19: Key feature – collaboration with external translators	155
Table 20: Key feature – translation project management: project specifications	156
Table 21: Key feature – process standards for quality assurance	157
Table 22: Key feature – in-house review and feedback	158
Table 23: Key feature: translation management applications	159
Table 24: Key feature: terminology management.....	159
Table 25: Key feature: TM and corpus data.....	160
Table 26: Summary – Grid of key features for translation policies in (art) museums.....	160
Table 27: Grid of key features applied for the case study of 25 European art museums – summary of results	171

1 Introduction

One consequence of globalisation has been a major increase in international visitors in many art museums, especially in important tourist destinations. Large-scale migration has further led to the development of more multicultural and multilingual societies with diverse local language communities. At the same time, museums are increasingly visitor-oriented, applying an audience-driven approach to museum communication. Which languages do museums speak? What are their multilingual communication strategies and translation policies? The interest shown in museum communication by scholars of Translation Studies has been rather limited. In fact, as observed by some scholars (Liao 2018, Cranmer 2016, Neather 2012), more research is needed on translation practices in the museum context. The aim of this thesis is to begin filling this gap by investigating the practices of European art museums as they commission, manage, and check translations.

Recent findings on museum translation by Robert Neather (2012: 266) point out how the interaction between museum and translation community is often complicated by differing levels of expertise – making negotiation and dialogue a difficult undertaking. To overcome such difficulties and enable an efficient collaboration between the diverse actors, Neather (2012: 260) calls for “boundary practices” – a suggestion in line with observations by a variety of translation scholars (Risku 2006, Abdallah 2012, Alonso 2016). Trust building, a common goal and the smooth flow of information are widely considered to be key factors for efficient collaboration in translation projects – principles that also reflected in the ISO 17000 and ISO 11669 international quality standards for translation. It is against this background, that my study aims to explore how art museums may contribute to the overall translation quality in the translation process. In particular, the aim is to explore how art museums communicate their quality requirements, how quality is ensured, how feedback is handled, and which tools are employed to identify potential enhancements.

The study is qualitative and exploratory in nature, employing semi-structured interviews to shed light on translation practices in art museums within an Action Research (AS) approach. Addressing the concerns of practitioners and stakeholders rather than solely academic interests is a key characteristic of AS (Stern 2014: 202) – in line with constructivist approaches involving the co-creation of knowledge through dialogic interaction. Qualitative interviews have been the choice in this study, as they are a suitable method to investigate professional practices (Kvale

2008, Wilson 2014) as well as new research areas, potentially providing in-depth information about a topic that would otherwise not be available (cf. Minichiello et al.1990: 96).

The selection of museums to be interviewed was purposive, as is typical for qualitative studies. The goal when selecting suitable institutions was to “maximise the utility of information from small samples” (Flyvbjerg 2006: 230). According to Teddlie & Yu. (2007: 83-84), purposive sampling typically involves around 30 cases selected by means of the “expert judgment” (of the researcher) to “yield the most information about a particular phenomenon”. For this study, I identified 35 key institutions, potentially able to provide rich information on the organisational aspects of translation in art museums. Although representativeness is not the main concern of qualitative research, I was careful to select a diverse range of art museums, from large to medium-sized, from contemporary and modern to premodern in their content, involving 25 institutions of five European countries, among which museums of the highest standard, such as the Louvre Museum in Paris and the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao.

At some point, I felt that input was needed from those who collaborate with art museums and/or professionally manage translation projects. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were arranged with a small sample of three different translation service providers, to gain insights into the professional practices of translation project management and to reflect on how art museums may contribute to the translation process. Due to the diversity of the companies involved, the interviews were characterised by different foci, ranging from the collaboration between museum and translation service provider (TSP), multilingual communication strategies in museums, to the use of translation technology and how this may contribute to the translation process in museums.

One of the most salient points when carrying out the thematic analysis of the interviews with museum staff was their desire to keep editorial control of translated content, which is due to anxieties regarding the professional expertise of translators in the art sector, the special status of art discourse, and the predominant role of the curator in art museums. This tendency correlates with a preference to collaborate with “trusted” translators allowing for a direct dialogue and exchange. Moreover, from the information collected, it emerged that a number of institutions put forward rather personalised solutions for handling translations based on the competence of single people, without capitalising on existing practices in the form of documented processes. While some major art museums have established standardised practices, many cases lack a systematic approach. Against this background, I have developed a quality model of translation practices in museums, centred on the concepts of a close collaboration and

professional exchange – in line with the industry standards and the literature calling for an efficient communication between stakeholders.

In addition to the thematic analysis, the information collected during the interviews was analysed by means of a grid of key features, which I developed to analyse the translation policies in museums. The term translation policy is used within its broad definition (Meylaerts, 2011), referring to the translation procedures and guiding principles underlying translation practices. When defining the key features of three relevant areas – translation management, translation quality assurance and translation technology – I drew both on Peter Sandrini’s work (2018) on quality standards for translation policies in official institutions, and on the quality standards for translation ISO 17000 and ISO 11669. The purpose of this grid analysis was twofold: first, to provide a description of existing translation policies in the interviewed art museums; and second, to provide a framework to identify areas that support translation practices and provide guiding principles to enhance translation practices in art museums.

The findings of these two lines of analysis were brought together in a proposed set of guidelines on translation practices in art museums. These guidelines suggest a systematic and collaborative approach of managing translation quality in museums, by building up knowledge in the form of resources and best practices, while ensuring close collaboration with translation service providers to enhance quality. Although this study focuses on art museums, when formulating the quality model, it emerged that most recommendations apply to any type of museum. For this reason, the guidelines have been organised within a modular structure, containing a main part with recommendations aimed at museums in general, and a specific section addressing art museums. The general part focuses three topics: translation policies, the workflows of translation project management, and parameters for client specification.

The accuracy of the results was validated by the interview participants, who provided feedback on the proposed guidelines – a strategy referred to as “member checking” (Creswell & Creswell 2018: 200). By means of a questionnaire survey and a small number of follow-up interviews, a detailed evaluation of these guidelines by practitioners – both museum staff and translation professionals – was solicited with the aim of improving and refining the guidelines. This is in line with Wagner’s suggestions for theory to be co-created and tested by practitioners to improve practices and provide guidance:

In my view, “theory” should not be just some individual’s brain-child: it should arise from observing practice, analyzing practice, and drawing a few general conclusions to provide guidance. These conclusions should naturally be tested in practice. Leading to better guidance. (Chesterman & Wagner 2002: 6)

2 Theoretical Framework

Within an interdisciplinary theoretical framework and drawing on qualitative interviews, my research sets out to investigate translation practices in art museums. By taking the perspective of museums, commissioning, managing, and checking translations, I focus on organisational and managerial aspects of translation, contributing to the overall translation quality. The objective is to elaborate a grid of key features for translation practices in museums, able to describe the degree to which these key features are applied by museums. As a result, potential enhancements in the respective key areas (translation management, quality assurance, translation technology) are illustrated within a quality model for translation practices in museums.

This chapter outlines the theoretical background informing my thesis. A variety of studies are drawn upon to shed light on central aspects of this research. As for museum studies, two different but related research areas are presented: audience-centred approaches to museum communication, and digital heritage studies focusing on integrated content management, which allows to address diverse audiences by efficiently distributing diversified content. These issues are relevant for my study in so far as they define the general communicative framework in which museum translation takes place.

A variety of studies on translation addressing different research areas are put into relation. Studies that investigate the difficulties of interaction between the museum and translation community connect with studies focusing on aspects of communication and collaboration in translation project management. Translation quality assurance is addressed by presenting diverse approaches (e.g. process-based, customer-based), while pointing out the centrality of project specifications and client participation in the translation process. It is precisely the way and the degree to which museums take an active part in translation projects, that represents the core of my research. Diverse quality standards for translation services are introduced and discussed in terms of their relevance for the context of museums. Finally, studies on the use of translation technology for managing translation projects add reflections on how such tools may support the interaction and efficient exchange of information between the involved actors.

2.1 Audience-centred communication in museums

The idea of the addressee the author has in mind, is a very important (if not the most important) criterion guiding the writer's stylistic and linguistic decision. If a text is to be functional for a certain person or group of persons, it has to be tailored to their needs and expectations. (Nord 2000: 195)

This quote from Christiane Nord – prominent scholar of translation studies and advocate of a functionalist approach to translation – underlines the centrality of the target addressee. The statement could as well have been used within a museum context, where the attention to audiences and their expectations has become increasingly important. Audience-oriented approaches to museum communication represent the general framework of this study, embedded in a functionalist approach to translation. The paradigm shift within museum studies has involved a move from an object-centered to an audience-centered approach to museums, thus expanding their focus from collecting and preserving to communicating and engaging with interactive visitors (Hooper-Greenhill 1999a/b/c, Hein 1999, Simon 2010, Falk & Dierking 2013, Falk 2016). This view is also reflected in the definition of the International Council of Museums¹ of 2007: “A museum [...] acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage [...] for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.”

2.1.1 Constructivism – A holistic approach to museum communication

Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1999a) approaches the concepts of communication, education, and interpretation in museums against the background of a cultural move from modernism to postmodernism. “During the last 200 years or so, a positivistic epistemology, a didactic learning theory and a transmission view of communication have prevailed” (Hooper-Greenhill 1999c: 70). In recent decades, the active role of people making sense of their social environments as well as the legitimacy of diverse interpretations have been acknowledged within the fields of communication and education theory – giving way to constructivist learning theories. Hooper-Greenhill argues that within a differentiated and audience-driven approach, the three concepts – communication, education, and interpretation – tie together, offering a holistic view of museum communication. She thus calls for cross-departmental teamwork to avoid communication and education being approached separately. Such a holistic approach (1999b:

¹ <https://icom.museum/en/news/the-challenge-of-revising-the-museum-definition/> (last access 15/09/21)

41) also moves away from limiting museum communication to that related to exhibitions, by considering the complex interplay of all elements contributing to the museum experience and the museum's image. Since communication impinges on all museum activities, from the exhibition design, to education, to marketing and advertising, coherent communication policies and a well-balanced communication mix need to be established to put the various communicative activities into relation.

As for the development of museum exhibitions, until quite recently, the transmission model of communication was dominant, favoring a linear process of transmitting objective content from a knowledgeable communicator, while paying little attention to creating opportunities of exchange between the exhibition team and the visitor. Today, a new model of communication in the development of exhibitions in museums is gaining ground: the *cultural approach* posits communication as a process of sharing and participation, as a cultural process that constructs a meaningful world in which all parties of society participate. By drawing both on the idea of the audience-centred museum and the constructivist learning theories, Nina Simon (2010: iii) coins the term of *participatory museum* based on the active engagement of audience(s). She underlines the need for diversification: “Rather than delivering the same content to everyone, a participatory institution collects and shares diverse, personalized, and changing content co-produced with visitors.”

These recent developments have triggered a deep reflection on the nature of museum content, which results in a situation of great heterogeneity regarding communication approaches (cf. Falk 2016). On the one hand there is the traditional approach which promotes more formal and academic content intended for the expert and educated visitor, and on the other the new approaches in favour of more accessible and interactive content suitable for a wider audience that does not necessarily possess prior knowledge of the topic. This dichotomy entails potential conflicts between the curatorial department and the education department, as different approaches must be negotiated.

2.1.2 Multiple perspectives: considering diverse audiences' needs

Within the constructivist approach, active visitors are provided with an appropriate learning experience/environment, allowing them to make their own connections with the material according to their individual learning preferences. A constructivist museum thus offers multiple paths and multiple learning modalities (Hein 1999: 77) by means of different text types and

multiple channels. Howard Gardner’s concept of multiple intelligences fits very well into the framework of a multimodal museum addressing different learning styles and diverse intelligences (linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal) (Gardner/Davis 1999: 100).

By proposing a visitor-centered perspective, John H. Falk (2016) criticizes the ongoing debate on the communicative role of museums, “often dichotomized as ‘quality/education’ versus ‘quantity/entertainment’” (ibid.: 1). Based on diverse visitor studies, he finds that people visit museums for a multitude of goals, falling within the entire range of the quality-quantity continuum. Falk thus addresses yet another aspect expressed in the ICOM definition of 2007, namely the fact that museums communicate “for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.” In line with ICOM, he argues that museums should aim at meeting a diversity of visitor needs – both in terms of education and entertainment – by creating exhibitions that reflect intellectual excellence and simultaneously satisfy the interest of diverse audiences.

Concerning the diversity of visitor needs in museums, Joselia Neves (2018) calls for a user-centred design (UCD) which is “at the heart of universal accessibility”, involving the need to foresee “all possible profiles of visitors and creating ideal conditions to make them feel welcome, safe, comfortable, and above all, to make them feel that there is something to enjoy, learn and do that has been created especially for me” (Neves 2018: 421-22). Neves states that such an approach goes beyond suggesting that all content be levelled down to the lowest common denominator, but that content should be graded and presented in multiple formats in order to offer different ways of interaction and engagement, which may appeal to diverse users (ibid.). In my study, I will refer to *accessible content* as content with an acceptable degree of comprehensibility allowing the greatest possible number of visitors to understand linguistic museum texts.

2.1.3 Museum texts and art discourse

Multimodality of museum texts

Drawing on Hooper-Greenhill’s holistic approach to communication, Robert Neather (2008: 221) observes that a museum text cannot be considered in isolation, as it is part of a broader system of verbal signification (all texts of an exhibition) and visual signification (the described artefact). This interaction of a text with both verbal and visual elements – described as “multimodal” by Gunther Kress & Theo van Leeuwen (1996) – imposes a non-linear reading

to audiences. Understanding how verbal and visual elements interact within the museum environment and how audiences experience an exhibition is thus helpful not only to produce museum texts, but also culturally effective translations (Neather 2008: 238, Jiménez Hurtado et al. 2012: 1).

This study attempts to explore organisational aspects of translation practices in European art museums by focusing on the interlinguistic translation² of a variety of linguistic texts³ in art museums. This restricted focus is not intended to imply that the linguistic aspect is the exclusive concern of museum translation. Other spatial and visual elements contribute to the meaning within the museum setting and must certainly be taken into account when translating linguistic texts. Moreover, in a context where translation is mostly outsourced, translators may not necessarily have access to nonverbal elements. To alleviate this gap, it is crucial that museum staff provide translation professionals with sufficient contextual material, such as images of the artworks and the exhibition spaces. This implies a close collaboration between the professional communities, as suggested by Robert Neather (cf. sections [2.3.3](#)).

In this study, I will use the term *source text* to refer to a linguistic text that is to be translated – and *target text* to refer to a linguistic text that has been translated from the source text. Accordingly, *source content* / *target content* refer to a set of museum texts in a given context that are to be translated / have been translated.

Text types in art museums

Against the background of Joselia Neves' (2018) call for the provision of museum content in multiple formats in order to meet the diversity of visitors (cf. [section 2.1.2](#)), in this section I will shortly address the diversity of museum text types. Anda-Elena Crețiu (2013: 2) provides a list of museum text types, ranging from exhibition-related texts (such as exhibition catalogue, leaflet, museum and gallery labels), over academic genres tailored for art education (e.g. critical essay), to newer genres of computer-mediated communication (such as artist's blog, website). By drawing on Crețiu's listing as well as on an extensive online research of art museum's websites, I developed a list of museum text types that I will be addressing in my research:

² In reference to Jakobson's triadic division of translation (intralingual, interlingual, and intersemiotic), with interlinguistic translation being the "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language" (Jakobson, 2000: 127).

³ Audio formats were included as they are produced on the basis of written texts.

- ✓ Exhibition labels, wall panels
- ✓ Multimedia texts, texts in multimedia apps
- ✓ Audio /media guides, audiodescriptions
- ✓ Maps, brochures, leaflets
- ✓ Catalogues, other publications
- ✓ Web texts, social media texts
- ✓ Press releases

With the term *museum content*, I will refer to the totality of the museum texts within a given context. When it comes to the translation of museum texts, it can be observed that bilingual content generally comprises the entire range of museum texts, while multilingual content is more limited and typically includes audio or media guides as well as static visitor information in brochures, maps and on the website.

Art discourse and “Artspeak”

A note is due on the concept of art discourse. Anda-Elena Crețiu (2013) reflects on the notion of “Artspeak” in reference to discourse on art, while discussing the typical features that are attributed to this kind of discourse. By drawing on diverse authors, she shows a series of comments on how discourse in the visual arts is perceived (cf. extracts below). On the one hand, ambiguity and a lack of clarity are denounced, on the other hand it is claimed that complexity and mystery are features of good art writing. The third statement (“art writing does not require clear writing”) seems to stand in contradiction to the principle of a user-centred design (Neves 2008; cf. [section 2.1.2](#)) aimed at providing an acceptable degree of comprehensibility to a great number of visitors. However, the statement is mitigated by calling for conciseness and precision – elements that support the intelligibility of a text. Questions that come to the fore here are: Is it possible to mediate complex contents by using comprehensible language? And if the aim of art discourse is to convey ambiguity in order to stimulate a critical reflection, is it possible that the message is grasped by a broad audience?

“[...] the several layers of meaning, the subtle irony, the tricks and games played by the artist-writers in order to obtain a certain ambiguity” (Svenungsson 2007)

“[...] a wave of vague descriptors and questionable nouns had washed over you, all of which were supposed to combine to create some sort of meaning, but you couldn't.” (Jillian Steinhauer⁴)

⁴ Extract of the publication “How to Read International Art English”, published in the on-line art blog and magazine Hyperallergic, Sensitive to Art & its Discontents on 10 August 2012.

“Good art writing does not require clear writing. Art should never be, an area of specialization which requires simplicity or clarity: instead it should be an area that embraces complexity, depth, mystery, sensual appreciation and space for critical reflection, whilst also aiming for precision and conciseness.” (Robert Jackson⁵)

2.2 A multicultural perspective to museum communication

An increased attention to audiences and their diverse needs in museum communication has also raised awareness of the need to engage culturally and linguistically diverse audiences. While museums are progressively integrating strategies to include multilingual audiences, academia in parallel is investigating various issues related to translation practices in museums. There are fundamentally two lines of inquiry on translation practices in museums: first, focusing on the inclusion of local communities and second, focusing on international audiences.

2.2.1 “Translating” for local linguistic communities

During the International Museum Day 2020 entitled “Museums for Equality: Diversity and Inclusion”, which took place on 18 May in form of online events organised by the diverse national ICOM committees, experts around the globe focused the topic within its various facets among which the aspect of cultural-linguistic differences of museum audiences. Audience-centred approaches aim at engaging with many different target groups, while responding to their diverse needs. One of those needs is access to museum content in their own language, as shown by the 2013 Bilingual Exhibit Research Initiative (BERI). In fact, according to the BERI report, visitors felt more “welcome, comfortable, valued, and satisfied with their bilingual exhibit experience” (Yalowitz & Garibay 2013: 47). Recent demographic changes due to growing migration flows have given rise to the establishment of multilingual practices in museums. Jenni Martin & Marilee Jennings (2015: 90) address the need to increase organizational capacity, communication, and cultural competence of museum staff when engaging new local, linguistic communities. Two core issues are at the fore: first, identifying staff with bilingual competence and cultural knowledge able to act as “cultural liaison”. Second, building cultural competences among staff by means of ongoing communication and regular meetings to help staff at various levels understand the museum’s goals and multilingual practices. Moreover, processes are to be put in place to ensure that translations are relevant to the new local linguistic audience (ibid.: 86).

⁵ MPhil/PhD student at Lancaster University.

2.2.2 Communication strategies approaching international museum audiences

Various scholars in translation studies have pointed out that museum content requires a culturally sensitive and target-oriented approach to translation (Cranmer 2016, Guillot 2014, Neather 2008). Marie-Noëlle Guillot (2014: 78-79) raises the question whether the visitor-centred and educationally driven approaches (Hooper-Greenhill 2000) typical in the anglophone context, and which are reflected in a more informal and interpersonal style (Ravelli 2006), extent beyond that cultural sphere. Her study involving a student survey on the perception of texts from British and French art exhibitions provides evidence for differing museum texts and text conventions and consequently for differing expectations among diverse European linguistic communities.

Similarly, Robin Cranmer (2016) observes that research in many disciplines confirms that international audiences have different expectations in relation to content and form of communication. A government-funded knowledge-transfer project involving leading London museums and galleries together with linguists from the University of Westminster, confirmed the relevance of cultural diversity when communicating with international museum visitors. Against the backdrop of an audience-centred focus of museums and galleries, Cranmer discusses advantages and disadvantages of four different communication strategies aimed at international visitors, pointing out that, obviously, there is no single appropriate strategy for museums when communicating with an international audience. Instead, each museum needs to consider a series of factors within their specific context. In the following paragraphs, I will use Cranmer's term "domestic language", referring to source language.

Two common strategies involve translation practices in a narrow sense: first, translations of the domestic version with minor cultural adaptations. Second, translations of an international version, usually produced in-house in the domestic language by taking into account the specific needs of international audiences. Cranmer observes that both strategies preserve the editorial control by the museum but show only limited visitor focus and acknowledgment of diversity. Though culturally adapted, translations of domestic versions will not fully meet international visitors' needs. And the weakness of translations of a single international text is its "one size fits all" approach, which recognises some general needs of the international audience, but neglects its heterogeneity.

Two less common strategies are presented, namely "culturally-customised texts" and "accessible domestic language text". Thus, a third strategy involves translation in a wide sense:

content is localised or “rewritten in form and content” (Cranmer 2016: 98), thus tailored to the specific audiences’ needs. But there are two issues at stake here: high costs and a loss of editorial control on the part of the museum. The fourth strategy is quite different and aims at facilitating access to texts in the domestic language or in another dominant language (e.g. a *lingua franca*), an approach in line with current efforts towards inclusion, and drawing on more visitor-centred approaches prevailing in the anglophone context. To successfully put forward such a strategy, in-house staff needs to possess specific competences.

The translator’s task of cultural customisation is also referred to by Cranmer as “intercultural mediation” (2019: 65), a type of translation involving major cultural adaptation and partial rewriting – a concept which can risk pushing the boundaries of what museums may consider as translation. When it comes to marketing and web communication, creating such tailor-made content for a specific target group has lately been referred to as *transcreation*. Sissel Marie Rike (2014: 8) provides the following definition: “When a text is trans-created, both verbal and non-verbal content such as design and imagery are taken account of and adapted linguistically and culturally to the target audience.”

Like Martin & Jennings (2015, cf. 2.2.1), Cranmer (2016: 103) points out that museum staff need to develop an increasing awareness of the intercultural complexities involved when communicating with international audiences, which needs to be reflected on an organisational level. A multilingual communication strategy is a decisive element when defining translation practices and processes in museums. The choice of how to communicate with international audiences has implications on the languages to be translated, on the choice of translators and external collaborators, on staff competences to be developed in-house, on working tools to be acquired, on costs, etc. This issue of how diverse communication strategies entail different choices on the organisational aspects of translation will be addressed in chapter 4, which reports the results of the qualitative interviews with museum staff.

2.3 Managing museum translation: interaction between different professional communities

Translation projects generally involve not only translators, but a variety of professionals, such as project managers, revisors as well as the client itself. In fact, translators typically refer to various resources and collaborate with diverse people. The context of museum translation adds on yet another dimension, i.e. the “museum discourse community” as defined by Robert

Neather (2009: 148) drawing on Vijay K. Bathia (2004). This community is composed of diverse actors, such as curators and research staff of the museum’s curatorial department, educators and mediators belonging to the educational department, writers from the press office, or the communication and marketing departments, as well as translators of museum texts. These translators may be in-house or external, the latter including both freelance translators and translation agencies.

I will refer to freelance translator vs. translation agency when the distinction of the two is at stake. When referring to both categories, I will use the more general term *translation service provider* (TSP). This is in line with the definition in ISO 11669 (2012: 3), defining TSP as a “person or organisation supplying a translation service”. TSP thus refers to both freelance translator (i.e. a TSP acting as an individual) and translation agency (i.e. a multi-person TSP). It is of note that in the ISO standard a distinction is made between TSP and LSP (*language service provider*), the latter being a wider term involving other language-related and value-added services next to translation services. In my study, I will include language service providers in the concept of TSPs, since my focus is on translation services. A last actor to be mentioned is a specialised service provider, offering audio guide and multimedia products for museums, including content creation, adaptation, translation, and multilingual recordings on the one hand, as well as technological solutions on the other hand.

This section addresses potential gaps in knowledge between the museum and the translator community, which may cause difficulties when interacting and communicating within a translation project. A variety of studies on translation project management are presented, focusing on aspects of communication and collaboration, while underlining the importance of the client’s role.

2.3.1 Museum-translator divide: different perspectives on translation, different intercultural awareness

Robin Cranmer explores the client-translator relationship and communicative challenges in the tourist-related context (explicitly including museums and galleries). He observes a “divide in cultural awareness” (2019: 56) despite a shared commitment to inclusion by both professions, i.e. a growing prominence of visitor- and audience-centredness in the tourist sector, and a trend of “cultural sensitivity, localisation and mediation” within the translation sector. When

discussing potential differences in clients' and translators' levels of awareness, or vision, of culture, language and translation, Cranmer mainly refers to the concept of source text loyalty:

Tourist professionals might well, if their cultural awareness is limited, see the commissioning of translations as in itself a perfectly sufficient gesture of inclusion. In addition, such commissions will often not fall into a category in which [...] the client would normally [...] give explicit permission for “distortions” of the source text, as might happen in advertising contexts. The translator(s) they commission might, however, see clearly the extent to which the domestically-orientated source text, when faithfully translated, as the client understands this, will fail to meet the needs of the target group and include them. [...]. (Cranmer 2019: 59)

Cranmer describes a set of translator skills needed to meet such challenges when communicating with clients having different levels of understanding, i.e. managing dialogue with the client in a way as to “leave that person with a contextually adequate sense of ownership whilst leaving themselves with a clear course of action on their behalf” (ibid.). Though I focus on the translator's perspective, Cranmer's findings show that particular attention needs to be paid during the commissioning phase to the degree of source text loyalty that is required. Presumably, in the context of art museums, staff members are generally expected to have a rather high level of cultural awareness as they habitually work with cultural content, especially staff involved in text production.

2.3.2 The museum discourse community: anxious negotiation of differing expertise

A study carried out by Robert Neather (2012) in the context of Chinese museums sheds light on various aspects of the interaction taking place between the museum and translation communities, focusing on the stakeholders involved in the translation process, on perceptions of expertise in the museum community and the need for boundary practices. Such interaction is characterised by the “sometimes equivocal relationship [...] between the museum community and the external translation community” (ibid.: 255). The negotiation between different professionals is “characterised by forms of expertise anxieties in which no one community possesses the complete set of competences required to produce a fully competent piece of translation” (ibid.: 266). While museum staff has domain-specific competence and technical discursive competence in the source language but may be lacking (meta-) discursive competence in the target language, translators possess the latter, but may lack domain-specific competence as well as competence in the more technical and genre-specific aspects. It is for this reason, that members of the museum community may be regarded as “gatekeepers of museum knowledge” (ibid. 262) since they possess the disciplinary expertise to ensure content

accuracy, which is the prime factor of translation quality, in the view of museums. In fact, despite the substantial use of external translators, a number of Chinese museums interviewed by Neather prefer “to keep things in-house” (ibid.: 262), e.g. translation revision is generally performed by in-house staff taking on the role of gatekeepers of museum content.

Another obstacle in the interaction between the museum and the translator is the concept of “genre ownership” (ibid. 262), which is closely related to the tendency of museums to keep control over translated content. Outsourcing a museum text genre to translators implies relying on the competences of another professional community. The author observes that content in both source and target language is continually revised and modified, thus reflecting the “individual curators’ commitment” (ibid.: 267). In fact, in museum studies, it has often been observed that an exhibition may be the expression of a personal curatorial identity.

Given that neither museums nor the translation community possess the complete set of competences to carry out the tasks of museum translation, Neather suggests to “build points of contact” (2012: 260) between the different professions and their practices: “boundary practices” (ibid.), such as the provision of guidelines including glossaries and translator feedback, are suggested to overcome existing gaps in expertise among the communities and help the different communities communicate and transfer expertise. For this study, such boundary practices, also meaning an efficient dialogue and collaboration between the various stakeholders by putting together their respective expertise, are crucial elements to be considered when analysing the organisational and managerial tasks carried out in the context of museum translation.

2.3.3 Overcoming boundaries: efficient dialogue and translation project management

The criticality of efficient communication between diverse stakeholders in translation projects is equally recognised by the international standard *ISO/TS 11669 Translation projects – General guidance*, stating that the “main purpose [of the guidelines] is to facilitate communication among the parties involved in a [translation] project” (2021: 1). In the last two decades, scholars have considered the aspect of communication and collaboration in translation projects (Risku 2006, Dunne 2011) and within translator networks (Abdallah 2012, Foedisch 2017). Hanna Risku’s study (ibid.: 4) focuses on the role of translation service providers as being a “communication hub”, handling the flow of information between client and translator, thus assuring quality through an efficient collaboration of the various stakeholders. The provision of reliable source text material, terminology, documentation processes and the use of

translation technology are some elements Risku addresses as being crucial in managing translation projects. Within a practice-theoretical framework, Melanie Foedisch (2017) investigates the translation production processes from the perspective of project managers in TSPs. Conceptualising the translation production as a practice, she states that translation quality depends on the efficient collaboration and interplay of the different actors of a production network, pursuing a common goal (ibid.: 55). Or as Kristina Abdallah puts it:

[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. [...] 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)

Such an interplay of diverse people with different functions contributing to the translation is highly relevant in the context of museum translation as it allows for the different sets of expertise to merge into a joint effort. In addition to a clear definition of the tasks and responsibilities of the actors involved (as also stressed by ISO 11669; cf. [section 2.5.1](#)), the exchange of knowledge is of prime importance for museum translation, considering the way in which the expertise possessed by the diverse professional communities complement each other. The concept of building trust mentioned by Abdallah in the quote above as well as by other scholars (Stoeller 2011, Alonso 2016: 26-27) adds another aspect to translation project management, especially when communicating virtually. Given that the interaction between museum and translation community is characterised by anxieties regarding expertise, building mutual trust is expected to contribute to the overall quality of translation processes.

Despite recognising the contribution of all actors involved in the production of translation, the role of clients has been researched only marginally in translation studies. Foedisch (2017) states that translation studies currently underestimate the role played by the client in translation production (ibid.: 204) and that the “significance of the quality of the resources [clients] provide for the production process has been largely neglected” (ibid.: 30). In fact, by providing source materials and defining the conditions of the production process, the client significantly affects the quality of translation (Drugan 2013: 39+138). Just a few studies (Risku 2006: 6, Abdallah 2010) suggest that the quality of the source text and other supportive materials provided by the client have an impact on the translation process. Keiran J. Dunne (2011) goes a step further by stressing the significance of an active participation and continual feedback by the client throughout the entire translation project cycle (cf. 2.4.3). This study aims at further filling this gap by focusing on the role and functions of a specific type of client:

museums. Given that museums act as *knowledge gatekeepers*, it is suggested here that they should take over part of translation project management as well as translation quality assurance tasks, in close collaboration with the translation service provider. The concepts addressed so far, i.e. establishing an efficient communication, a common vision of translation and multilingual communication strategy, an active collaboration, while building trust will inform the quality model of translation practices in museums I intend to propose.

2.4 Quality management in the translation industry: the case of museum translation

This section focuses on various aspects of quality management and quality assurances in the translation and localisation industry, namely process-based, integrated as well as customer-based approaches, pointing out the centrality of client participation in the process on the one hand, and project specifications on the other hand – topics that reconnect directly with the museum’s desire to maintain editorial control in the translation process (cf. [section 2.3.2](#)) as well with the need to bridge the gap between the museum and translation community by means of *boundary practices* to share expertise. Within the section, the various approaches are discussed in terms of their relevance and applicability to museum translation, bearing in mind the client perspective of the study.

2.4.1 Quality assurance: a process-based approach

Joanna Drugan’s extensive study (2013) on translation quality models in the translation industry reveals a gap between academics and professionals: while translation scholars mainly focus on quality assessment (TQA models), professionals often envisage a global model, by including diverse aspects of translation quality, such as quality assurance and quality control. Drugan (ibid.: 76) further points out “the core difference between theorists’ focus on assessing quality post-translation (looking at the product), and the profession’s concern to assure clients [...] that [...] quality will be provided” throughout the entire translation process. Thus, in the translation industry, the notion of quality assurance (QA) is far more common than translation quality assessment (TQA). A number of scholars (Mossop 2001, Drugan 2013, Popiolek 2015) have observed that, in the industry, QA encompasses *all* of quality-assuring measures during *all* stages of the translation project cycle.

[T]he approach to QA within the translation and localisation industry is to describe the entire translation quality management system as QA. (Popiolek 2015: 342)

QA is typically understood as the global approach to translation quality. (Mossop 2001: 92)

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)

Thus, QA involves defining processes for all stages of the translation project aimed at achieving quality, including planning, gathering project specifications, and quality control (QC). While QA is process-oriented, QC is more product-focused, aimed at checking and correcting the translation product. QC usually involves linguistic testing and format checking (formal aspects of desktop publishing), but may also include revision, which is perceived as the “highest degree of QC” by Brian Mossop (2001: 84). Although the overall approach to translation quality in the industry is process-based, product quality is taken account of:

This is not to say that process is valued in the profession at the expense of the product, however, because the process typically involves QC too, even if standards do not emphasize this. (Drugan 2013: 76)

The all-encompassing nature of translation quality assurance is also reflected in the international standards ISO 11669 and ISO 17000, according to which a series of processes are involved in contributing to the overall translation quality: defining project specifications, assuring the quality of source content and other resources, ensuring in the pre-production phase that the actors involved have the necessary competence, checking compliance with project specifications and revision in the production phase, handling feedback in the post-production phase, and finally terminology management during all phases. In fact, *ISO 17100:2015 – Translation Services: Requirements for translation services* reflect a global approach to quality management, as observed by Madeleine Schnierer (2019: 32): “Im Grunde kann der gesamte Normtext der ISO 17100 als Grundlage für ein Qualitätsmanagementsystem dienen, da deren Struktur dem Ablauf eines Übersetzungsprojekts folgt.“ [The complete standards ISO 17100 may serve as a basis for a quality management system, as its structure follows the translation project cycle]. *Quality management* serves as an umbrella term, embracing the “coordinated activities to direct and control an organisation with regard to quality”, as defined by *ISO 9000:2015 – Quality Management Systems*, including quality planning, quality control, quality assurance, and quality improvement.

According to Drugan (2013), translation quality management systems are usually employed by large translation agencies rather than by freelance translators. In the context of cultural institutions, quality management is assumed to be a fundamental issue of translation practice as such institutions are supposed to provide high-quality content for their very mission and nature. In the case of museums, translation quality assurance may be outsourced to a translation service provider or carried out in-house by dedicated museum staff, as suggested by the international standard ISO 11669, addressing quality assurance by means of structured project specifications. However, irrespective of the extent to which a museum is involved in quality assurance, it is argued that a collaborative approach between museum and TSP is a fundamental condition, as outlined in [section 2.3.3](#).

2.4.2 An integrated approach to translation quality management

As observed by diverse scholars (Drugan 2013: 76, Foedisch 2017: 199), project managers adopt a comprehensive approach to quality assurance through a series of procedures that contribute to both process and product quality rather than merely assessing translation products – an approach typical of the translation industry. An international research group extends this view by discussing focusing on the relevance of quality-management principles to the translation industry (Fields et al. 2014: 408-410). Paul J. Fields et al.⁶ applied the well-known comprehensive framework by David A. Garvin (1984), which integrates five approaches to quality, to the profession of translation as follows:

1. Transcendent approach: Quality criteria to translation are absolute and universally recognizable, thus transcend the single translation project.
2. Product-based approach: Translation quality can be measured based on a set of specific requirements.
3. Production-based approach: Translation quality is achieved by implementing effective processes. Project specifications support the compliance to quality standards.
4. User-based approach: Quality criteria are established by the target audience; quality is measured according to how well the translation meets the reader's needs and expectations.
5. Value-based approach: The value and thus the quality of a translation is determined by a cost-benefit ratio.

⁶ Paul J. Fields, Daryl Hague, Geoffrey Koby, Arle Lommel

Assuring translation quality is part of museums' very mission, being “institutions in the service of society”, and represents a crucial factor to fulfil their “cross-cultural role⁷” and reach “wide multi-cultural (...) audiences⁸”. In the following paragraphs, the integrated approach to translation quality management proposed by Field et al. is briefly examined for its relevance in the context of museum translation.

Production and product-based approaches

In the previous section (2.4.1), both the production and the product-based approach to translation quality were described as being widely employed in the translation and localisation industry. Within the museum context, the production-based approach may offer suitable tools of communication between museum and translator and exchange expertise to ensure and achieve quality and overcome potential anxieties (cf. sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3). Project specifications are a structured tool to agree upon shared goals of a translation project, including requirements both on the product (e.g. indications about purpose and target audience) and on the process (revision process, terminology management). The product-based approach to translation quality in the form of quality control, including revision tasks, is crucial to museum translation as it involves high quality content of great visibility. Of course, there are different scenarios within museum translation: an exhibition panel to be printed once is more critical than web content, which can potentially be modified afterwards. However, in-process QC tasks (e.g. review by the museum) represent a means to further specify the client expectations.

Value and user-based approach

The value-based approach measures quality according to a cost-benefit-ratio. How can the quality of a museum translation be determined and compared? Will the quality of translated museum content affect the number of international visitors attending the museum? Maybe, yes. Will the degree to which international visitors enjoy and learn from their visit depend on

⁷ "A museum is defined as a ‘A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment’”. ICOM museum definition, <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/> (last access 15/09/21).

⁸ "A museum is an institution to keep memory alive by researching, exhibiting, and teaching relevant cultural assets (...) addresses cross-cultural issues to reach wide multi-cultural, multi-ethnic audiences.” Proposal for ICOM museum definition by Turkey, <https://icom.museum/en/news/the-museum-definition-the-backbone-of-icom/> (last access 15/09/21).

translation quality? Probably, yes. In practical terms, however, it seems rather hard to verify or calculate such a benefit. Thus, in my opinion the value-based approach cannot easily be applied to museum translation. Instead, a way to verify if visitors benefit from translated content is the user-based approach. Visitor surveys on content quality of international audiences may shed some light on their needs and expectations. Moreover, insights into diverging needs of different cultural groups among the international visitors can potentially be observed. Obviously, the end-user's evaluation of translated content occurs in a monolingual perspective as presumably most end-users lack source language competence. They will therefore be able to evaluate the translation quality in terms of fluency rather than of accuracy. Despite the limited perspective of monolingual evaluation, visitor surveys on translation quality may provide some helpful insights into the international audiences' preferences. Translation practices and multilingual communication strategies can be improved. The user-based approach fits well with audience-centred communication as a new paradigm in museums and is equally in line with Christiane Nord's (2000: 195) claim for translation quality to consider the addressee or target audience as a prime criterion.

Transcendent approach

According to Fields et al. (2014: 408), the transcendent approach to quality is relevant to the translation industry. However, in translation studies, there are conflicting viewpoints regarding the existence of universal quality criteria. Both industry standards (ISO) and theory (functionalist approaches) agree that quality cannot be defined in absolute terms but must rather be modelled based on project specifications or the intended purpose (cf. [section 2.4.3](#)). In museums, a series of text types (cf. [section 2.1.3](#)) are translated, which may differ in terms of requirements by the museum. However, it is quite likely that requirements for a specific text type may not vary that much from project to project, i.e. from exhibition to exhibition. General guidelines outlining the communication strategy for international audiences, facts about the international target audiences (if available) as well as set of general translation quality criteria (while considering diverse text types) may serve as a point of departure for translators. However, where suitable, more detailed requirements should be specified.

In the context of museum translation, both the production-based and the user-based approach to translation quality are highly relevant, operating within a functionalist approach to translation – serving the expectations of the client and end users. Further, the product-based approach contributes to the production-based one, as the quality control of a translation is

integrative part of process-oriented quality assurance. The purpose of integrating diverse approaches is a more holistic and comprehensive view of translation quality, addressing many components of translation quality as called for by both academics (Colina 2008: 103) and professionals (Drugan 2013: 76, Foedisch 2017: 199).

2.4.3 Project specifications, client specifications

Project or client specifications – based on a standard set of translation parameters – are widely used in the translation industry to assess translation projects. The centrality of such specifications is recognised not only by the industry (e.g. ISO, ASTM), but also by the academia (Risku 2006, Colina 2008, Gouadec 2010, Hague et al. 2011: 259, Mossop 2001). Both Daniel Gouadec (2010) and Daryl Hague et al.⁹ (2011) emphasise project specifications as being of paramount importance in ensuring translation quality. Hague et al. (2011: 260) argue that “stakeholders should adopt explicit specifications based on a standard set of parameters. By doing so, stakeholders can closely align assessment with [client] expectations.” Similarly, Hanna Risku stresses that high-quality translations can only be produced within an ongoing process of approaching and understanding the client’s specific needs:

Changing the definition of quality from mere "zero defects" to "quality as the ongoing creation of value for the customer" [...] the focus shifts from eliminating errors to an understanding of the customers' value-systems [...]. This sense of "total quality", as advised by different leaders in the discipline [...] is the basis of high-quality translations. Knowing the special needs and wants of a customer, with regard to a translation project allows the translator a much better translation of the "text between the lines", and often distinguishes an ordinary translation from a high-quality translation. (Risku 2006: 7)

The terms *client specifications* and *project specifications* practically refer to the same concept, emphasising two different though closely related aspects. While the term *client specifications* emphasises the fact that quality is modelled on client requirements, the term *project specifications* adds the element that each translation project needs to be defined in terms of its specific purpose and audience – thus recalling function-oriented translation approaches. Diverse scholars argue that translation project management can greatly benefit from functionalist approaches (Risku 2004: 95, Arevalillo 2015). In fact, functionalist theories have had a great impact on the translation industry, translation standards, and quality management systems in professional translation, probably because they are inspired by observing the

⁹ Daryl Hague, Alan Melby, Wang Zheng

translation market (Alonso & Calvo 2015: 143; Calvo 2018: 19). The ISO standards on translation clearly reflect functionalist principles: annex B in ISO 17100 lists 22 *skopos*-related items constituting translation project specifications. And ISO 11669 provides instructions on how to define project specifications, referring to both Christiane Nord’s essay “Translating as a purposeful activity: Functionalist approaches explained” (1997), and Hans J. Vermeer’s “A Skopos Theory of Translation” (1996). Vermeer and Nord use the terms *brief* and *commission*, affirming a core role to the client in the translation process (Parry 2005: 67). Though inspired by the ruling principles of functionalist approaches to translation, the translation market standards have preferred to use the term *specifications* (sometimes *requirements*) rather than the more scholarly terms *brief* or *commission* (Calvo 2018: 29).

Given that project specifications are closely related to a functionalist view of translation quality, Geoffrey Koby et al.¹⁰ observe that the value of such specifications varies according to how translation quality is defined. The authors distinguish between a broad and a narrow definition of translation quality (TQ):

[broad definition]: A quality translation demonstrates accuracy and fluency required for the **audience** and **purpose** and complies with all other **specifications** negotiated between the requester and provider, taking into account end-user needs. (Koby et al. 2014: 416)

[narrow definition]: A high-quality translation is one in which the message embodied in the source text is **transferred completely** into the target text, including denotation, connotation, nuance, and style, and the target text is written in the target language using correct grammar and word order to produce a culturally appropriate text that, in most cases, reads as if originally written by a native speaker. (Koby et al. 2014: 416)

Besides two linguistic features (accuracy and fluency), their broad view of TQ recalls fundamental aspects of the functionalist approach: the translation purpose, the target audience and compliance to project specifications. In contrast, the narrow view is rather text-centric, requiring high loyalty to the source text (“transferred completely [...] including denotation, connotation, nuance and style”). These differing views affect several aspects of the translation process. First, while the broad definition applies to a series of translation types, including transcreation and localisation, the narrow approach includes neither transcreation nor certain aspects of localisation, which are rather common in the translation industry. Second, opting for one definition of translation quality rather than the other will influence the framework for

¹⁰ Geoffrey Koby, Paul J. Fields, Daryl Hague, Arle Lommel

developing translation project specifications. While a broad view implies that client requirements should always be explicitly formalised as they can vary from project to project, the narrow view asserts that requirements are generally constant and can therefore be defined just once (Koby et al. 2014: 414). This idea is also reflected by Christiane Nord:

In routine tasks from well-known clients, for example, the translator may rely on previous experience; in "**standard briefs**" (like translating a set of operating instructions for a similar audience to achieve the same communicative function as that of the source text), they may simply follow the culture-specific norms for this kind of translation. **Any task that is not standard or routine, will have to be specified** before the process is initiated. (Nord 2006: 30)

In the view of the commissioning museums, many text types are expected to be translated into largely equivalent text types in the target language, thus falling within Geoffrey Koby's narrow definition of TQ. However, translators may have a different view on the degree of loyalty to the source text, as observed by Robin Cranmer (2016: 103), pointing out there are many text types in museums requiring not only minor cultural adaptations, but an approach of cultural customisation (c.f. 2.2.2) – thus falling under Koby's broad definition of TQ. How can the use of project specifications resolve such a scenario of differing views? I suggest a differentiated approach to project specifications, aimed at elaborating a common vision of a translation project. By co-creating project specifications, issues that would have remained unstated and unresolved otherwise are brought up. For text types requiring a loyal translation, a set of general requirements (similar to Nord's "standard brief") could be elaborated, with the option to add some project-specific indications if necessary. In contrast, for text types requiring a greater extent of cultural customisation (e.g. promotional content), more detailed project specifications could be co-created in a discovery process, bringing up issues that would have remained unstated and unresolved otherwise. Obviously, there is no definitive answer to the question of when formalising project specifications is suitable since each museum faces a unique context and situation. Depending on its general communication strategy for international audiences and depending on the museum's in-house competences and organisational structures, a careful case-specific evaluation may be necessary.

2.4.4 An agile, customer-based approach to translation quality management

Although in the industry, quality is widely defined as a matter of client satisfaction (Calvo 2018: 28, Drugan 2013: 70), modelling quality on client requirements, client specifications (also: project specifications), may present a series of challenges. Keiran J. Dunne (2011) argues that

in translation and localisation projects, a customer-focused approach is challenging for the fact that many customers may not be able to efficiently communicate their requirements (Abdallah 2010, Dunne 2011: 158, Drugan 2013) as they may lack specialised linguistic knowledge (Shreve 2000, Byrne 2006: 39-40, Sunwoo 2007: 3). Against this background, Dunne (2011) suggests an agile approach aimed at overcoming such difficulties by enabling project managers to act flexibly. When client requirements and expectations are not sufficiently specified in advance, they should rather be integrated progressively. In an iterative approach, requirements may emerge and be integrated throughout the entire project life cycle. In other words, project specifications represent an efficient way of elaborating a common vision in a translation project, if applied within a process of exchange, discovery, and co-creation.

Such an iterative approach, as proposed by Dunne, means that the project management must move towards a greater degree of interaction as well as an active participation and continual feedback from the client. This is in line with other scholars' call for a greater attention to the role played by the client (2006, Abdallah 2010, Drugan 2013, Foedisch 2017; cf. [section 2.3.3](#)). In fact, the standard practice of restricting client intervention to a final client review has the disadvantage that potentially important changes are not considered during the editing phase. Dunne objects the traditional waterfall approach to project management (also called linear model), which is characterised by different phases of project management proceeding in a sequential fashion. He suggests that the iterative approach is more suitable for managing translation and localisation projects, since it allows for in-process feedback loops and greater exchange among the actors involved. The iterative approach applied to translation projects by Dunne shares some features with what Joanna Drugan (2013) defines as a bottom-up approach to translation quality as opposed to top-down. Bottom-up approaches are characterised by a strong feedback component, an emphasis on sharing resources, and trust-building (*ibid.*: 176). In contrast, top-down models aim at the efficient use of resources: translator competences, technological tools, process optimisation. However, as Drugan points out, in practice features from these approaches are often combined (*ibid.*: 154).

Dunne (2011: 182-183) outlines the client's involvement in the project cycle as follows: during the planning phase, the project manager gathers the preliminary project specifications from the client, i.e. information on the communicative objectives of the text, the purpose of the translation, the target audience, the required degree of loyalty to the source text. A consultation between the project team and client follows, aimed at further specifying text-related requirements, including linguistic style, terminology, and visual style. During the production

phase, in an ongoing QA process, iterative translator revisions can contribute to efficiency as potential errors are detected early on and are not further propagated. Moreover, continuous client reviews provide feedback concerning the client's quality requirements. In this way, stylistic or terminological requirements may emerge during the early production phase, enabling the project manager to update the project specifications when there is still time to implement them.

Dunne's approach is very relevant to this study. On the one hand, it recognises the essential role of communication between the different actors involved in a translation project (cf. [section 2.3.3](#)). On the other hand, such a flexible approach responds to a series of issues at stake in the museum: first, a greater involvement in the project cycle meets the museums' desire of maintaining editorial control (cf. [section 2.3.2](#)). Second, allowing for continual feedback by the museum is important for those museums who prefer to review translations in-house, and allows them to intervene on stylistic, terminological, and more general aspects. Dunne's work thus adds useful suggestions on quality assurance procedures which can be integrated in our quality model of translation practices in museums.

A digression on recent industry developments

At this point, we will consider a recent development in the industry, which challenges the standard view on translation. Drugan (2018) discusses some innovative companies who integrate translation in their production cycle. While traditionally, translation came at the end of the production cycle, many companies now involve translation earlier. In this way, errors in the source content spotted by translators can be corrected in good time, and localised products can be put on the market earlier. Therefore, some companies embed in-house translators across their production structures “so that linguistic expertise feed in during design and production” (ibid.: 18).

In a museum context, such a view connects with Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's (1999a) call for cross-departmental collaboration in exhibition making. An application of her holistic vision of museum communication would entail translation becoming an integrative part of exhibition making. The idea of integrating linguistic and cultural expertise during the phase of exhibition making is also in line with the claim of a number of scholars in museum studies that all aspects of exhibition making (design, objects, texts, storytelling, rooms) must be conceived of

holistically as a single process and should not be managed separately¹¹. In such a scenario, any critical issues concerning the appropriateness of content for an international audience can be dealt with early on, so that later stages of the translation or content adaptation are streamlined. This holds true especially for those museums who create an international version next to the domestic version, as well as for those museums that create a single accessible version.

It has been observed that both practitioners and academics underestimate the importance of the client's role in contributing to the overall quality of a translation project. This study aims at partly filling this gap by analysing how museums, as a specific type of client, understand translation quality and which procedures are currently being used to ensure both process and product quality. To this end, we will look at European art museums and ask: how are translation projects handled? how are quality requirements communicated? how are translation review and translator feedback handled?

2.5 Are existing translation quality standards relevant for translation practices in museums?

To increase the efficiency of translation project management, processes tend to be standardised. I argue that the ISO standards can offer valuable indications on how museums can collaborate with the translator community. Peter Sandrini's (2018) quality standards for translation policy in official institutions are considered relevant to the context of museums, suggesting key features to ensure a structured and efficient organisation of translation-related tasks.

2.5.1 International quality standards for translation: ISO 17100, ISO 11669, ASTM F2575-14

Quality standards for translation services take on two different forms: norms to support a standardised project cycle, and error metrics. Since the focus of this research is on translation practices in museums involving organisational and planning tasks throughout their translation project cycle¹², this section will concentrate on norms supporting a standardised project cycle.

¹¹ Interview with Prof. Karl Stocker, Head of Department Exhibition Design and Information Design, University of Applied Sciences Graz. 20 May 2019.

¹² e.g. preparing and managing translation, establishing quality-ensuring measures, managing translation resources, creating a technological infrastructure

Thus, error metrics, such as the LISA QA model, the TAUS Dynamic Quality Framework and the Multidimensional Quality Metrics Model, will not be discussed here.

ISO 17000

The international standard *ISO 17000 Translation services – Requirements for translation services* published in 2015 revises and substitutes the European standard *EN 15038 Translation services – Service requirements*. Like the former European standard, rather than defining absolute quality criteria, ISO 17000 offers a framework for the translation process which is intended to ensure a certain degree of quality. The novelty lies in its structure, which mirrors the translation project cycle, presenting the diverse stages chronologically: pre-production, production, and post-production. According to Madeleine Schnierer (2019: 32), the ISO 17100 standard can serve as a basis for a quality management system, as its structure follows the translation project cycle. A recurring concept in all stages of the cycle is that of project specifications with 38 occurrences in ISO 17100, compared to only 8 occurrences in the preceding EN 15038. As (project) specifications refer both to translation quality and service quality, this supports Schnierer’s observation that the new international norms may serve as an instrument of quality-assurance, of both the product and the translation service as a whole.

Another novelty is the introduction of client feedback in the post-production stage, which is relevant to this study, as it may represent a valuable instrument of communication between the museum and the translator community. However, as claimed by Keiran J. Dunne (2011) (cf. [section 2.4.4](#)), continual feedback by the client during the production phase can considerably increase the overall quality of the translation in terms of client satisfaction. Checking and editing are a core aspect of quality assurance; ISO 17100 (2015: 10-11) distinguishes the following terms and definitions: the “check” is the translator’s overall self-revision of the target content, both for linguistic issues as well as ensuring compliance with project specifications. A second translator carries out the “revision”, i.e. a bilingual examination of target language content against source language content for any errors as well as its suitability for purpose. The “review” is described as a monolingual examination of the target language content for suitability of the target language content, including text-type conventions and domain accuracy. It is further specified that reviewers must be domain specialists. Finally, the “proofreading” phase is a final examination of revised target language content, applying corrections before printing. The check and revision phases are mandatory according to the four-

eyes principle (from the German term *Vieraugenprinzip*), while the other steps are optional. ISO17000 (2015: 10) provides 8 basic revision parameters:

- a) compliance with specific domain and client terminology and/or any other reference material provided and ensuring terminological consistency during translation;
- b) semantic accuracy of the target language content;
- c) appropriate syntax, spelling, punctuation, diacritical marks, and other orthographical conventions of the target language;
- d) lexical cohesion and phraseology;
- e) compliance with any proprietary and/or client style guide (including domain, language register, and language variants);
- f) locale and any applicable standards;
- g) formatting;
- h) target audience and purpose of the target language content.

How may these ISO standards apply to museums and their translation practices? Given the prevailing concept of museums' gatekeeper function (as discussed in [section 2.3.2](#)), an active role of the museum throughout the project cycle seems appropriate. Project specifications thus represent an efficient way to communicate requirements and elaborate a common vision of the translation project, as already pointed out earlier (cf. [sections 2.4.3](#) and [2.4.4](#)). Continual feedback as suggested by Dunne (2011) may add value by fine-tuning the specifications during the translation process. The domain-specific competence possessed by members of the museum community, combined with an in-depth knowledge of the source content, can contribute to translation quality: museum staff could carry out what ISO 17000 defines as review by a domain specialist – provided that the reviewer has sufficient target language competence.

ISO 11669

The importance of translation project specifications as underlined in ISO 17000 is confirmed by the existence of a dedicated standards document offering a framework for developing structured specifications for translation projects – *ISO TS 11669 (2012) Translation projects – General guidance*. As declared within the document, “project specifications not only define and guide a translation project but also allow the entire translation project to be assessed” (ISO 11669 2012: 1). The standard thus “addresses quality assurance and provides the basis for qualitative assessment” (ibid.: 1). In other words, the framework offers guidance for quality-assuring measures in terms of translation process quality, which also affect product quality.

This is in line with Joanna Drugan’s (2013) and Melanie Foedisch’s (2017) observations on quality assurance practices in the translation industry discussed in [section 2.4.2](#).

I argue that the ISO 11669 standard offers a response to the need for boundary practices in museum translation projects and for an efficient collaboration between the museum and the translator. In fact, the document’s principal aim is to facilitate communication between the actors involved in the project (ISO 11669, 2012: 1). Another focus is the clear definition of each actor’s responsibilities, recommending a “division of labour between requester and TSP [...] [as] many tasks can be performed by either the requester or the TSP” (ibid.: 5). Considering the differing expertise and competences of the museum and translation community, this question of defining responsibilities is of particular interest for the museum context.

Whose responsibility?

Both ISO standards leave open a series of questions regarding the involved actors’ responsibilities. First, who should ensure the quality of the source text and other resources? The client, the TSP, or the translator? According to ISO 11669:

Source content can be adapted during the [pre-production] phase [...] to facilitate translation. [...] When [...] a document is translated, authors should consider eliminating as many obstacles as possible by optimising the source content for clarity, conciseness, and consistency to make the translation process more efficient. (ISO 11669, 2021: 11)

While ISO 11669 recommends that the client carries out source text optimisation, ISO 17100 (2015: 9) assigns the task of analysing the source language content to the TSP “to ensure efficient and effective performance of the translation project”. Source text analysis is considered a crucial step also by scholars (e.g. Drugan 2013), as it can prevent problems during the translation phase. In Drugan’s view, it is the responsibility of TSPs to advise clients on the requirements that ensure a frictionless translation process, this being in the interest of all, and thus suggesting a co-responsibility.

Second, the question of who is responsible for in-process quality assurance tasks, which typically include the different forms of checking and editing a translation (self-check, revision, review, proofreading), is answered by ISO 11669 (2012: 13) as follows: “The responsibility for in-process quality assurance tasks can fall upon either the requester or the TSP. [...] Interaction between the requester and the TSP can be important during this stage to clarify any questions”.

Again, the stress on the need for interaction between the actors involved may be interpreted as a call for co-responsibility and collaboration.

Third, the question of who is responsible for the translation project management is not explicitly answered in ISO 11669, while ISO 17100 recommends that translation service project management be carried out by a project manager “in accordance with the TSP’s procedures [and] the client-TSP agreement”, which leads to the assumption that the PM is part of the translation service provider. In contrast, the American translation service standard *ASTM F2575-14 Standard Guide for Quality Assurance in Translation* leaves translation project management tasks up to either the requester or the TSP: “When requesters are in the process of analysing their needs with respect to a decision to hire either an individual or a company for a specific translation project, the requester should determine [...] whether the requester wishes to retain responsibility for some or all project management activities.” The ASTM standard thus provides a framework for the agreement on specifications for translation projects, enabling diverse actors to collaborate.

These three quality-assuring aspects (quality of source content, in-process quality assurance, translation project management) are best handled in collaboration of the involved actors. A collaborative approach, aiming at efficient communication and exchange between the diverse actors, offers a suitable framework for museums to negotiate their requirements and contribute with their domain-specific expertise.

2.5.2 Quality standards for translation policies in official institutions

The analysis of existing translation practices in European art museums is informed by Peter Sandrini’s study (2018) on quality standards for translation policies in official institutions. According to Sandrini, translation policies shape the conditions of a series of interconnected translation processes in a specific context (ibid.: 61). Translation policies (the concept is elaborated on below) embrace the organisation of translation in general terms, i.e. independently from specific translation projects or individual persons (ibid.: 67). Such organisational aspects include translation project management, quality standards, translation technology, as well as the use of translation-related resources, e.g. translation memories and terminology (ibid.: 38). Organisation and planning are also the focus of this study – and they are investigated from the perspective of (art) museums and how they manage translation.

Sandrini's quality standards (ibid.: 277) have been a very useful model when I elaborated the categories for analysing translation practices in museums.

Translation policies

Translation policy has been defined in both a narrow and a broad sense in translation studies; a good overview is provided by Reine Meylaerts (2011). She says that translation policy “may refer more broadly to translation strategies, tactics, guiding principles or procedures and may thus be related to all possible choices involved in the translation process, to all possible actors [...] implementing these choices” (ibid.: 167). But, in a narrow sense, translation policy can be defined as “a set of legal rules that regulate translation in the public domain: [...] in political institutions, in administration, in the media” (ibid.: 165). There is a broad spectrum of museum institutions, ranging from private to public, such as state museums and national galleries. At the one end of the spectrum, museums as cultural institutions have a mandate to make cultural heritage accessible to the widest audience possible; in these situations, translation serves as a means of inclusion and integration. At the other end of the spectrum museums are increasingly seen as cultural and creative industries (Liao 2018: 45); in these situations, translation also serves to attract an international audience. In this study, the term translation policy is used in line with the broad definition, referring to the translation procedures and guiding principles underlying translation practices in museums, able to respond to diverse missions, be it the inclusion of local linguistic communities or attracting an international audience. The focus on translation policy in museums involves a series of questions: how do museums organise their translation practices? how is a multilingual communication strategy defined? which quality-assurance measures are implemented? While *translation policy* refers to the guiding principles that shape the conditions of translation practices, *translation practices* refer to the concrete translation-related tasks put into action within a museum.

The concept of norms¹³

At this point a note is needed on the concept of norms, while reflecting how it applies to the notion of translation policy. In line with a wide definition of translation policy, Gideon Toury (1995: 54) considers translation policies as norms rather than as rules, while defining *norms* as standing midway between objective rules and subjective idiosyncrasies. Andrew Chesterman's (1993) idea about norms equally fits within a broad definition, considering translation policies

¹³ For a detailed discussion on the concept of norms, see Neves 2005.

as guiding principles. In his view, norms grow out of common practice and are approved either by implicit acceptance or explicitly by some authority (1993: 7). While Toury is committed to a descriptive approach to norms, Chesterman acknowledges a prescriptive force of norms within a given community (1993: 5). In the spirit of Andrew Chesterman’s claim that norms grow out of common practice, I developed my guidelines (cf. chapter 7) by observing existing norms in professional practice. This is also in line with the Chesterman & Wagner’s proposal for a practice-oriented theory rooted in best practice (2002: 132-133). Moreover, I adopted the approach of Action Research, in line with Joselia Neves’ (2005: 37) claim that “Action Research may provide a new environment for the writing of guidelines, where both practitioners and researchers work together [...] building on each other’s expertise” (cf. [section 3.2](#)).

Institutional translation competence

Closely related to the concept of translation policy is that of “institutional translation competence” (Sandrini 2018: 394-395) defined as the capacity of an institution, organisation or company to combine the competences of collaborators and the use of technology in such a way as to optimise translation within its defined goals. This does not necessarily involve the setting up of a translation unit within the institution but may also mean the outsourcing of translations to external collaborators. In either case, the planning competence of the museum is an absolute priority. Staff should know how to collaborate with TSPs in managing translation projects, how to set and achieve quality standards, which translation technology to use and how to manage translation resources. Such a scenario is applicable to many museums. Since translations are typically outsourced and the museum typically prefers to keep control on translated content, the planning competence of museum staff must be a priority.

2.6 Translation technology and efficiency applied to museum translation

This section addresses translation technology and how diverse tools can improve efficiency in managing translation projects. I argue that both web-based CAT tools featuring a series of translation management functions and translation-oriented terminology management may represent added value if used collaboratively by museums and translator.

2.6.1 Computer-aided translation tools

The technological turn

Michael Cronin (2010: 1) coined the term “technological turn”, referring to the unprecedented changes in the translation industry caused by the advent of translation technology and an ever-growing demand on translation in a globalising market. It is largely acknowledged that technological advances have increased productivity, efficiency, and quality in many domains of professional translation (Doherty 2016, Chan 2017). Joanna Drugan (2013: 31) states that dedicated tools have positive effects for certain aspects of quality, enhancing consistency and accuracy, while allowing for automated quality control processes. At the same time, it has also been pointed out that the efficient use of computer-aided translation tools poses challenges to the translation profession (Doherty 2016). In fact, various studies have focused on the effects of translation technology on the target text production. Adrià Martín-Mor (2012) for example confirms that the sentence-by-sentence translation modus in translation memory systems creates a strong focus on the sentence at the expense of the text’s macrostructure. However, Martín-Mor also finds that shortcomings deriving from translating on the sentence level are much more present in novice translators, while compensated for by experienced translators. Drugan (2013: 31) reports recurrent criticisms expressed by translators on the tools’ effects on translation quality, pointing out that the aim of introducing them was speed and economy rather than quality.

With the advent of the Internet and globalisation, the increasing demand for translations could only be met by employing dedicated tools. When CAT tools became widely used, a new business model developed, transforming not only the profession of translators over the last two decades (Drugan 2013; Risku & Windhager 2013), but also that of professionals managing translation projects (Risku & Windhager 2013, Foedisch 2017). In fact, Hanna Risku & Windhager (2013: 40) investigated translation management processes, showing that project managers depend heavily on translation technology and need to possess specific competences to use CAT tools as well as translation management systems. Melanie Foedisch (2017) provides evidence that translation technologies play a crucial role in translation project management, enacting the exchange of resources between professionals and ensuring that textual properties are achieved in translation production, thus contributing to both process and product quality (ibid.: 154, 189, 201).

CAT tool features

An overview of the diverse features of computer-aided translation systems is provided by Ignacio Garcia (2014). The principal features of CAT tools comprise translation memory databases for the (partial) reuse of past translations, and terminology databases (short: termbases) for the management and automated use of terminology. While these two core functions are the most important, there are other functions which are useful for creating and maintaining translation resources and for project management. The management of both translation memory (TM) and terminology databases is assisted by a range of tools. Alignment tools assist in creating TM databases from previously translated documents, while term extraction tools serve to compile termbases from translation memories, bilingual glossaries, and other documents. Recently, CAT systems further integrate a series of functions to manage complex translation projects with different types of files, translators, and languages, while ensuring basic linguistic and engineering quality assurance. QA functions perform linguistic checks, such as terminology, grammar, and spelling and ensure that no target segment is left untranslated. CAT tools have also been referred to as “translator’s workbench”, “translator’s workstation” and “TEnTs”, i.e. translation environment tools, (Zetzsche 2008), stressing the supportive character in terms of translation productivity:

As the name suggests, these TEnTs provide translators with an environment that allows them to work productively. This environment includes a translation memory and a terminology database, but it also provides features for quality assurance, spell-checking, workflow management, project management, analysis, support for complex file formats, and so forth. (Zetzsche 2008: 47)

Web-based CAT tools, translation management systems, translator platforms

Recently, web-based (and cloud-based) CAT systems put a further emphasis on ensuring efficient communication between translators by allowing all actors involved in a translation project to access the same resources, in a managed way. In fact, collaboration through technology plays a crucial role in the language and translation industry, as stated by Sin-wai Chan (2017: 39): “At present, translation is done largely through teamwork and translators are commonly linked by a server-based computer-aided translation system. In other words, translation is done in a collective manner.” Web-based CAT tools with a focus on the management of translation projects are often referred to as translation management systems or translator platforms (Heinisch & Iacono 2019: 64-67). Such tools include a series of features to centralise project and asset management, such as translation workflow management,

terminology, and translation memory management as well as quality assurance. However, there is a large number of systems focussing on different aspects. For an overview of different types of systems, compare Heinisch & Iacono 2019, ELIA 2018, Choudhury 2013, Massardo 2016 and the ProZ website¹⁴. According to Barbara Heinisch & Katia Iacono (2019: 64-67), translation management systems and translation platforms are sometimes used interchangeably and can be subsumed as translation technologies. Web-based CAT tools, translation management systems or translator platforms – they can all be subsumed under the umbrella term of “translation technology” (Krüger 2015: 322-323), including any tool supporting people in the translation workflow.

Web-based CAT tools, translation management systems and translation platforms, – if correctly employed – are helpful in building points of contact between the museum and the translation community, enabling efficient ways of exchanging information and expertise. Art museums typically outsource translations of various nature: websites, catalogues, exhibition panels, audio guides, media guides, to name but a few. In doing so, they contact specialised (and trusted) freelance translators, sometimes translation agencies as well as specialised agencies for different services. Quite frequently, different translators are assigned different text types simultaneously within the same project or exhibition. In such a scenario, a web-based CAT tool, translation management system or translator platform may offer a series of advantages and contribute to the efficiency and quality of both the translation process and the product. First, such systems or platforms allow the client to commission and manage translations centrally. Second, translation resources may be managed centrally and shared with all translators working on the same project, allowing for efficient collaboration. Third, a series of QA features allow the client to carry out in-house reviews, which can be passed back to translators in a feedback loop.

2.6.2 Terminology management

A digression on terminology in museums

In the museum context, the harmonisation of terminology is a fundamental issue in documentation and the cataloguing/indexing of museum objects. Different formats of terminology and vocabularies co-exist (Ermert 2012), i.e. simple term list, glossary, thesaurus,

¹⁴ https://www.proz.com/software-comparison-tool/cat/cat_tools/2 (last access 15/09/21)

ontology, taxonomy. According to Stefan Rohde-Enslin¹⁵ from the Institut für Museumsforschung Berlin, most museums use neither existing thesauri nor a properly made thesaurus, but rather simple term lists. However, large-scale projects have created important terminological resources for museums: a notable example of a structured vocabulary is the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus* (AAT) containing 375,000 terms (in 2017), useful to describe art, architecture, decorative arts, material culture, and archival materials. In recent years, the AAT is being translated into a range of languages: Chinese (91,839 terms in 2019), Dutch (63,336), Spanish (56,188), German (20,959), Italian (14,444) and French (6,813), thus representing a multilingual terminological resource. For a full account on existing (multilingual) terminology resources in museums, see the results of the EU-financed project ATHENA¹⁶ (*Access to cultural heritage networks across Europe*). Another example worth mentioning is The *LexArt* project¹⁷, funded by the European Research Council – a multilingual database (EN, FR, NL, DE) of terms belonging to the artistic vocabulary referring to the period 1600-1750. The creation and translation of such large-scale terminology resources is obviously not within the scope of this research. However, such publicly accessible multilingual resources can be a helpful reference, both for the translation task and for terminology management when terminology resources are created.

Multilingual translation-oriented terminology

This section on terminology management addresses the production and use of multilingual terminology for translation-specific purposes. Much has been written on terminology management, especially from the terminologists' perspective, while little research has been done on managing terminology in the context of translation projects (Melby 2012) and translation quality assurance (Popiolek 2015). While the first is concerned with clarifying and standardising concepts of terminology (ISO 704, 2009), terminology management from the point of view of the translation industry professional refers to “systematically collecting, processing, classifying and applying vocabulary that has specific meaning in a given subject field or context” (Popiolek 2015: 341). Terminology management differs from the random compilation of lexicons by virtue of its systematic approach; the goal is to ensure that the key

¹⁵ Interview carried out by the author on 25 January 2019 with Dr. Stefan Rohde-Enslin, Responsible for research and advice regarding digitisation and digital preservation at the Institut für Museum Research, Berlin.

¹⁶https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/Projects/Project_list/ATHENA/Deliverables/D4.1%20Identification%20of%20existing%20terminology%20resources%20in%20museums.pdf (last access 15/09/21)

¹⁷ <https://www.lexart.fr/> (last access 15/09/21)

vocabulary for a project or organisation is maintained, updated, and consistently used by the involved actors within an accessible system (ibid.). The German Institute for Standardisation (*DIN 2342:2011-08 – Begriffe der Terminologielehre*) also distinguishes two forms of terminology work – multilingual translation-oriented terminology work and monolingual/multilingual terminology work norming a specific subject area or domain: while the latter involves in-depth terminology research, terminology management within a translation project involves more precise and text-based terminology work, thus analysing the given text material, identifying relevant terms in the source language and researching equivalent terms in the target language. The aim is to resolve specific terminological problems within a concrete translation project and to elaborate a multilingual terminology related to that specific project, which is to be reused in future translations. To this end, the acquired knowledge is stored in a terminology database (Mayer 1998:41). According to the cited DIN norm, multilingual translation-oriented terminology work can refer both to the translator during the translation process and to a translation project manager.

Terminology management and quality assurance

Terminology management is considered an integral part of translation quality assurance (Popiolek 2015: 342). In her study, Monika Popiolek describes how the key stages of terminology work (i.e. creating, applying, and controlling terminology) fit in and affect QA processes (ibid.: 346). Similarly, ISO 11669 states that terminology work applies to all stages of a translation project and includes identifying terminology, harmonizing terms within a termbase, and ensuring consistency (ISO 11669, 2012: 11). According to the above cited international standard, the benefit of terminology management grows with the volume of translation and the number of involved actors: in a large translation project, it can be advantageous that a terminologist/project manager extracts relevant terms beforehand, commissions a translator to translate the terms, validates the translations, and then provides the project team with a ready-to-use termbase. In smaller single-translator projects, the translator may save notes on his/her terminological decision by means of simple entries to be validated and saved by a terminologist/project manager afterwards. In any case, a well-structured termbase organises data entries according to the three structural levels dictated by the TMF standard (Terminological Markup Framework, ISO 16642:2003): term information, language information, concept information. Both Popiolek (2015: 341) and Garcia (2014: 73) observe that termbases should relate to a specific domain or project. According to Garcia (2014: 73), it is “usual practice to compile multiple termbases which can be kept segregated for designated

uses” (ibid.), according to domain or project, but which may also be merged into bigger termbases if necessary.

Terminology as integrated feature of CAT tools

Alan Melby outlines the practices for translation-oriented terminology as follows:

At one extreme is a very simple two-column glossary in which each row consists of only a source term and a target term. At the other extreme, one can design a very complex system to manage an extensive termbase. (Melby 2008: 1)

Thus, the complexity of termbases varies considerably. Most CAT tools have an integrated feature for managing terminology. The advantage is that term suggestions are prompted while translating in the tool. The functionalities offered in the freelance and enterprise versions of some CAT systems may vary addressing the diverse needs (Garcia 2014: 73). While translators may prefer simple bilingual glossaries with few metadata, companies, organisations and large TSPs may opt for a more sophisticated comprehensive multilingual termbase featuring vast metadata, examples of usage, and links to images and external information. More sophisticated termbases allow project managers to dynamically select a subset of the large termbase that is relevant to a particular translation project, enabling its integration and automated processing within the CAT tools. There are also sophisticated stand-alone terminology management systems, employing the TBX standard (TermBase eXchange, ISO 30042:2008). The use of this standard minimises the disadvantage of the termbase not being integrated in the translation environment. Popiolek (2015: 347) observes that any tool that supports systematic terminology management needs to have functionalities for storing, assessing, and archiving terminology, while providing access to the terminology databases to all involved actors, via a collaborative platform.

Translation-oriented terminology work in museums

Terminology is a critical issue for museums and the situations in which museums need to efficiently employ terminology management for translation purposes are manifold. According to Popiolek (2015: 357), terminology can be professionally managed by small organisations, provided that the adequate tools and a systematic approach are in place. Web-based CAT tools, online translation management systems, and translation platforms may offer suitable solutions (cf. [section 2.6.1](#)), offering collaborative environments, while providing access to an integrated termbase to all involved actors. In this way, the domain-specific knowledge of the museum can

contribute to the management of its termbase. Depending on the project size, it could be an advantage to extract relevant terminology in the pre-translation phase and collaborate with a translator on term translation. In this way, the various translators working on different parts of a project will use terminology consistently. In a single-translator project, the translator may note down terminological considerations while translating by means of simple entries, which can then be validated for future use. Another issue concerns the question of who should manage the comprehensive multilingual termbase. A first option is that of outsourcing to an TSP, while ensuring close collaboration. A second option is to manage terminology in-house while using an external translator to translate the terms in context. The latter option requires that at least one member of staff in the museum possess (or be prepared to acquire) some knowledge and experience in terminology management. Apart from human resources, investment for acquiring technological tools is another issue, although most software is reasonably priced. For an overview on functionalities of diverse tools, compare Heinisch & Iacono 2019, ELIA 2018, Choudhury 2013, Massardo 2016 and the ProZ website.

2.7 Digital heritage studies: integrated content management in museums

In this section, I will briefly describe the principles of an integrated approach to content management, while pointing out its benefits, both in terms of an efficient reuse of multilingual digital museum content on diverse channels, and within the context of translation management in museums.

2.7.1 Digital heritage

The importance of digital heritage is affirmed by the UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage 2009, highlighting the emerging role of digital heritage, i.e. the use of digital media in preserving and presenting our heritage. The European Commission supports research and innovation in digital heritage through its framework programmes; a well-known example is the digital project *Europeana Creative*, which enables greater re-use of digital cultural heritage resources by creative industries. New digital forms of communication have likewise gained momentum in museums, able to fulfil the growing demand for content diversification and the active engagement of visitors in an audience-oriented paradigmatic shift (cf. [sections 2.1.1](#) and [2.1.2](#)). At the same time, the new subject of “digital heritage” has also developed in the academic world (Parry 2005). In the museum field, this new subject includes research on the use of digital media in museums and on the appropriate management of digital

heritage assets. Innovative ways to offer diversified, interactive, and personalised content in multi-media-guides (Bartolini et al. 2016, Emmanouilidis et al. 2013) have recently been investigated, by employing location-based content relying on sensor technologies to accurately detect the user's position, and recommender systems, i.e. an information filtering system that seeks to predict user preferences on user's private mobile device. The successful use of such solutions depends on an efficient management of digital content to redistribute content on diverse end points and reassemble/combine relevant pieces of information (Pashuysen 2017). According to Marty & Burton Jones (2008), the collection-centred information models (i.e. collection management systems) that are widely used in museums are not sufficient anymore, given the necessity to provide dynamic and redistributable content (Cameron 2008, Pani et al. 2015). It is claimed that a central system accessible to all is necessary to efficiently retrieve and reuse digital content in museums¹⁸.

2.7.2 Integrated content management in museums

Corey Timpson (2017) calls for the integration of diverse content management applications (web content management system, collection management system, digital asset management system, etc.) within an Enterprise Content Management System (ECMS), allowing for a central management of *all* museum content. Within this approach, the digital asset management system (DAMS) serves as central repository of diverse and modular content (audio, video, image, text). In this way, content (and most obviously also multilingual content) referring to an exhibition may be redistributed via various channels: on applications for mobile devices, on the museum's website, within onsite media installations, etc. The Canadian Museum for Human Rights has built such an integrated system to manage their "omnichannel" museum content (Timpson 2017). Similarly, the Minneapolis Institute of Art has engaged in an applied research project to improve digital content management by means of a flexible metadata and ECMS project with the aim to provide deep levels of engagement with the museum collection on diverse digital channels (Lloyd-Baynes & Lynn 2016: 46). It is worth stressing that for text to be reused, it should be treated according to the modularity concept, i.e. chunking text into reusable modules, and labelling it with metadata for reasons of retrievability (Self 2010). In Timpson's words:

¹⁸ Interview carried out by the author on 24 January 2019 with Prof. Monika Hagedorn-Saupe, Professor in museology at the University of Applied Sciences HTW in Berlin and Head of the department "Visitor-related museum research and museum statistics" in the Institut for Museum Research

It's noteworthy that for the purposes of managing all text in the museum, text is considered a digital asset even if the text is only ever printed or added to a built/static exhibit. This ensures that the raw, or original, asset, whether a paragraph of text or a photograph, is always treated the same way, irrespective of medium or asset type. (Timpson 2017: 169)

Similarly, some European museums, such as the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and the Städel Museum Frankfurt, have put into action an innovative digital strategy. They combine online and offline content to enable the participation of audiences within a cross-departmental approach (Hagedorn-Saupe 2015). To ensure efficient cross-departmental collaboration in museums, content needs to be managed centrally.

How is central content management related to organisational translation tasks in museums? As outlined in ISO 17100 (2015: 7), “the safe and confidential handling, storage, retrieval, archiving, and disposal of all relevant data and documents” is considered part of the “efficient and effective completion of translation projects”. Within a holistic view of museum communication as claimed for by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (cf. [section 2.1.1](#)), managing translations is embedded in a wider context of content creation and management. It goes without saying that managing content centrally can also contribute to efficiently manage translation projects, since relevant resources (e.g. images related to an exhibition text) are easily retrieved by all museum staff members across departments and provided to translators. Providing translators with contextual material is of crucial importance in order that translation does not take place in isolation as stated by Robert Neather (cf. [section 2.1.3](#)). Moreover, in the case that museums work with a translation management tool, it can easily be connected through an API interface with the central repository, allowing for a frictionless data transfer.

3 Research Design and Methods

As we have seen often enough, theory without practice is empty, but, equally, practice without theory is blind. (Neubert 2000:26)

By adopting the approach of action research and drawing on qualitative interviews, my attempt is to bring theory and practice together. In this chapter, I will outline the research design and the methods adopted to achieve this aim.

3.1 Research questions

The purpose of my study is to investigate translation practices and policies in European art museums by focusing on the perspective of the client and their role in contributing to the overall translation process by carrying out organisational tasks. In particular, the aim is to explore how museums manage translation projects, ensure quality, and employ translation technology. In doing so, my research seeks to identify potential enhancements in the key areas of translation practices in museums.

I will address the following research questions and sub-questions:

1. Which strategies are adopted by European art museums to communicate with a multilingual audience?
 - 1.1. How are the needs of a multilingual audience defined?
2. How are translation practices organised in European art museums?
 - 2.1. What use is made of in-house staff and external collaborators?
 - 2.2. How are translation projects managed and commissioned?
 - 2.3. Which procedures are employed to contribute to translation quality?
 - 2.4. To which what extent is translation technology employed to support translation-related tasks?
3. To what extent are translation-related tasks approached in an efficient and systematic manner?
4. Which enhancements to current translation practices may be introduced by art museums to contribute to the overall translation process?
 - 4.1. Which processes may contribute to successfully communicate client requirements?
 - 4.2. How may translation technology be employed to contribute to an efficient collaboration?

3.2 Action Research: Towards guidelines and best practices

My study is qualitative and exploratory in nature, employing semi-structured interviews to shed light on translation practices in art museums within a social constructivist approach to translation research and practice, namely action research (AR). Social constructivism is typically associated with qualitative research and the use of qualitative interviewing (Creswell 2018: 7-8). Such an approach operates from the perspective that knowledge is constructed in a dialogic interaction, while meaning is co-produced by both researcher and participant (Mason 2018: 110). The term *participant* rather than subject, interviewee or respondent reflects a change in status by stressing the collaborative process and acknowledging the participants' contribution and experience (Stringer 2007: 20, 77). According to Gabriela Saldanha and Sharon O'Brien, semi-structured and unstructured interviews as well as focus groups tend to "shift the balance of power away from the researcher and towards the research participant, allowing for the co-construction of knowledge" (2013: 173), thus empowering participants and enabling change. Saldanha & O'Brien (*ibid.*) argue that for this reason, interviews and focus groups are often used in action research. Jennifer Mason's (2018: 8) definition of the epistemological approach of action research summarises what has been said so far: "the world is constructed through action, interaction and collective agency; the researcher works with participants to co-generate knowledge and to create change collectively".

While action research has been used in the social sciences since the 1940s, in translation studies (TS) it has gained momentum only recently. Within TS, action research has been applied in specific areas, such as translator training (Kiraly 2000) or audio-visual translation, more specifically SDH, audio-description, and the accessibility of museum collections (Neves 2005, 2016). In their article "Action Research in Translation Studies", Ana Cravo and Joselia Neves (2007: 93) claim:

It is our conviction that AR can play an important role in TS. Issues that have not been explained, **practices that have not been described**, bridges between scholars and practitioners that have not yet been crossed, gaps between theory and practice that remain to be covered, may be dealt with through AR, thus bringing new challenges to all those involved.

As shown in the previous chapter (*cf.* chapter 2), little research has been done on how art museums organise their translation practices. Robert Neather (2012: 245) has examined some aspects of translation practices in Chinese (art) museums, focussing on the differing expertise of involved stakeholders, while concluding that neither the museum community nor the

translation community “possesses the complete set of competences for fully effective museum translation” (cf. [section 2.3.2](#)). Such a statement calls for integrating diverse perspectives to further examine the issue. Given that organisational aspects of translation practices in European museums have not been described so far, I argue that the approach of action research may fruitfully bring together different perspectives within a “dialogic approach to discovery” (Neves 2016: 241). Addressing the concerns of practitioners and stakeholders rather than solely academic interests is a key characteristic of action research (Stern 2014: 202). Similarly, Joselia Neves (2016: 241) states:

Having the opportunity to debate issues with specialists from other fields [...] open[s] the world of traditional introspective solitary research work to one where new ideas [are] generated [...] collaboratively and addressed from **different angles**.

Moreover, Cravo & Neves (2007: 94) observe that action research represents an option “if the focus of interest involves people, and the work they do, and if the aim is to try to understand why they do what they do in a specific way, in the belief that while researching their ability may somehow be improved.” This observation holds true for my research, which seeks to identify potential enhancements in translation practices in museums, by collaboratively addressing the issue with different stakeholders, and bridging gaps between practice and theory. One of the results of my research is a set of guidelines on translation practices in museums, informed by both the practical input gained throughout the interviews and the theoretical foundations underpinning this study. The idea of enhancement or improvement is central to action research, as stressed by Ferrance (2000: 2-3): “Action research is [...] a quest for knowledge about how to **improve**”.

A much-cited definition of action research is that in the introduction of the *Handbook of Action Research* by Reason & Bradbury (2001: 1):

Action research is a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It seeks to bring together **action and reflection, theory and practice**, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions [...].

The above definition points out the dual nature of action research: action-reflection, practice-theory. The term *action research* itself suggests this duality: action-research. By drawing on various scholars (Dick, Hopkins, Coghlan & Brannick), Neves (2005: 46-47) observes different interpretations of this duality. Dick (1993) claims that action research aims to provoke change

through action and increase knowledge through (participatory) research, while suggesting that some studies focus primarily on action, others on research. In contrast, Hopkins (1993: 44) points out that action and research can feed one into the other simultaneously, i.e. action is disciplined by enquiry and research is enriched by insights into practice. Finally, Coghlan & Brannick (2001: xi) state that there is a great diversity in theory and practice among action researchers, providing for a “wide choice for potential action researchers as to what might be appropriate for their research”. This study aimed to co-create knowledge within a “dialogic approach to discovery” (Neves 2016: 241) – by employing qualitative interviews with staff from a selection of art museums. *Action* thus involved a dialogic *interaction* between researcher and participants, which took place in a two-stage procedure. In a first stage, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were carried out to discuss current translation practices in museums and reflect on potential enhancements. In a second stage, questionnaires as well as online interviews were employed to review, validate, and improve the results – a set of guidelines for translation practices in museums. Stern (2014: 214) observes that the “communicative validation” of results is a special asset of action research, which may occur through feedback or advice by the participants that are involved in the research. In this way, “the invaluable knowledge of insiders [...] complements and validates the finding of external researchers” (ibid.: 210-211), while diminishing the gap between theory and practice.

By drawing on the four ways how action research generates knowledge described by Heron & Reason (2008), Stern (2014: 203-209) elaborates four qualities of “good” action research:

1. Good action research pursues worthwhile practical purposes
 - by trying to find **solutions for authentic problems** and empowering the people concerned to acquire relevant knowledge and to share it with others [...]
2. Good action research is **collaborative / participatory**
 - by involving the people concerned into the research process [...]
3. Good action research is responsive and developmental
 - by engaging in a continuous series of research-and-development **cycles**
 - by taking the **different perspectives** of various stakeholders into consideration in search of satisfactory solutions to perceived problems
4. Good action research connects theory and praxis
 - by balancing action and reflection (reflection can inspire or evaluate actions [...]; action can prove or disprove theoretical assumptions)
 - by generating theoretical knowledge [...] and **promoting practical improvements**

Stern’s qualities for “good action research” is largely met by my study: 1) It pursued the practical purpose of enhancing translation practices in museums by addressing the concerns of members of the museum community. 2) Semi-structured interviews involved diverse museum staff and enabled a participatory approach. 3) The interviews further allowed for different perspectives of various stakeholders to inform the research. Though the cyclic nature of my research is limited, a two-step procedure guaranteed a minimum of a developmental approach. 4) Finally, a dialogue between theory and practice was instigated, and ideas were exchanged, with the overall aim to contribute towards change and practical improvement.

The necessity for theory embracing practice is also expressed by Emma Wagner, translation manager at the European Commission in Luxembourg in an exchange¹⁹ with prominent translation scholar Andrew Chesterman:

In my view, “theory” should not be just some individual’s brain-child: it should arise from observing practice, analyzing practice, and drawing a few general conclusions to **provide guidance**. These conclusions should naturally be **tested in practice**. Leading to better guidance [...]. (Chesterman & Wagner 2002: 6)

[Professionals] could **help to create** practice-oriented theory – a theory rooted in best practice, directed at **improved practice**, and **attentive to practitioners** [...]. (Chesterman & Wagner 2002: 133)

Wagner’s suggestions for theory to be co-created and tested by practitioners, aimed at improving practices and providing guidance, while paying attention to professionals’ needs, are in line with the principles of action research.

3.3 Qualitative interviews: Gathering diverse perspectives

As already pointed out in the previous section (3.2), semi-structured interviews acknowledge the contribution of participants, and thus fit well into the approach of action research, aiming at the co-construction of knowledge by means of dialogic interaction, while implying an “egalitarian concept of roles” (Minichiello et al. 1990: 93). In fact, the continuum ranging from structured, over semi-structured, to unstructured interviews is characterised by increasing levels of flexibility and decreasing levels of structure. Semi-structured interviews are somewhat in-between: a minimum of structure ensures comparability across interviews, while allowing for the flow of interaction. They rely on an *interview guide* (also referred to as interview schedule

¹⁹ Chesterman, A. & Wagner, E. (2002): Can Theory Help Translators? A Dialogue between the Ivory Tower and the Wordface. Manchester: St. Jerome.

or interview protocol) with a flexible structure developed around themes, which serves as a reminder and ensures that the same areas are covered in each interview. However, this flexible approach allows for more freedom, as questions are mostly open-ended, the order of questions is not fixed, and new questions may be introduced (Saldanha & O’Brien 2013: 172-173).

According to Brinkmann (2013: 53), individual, face-to-face interviews are still the standard choice in qualitative interviewing. However, other forms of interviewing, such as group interviews or internet interviews offer alternatives. In group interviews (also: focus groups), there is a greater emphasis on dynamic interaction, producing different perspectives on a given theme, with the interviewer taking on the role of a moderator. Focus groups may thus allow insights into inter-professional discourse (Saldanha & O’Brien 2013: 174) and are often employed as a form of brainstorming to generate new ideas (Edley & Litosselitti 2010: 170). While focus groups usually involve a group of 6 to 8 people, Brinkmann observes that qualitative researchers have recently experimented with groups of two participants to reduce the organisational effort. Just as in conventional focus groups, “the point is not to reach consensus about the issues discussed, but to have different viewpoints articulated about an issue” (Brinkmann 2013: 26). However, in more hierarchical settings, it may also be the case that more experienced staff members will be dominant in the conversation, while the less experienced colleagues will act deferentially.

In my study, I carried out both individual and group interviews with staff members from large and medium-sized European art museums to explore the translation policies and management of multilingual content. By the end of the project, I felt the need to integrate the information provided by museum staff with yet another perspective – that of translation service providers collaborating with art museums. I therefore interviewed three TSPs (cf. [section 3.3.2](#)).

3.3.1 Interviewing staff of art museums

The purpose of my research is to gain deeper insight into how museums organise their translation practices, an issue that has received little attention from academia so far (cf. chapter 2). A suitable method for investigating new research areas is the qualitative interview, which has the potential to provide in-depth information about a topic that would otherwise not be available (cf. Minichiello et al. 1990: 96). As is typical with studies conducted from a constructivist viewpoint, I employed qualitative interviewing to co-create knowledge through dialogic interaction. A number of scholars point out that the format of semi-structured

interviews is very suitable to investigate professional practices (Kvale 2008, Wilson 2014). I therefore used semi-structured individual and group interviews with museum staff to gain detailed insights into how museums manage translation projects, ensure quality, and employ translation technology. As suggested by the approach of action research, I also addressed the concerns of practitioners rather than solely academic interests, enabling a collaborative approach, shedding light on diverse perspectives.

Selecting the museums

The selection of museums was information-oriented or purposive, as is typical for qualitative studies. The goal was to “maximise the utility of information from small samples; [...] selected on the basis of expectation about their information content” (Flyvbjerg 2006: 230). In general, representativeness is not the main concern of qualitative research, although “purposeful sampling [...] can be used to achieve representativeness or typicality of settings and individuals” (Maxwell 2009: 235). According to Teddlie & Yu. (2007: 83-84), purposive sampling typically involves 30 (or less) cases selected by means of the “expert judgment” (researcher) to “yield the most information about a particular phenomenon”. Mason (2018) observes that theoretical (or purposive) sampling was initially introduced by Glaser & Strauss as part of Grounded Theory; in a more general form, purposive sampling means “selecting groups, categories or units to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions, [...] and most importantly to the argument [...] that you are developing” (ibid.: 58-59).

For this study, I identified 35 key institutions, potentially able to provide rich and diverse information on the organisational aspects of translation in museums. The main criteria were the degree of multilingual content in museum’s communication and the innovativeness of its digital strategy. The first criterion is rather self-explanatory, as a lack of multilingual (or bilingual) communication would mean that there were not translation practices to be explored. The second criterion is not so obvious: Since the study aims at focusing translation practices also within a digital environment, museums with an innovative digital strategy were expected to provide important insights. During the selection process, I referred to scientific literature, statements by authoritative media and analysed numerous museum websites, seeking for information on multilingual communication and digital strategies of European art museums. Some pragmatic criteria had an impact on the selection process as well: for logistic reasons and in line with my own language competences, museums were mostly selected in Italian and German speaking countries.

Size was another criterion: As small-sized art museums are not expected to manage a large volume of translations, I preferred medium and large-sized institutions. Moreover, I included institutions of the highest standard— among which the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and the Louvre Museum in Paris – to discover if translation practices vary substantially compared to mainstream, a technique referred to as “extreme case sampling” (Ames et al. 2019: 3). Most institutions involved were public corporations, with a few exceptions, such as the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Schirn Kunsthalle and the Barberini Museum Potsdam. Recently, institutions may be publicly owned, but privately run; examples are the Universalmuseum Joanneum and the Kunsthalle Mannheim. *Kunsthalle* or *Kunsthhaus* (art gallery) in German-speaking regions are characterised by frequently changing temporary exhibitions (Prokop 2003: 132), trying to capture “the pulse of time”, often addressing avantgarde movements as well as contemporary issues. They do not possess a permanent collection. In contrast, *Kunstmuseum* is referred to a place of stability and permanence (ibid.) with a permanent collection. However, recently, there is a trend in art museums to arrange parts of their permanent collection thematically in temporary exhibitions or to rearrange the complete collection continuously. Such changing scenarios stimulate the engagement of diversified audiences in line with a more audience-driven approach to museology. *Gemäldegalerie* and *Pinakothek* in German, and respectively *pinacoteca* in Italian usually refers to a public art museum which exhibits paintings in a permanent exhibition.

The museums selected for this study exhibit premodern, modern, and contemporary visual art: mostly paintings, but also sculptures, drawings, design, photography, video, and installation art. The variables characterising the selected museums (private vs. public institution; art museum vs. art gallery; temporary vs. permanent exhibitions; premodern vs. modern vs. contemporary art, “mainstream²⁰” vs. highest level institutions) will be taken into consideration during the analysis of interviews.

Establishing contact with the identified institutions required careful preparation and perseverance. Eventually 30 out of 35 institutions I had contacted engaged with the project. Table 1 gives an overview of the museums that agreed to participate in the interviews and provides further details on the museum location, the different languages of museum content, the type of art that is exhibited, as well as the type of exhibitions held. Within the language

²⁰ The term *mainstream* is in no way intended to overly homogenize the category but serves the aim to investigate whether there are significant differences in managing translation issues in world-class museums. Moreover, it goes without saying that “mainstream” comprises a variety of different layers.

column, the minus sign (“ – “) separates those languages for which a wide range of museum content is provided (usually the local language and English) from those languages for which only a selection of museum content is provided, which often includes web content as well as audio/media guide content.

Details on the selected art museums and galleries				
Institution	Location	Languages	Which art?	Exhibition type
Albertina Museum	Vienna Austria	GER, ENG – CHI, CZE, ITA, JPN, RUS, SPA	Contemporary Modern	Permanent collection continuously rearranged
Belvedere Museum Oberes Belvedere Unteres Belvedere	Vienna Austria	GER, ENG – CHI, FRE, ITA, JPN, KOR, SPA	Contemporary Modern Premodern	Permanent Temporary
Bundeskunsthalle Bonn	Bonn Germany	GER, ENG	Contemporary Modern Premodern	Temporary
Ca’ Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art	Venice Italy	ITA, ENG	Contemporary Modern	Permanent Temporary
Gallerie degli Uffizi	Florence Italy	ITA, ENG – SPA, FRE, GER, JPN, POL, RUS	Premodern	Permanent
Guggenheim Museum Bilbao	Bilbao Spain	SPA, BAQ, ENG, FRE – GER, ITA	Contemporary Modern	Permanent Temporary
Kunsthalle Mannheim	Mannheim Germany	GER, ENG	Contemporary Modern	Permanent collection continuously rearranged
Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien	Vienna Austria	GER, ENG – CHI, CZE, FRE; ITA, JPN, KOR, RUS, SPA, TUR, BOS, SRP, HRV	Premodern	Permanent Temporary
Lenbachhaus	Munich Germany	GER, ENG	Contemporary Modern	Permanent collection continuously rearranged
Louvre Museum	Paris France	FRE, ENG – CHI, GER, ITA, JPN, KOR, POR, SPA	Premodern	Permanent Temporary

MAMbo Museo d'Arte Moderna	Bologna Italy	ITA, ENG	Contemporary Modern	Permanent Temporary
Mart Museo	Rovereto Italy	ITA, ENG – GER	Contemporary Modern	Permanent
Musei San Domenico	Forli Italy	ITA – ENG	Modern Premodern	Permanent Temporary
Museion	Bolzano Italy	ITA, GER, ENG	Contemporary	Permanent collection continuously rearranged
Museo dell'Opera del Duomo	Florence Italy	ITA, ENG – CHI, SPA, FRE, GER	Premodern	Permanent
Museum Barberini Potsdam	Potsdam Germany	GER, ENG	Contemporary Modern Premodern	Temporary
Peggy Guggenheim Collection	Venice Italy	ITA, ENG – GER, SPA, FRE	Contemporary Modern	Permanent Temporary
Pinacoteca di Brera	Milan Italy	ITA, ENG	Modern Premodern	Permanent
Pinakotheken	Munich Germany	GER, ENG – ITA, SPA FRE	Contemporary Modern Premodern	Permanent Temporary
Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt	Frankfurt Germany	GER, ENG	Contemporary Modern	Temporary
Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden	Baden- Baden Germany	GER, ENG	Contemporary	Temporary
Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe	Karlsruhe Germany	GER, ENG, FRE	Contemporary Modern Premodern	Permanent Temporary
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Gemäldegalerien Alte Nationalgalerie	Berlin Germany	GER, ENG	Contemporary Modern Premodern	Permanent collection continuously rearranged
Universalmuseum Joanneum Neue Galerie Kunsthaus	Graz Austria	GER, ENG	Contemporary Modern Premodern	Permanent Temporary
Wallraf-Richartz- Museum	Cologne Germany	GER, ENG	Modern Premodern	Permanent Temporary

*Table 1: Details on the selected art museums and galleries:
Details on the selected art museums and galleries*

Recruiting participants

Analogously, when sampling and recruiting participants for an interview study, the aim is to provide rich and diverse information from key participants. The recruitment of staff from the selected museums was equally based on *purposive sampling*, “seek[ing] out groups, settings and individuals where [...] the processes being studied are most likely to occur (Denzin & Lincoln 2011: 245). However, gaining access to cultural institutions can be a difficult task, as they are often characterised by rather hierarchical structures. For this reason, I first established contact with the museum directors, informing them about the aims and expected benefits of my research, and suggesting that the museum might participate in the project. As it appeared difficult to guess which staff members might be involved in translation-related tasks, I involved the museum to identify the most suitable staff²¹. In fact, depending on the organisational structures of the museum, staff from different departments may be involved in handling translations: press officers may commission content to external translators, curators may revise translations of content created by them, etc. I paid attention to get in touch with a variety of staff members, working at different levels and in a variety of roles, as I expected them to have different perspectives on translation. The interview questions were provided to the museums in this phase to support the process of selecting

It goes without saying that the availability of participants added a random element to my final sample. In fact, both availability and varying organisational structures resulted in heterogeneous interview situations: I carried out 14 individual and 11 group interviews. Nine of the group interviews involved only two participants, the remaining two were composed of three or four participants. Both the diversity of participants belonging to different teams or departments, and the diversity of interview situations (ranging from individual to group interviews) were enriching for my research, as a variety of perspectives emerged. In fact, Saldanha & O’Brien state that “interviews and focus groups can be used together as methods of data elicitation within the same research project. Each type of method may provide different insights” (2013: 183). Table 2 gives an overview of the participants, with the participant names being anonymised. I included information on the institution and team/department participants belong to as well as the interview situations, indicating the date, interview modality as well as

²¹ To support this process, I provided the museums with the interview questions. However, it was also deemed useful for the participants to know the interview questions in advance, as specific professional issues were to be dealt with

the number of participants. I carried out a total of 30 interviews, involving 43 participants from 25 art museums. The question of how many interviews one should conduct in a project, is answered by Creswell & Creswell (2018: 186), stating that the so-called saturation is reached when additional data does not produce new ideas or themes. In my project, I thought that saturation was reached before the end of the interviewing cycle, when the information gained in the interviews started to become repetitive. However, the last two interviews with institutions of the highest standard added important insights.

Details on the selected participants and interview situations			
Institution	Participant	Team / Department	Date & Modality
Albertina Museum Vienna	AM	Press Office	31/05/2019 online
Barberini Museum Potsdam	BM-1 BM-2	Press & Marketing Information Management	23/01/2019 face-to-face
Belvedere Museum Vienna	BV	Digital Communication	24/05/2019 face-to-face
Bundeskunsthalle Bonn	BKH	Museum Direction	15/02/2019 face-to-face
Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art, Venice	CP-1	Museum Direction	03/06/2019 face-to-face
Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art, Venice	CP-2	Educational Services	03/06/2019 face-to-face
Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art, Venice	CP-3	Communication	04/06/2019 face-to-face
Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence	GUF	Communication Department	18/04/2019 face-to-face
Guggenheim Museum Bilbao	GMB	Publications Department	28/08/2019 face-to-face
Kunsthalle Mannheim	KM-1 KM-2	Press Office Digital Strategy & New Media	12/02/2019 face-to-face
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna	KHM	Press Office Publications Department	24/05/2019 face-to-face
Lenbachhaus, Munich	LH-1 LH-2	Curatorial Team Digital Communication	09/01/2019 face-to-face
Louvre Museum, Paris	LB	Translation Coordination Editorial Services, Research Department	15/07/2019 face-to-face

MAMbo Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bologna	MBO-1 MBO-2	Publications Department Communication, Press & Marketing	04/07/2019 face-to-face
Mart Museo, Rovereto	MM-1 MM-2	Digital Communication Editorial Department	21/03/2019 face-to-face
Musei San Domenico, Forli	MSD	Communication Department of sustaining foundation	27/06/2019 face-to-face
Museion, Bolzano	MUS-1 MUS-2	Press Office Digital Communication	21/03/2019 face-to-face
Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence	MOD	Communication Department	29/03/2019 face-to-face
Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice	PG	Publications	05/06/2019 face-to-face
Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan	PB	Communication Department	26/06/2019 face-to-face
Pinakotheken, Munich	PM-1 PM-2 PM-3	Museum Direction Press Office Education Office	07/12/2018 face-to-face
Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt	SKF	Press Office	18/12/2018 face-to-face
Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden	KH	Museum Direction	30/11/2018 face-to-face
Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe	KK	Communication Department	19/12//2018 face-to-face
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin	SMB-1 SMB-2	Communication Department Education & Mediation	24/01/2019 face-to-face
Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz	UJ-2 UJ-3	Inclusion & Participation Inclusion & Participation	20/05/2019 face-to-face
Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz	UJ-4 UJ-5 UJ-6 UJ-7	Marketing Digital Communication Press Office Editorial Department	21/05/2019 face-to-face
Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz (Neue Galerie)	UJ-8	Curatorial Team	22/05/2019 face-to-face
Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz (Neue Galerie, Kunsthaus)	UJ-1	Education Department	15/05/2019 face-to-face
Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne	WRM	Museum Direction	15/02/2019 face-to-face

Table 2: Details on the selected participants and interview situations

Preparing the interview guide

While selecting institutions and participants, I designed an interview guide. As indicated by Creswell & Creswell (2018: 190-191), the guide included basic information about the interview, instructions for the interviewer, and a list of content questions. The term *semi-structured interviews* suggests that the interview guide should provide some structure to ensure consistency between interviews, while allowing sufficient flexibility to follow the flow of the interaction. To that end, I drew up a list of open-ended questions organised by themes, which I flexibly adhered to – both in terms of wording and the order in which I asked the questions. According to Brinkmann (2013: 60), a two-column layout of the interview guide, displaying the research themes on one side and the interview questions on another, helps the interviewer to get “an overview of where she is in the conversational process and likely ensures that all relevant themes are covered”. My interview guide for interviews with museum staff addressed the first three research questions and respective sub-questions (cf. [section 3.1](#)). Creating an interview guide means “translating the research questions into questions that can be posed to interviewees in a language that makes sense to them” (Brinkmann 2013: 59). Table 3 shows how I “translated” my theory-driven research questions into more concrete interview questions (and follow-up questions), formulated in a language suitable for museum professionals.

Research questions and corresponding interview questions for interviews with museum staff		
Theme	Research question	Interview questions / <i>follow-up questions</i>
Communication strategies for the multilingual audiences	1. Which strategies are adopted by European art museums to communicate with a multilingual audience?	Which languages and which contents are involved when communicating with your multilingual audience? <i>How is decided which content is translated into which languages?</i>
	1.1 How are the needs of the multilingual audience defined?	Which international target groups do you address? <i>To which extent are you addressing an international audience or local linguistic communities?</i>
		What potential do you see in employing digital technologies in the art museum to involve your multilingual audience?
		Should the translated content be adapted according to the cultural conventions of the target language?
		To which extent do you consider translation issues when creating content in the original language?

Managing translation	2.	How are translation practices organised in European art museums?	Who translates the various contents? <i>Can you explain why you prefer collaborating with freelance translators rather than with agencies (or vice versa)?</i>
	2.1	What use is made of in-house staff and external collaborators?	Which criteria do you consider when selecting external collaborators for translation tasks?
	2.2	How are translation projects managed and commissioned?	Who is involved in managing and commissioning translation projects? <i>To which extent is cross-departmental collaboration implemented?</i>
			How are project-specific requirements communicated to translators / agencies?
			Which resources are translators / agencies provided with?
Translation quality assurance	2.	How are translation practices organised in European art museums?	What do you expect from translators / agencies in terms of quality? <i>What is a quality translation for you?</i>
	2.3	Which procedures are employed to contribute to translation quality?	How are quality requirements communicated to translators / agencies? How is the revision / review of translations organised?
			How is translator feedback handled?
Translation technology & content management	2.	How are translation practices organised in European art museums?	Which tools are used for managing, commissioning, and checking translations? How do you ensure consistent terminology across contents?
	2.4	To what extent is translation technology employed to support translation-related tasks?	<i>Which tools are used to ensure consistent terminology across contents?</i> Which tools are employed to reuse existing translations in future translations? Which systems are employed to manage (multilingual) digital content?
Enhancing translation practices	3.	To what extent are translation-related tasks approached in an efficient and systematic manner?	To which extent are procedures of managing and commissioning translation projects documented and systematised? To which extent are procedures of ensuring translation quality documented and systematised?

Table 3: Research questions and corresponding interview questions for interviews with museum staff

To establish a rapport and put the participant at their ease, I adopted the method of funneling. *Funneling* refers to starting the interview with questions of a general and broad nature before shifting into more specific questions (Minichiello et al. 1990: 116). In fact, the first question of the interview guide ([Appendix A](#)) – “Would you like to present yourself and explain your role within the institution?” – was intended as an ice-breaker type of question, as suggested by Creswell & Creswell (2018: 191), followed by a broad question to start thinking about the issue in general terms: “Which languages and which media are used in your institution when translating for international audiences?”. Moreover, tailored questions were created, focusing on case-specific issues to integrate the core content questions outlined in table 4.

Tailored question	Museum
You created the so-called museum orchestration server (MOS) to connect and manage analogue and virtual museum spheres. Can you explain in more detail? (Kuma) Could this MOS server be useful for efficient translation management?	Kunsthalle Mannheim
Your institution is part of the project Google Arts & Culture – in German language. I read on your website, that content is planned also in English and French language. How are you planning to realise the translation project? (Karlsruhe)	Kunsthalle Karlsruhe
On your website, I saw a tender offer for a translator responsible to establish a translator database (translator pool) for translation services. Can you tell me more about the benefits you expect from this novelty? (Bonn)	Bundeskunsthalle Bonn
I saw a series of multilingual and multicultural digital projects on your website, for example the HyperVisions project. Which role do new technologies play within the multilingual offer of content?	Uffizi Galleries, Florence
I read in the newspaper, that under the new director Jean-Luc Martinez, an important project was launched for the renewal of bilingual object labels. How was this huge translation project managed?	The Louvre Museum, Paris

Table 4: Examples of tailored interview questions

I prepared the interview guide in three languages: German, Italian and English. All interviews were carried out in the native language of the participants, except for three cases, in which the participants used a working language with a high degree of proficiency. Translating the interview guides (and at a later stage participants’ interview quotes), inevitably involved another layer of interpretation, with some potential bias. However, according to Temple & Young (2004: 168), if translation involved in the research process is carried out by the

researcher themselves, this may present advantages, since the translation process “brings the researcher up close to the problems of meaning within the research process” (cf. [section 3.6.3](#)).

Carrying out the interviews

I carried out 30 interviews in 25 institutions within the period from November 2018 to August 2019. Except for one case, I carried out face-to-face interviews. The duration of individual interviews was approximately one hour, group interviews took from 1,5 to 2 hours. A set of interview questions had been provided to the participants beforehand to support the recruiting process. However, as typical for semi-structured interviews (cf. introduction to this [section 3.3](#)), questions were not fixed, and new questions were introduced during the flow of interaction. Throughout the interviews, I posed mostly open-ended questions encouraging reflective and descriptive answers. Ethical considerations had informed the design of the interview process. All participants were informed in advance about the scope of the study and were asked about whether they agreed to audio record the interview process for research purposes. Upon agreement of the participants, all interviews were audio recorded and used for further data analysis. The data was treated confidentially, and quotes were anonymised.

The use of specialised language referring to the profession and theory of translation was an issue during the interviews. Some participants were insecure when talking about translation practices, since they were not entirely familiar with the terminology related to the translator profession. For instance, in one interview, the participant did not know or remember the term *computer-aided translation tools*: “We use ... I do not know how you call them, ... it's computer-aided ...” (interview with participant GMB). This is not surprising, as museum professionals, though involved in translation-related issues, are not necessarily experts of the subject. I dealt with the situation by keeping specialised terminology to a minimum in order to put participants at their ease. Although imprecise terminology could minimally obstruct the dialogue, the object of the research is content-driven and not focused on the language use of the participants.

It has been said at the very beginning of [section 3.3](#) that semi-structured interviews allow for a greater degree of feedback from participants, as information flows, and the interviewer can alter the line of questioning accordingly. For this reason, “listening skills” are essential to conduct such interviews (Minichiello et al. 2004: 413), enabling the interviewer to follow-up on participants’ input and guide the flow of interaction. I was aware of the importance of “active listening” during the interviews (Seidmann 1998: 78-79), thus tried to focus on various levels: the explicit content (verbal information), the unstated content (information

between the lines) and the overall situation (reactions, time management, etc.). As suggested by Minichiello et al. (1990: 137), I attempted to listen analytically by “engaging in the conversation as part of a normal social interaction while at the same time being distanced enough to sustain a critical inner dialogue which enables analysis of the information”. Moreover, I took notes to keep record of key terms, ideas, and emerging topics. Notetaking during the interviews served two objectives. On the one hand, it helped me to follow up on meaningful issues in need of clarification at a later point during the interview – without interrupting the flow of information (Adams 2015: 503). On the other hand, the key words and ideas noted down during the interview had a mnemonic function, supporting the second phase of notetaking. In fact, immediately after the interview, I wrote down fieldnotes in form of a “reflective account” of what was said in the interview, while connecting and interpreting pieces of information (Minichiello et al. 1990: 251). Taking reflective notes after the interview was thus a first approach to analysing the information obtained during the interview (ibid.).

In line with the constructivist approach I was using, building rapport was essential to establish a collaborative and interactive interview. I tried to apply the CHE principles (Brown & Danaher 2017), “a tool for rapport building [...] maximising the interview’s potential as a dialogical source of knowledge and meaning making” in semi-structured interview practices. The acronym CHE stands for connectivity, humanness, and empathy. For this study, the most relevant CHE principles were: the importance of adequately informing the participants about the objectives of the interview, maintaining an equal balance of power in the relationship, the value of mutuality by appreciating the perspectives of the “other”. To achieve these principles, Brown & Danaher point out a series of practices, such as open-ended questioning and responsive and active listening techniques. Rapport building was also a door-opener for further collaboration, as I carried out a member check of the results in form of follow-up interviews and a questionnaire survey.

3.3.2 Interviewing staff of language and translation service providers

At a certain point, I felt that input was needed from those who professionally manage translation projects, and/or potentially collaborate with museums. I considered this useful as one theoretical premise underlying this study is the efficient collaboration between museum staff and translation service provider. Therefore, I arranged semi-structured interviews with three different language and translation service providers (cf. table 5). The choice of the TSPs was mainly guided by the criterion of specialisation in the field of (art) museum translation. From

my online research, few language and translation providers appeared to be highly specialised in the sector. Nonetheless, I achieved to identify and involve two major translation service providers specialised in the art sector – one based in Europe, and the other in the USA:

- Art & Culture Translated, a translation and language services' company focused on the art and culture sectors, based in Barcelona and London, which collaborates with a number of European art museums, such as the MAXXI – National Museum of 21st Century Arts in Rome or the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid.
- Eriksen Translations, a TSP based in New York, specialised in translating for museums and cultural institutions, that collaborates with major US art museums, such as the Guggenheim or the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The third language provider to be involved was the Italian branch of Acolad, an international TSP with offices in 25 countries around the world. Acolad was involved thanks to a close relationship with the University of Bologna, with the TSP having offered support in providing insights into issues of translation technology. Although the TSP is not primarily specialised in museum translation, they do have some experience in the sector.

The interviews with these translation service providers served to gain insights into the professional practices of translation project managers and stimulated a reflection on how museums can contribute to the translation process. Due to the diversity of the companies, each interview was characterised by different foci. While the interviews with Arts & Culture Translated and Eriksen Translations focused on the collaboration between museum and TSP, the interview with Acolad concentrated on project management, especially on the use of translation technology and how it can contribute to the translation process. The interviews thus addressed the fourth research question and sub-questions (cf. [section 3.1](#)). Table 6 shows how the research questions have been translated into interview questions (cf. [Appendix A](#)).

TSP	Participant(s)	Team / Department	Date & Modality
Acolad Bologna	ACO-1 ACO-2	Production Production	9 June 2020 online
Arts & Culture Translated Barcelona & London	ACT	Director	8 June 2020 online
Eriksen Translations, New York	ET	Sales	24 June 2020 online

Table 5: Overview of selected TSPs and participants for interviews

All interviews were carried out in the month of June 2020 via videoconference (Skype, Zoom and MS Teams) for several reasons, such as long distances, time constraints as well as COVID-19 restrictions and precautions. Upon the participants' authorisation, the three interviews were recorded, while notes were taken to track key terms and ideas.

Research questions and corresponding interview questions for interviews with TSP		
Theme	Research question	Interview questions / <i>follow-up</i> questions
Enhancing translation practices	4. Which enhancements to current translation practices may be introduced by art museums to contribute to the overall translation process?	Which are potential problems when collaborating with art museums? <i>How could these problems be resolved?</i>
		What can museums do to help improve your work and contribute to translation quality?
Project Management	4.1 Which processes may contribute to successfully communicate client requirements?	To which extent is project management a shared practice between museum and TSP? <i>To which extent is the museum involved in the translation project cycle?</i>
		Which channels and tools are used to support the dialogue between museum and TSP in the various phases of a translation project?
		How are communication strategies for international audiences agreed upon?
		How are client requirements agreed upon?
Translation technology	4.2 How may translation technology be employed to contribute to an efficient collaboration?	How do you evaluate the usefulness of computer-aided translation tools for museum translation, especially in the art sector?
		Which CAT tool functions are most useful for translation, project management and quality assurance in the context of museum translation?
		How may web-based CAT tools contribute to an efficient collaboration between museum and TSP?

Table 6: Research questions and corresponding interview questions for interviews with staff from TSPs

3.4 An alternative method of data management and analysis

The information collected through interviews can be organised and analysed by adopting a variety of methods and tools. In my study, I loosely adopted thematic analysis, a useful method for working within the participatory research paradigm, examining the perspectives of different participants, highlighting similarities and differences, while potentially generating unanticipated insights, as observed by Braun & Clarke (2006: 97). In fact, Braun & Clarke adopt a qualitative approach to thematic analysis (“reflexive TA”), acknowledging the researcher’s reflexivity as an integral process of analysis – interpreting and creating meaning (Braun & Clarke 2019: 590-591). Thus, thematic analysis seeks to develop, analyse, and report themes within a data set in an “iterative and reflective process of data engagement” (Terry et al. 2017: 18-19). The terms *reflexive* and *reflexivity* are used by the research team Braun, Clarke, and Terry referring to the concept of continually “reflecting and identifying what you’re assuming” (Braun & Clarke 2019: 595). However, sometimes they equally use the term *reflective*.

While themes are usually developed by coding verbatim transcriptions of interview data, I opted for an alternative way of managing interview data relying on fieldnotes and repetitive close listening of interview recordings as proposed by Halcomb & Davidson (2006). They propose a “reflexive, iterative process of data management” for those interview studies, to which closeness to the verbatim account is not so crucial (ibid.: 41). As my research investigates professional practices with a focus on analysing content rather than language, I considered the verbatim transcription of more than 30 interview recordings to be inefficient²². Instead of creating full transcripts, I used partial transcriptions of significant citations to complement my fieldnotes and audio recordings. The importance of writing notes to capture the researcher’s interpretations immediately after the interview (*debriefing notes*) and during the process of listening to the audio recordings (*theoretical memos*) is also stressed by Wengraf:

Post-interview debriefing is central to your understanding of the interview. Making notes immediately after the session [...] is a key operation often neglected. (2001: 142)

²² Trials with different voice recognition software (IBM, Dragon Naturally Speaking, YobiYoba) for automatic transcription have been carried out, providing results of poor quality due to various reasons, such as different local accents, background noise, etc.

When you listen to the tape for the first time, [...] a flood of memories and thoughts will be provoked. These memories and thoughts are – like your post-session thoughts and impressions [...] – available only once. [...] You could argue – almost – that the only point of doing the slow work of transcription is to force the delivery to your conscious mind of as many thoughts and memories as you can. If, at the end of the process of transcription, all you have is a perfect transcript, and no theoretical memos, you have wasted 60% or more of this window of opportunity. Better to have no transcript and all the **theoretical memos**, than the other way round! (Wengraf 2001: 209)

The high value of such notes written in a “free flow” lies in the fact that material is already interpreted, re-ordered, and first “connections within and outside the interview” are made – which is vital for subsequent analysis (Wengraf 2001: 144). In this section, I will describe the process of data management and analysis I adopted in my study, which is inspired by Braun and Clark’s process of thematic analysis and by Halcomb and Davidson’s process of data management, both of which share the attribute of being “reflexive and iterative” (Halcomb & Davidson 2006: 41). In table 7, I aligned the two processes to provide a schematic overview.

Steps of an alternative data management method (Halcomb & Davidson 2006)	Phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006)
<i>Step 1:</i> Audio taping of interview and concurrent note taking	
<i>Step 2:</i> Reflective journalising immediately post-interview	
<i>Step 3:</i> Listening to the audiotape & amending of field notes	<i>Phase 1:</i> Familiarising with data
<i>Step 4:</i> Preliminary content (or thematic) analysis ²³	<i>Phase 2:</i> Generating initial codes
	<i>Phase 3:</i> Searching for themes
<i>Step 5:</i> Secondary content (or thematic) analysis	<i>Phase 4:</i> Reviewing themes
<i>Step 6:</i> Thematic review	<i>Phase 5:</i> Defining and naming themes
	<i>Phase 6:</i> Producing the report

Table 7: Alignment of two processes inspiring

²³ Although Halcomb & Davidson mention ‘content analysis’ as a possible method, thematic analysis is considered as an alternative (Halcomb & Davidson (2006: 40).

By merging some of their steps of data management and analysis, I adapted a process according to my research needs, including seven phases (cf. table 8). Here it must be pointed out that the seven phases described in [sections 3.4.1](#) and [3.4.2](#) are not clear cut, as the whole process of collecting, managing, and analysing information in qualitative research is iterative:

Working with qualitative data is mainly about interpreting and getting a good understanding of the accounts and of the participants. [...] [It] is a process that moves between gathering, working with, and reflecting upon data throughout the research (Matthews & Ross 2010: 373).

Moreover, since the process of interviewing museums extended over a period of 10 months, different phases of the analysis were carried out in parallel. For instance, while already analysing one set of interviews, other interviews were still to being carried out.

Phases of data management and analysis	
<i>Phase 1:</i>	Audio recording of interview and concurrent notetaking
<i>Phase 2:</i>	Reflective post-interview notetaking
<i>Phase 3:</i>	Close listening of audio recordings and revising/integrating fieldnotes
<i>Phase 4:</i>	Organising data
<i>Phase 5:</i>	Developing themes
<i>Phase 6:</i>	Reviewing and defining themes
<i>Phase 7:</i>	Selecting illustrative examples from audio recordings

Table 8: Phases of data management and analysis

3.4.1 Collecting data: from notetaking to case summaries

Phase 1: Audio recording of interview and concurrent notetaking

During the interview, the audio of the dialogic interaction was recorded, while taking a few notes. It has often been observed that notetaking can disrupt the flow of an interview and distract the interviewer from the dialogue. For this reason, I limited the note-taking during this phase to briefly jotting down some keywords, ideas, and impressions. These “brief” notes had a mnemonic function, allowing me to expand on these first impressions during subsequent phases.

Phase 2: Reflective post-interview notetaking

To exploit a fresh memory of the interview, I expanded on my initial impressions with more detailed comments *immediately* after the interview. I reflected and connected “major ideas, concepts and issues raised by participants” (Halcomb & Davidson 2006:41), thus engaging in a first interpretation of the interaction, and speculating about themes (Minichiello 1990: 251).

Phase 3: Close listening of audio recordings and revising/integrating fieldnotes

The phase of close listening of the interview audio is another step aimed at reviewing and integrating the fieldnotes. The purpose of this phase was to ensure that my notes provided an accurate account of the interaction, what I shall refer to in what follows as *case summaries* (cf. [Appendix B](#)). These case summaries also include the transcription of significant and selected interview passages, transcribed verbatim, by loosely employing techniques for orthographic transcriptions (e.g. adding punctuation), while excluding paralinguistic features (e.g. laughing).

3.4.2 Organising and analysing data: the *Zettelkasten* method***Phase 4: Organising data***

Thematic analysis involves segmenting, categorising, and relinking of aspects in the data before final interpretation. (Grbich 2013: 7)

In the following, I will show how the *Zettelkasten* method can help to adequately prepare the data in Grbich’s sense, i.e. “segmenting, categorising and relinking” data elements. Due to the nature of semi-structured interviews, the overall structure of my collected information varied from case to case. To analyse and compare the information contained in my case summaries, it was thus necessary to develop a common structure of relevant topics before inserting the data in an analysis tool. I therefore elaborated an *index* of topics (cf. [Appendix B](#)) able to fit in information from all interviews, while chunking the information according to topics. These topics were roughly based on the topics of the interview guide as well as on potential themes that I began to identify. The purpose of this index is to allow the researcher to retrieve pieces of data about a particular topic, while enabling an effective comparability between the interviews (Matthews & Ross 2010: 332). Prior to the insertion of the data, I also defined a map of keywords (cf. [Appendix B](#)) with the aim of tagging the pieces of information while inserting them. This step may be compared to what in thematic analysis is usually referred to as “generating initial codes” (Braun & Clarke 2006: 87).

To organise the information in such a structured and accessible manner, I created a note archive, using the Zettelkasten method²⁴. This archive simulates a database and allows information to be connected through *tags* and *relations*. To insert the information, I used the text editor Sublime Text²⁵ and the Plugin Sublime ZK²⁶. I inserted more than 200 pieces of information according to topic and museum, tagged on the basis of the keyword map, and connected through relations in an ongoing manner. Moreover, ideas and interpretations that emerged while inserting the data, were saved as *notes*, which I tagged and related to relevant pieces of information. By using an analogous procedure, I also inserted the information obtained during the interviews with TSPs in the same archive.

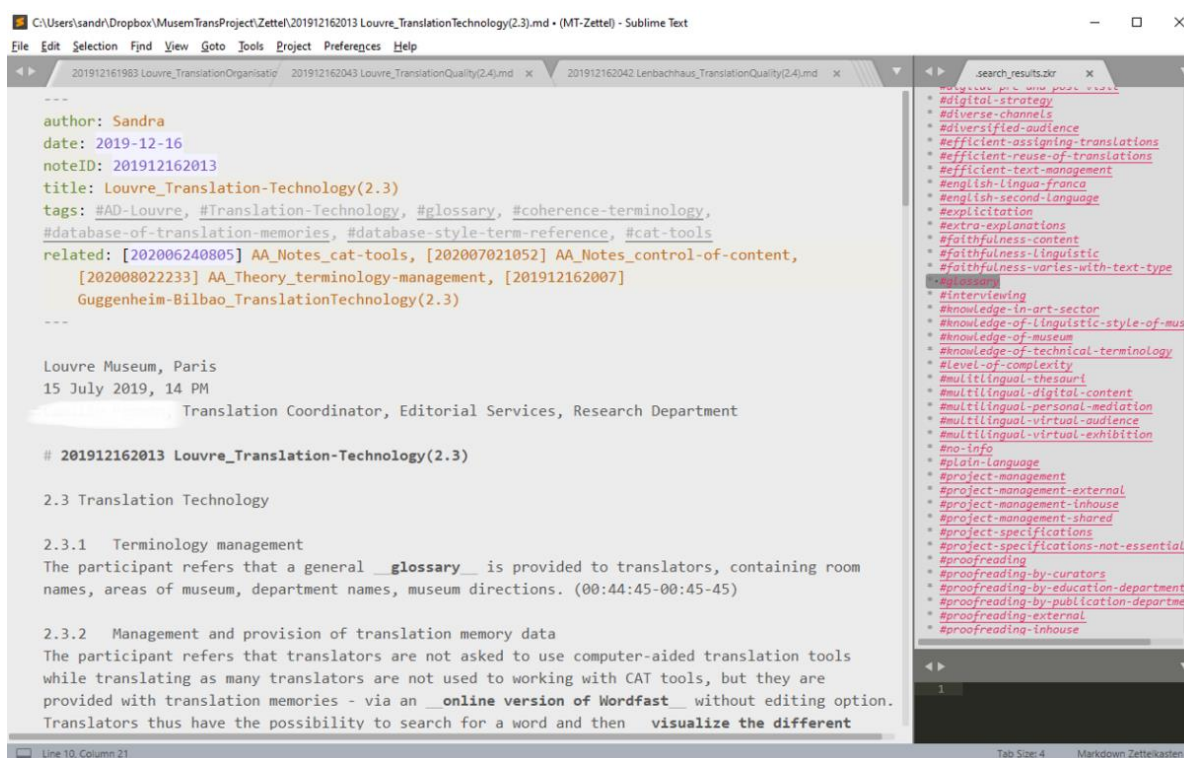


Figure 1: Interface of Sublime Text: header containing tags and relations, right column containing keywords/tags

²⁴ <https://zettelkasten.de> (last access 15/09/21)

²⁵ <https://www.sublimetext.com/3> (last access 15/09/21)

²⁶ <https://packagecontrol.io/installation> (last access 15/09/21)

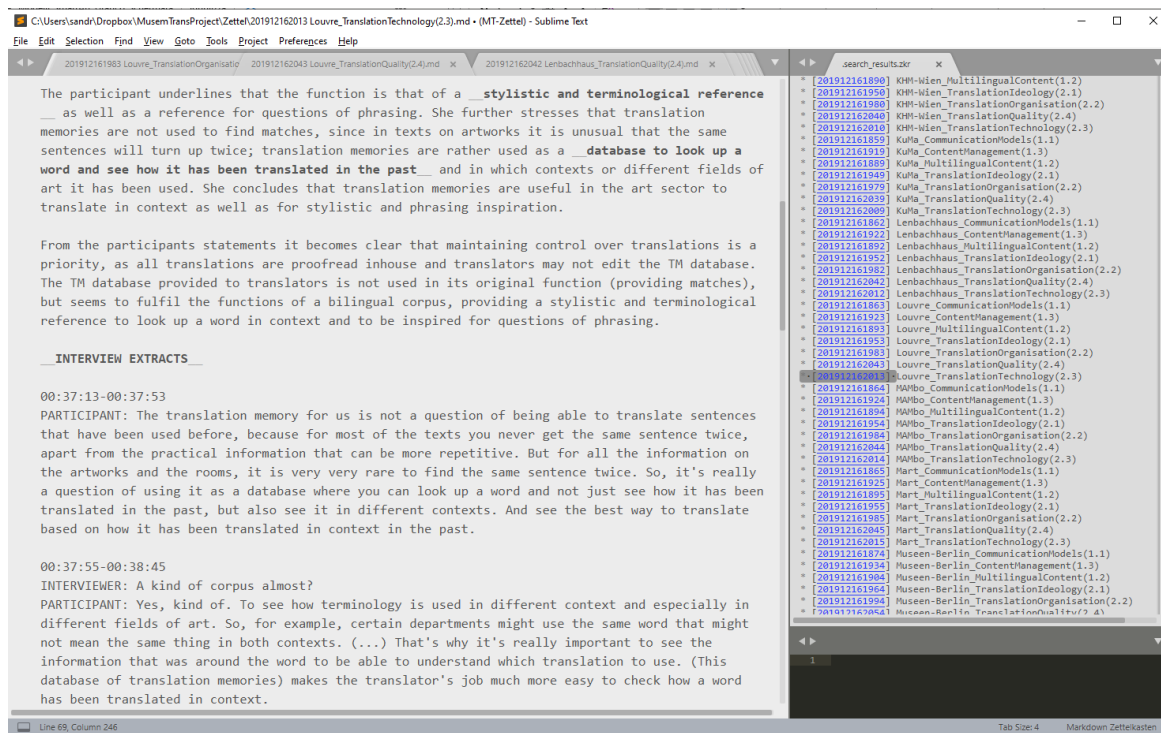


Figure 2: Interface of Sublime Text: right column containing index ordered by museum and topic, body containing the related part of the case summary

Phase 5: Developing themes

After having inserted the case summaries in the analysis tool, I continued to add notes and create relations in an ongoing analysis. In this way, I created a network of ideas, which allowed me to identify common thematic patterns across the cases. Besides the option of full text research, I prevalently searched the archive for tags (keywords) and relations, allowing for cross reference research and for themes (and sub-themes) to be developed.

Phase 6: Reviewing and defining themes

In this phase, I refined the developed themes and sub-themes and organised them in “thematic maps” (cf. [Appendix C](#)), while clearly naming them and defining the story of each theme as well as the overall story the analysis tells (Braun & Clarke 2006: 91-92). Creating a thematic map can also be considered an iterative process, in the sense that an initial thematic map may be created in earlier phases and progressively refined.

Phase 7: Selecting illustrative examples from audio recordings

While reporting the analysis, I listened again to significant interview passages of the audio recordings to identify additional examples, which capture the essence of the points I was trying

to make. The aim was to embed compelling extracts within the narrative to illustrate the story (Braun & Clarke 2006: 93). Returning to the collected verbal data is crucial to qualitative research, as stated by Matthews & Ross (2010: 374): “although the data must be interpreted, summarised and categorised, we must remain in touch [with] the raw data”.

3.5 A grid of key features: analysing translation policies in art museums

As outlined in [section 2.5.2](#), with *translation policies* I refer to the translation procedures and guiding principles underlying translation practices in museums. In addition to my thematic analysis of translation practices in art museums outlined in the previous sections of this chapter, I developed a grid of key features (cf. [table 9](#), [section 6.1](#)) to analyse the translation policies in museums and examine whether they were present or not in each institution. The objective here was not an evaluation or value judgement of translation policies in the museums, but rather an assessment of the degree to which policies were in place in different areas, with the aim to illustrate possible enhancements and optimisations of existing approaches. My grid of key features is inspired by Peter Sandrini’s work (2018) on quality standards for translation policies in official institutions, and it proposes key features that can ensure a structured and efficient organisation of translation-related tasks. Sandrini’s Translation Policy Model (TPM) comprises five areas: Ideology, Organisation, Technology, Quality, and Human Resources – three of these areas were relevant to my grid model, namely Organisation, Technology, and Quality.

The structure of my grid is inspired by the Maturity Model (cf. Crawford 2007; CMMI 2010), a widely used tool to outline potential improvements of processes, structures, and technologies in the professional world, often in the context of project management and in the technological sector. A well-known model is the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) developed by the Software Engineering Institute of the Carnegie Mellon University. Although these models had originally been developed for the software industry, the maturity level structure, and the mechanisms for determining those levels have been applied in other sectors. In fact, the model has also found application in the translation industry, e.g. the Localization Maturity Model²⁷ to evaluate localisation activities and the LSP Metrix²⁸ to evaluate translation service providers. A maturity model allows companies or organisations to

²⁷ <https://insights.csa-research.com/reportaction/37952/Marketing>

²⁸ <https://csa-research.com/More/Media/Press-Releases/ArticleID/8/CSA-Research-Launches-Data-based-Series-for-Language-Service-Providers-to-Benchmark-Business-and-Operational-Maturity-Against-Proprietary-LSP-Metrix%E2%84%A2>

self-assess the maturity of various aspects of their processes against benchmarks (Solar et. al 2013: 207). These models are typically constructed with five levels describing a staged development: *initial*, *defining*, *defined*, *managed*, *optimised* as suggested by the CMMI model, which are synthesised here:

- *Initial*: no processes are in place
- *Defining*: initial processes are introduced
- *Defined*: processes are defined and controlled
- *Managed*: processes are quantitatively managed
- *Optimised*: processes are optimized and continually improved

In order to assess the maturity of specific processes, structures or technologies in a specific professional setting, the maturity level is determined for a set of key domain areas (KDA), which are each broken down into key components (or key features). It is at the level of key features, where the actual “measurement” of maturity takes place. Obviously, there is a subjective nature to the assessment. To minimise potential errors, Crawford (2007: 12-13) stresses the importance of “individual interviews” to collect data as well as “benchmark comparisons to established standards”.

I adapted the Maturity Model to the specific needs of my project, able to describe potential enhancements of translation policies in art museums and promote best practices. A significant adaptation concerned the choice of terminology. To underline that evaluation and measurement were secondary, I avoided the common terms *metrics* and *maturity level*, while giving preference to the terms *grid of key features* and *degree of application*. Moreover, I elaborated a simplified structure of the model by reducing the number of staged developments: rather than five maturity levels, I considered only three degrees of application (DA) to describe a staged development for various areas and their key features – *initial*, *defined*, *optimised* (cf. [table 17](#), [section 6.1](#)):

- *Initial*: no or only initial processes are in place
- *Defined*: defined processes are performed in a partially systematic manner
- *Optimised*: processes are optimised and continually improved

Based on the quality criteria of Sandrini’s work (2018) and the international standards for translation ISO 17100 and ISO 11669 (cf. [section 2.5.1](#)), I identified three key domain areas (KDA) as relevant to support translation practices in art museums, namely Translation management, Translation quality assurance, and Translation technology Each area was further

broken down into a set of key features (KF). For instance, the key features of the KDA Translation management are: Coordination of in-house translation management, Collaboration with external translators, and Translation project management – project specifications (cf. [table 9](#)). Prior to the assessment, I described the three degrees of application for each key feature, while referring to the ISO standards for translation. However, I chose a bottom-up approach. Therefore, although the descriptions are based on approved practices of existing quality standards, at the same time they consider some specific conditions of art museums that had emerged from the interviews. When applying the grid for assessment (cf. [section 6.2](#)), I drew both on the case summaries and on the audio recordings to establish the degree of application of the diverse key features for each museum, while illustrating general tendencies and potential enhancements.

Grid of key features for translation policies in (art) museums

Key Domain Area (KDA)	Key Features (KF)
Translation Management	Coordination of in-house translation management
	Collaboration with external translators
	Translation project management: project specifications
Translation Quality Assurance	Process standards for quality assurance
	In-house review and feedback
Translation Technology	Translation management systems
	Terminology management
	Management and provision of TM and corpus data

Table 9: Grid of key features for translation policies in (art) museums

The objectives of this grid analysis were multiple. On the one hand, I aimed to provide a description of existing translation policies in the interviewed art museums. On the other hand, with the grid of key features; I aimed to provide a framework to identify areas that support translation practices and provide guiding principles to enhance translation policies in art museums. Finally, next to the thematic analysis, the grid analysis served as the starting point to develop a set of guidelines for translation practices in art museums. Thus, this part of the analysis responds to the last two research questions and sub-questions (cf. [section 3.1](#)), on whether translation practices are approached efficiently in art museums and which potential enhancements to current translation practices could be introduced. In table 10, the objectives of the grid analysis are aligned with their respective research questions.

Objectives of the grid analysis	Research questions
provide a description of the present situation of translation policies in art museums	3. To which extent are translation-related tasks approached in an efficient and systematic manner?
<p>create a framework to identify areas that support translation practices</p> <p>provide guiding principles of potential enhancements of translation policies and practices in art museums</p> <p>provide a basis to develop guidelines for translation practices in art museums</p>	<p>4. Which enhancements to current translation practices may be introduced by art museums to contribute to the overall translation process?</p> <p>4.1. Which processes may contribute to successfully communicate client requirements?</p> <p>4.2. How may translation technology be employed to contribute to an efficient collaboration?</p>

Table 10: Objectives of grid analysis and research questions aligned

3.6 Qualitative validity

3.6.1 Strategies of qualitative validity

Interviews offer the benefit of privileged access to participants' opinions on a specific issue. At the same time, "one of the problems presented by this type of research is the potential bias created by the proximity between interviewer and interviewee" (Saldanha & O'Brien 2013: 169). But a possible threat to the validity of the interview, from a research perspective, is that the interviewer-researchers can influence the participants' responses by unconsciously revealing the type of answers they desire ("researcher unintentional expectancy effect", Frey et al. 1999). Apart from such researcher bias effects, participants may also introduce bias by responding in the way they assume the researcher wants them to ("social desirability") or by responding with the intention to make a good impression ("impression management") (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson 2009: 96). Within a positivistic perspective, techniques to ensure researcher/interviewer neutrality are employed to guarantee validity. In contrast, within a constructivist approach, the interactive aspect of interviews is considered an intrinsic part of the research, making neutrality both impossible and undesirable. Thus, alternative parameters of assessing validity are needed in qualitative research (Saldanha & O'Brien 2013: 29). Lather's (1986) concept of "face validity" suggests integrating the validation of results by the researched community with the aim of refining results. Similarly, Creswell & Creswell (2018: 200) suggest "member checking to determine the accuracy of qualitative findings by taking the final report

or specific descriptions or themes back to participants and determining whether these participants feel that they are accurate.” The concept of “warrantability” (Wood & Kroger 2000) refers to assessing the research in terms of “trustworthiness” involving both participants and evaluators. A detailed documentation of the research processes is another key issue to allow for assessment. Yin (2009) similarly suggests that qualitative researchers should document as many steps of the procedures as possible. This requirement has been largely met in my study, given the detailed explanations in the previous sections of this chapter aimed at illustrating the research method and the various steps of the procedures. Moreover, in the following sections, I will show how the validity of my results has been assessed by involving the research participants.

3.6.2 Checking the validity of the results: questionnaires and follow-up interviews

Creswell & Creswell (2018: 200) define *qualitative validity* as the checking for accuracy of the results by employing diverse “validity strategies”. In my study, the accuracy of the findings was validated by the interview participants, who commented and provided feedback on the results – thus applying the strategy of *member-checking* or *face validity*. To this end, I employed questionnaires and follow-up interviews, as already mentioned in [section 3.2](#). Moreover, as described in [section 3.4.2](#), the process of defining themes from the data was organised in several steps to double-check accuracy. Finally, I documented the procedures of the various research phases and reported in a detailed and transparent manner.

The proposed set of guidelines for translation practices in museums which I had drawn up were validated by means of two different questionnaires (cf. [Appendix D](#), tables 13 and 14) – one designed for museum staff members, and the other for translation service providers, which were sent to all the interview participants. Moreover, follow-up interviews were carried out to address the issues of the questionnaire in more depth. Such “communicative validation” (Stern 2014: 214) is a typical asset of Action Research. I solicited such a detailed evaluation by practitioners in order to improve and refine the guidelines and reach an agreement on the criteria of the model. Tables 11 and 12 give information about the adhesions to the questionnaire survey and the follow-up interviews. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and complicated working conditions, the participation in the validation phase was significantly lowered.

Institution	Participant	Team
Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art, Venice	CP-1	Museum Direction
Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art, Venice	CP-3	Communication
Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence	GUF	Communication Department
MAMbo Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bologna	MBO-1	Publications Department
Mart Museo, Rovereto	MM-1	Digital Communication
Museion, Bolzano	MUS-1	Press Office
Pinakotheken, Munich	PM-1	Museum Direction
Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz	UJ-7	Editorial Department

Table 11: Overview of museum staff members participating in the questionnaire survey

Institution / Company	Participant	Team	Date and Modality
Arts & Culture Translated Barcelona & London	ACT	Director	21/12/2020 online
Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice	PG	Publications Office	05/02/2021 online

Table 12: List of participants performing follow-up interviews

Zoltán Dörnyei (2009) states that questionnaires are not particularly suited for qualitative exploratory research. However, including “open-format items can provide a greater richness” (Dörnyei 2009: 36). According to Dörnyei, open questions in questionnaires work well if they are “not completely open but contain certain guidance” (ibid.: 37), which may be achieved by means of diverse techniques: *specific open questions*, *clarification questions*, *sentence completion items*, and *short-answer questions*.

In my questionnaire design, I combined a closed and an open item within the same question. By drawing on Dörnyei’s techniques, the open questions contained in my questionnaire can be considered *clarification questions*, as they require the participants to further explain the response to the respective closed question. At the same time, my open questions may be categorised as *short-answer questions*, as they require short but “free-ranging

and unpredictable responses” (ibid.: 38). In contrast, the closed questions I included are yes/no questions as well as questions to be answered on a five-numbered Likert scale. The closing question of both questionnaires can be considered a fully open-ended question: “Anything else you wish to add?”, giving participants the opportunity to add any further opinion or highlight a specific issue. The tables 13 and 14 report the questions of both questionnaires:

Questions addressed to museum staff
1) Do you think the guidelines would be useful for your museum? Please explain why?
2) In your opinion, are there any aspects of the guidelines that need improvement? If yes, please explain why and how the guidelines could be improved?
3) In your opinion, is there anything missing from the guidelines? If yes, please explain.
4) In your opinion, how likely is it that your museum could adopt these guidelines, either entirely or partially? Please answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is the most likely. Please explain.
5) In your opinion, how likely is it that Art museums in general could adopt these guidelines, either entirely or partially? Please answer on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is the most likely. Please explain.
6) Anything else you wish to add?

Table 13: Questions included in the questionnaire for museum professionals

Questions addressed to translation professionals working for TSPs
1) Do you think the guidelines could support the collaboration between museums and translation service providers? Please explain why?
2) In your opinion, are there any aspects of the guidelines that need improvement? If yes, please explain why and how the guidelines could be improved?
3) In your opinion, is there anything missing from the guidelines? If yes, please explain.
4) Anything else you wish to add?

Table 14: Questions included in the questionnaire for professionals working for TSPs

3.6.3 Language and translation issues

To conclude this chapter, some remarks on language and translation are needed since my results are reported in a language other than that of the interviews. While my research is reported in English, 28 out of 30 interviews were carried out in either German or Italian. Translating the information gathered from the interviews, especially participant quotes, inevitably involved

another layer of interpretation. However, as already stated in [section 3.6.3](#), if the translation involved in the research process is carried out by the researcher themselves, this may present advantages, since the translation process “brings the researcher up close to the problems of meaning within the research process” (Temple & Young 2004: 168). Another advantage is the fact that the translator possesses in-depth knowledge of the research domain. In my project, researcher, interviewer, and translator coincide. As a scholar of translation studies, I was aware of potential translation issues, and was very careful to preserve the original source language meaning of the interview quotations, in line with the literature:

When translating quotations from interviews for usage in publications, [...] achieving this aim means ensuring the transfer of meaning of what has been said [...] while reconstructing the colourful expressions [...], the nuances and the subtleties [...] of the original quotation. (Feldermann & Hiebl 2020: 235)

My approach to translating interview quotes was a functionalist one, trying to transfer the meaning, while taking into account the situational context. In fact, I tried to provide relevant contextual information, such as the institutional background or role of the participants when suitable. Interview quotes were translated from German and Italian into English by myself as a professional translator of the three involved languages, with German being my mother tongue and Italian and English being my working languages at a high proficiency level. Finally, all the translations were reviewed by a native-speaker professional translator.

4 Results: Interviews with museum staff

In this chapter, I report the results of the qualitative interviews with museum staff, by discussing the emerging themes. I used participant quotes to illustrate my argument, while giving voice to practitioners. For better readability, I edited the quotes for clarity by eliminating “superfluous” features of spoken language (i.e. fillers, repetitions, etc.), by adding contextual information between square brackets where necessary, by omitting irrelevant text elements using empty square brackets, and by highlighting in bold key terms and passages. The analysis is of qualitative nature.

I used quantitative expressions only to show trends in the collected information and to provide some evidence of the strength of a theme. However, frequencies are not part of the qualitative rationale, as expressed by various scholars: Priscilla Pyett (2003: 1174) points out that “counting responses misses the point of qualitative research” and Braun & Clarke (2013: 376) state that “whether something is insightful or important for elucidating our research questions is not necessarily determined by whether large numbers of people said it.”

When using interview quotes, I translated those that were originally in German or Italian (cf. [section 3.6.3](#)). To avoid weighing down the writing, participants’ quotes are provided here only in English. Finally, in the interview extracts, the interviewer is indicated with the letter “I”, the participants with “P”. Acronyms are used to indicate the specific participants referring to the institution they belong (cf. [Appendix F](#)). During the thematic analysis of the interviews with museums staff, I developed six major themes with respective sub-themes:

[Theme 1] Involving the multilingual audience

- Multilingual audience: defining the language policy
- Digital channels to engage the multilingual audience vs. the concept of “Aura”

[Theme 2] (Multilingual) communication strategies

- Content creation in art museums: the curator role
- Creating multilingual content in art museums

[Theme 3] Approaching translation in art museums: quality expectations

- Translation quality as understood by art museum staff
- Translating art – the art of translation: the importance of writing style

[Theme 4] Translation management: assembling a translation team

- In-house staff: single person vs. systematic approach
- Concept of “trusted translators”

[Theme 5] Managing translation quality: lack of a systematic approach

- Checking translations in-house: the desire to keep control
- Co-constructing quality: the importance of an efficient dialogue
- Losing control: terminological coherence

[Theme 6] The use of technology: managing translations efficiently

- Underestimating translation technology
- On everybody's lips: digital content management

4.1 [Theme 1] Involving the multilingual audience

In this section, I address the following research question: Which strategies are adopted by European art museums to communicate with multilingual audiences? The section provides an analysis of art museums' approaches to multilingual communication. Specifically, I investigated their definition of multilingual audiences, as well as the role of the curator in the communicative processes. Finally, I looked at participants' attitudes towards employing digital forms of communication to address multilingual audiences.

4.1.1 Multilingual audience: defining the language policy

This section addresses the definition of the multilingual target audience and its consequences for the language policy in art museums. My analysis revealed that generally, decisions concerning language policy are based on visitor flows and potential international visitors. In border areas, this may include deciding to provide content in the language of a close neighbouring country. Recently, museums also cater for the languages of local linguistic communities and refugees. Further elements affecting language policy are the topic of the exhibition and possible international collaboration when designing an exhibition. A staff member of the communication department of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (KHM) expressed this range of considerations:

- (1) I: How do you decide what content is translated into which languages?
 P: We have data about **visitor flows** of the museum. [...] That is one decisive factor. I think there is a second factor [...] related to projects [...], for example the app, where translations are provided in further languages [...] to **attract new audiences** and people that usually do not come [...]. We are an international institution, and we obviously offer all content in English [...]. In addition, we offer content in the languages of our actual visitors [...]. There are also **project-specific considerations**, as in the case of [the **international collaboration** with the Rijksmuseum] Amsterdam. [...] Of course there are also **limits**. [KHM-1]

Visitor flows and geographical closeness

Observing visitor flows is a common strategy to gather facts on the provenance and language needs of the museum audience. Especially in large-sized art museums and in museums located in tourist destinations, such as Venice, Florence, Paris, and Vienna, the language policy is often based on visitor surveys or other statistical methods, as show the statements by participants from the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice (PG) and the Louvre Museum in Paris (LV) (cf. extracts 2 and 3). Due to economic constraints and staff shortage, many art museums with fewer tourists limit themselves to offering bilingual content, in the local language and in English²⁹, as is the case of the Pinakotheken München (PM) (cf. extract 4).

- (2) The choice [of languages] [...] is based on **our surveys**. [...] English as a *lingua franca*, Italian because we are in Italy, French, Spanish and German represent the **most important tourist groups** [...], and three non-Western languages [Russian, Mandarin, Japanese], since the Russian and Chinese do not necessarily know English. [PG]
- (3) In the museum rooms we have only French and English as there is not enough space. [...] The maps [...] and the audio guides are available in more languages. [...] The choice of languages is **based on visitor statistics**. The aim is to provide the **broadest range of languages**. You have got the Asian, the extra-European, and EU languages. [LV]
- (4) P1: We would like to address a **global citizenship**. We have **artworks that belong to the world**. [...] I think the choice to rely on a **global language – English** – is the right choice.
P2: More than that is not possible. But you may have noticed that our entire collection is online. **We want to get out, we want to be seen**. [PM-3, PM-1)

While bilingual content typically comprises any type of content, from wall panels, audio or media guides, catalogues, brochures, and maps, to web content, multilingual content is more limited and typically includes audio or media guides as well as static visitor information in brochures, maps and on the website, as suggested in extract 3. Sometimes, geographic closeness to a neighbouring country may result in a privileged position being given to that country's language, as in the case of the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (KK) (cf. figure 3) and the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (GMB), who both offer their museum content in French language:

- (5) [Our museum] has an increasingly international orientation. That means that we have recently decided to offer content around exhibitions in **three languages – German, English, and French** – as far as this is possible and sensible. The

²⁹ For a reflection on English as a *lingua franca* in museum communication, refer to Chiara Bartolini (2019).

choice to offer French content has two reasons: on the one hand due to the **geographical closeness**, and on the other hand because of the focus on French painting. Thus, many exhibitions [...] have a French aspect. We offer French content – both in **analogue form** and recently also in **digital form**. [...] For example, the highlights as well as the thematic tours of our multimedia guide for the permanent collection will be offered in three languages. [...] Both our website and the online collection will be in three languages. [KK]

- (6) Since we are in Bilbao, the two languages spoken here are **Spanish and Basque**. **These two languages are a must**. And then, we also want to address the international audience. Since **English is the *lingua franca*** everywhere, we use English. But, as we are so **close to France**, most of the things that we do are also in French. The website is in French. I think, **almost everything is in French**, except for certain things in certain temporary exhibitions. [GMB]

Extract 6 above presents yet another aspect concerning language policy in museums, i.e. the presence of bilingualism in certain regions. Such bilingual situations represent an additional challenge for museums in general, since they usually communicate in at least three languages: the two official languages and additionally English as a *lingua franca*.



Figure 3: Trilingual website of the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe

Topic of temporary exhibitions

Several museums mentioned the topic of the exhibition as an aspect which determined the offered languages for a specific exhibition. Such a choice has often political and diplomatic reasons, as in the case of the exhibition *Leonardo da Vinci* on the 500th anniversary of the artist's death, for which the Louvre Museum Paris (LV) exceptionally created content in Italian.

- (7) Sometimes they [museum directors] also make **diplomatic choices**. For example, we have the **Leonardo da Vinci** exhibition coming up, and obviously some of the contents will be **translated into Italian**. The general policy is how I described [based on statistics], but then the director has the power to add a language if he deems it necessary for a **specific exhibition**. [LV]

The Kunsthalle Mannheim (KM) organised an exhibition, entitled *Inspiration Matisse* (27 September 2019 to 19 January 2020), in occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of the French artist. In this case, the usual bilingual approach of German and English was extended to including a French version:

- (8) Our language policy is also determined by the **languages that are related to an exhibition**. In this case, that is French. And we will present the Matisse exhibition in French, too. [KM-2]

While many art museums decide on the languages to be involved in a temporary exhibition based on the topic, it is far less common that the content or topic of a permanent collection plays a decisive role in the choice of languages. An exception is the example of the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (cf. extract 5 above) which possesses a permanent collection with a strong focus on French painting. Since many of their exhibitions deal with French themes, they chose a trilingual approach to museum communication: German, English, and French.

International collaborations

The Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien and the Rijksmuseum, in Amsterdam, organized a major exhibition on Caravaggio and Bernini, and the origins of the baroque art in Italy. It was held from 15 October 2019 to 19 January 2020 in Vienna with the title *Caravaggio & Bernini – The Discovery of Emotions*, and from 14 February to 13 September 2020 in Amsterdam with a different title *Caravaggio-Bernini. Baroque in Rome* (cf. figure 4). Due to the collaboration with the Rijksmuseum, the exhibition in Vienna provided content in three languages: German, English, and Dutch. This is a prime example of how language policy in museums can also be influenced by international collaborations.



Figure 4: Websites of the Kunsthistorisches Museum and the Rijksmuseum promoting the exhibition on Caravaggio which has been produced in collaboration

Local linguistic communities

Regarding specific projects, the language policy can be based on local communities in order to attract new target groups. For example, the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien offers a museum app “*KMH Stories*” with special thematic tours in the languages of large local linguistic communities, i.e. Turkish as well as the three related languages Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian. In contrast, the regular audio guide is available in languages serving international visitors (German, English, Italian, French, Spanish, Russian and Mandarin).

Offering museum content in languages of local communities aims to promote integration. According to the director of the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne (WRM), museums projects on integration should not be just symbolic politics but must be “appropriate” for the target group involved. A project called *The Children’s Republic* started out engaging school children with Baroque art and ended up as an integration project. Since many participating children were of Turkish background, it was decided to exhibit the project outcome by creating an exhibition featuring Baroque paintings next to children’s paintings – with labels in German and Turkish. In extract 9, the participant describes the project, which was carried out between 20 April 2016 and 1 May 2017:

- (9) We also had an exhibition entitled *The Children's Republic*. Works of Baroque art were interspersed with paintings by children. [...] In the end, we had the labels also in Turkish, as many participating children had a Turkish background. We have quarters [in Cologne] with a huge [Turkish] community. [...] These children would never have come to the museum without such an initiative, as we collaborated with schools. [...] Afterwards they came with their families, and the families were enthusiastic to find their native language in the museum. It was about feeling recognised as part of the community. However, it should not be a **symbolic politics**, but it must be suitable. I do not think it makes much sense to have Turkish labels in the Medieval galleries, while it may be reasonable to offer an audio guide in Turkish language. [WRM]

However, the same participant of the Wallraf-Richartz Museum (WRM) also pointed out that designing content for local communities, including refugees, can be very challenging as this requires specific competences that museums may not always possess (cf. extract 10). His statement is in line Martin & Jennings' (2015) call to increase the cultural competence of museum staff when engaging new local, linguistic communities (cf. [section 2.2.1](#)).

- (10) Two years ago, we had an exhibition about the destruction of cultural heritage in Syria – in Palmyra. The starting point were 18th century paintings from French artists, who had been in Palmyra and who had painted the ruins. During the time of the demolitions, we had archaeologist among the refugees from Syria here in Cologne [...], who made guided tours for the exhibition, also for the **refugees from Syria**. [...] So, we also offered the **guided tours in Arabic language**. That was totally new for us because we did not know whether it would work. [...] There was a **lack of competence**, which we still need to develop. New competences must be acquired and developed. [WRM]

4.1.2 Digital channels to engage the multilingual audience vs. the concept of “Aura”

When I interviewed the participants on the potential of digital technologies in art museums aimed at involving multilingual audiences, the reactions were ambivalent. While recognising the great opportunities of digital options, several participants showed reservations, referring to the distracting nature of multimedia devices. Traditionally, multilingual content in museums is provided in the form of audio guides and personal mediation formats. As audio guides are increasingly being substituted by digital multimedia guides, museums need to decide whether a multilingual approach for this new digital format is feasible. A number of museums pointed out that the costs were high, stating that very often it was only possible to make individual projects multilingual. However, a great advantage in using digital technology to address multilingual audiences is the absence of spatial constraints, a limit encountered with wall panels in the exhibition space. Or, as the Director of the Bundeskunsthalle Bonn put it:

- (11) The **potential of digital technologies** starts exactly where too much diversified content would overload the objects in the exhibition. [...] Digital multimedia guides offer great opportunities [...]. But it is also a question of **cost**. [...] That is only possible for exhibitions with large audiences. [BKH]

Apart from digital content within the museum walls, a variety of museums focus on digital formats addressing a virtual audience. The Kunsthalle Baden-Baden invested in a bilingual digital platform "Kunsthallerevisited.com"³⁰, providing narratives of 12 artworks in

³⁰ <http://kunsthallerevisited.com/episodes/> (last access 15/09/21)

an interactive digital format. Also, the Kunsthalle Karlsruhe stated to exploit the potential of digitalisation to communicate with an international audience by experimenting a range of concepts and formats, e.g. Google Arts and Culture. In my opinion, apart from such special digital projects, both museum websites as well as mobile applications have great potential to address a multilingual audience. As part of the website, online collections are often only monolingual because of the huge amount of content. In some cases, collection highlights are translated into English, as is the case of the Uffizi Galleries (Florence) or the Städel Museum (Frankfurt). Some participants said that their museum intended to translate its online collection into one or two languages. The alternative to translating an online collection is to participate in the Google Arts & Culture project, thus providing content on a selection of artworks in English.

The Uffizi Galleries used their website to co-create content with visitors from a variety of cultures to foster a multicultural dialogue through the encounter with selected artworks. In the section *Hypervisions*, the contents of the project *Views from around the World - An intercultural vision of some masterpieces of the Uffizi Galleries*³¹ are available. Different perspectives on various masterpieces are provided both in the native language of the participant and in English. In a follow-up project *Factories of Stories*³², stories around the Uffizi's masterpieces are narrated by museum staff and people from different cultures. The stories are available as audio tracks in both Italian and the original language of the participants (e.g. Arabic, Farsi, Mandarin, and Spanish) on the museum website, which can be accessed from home or also during a museum visit. This intercultural focus is in line with the declared mission of the museum to “facilitate the access to the Uffizi Galleries’ collections for everybody by promoting the removal of any kind of physical, cultural and social barrier”³³ (cf. figures 5-7).

Alongside the enthusiasm for the potential of digital technologies, a number of participants also expressed doubts regarding the use of digital technologies within art museums. A participant from the educational department of the Kunsthhaus Graz pointed out the limits of digital technology when addressing local language communities. Personal mediation is deemed far more suitable than digital content when it comes to addressing migrant groups in their native language, since social aspects and integration are crucial.

³¹ <https://www.uffizi.it/en/online-exhibitions/views-from-around-the-world> (last access 15/09/21)

³² <https://www.uffizi.it/en/online-exhibitions/factoriesofstories> (last access 15/09/21)

³³ <https://www.uffizi.it/en/pages/accessibility> (last access 15/09/21), see also video “No one is left behind” <https://www.uffizi.it/en/video-stories/learning-education> (last access 15/09/21)

A participant of the Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art (Venice) stated that digital technology may distract from the art works, as visitors are seeking tranquillity, not distraction. Participants from the Pinakotheken München (PM) pointed out the special case of art museums and the concept of *aura*: digital content might interfere with the *aura* of the artworks, as the visitor spends their time looking at a screen rather than appreciating the original artwork (cf. extract 12). Therefore, they see real potential of digital technologies as a means of informing virtual audiences and visitors before and after their visit (cf. extract 13), a view shared by participants of the Museion (Bolzano) and the Grande Museo del Duomo (Florence).

- (12) We want the eye on the artwork and not on a screen. It is a big difference if you are in the Deutsches Museum [with focus on science and technology] and want to explain the inner life of a clock. That is where it [the digital] makes sense. We live in an era where everybody can access any artwork at any time [digitally]; that is why we want that people spend time with the **original artwork** when they come to the museum. In this respect, we adhere to Walter Benjamin's **concept of the Aura of the original**. [PM-1]
- (13) Our online collection informs people about the location of the artwork; that is an **excellent preparation** and highly service-oriented [...]. Our website [online collection] is like an Asian menu: you get the picture of the artwork, you roughly know what it is about, and then you go and see the **original artwork, which is the dish**. [...] **The digital may lead to art, but it may not substitute it**. [PM-1]

Apart from such conceptual considerations, pragmatic constraints, such as cost, time, and available staff to manage multilingual content were also mentioned as decisive factors. From the interviews it is clear that this is an even greater challenge for art galleries without a permanent collection, but with constantly changing temporary exhibitions, involving a series of additional difficulties, such as immense time constraints for providing translations and high costs because of the high number of exhibitions to be translated, as pointed out by the director of the Kunsthalle Baden-Baden:

- (14) You need to evaluate what is feasible, especially considering the three-months duration of our temporary exhibitions. **That is a real challenge**. [...] The situation changes when you have a permanent exhibition as that involves a long-term investment. [KB]

In conclusion, it can be said that an integrated digital and multilingual strategy in art museums is still the exception. Art museums are still in a phase of experimentation, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of digital forms of communication. An excerpt of the daily newspaper Tagesspiegel expresses the situation in Berlin as follows:

“It is still only single experiments, expensive lighthouse projects. [...] The museums in Berlin are still miles away from offering all-embracing digital content, that is multilingual, multimedia, and target specific.” (Tagesspiegel³⁴)

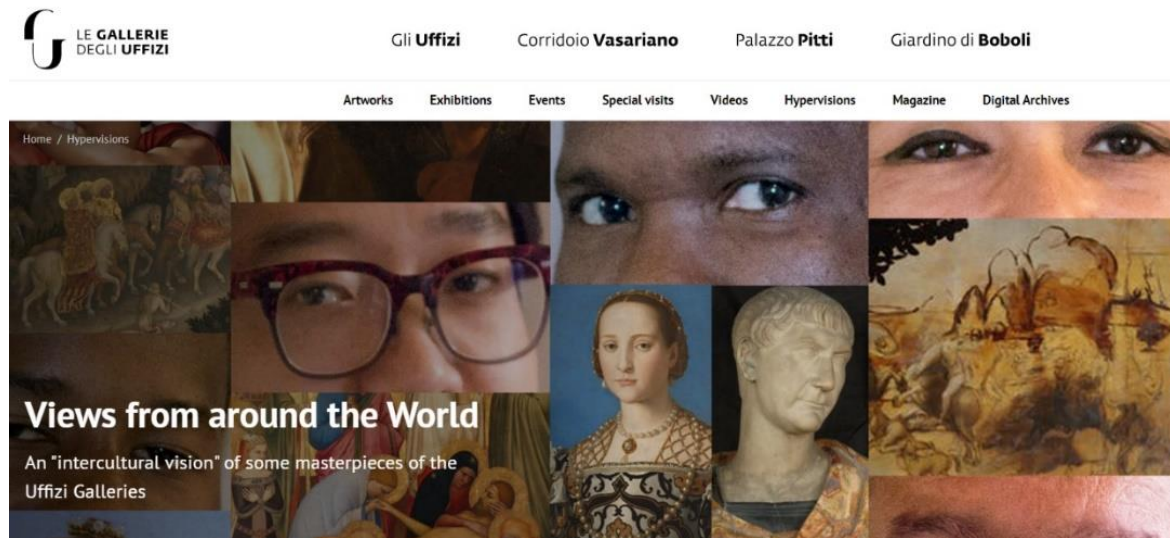


Figure 5: Website of the Uffizi Galleries: Views from around the world

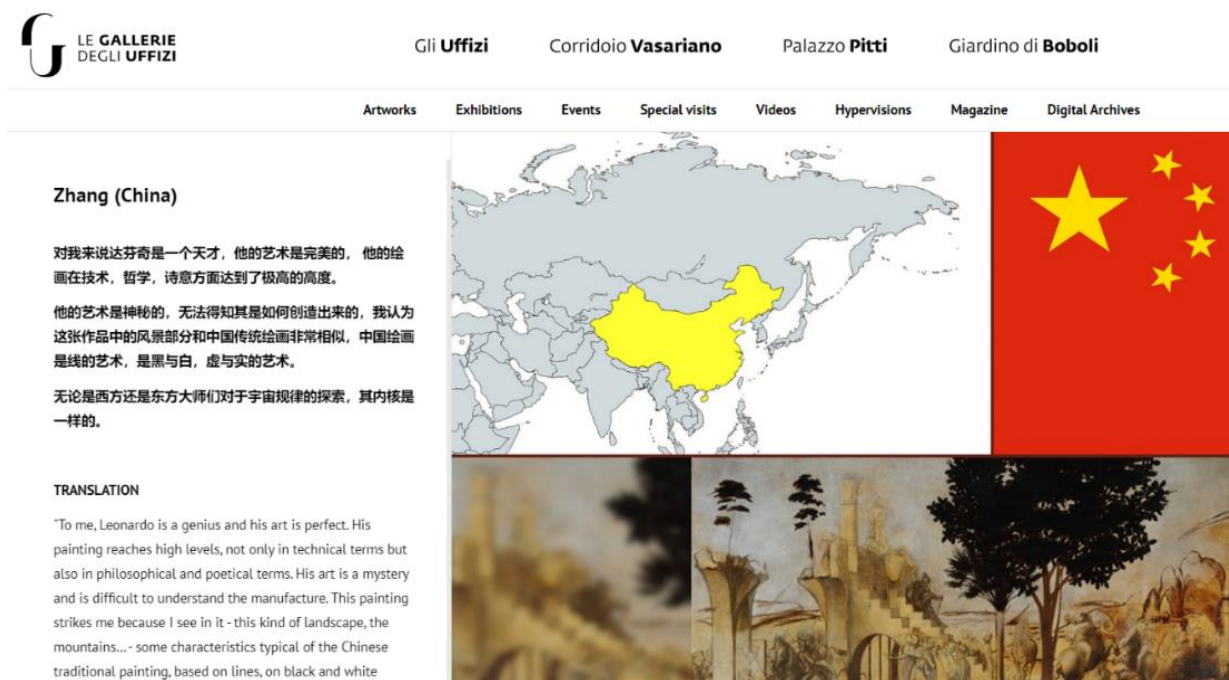


Figure 6: Website of the Uffizi Galleries: Views from around the world – Leonardo’s ‘Adoration of the Magi’ in the view of a Chinese visitor

³⁴ <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wirtschaft/per-app-durch-die-galerie-wie-berliner-museen-fuer-ihre-besucher-digital-werden/12838756.html> (last access 15/09/21)



Figure 7: Website of the Uffizi Galleries: Views from around the world – A painting of the adoration of the magi in the view of an Iranian visitor

4.2 [Theme 2] (Multilingual) communication strategies

Since multilingual communication strategies are embedded in a wider context of museum communication, the issue of communication models was inevitably touched upon in the interviews, revealing a strong tradition of curatorship as a specificity of art museums.

4.2.1 Content creation in art museums: the curator role

- (15) In the last four years, the Pinacoteca has been entirely re-arranged. Before, [descriptive texts of artworks] were extremely academic. [...] Today, content is **intelligible**, the language used is much more **accessible to all**, while preserving a high degree of accuracy and scientific reliability. [...] **Texts are more welcoming**, inviting the visitor to enter the artwork. [PB]

The statement in extract 15 by a participant of the communication department describes how content in the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan (PB) has been entirely redesigned using an accessible language, in order to address a diversified audience. In fact, museums worldwide are currently facing a paradigm shift (cf. Falk 2016), involving a deep reflection on the nature of museum content, which results in a situation of great heterogeneity regarding communication approaches (cf. extract 16), as reported by the communication officer from the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (SMB). On the one hand there is the traditional approach which promotes more formal and academic content intended for the expert and educated visitor, and on the other the new approaches in favour of more accessible and interactive content suitable for a wider audience that does not necessarily possess prior knowledge of the topic.

- (16) Some museums may have strong politics [in terms of their communication model], in others content creation is determined by curators. In some museums, curators have greater power, in still others the education department has more power. Right now, there is a huge **diversity of museum communication models**. [SMB-1]

This diversity of the communication models being used in art museums and of the people involved in creating content is the result of a phase of experimentation with different communicative approaches, entailing potential conflicts between the curatorial department and the education department (museum mediators, museum educators) as is demonstrated by the case of the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne (WRM) (cf. extract 17). They therefore suggest an approach which involves staff members from a variety of departments to provide content for different levels of access aimed at fulfilling Falk's claim (cf. [section 2.1.2](#)) to address multiple visitor needs – both in terms of education and entertainment – by creating exhibitions that reflect intellectual excellence and simultaneously satisfy the interest of diverse audiences.

- (17) In our case, it is staff from the education department, but in close collaboration with curators, who may intervene on text level. [...] However, there is a **potential conflict**: curators have dealt with the subject for decades and know everything about it and are thus inclined to include many facts. For me it is important that we have the text created by a **museum educator**, and then the **curator** may add a second and deeper text level with more detailed content. That would be ideal. [WRM]

The information collected during the interviews also revealed that museums are reflecting on the new museum communication and are making an effort to find viable solutions and alleviate potential tensions. The Staatliche Museen zu Berlin for example organised workshops of creative writing for curators to ensure the quality of content. The language training arranged by the Bundeskunsthalle Bonn (BKH) focused on a more specific issue: different staff members involved in content creation were asked to reflect on the right level of complexity for text panels, thus addressing the dichotomy between academic and more accessible and attractive content:

- (18) Next month we will have language training for our staff members. The aim is to **reflect on the text panels** [...] About 15 people will participate: **mediators, marketing staff, curators, and exhibition project managers**. We want input from diverse perspectives [...] The objective is to **review the level of complexity** [of text panels]. How long should they be? How complex should syntax be? And how can we find a compromise between intellectual mediation and a catchy text? [BKH]

According to Nettke³⁵, such efforts in cross-departmental collaboration follow recent trends, especially in the anglophone area, suggesting that curators and museum mediators should collaborate both in the conceptual design of exhibitions and in content creation to generate more audience-centred content. However, from the interviews, it emerged that communication models in many European art museums are perceived to be strongly determined by the curator, a key figure in content creation process (cf. extract 19). Though a number of the interviewed museums in Austria, Germany, and Italy stated that they have begun to involve museum educators next to curators, others remain more committed to the curatorial concept, as the statement by a participant from the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao shows:

- (19) The curators [...] define and write contents for the gallery, the website, and the audio guide. That is all defined by curators. And it us from the publications department modulating and editing their language and producing the translations. [...] The concept of editing can vary greatly [...] We have our counterparts in New York [...] What they call editing is totally different from what we call editing. **In Spain, editing is much more respectful with the voice of the author**; in the States, an editor tends to redo many things in the text. [GMB]

The extract from an interview with a staff member of an education department of the Kunthaus Graz (UJ) (cf. extract 20) shows how the strong role of curators in art museums is perceived as a limit, both on potential collaboration with other staff members, and on the museum's ability to meet the audience's needs – a situation which also has consequences for translation processes and multilingual strategies (cf. [section 4.2.2](#)).

- (20) I have a strong interest in what happens in the Anglo-Saxon area [...], and I think they are much more audience-centred [...] Here [in Austria], exhibitions are strongly associated with the curator, which results in personalised projects, while talking of "my exhibition". [...] But when exhibitions are developed by a team, more perspectives can be integrated. This way, the **needs and expectations of the audience** can be discussed [...]. The **concept of curatorship** in the German-speaking area – and **especially in the context of art museums** – is strongly eradicated. [...] [It] is almost seen as something divine. [...] For me it was very enriching to see other models and see how organisational processes are implemented. All this is strongly related to content creation, **translation processes**, and intended audiences. [UJ-1]

³⁵ Interview carried out by the author on 22 January 2019 with Prof. Dr. Tobias Nettke, Professor in museology at the University of Applied Sciences HTW in Berlin

4.2.2 Creating multilingual content in art museums

It is not my aim to discuss the appropriateness of different multilingual practices. Rather, my aim is to make some observations based on the interviews to show how different strategies may vary depending on how the source content is created and who the intended target audience is. A core question when deciding on multilingual communication strategies is how to meet the different needs of a multilingual audience. This involves a reflection on how and to what extent the source text needs to be (culturally) adapted for the multilingual target audience. In fact, Cranmer’s distinction of four strategies is centred around this very question (cf. [section 2.2.2](#)), with different levels of adaptation (cf. table 15). At this point it is worth anticipating that the choice of how to communicate with multilingual audiences will also have implications on the selection of external translators, on staff competences to be developed, and on in-house workflows.

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Translations of the original version with minor cultural adaptations 2) Translations of an international version produced in-house in the source language by taking into account the needs of the international audience 3) Culturally customised content: rewriting of content in form and content 4) Accessible content in the source language or in a <i>lingua franca</i> |
|---|

Table 15: Multilingual communication strategies (adapted from Cranmer 2016)

Cultural adaptation

It was mainly participants from museums that exhibit pre-modern art who pointed out the necessity of adapting cultural references, such as historical events and figures. This is not surprising, as pre-modern art represents to a large extent historical, religious, and mythological themes. From the interviews it emerged that the preferred strategy to deal with cultural references is to include additional explanations in the translated content. A participant from the translation unit of the Louvre Museum in Paris (LV) observed that within European languages, many cultural references may be transferred because of a degree of shared history, while some contextualisation may be necessary for visitors from non-European cultures (cf. extract 21). The adaptation of cultural references, as Cranmer suggested with his strategy 1, (cf. table 15) requires that translators and revisors have the necessary cultural competence as was also pointed

out by a participant from the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne in [extract 10](#) when addressing the creation of content for local communities or refugees.

- (21) It is a very different situation for the **Asian languages**. [...] There are a lot of **cultural references** that can be transferred into the European languages because we have a shared history. But when it comes to a Japanese, Chinese and Korean audience, there are many things that need to be **explained** and **contextualised**. [...] That's why we need translators and proof-readers we can really trust. [...] Then we can really trust in their judgement in adding and taking things out. They are having the job of both checking the translation and making sure the content is **adapted to the target audience**. [LV]

Source text editing: creating an international version

However, the decision of whether cultural adaptation is necessary or not depends not only on the language, but also on the target audience that is addressed. If English as a *lingua franca* serves a multilingual and multicultural audience, a higher degree of contextualisation might be required. In fact, a participant from the Uffizi Galleries in Florence (GUF) referred that elements which are specific to the Italian culture are explained in more detail in the English language version in order to address a global audience (cf. extract 22). This is achieved by editing the source text in such a way as to create a new text version which takes the multilingual audience's needs into account before sending it out for translation, which corresponds to Cranmer's strategy 2 (cf. table 15).

- (22) An example. There are three reigning dynasties: the Medici, Lorena and Savoia. That is a basic information to place artworks in time. Our curators take that for granted. A **diversified foreign audience** reading "the Lorena period" probably does not know which period this refers to. [...] So, we [from the communication department] may give the information between brackets or directly in the text, by **explicating** "in the 18th century during the reign of Lorena". [GUF]

Apart from adapting cultural aspects, the same participant from the Uffizi Galleries referred that source text editing also includes adaptations in terms of language and terminology (cf. extract 23). Content thus undergoes a kind of quality check, ensuring that specialised content is clear and accessible to a global audience. Optimising source content for clarity, conciseness, and consistency prior to translation is considered a crucial step in any quality process by scholars (e.g. Drugan 2013) as well as by the translation industry (ISO 11669, ISO 17100), since it can make the content much easier to translate (cf. [section 2.5.1](#)). Such an in-house adaptation process of the source content for a global audience requires museum staff to possess adequate cultural competence.

- (23) P: We need to be more explicit in the **English version** [...] as it is accessed by a wide audience including many **non-native speakers**, thus with a reduced language knowledge. So, we try to use a **simple language**. [...]
 I: So, for translations from Italian into English, you require an effort of simplifying by translators?
 P: [...] No, it is us **simplifying the source text** before sending it out for translation into English. [GUF]

Authoring accessible content

Extract 24 presents a different point of view by a participant from the Pinakotheken München (PM). By referring to a global audience (“mankind”), the museum director claimed that no cultural adaptation is necessary. The participant further argued that art discourse focuses on topics of human interest, which are made available in a format that everybody can access. At the Pinakotheken, content is designed for a global audience, thus cultural adaptations are not deemed necessary, neither when translating into different languages, nor for the English language version addressing a multilingual audience³⁶.

- (24) I: Do you require some degree of cultural adaptation when translating for diverse target groups?
 P: No. [...] **We do not see diverse target groups**. Our audience is **mankind**.
 I: So, what is your strategy when addressing this multilingual audience?
 P: I see my task in providing content in a **format so that everybody can access them**. This tradition is widespread in the Anglo-Saxon area. [...] Our key task is to mediate art content for the **educated citizen – not for the expert**. [...] I am interested in **issues concerning mankind**. [...] Why should we be watching at the old paintings? The answer is an index of topics related to the artworks: alcohol, attentiveness, altruism, anarchy, antisemitism – all these topics are dealt with in the paintings, and it is our job to make them **accessible**. [PM-1]

Cranmer’s strategy 4 also suggest the creation of accessible content to meet the needs of both the local and the global audience (cf. [table 15](#)). However, Cranmer’s starting point is the acknowledgment of diversity (Cranmer 2013: 92). This is in line with Joselia Neves’ (2018) call for a user-centred design (UCD) to support universal accessibility. As outlined in [section 2.1.2](#), UCD involves considering “all possible profiles of visitors and creating ideal conditions to make them feel welcome” (Neves 2018: 421-422). This innovative approach goes far beyond the creation of a single accessible version. Rather than suggesting that all content be levelled down to the lowest common denominator, Neves (2018) proposes that content should be graded and presented in multiple formats in order to offer different ways of interaction and

³⁶ The Pinakotheken München offers a book “The Director’s Choice” in eight languages, audio guides in five European languages, and exhibition and web content in German and English.

engagement, which may appeal to diverse users. To adopt such a strategy successfully, in-house staff needs to possess specific competences, as pointed out by Martin & Jennings (cf. [section 2.2.1](#)), and a high level of linguistic and intercultural awareness. Content creators should be able to “see things through the eyes of someone from outside” (Cranmer 2016: 101).

Designing the source text in a format that is accessible to a global audience may also include optimising the source text for translation in linguistic terms: clear writing for easy reading certainly can facilitate not only the visitors, but also the translation process. In fact, without being prompted, the director of the Pinakotheken (PM) continued his reflection, pointing out that by simplifying vocabulary and syntax, translation problems are avoided:

- (25) Translation has a starting point – the German text. This text needs to take the international target audience into account [...] We act within a certain framework, referring to a **touristic audience** with cultural and **educational interest**. When I write for a yearbook, I write differently [...]. But when writing for the **wide audience**, I reduce the **technical terminology** and the **length of sentences** – for two reasons. First, because it is addressed to a wide German audience – not experts, and second, because that **reduces obstacles for the translation process** right from the beginning. [PM-1]

Similarly, a participant from the Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art in Venice (CP) stated that creating the Italian source content in an accessible format supports translators (cf. extract 26). This principle is very much in line with the recent turn in studies on accessibility (Greco 2018, Romero Fresco 2018), that considers accessibility within a “proactive approach” (Greco 2018: 213) that is made present from inception, rather than a post-factum correction or compensation of an existing gap.

- (26) Our texts are written having in mind a very **diversified audience**. Our visitors come from Canada, the USA, Asia, South America, Europe. And we do not know their level of background knowledge. [...] The concept is not to reduce everything to an elementary level, but to **express complex concepts with simple words**. So, we create **accessible Italian content** trying to avoid complex **sentence structures**, too much **technical vocabulary**, or difficult words [...] because the Italian language can be very complex. [...] This **helps translators**, but it is also an advantage for the Italian audience because in a museum, it is more difficult to read a sentence that extends over 6 lines. [CP-1]

Authoring content in a way that facilitates and supports later translations is an effective strategy, typically applied in technical writing, where a standardised use of language and rule-based writing enhance translatability. In the context of art museums, applying such controlled language may contrast with the aesthetic priorities of art discourse (cf. [section 4.3.2](#)) as it

reduces the author’s creative freedom. Nonetheless, optimising content for clarity, conciseness, and consistency where possible can facilitate the translation process considerably.

Transcreation

The concept of creating culturally customized content for diverse target groups – as proposed by Cranmer’s strategy 3 (cf. [table 15](#)) – has been embraced only to a very limited degree by museum staff, except for promotional content, as the statement by a participant from the Museo del Duomo (Florence) shows:

- (27) I: Do you provide tailor-made content for the diverse target groups belonging to different cultures?
 P: That depends on the text type. When we are talking about in-depth information on historical-artistic issues [...], then a creative translation is not our choice. [...] The translation of a curator text must be faithful. [...] But when it comes to **promotional content** for a wide audience, the concept applies. [MOD]

As pointed out in [section 2.2.2](#), in marketing and web communication, creating such tailor-made content for a specific target group has lately been referred to as *transcreation* and defined by Sissel Marie Rike (2014: 8) as the linguistic and cultural adaption of verbal and non-verbal content to suit the target audience.

Another context where transcreation becomes the preferred strategy regards the creation of bespoke content for “exotic” target groups. An example is the archaeological exhibition entitled *Iran – Behind the Art*, for which web content in Fārsī language was provided in video format rather than in written form, thus implying a change in mode, from written to spoken language (diamesic translation). However, the online publication of the tailor-made content had probably also ethnic reasons of including the culture at focus, and at the same time to promote the exhibition to that target group.

4.3 [Theme 3] Approaching translation in art museums: quality expectations

In this section I will report the most salient aspects that emerged when asking museum staff what they expected from their translators in terms of translation quality. As will be shown, quality requirements for translations may vary based on different communication models, people involved in content creation, differences of art discourse and the text type. It goes without saying that the museum staff’s understanding of translation quality will greatly impact a series of organisational aspects of translation.

4.3.1 Translation quality as understood by art museum staff

This section paves the way for those that follow by providing the main notions of how museum staff define translation quality, since their understanding of translation quality has implications for an art museum's translation policies, such as the selection of external collaborators, the organisation of translation practices in-house, translation quality management, and the use of computer-aided translation tools.

Vague concept of translation quality

During the interviews, participants were asked what, in their opinion, constitutes a good translation, and which competences they expect a translator to possess. Participants tended not to answer immediately but required some time to reflect. Defining translation quality appeared to be challenging for most of them. A possible explanation for these difficulties may be the fact that handling translations for most members of art museum staff is often neither their main task, nor part of their professional expertise. Even though most participants work with text and content and therefore know the vocabulary to describe aspects of textual quality, their responses suggest that translation quality is a rather vague concept for them. Both their initial hesitation and limited aspects of translation quality that were addressed indicate this, as show the statements by two participants from the Kunsthhaus Graz (UJ) and the Kunsthalle Mannheim (KM):

- (28) I: What is a good translation for you?
 P: [...] **That is hard to describe.** [...] There is always text between the lines. When the translations archives to maintain this, then the text works. [UJ-1]
- (29) I: What is a good translation for you?
 P: ... [no answer]
 I: What do you expect from translators?
 P: **I do not know if I am able to tell you** what we require from our translators. Well, they must be able to translate our texts well. We had some translators, where things just did not work. So, in the end, we established that translators need – apart from language skills – knowledge in the art historic sector. [KM-1]

Differentiation of text types

Museum staff appeared to define quality also depending on the text type, requiring varying textual features and expectations of product quality. A common distinction was between informative academic content about art and promotional texts, with the latter requiring a far more creative translation (cf. extract 30) and the former requiring a rather close translation, as reported by the communication officer from the Museo del Duomo (Florence):

- (30) That depends on the text type. [...] When it comes to more **promotional and more accessible content** for a wide audience, we expect a creative translation. But in the case of in-depth **information on historical-artistic issues** for an expert audience authored by a curator, we need a faithful translation. [MOD]

Other participants, as the director of the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne (WRM) distinguished between academic texts in catalogues which provide more in-depth information, and exhibition texts, such as wall texts, addressing a wider audience, with the latter giving translators more freedom to adapt or rewrite content in order to engage a diversified international audience:

- (31) In **academic texts** we expect translators to translate literally. But with **wall texts** addressed to a wide audience, they must create a text that is enjoyable to read. [WRM]

These accounts show museum staff's awareness that according to different text types and specific project conditions, quality requirements may vary. In the view of the publications officer of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (GMB), such varying quality expectations have a major impact on the choice of external collaborators:

- (32) We select the translators not only in terms of the language they translate into, but also in terms of **type of text** [...]. General texts, for example visitor information, mostly anyone can do. [...] Then there are translators we use for more **scholarly texts**. [...] We know who can translate best certain texts. For example, in German, we have a translator who is very good at translating **art historical texts**. He has a certain style that matches very well a certain kind of style in the original text. And we also have a German translator who has experience with texts about contemporary art. [GMB]

Quality priorities

- (33) For us it is important that our translators have a good **understanding of the art sector**. It is not enough that they translate rapidly or efficiently. [...] They also need to be able to convey a certain tone of voice, a certain **writing style**. [...] Art description is not a factual description but involves a certain style. [KB]

The statement by a participant from the Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (KB) in extract 33 encloses the two aspects that emerged as core quality requirements from the interviews. It should be pointed out here that both criteria typically referred to content in catalogues, in the exhibition, or in the online collection – which represent the majority of translations. Figures 8 and 9 equally show this tendency regarding art museums' priorities in terms of translation quality and translator competences. Apart from accuracy and fluency, which are default quality requirements for nearly any museum, the correct use of specialised terminology and style are the most recurring priorities (cf. figure 8). This correlates with what staff members mentioned

most urgently in terms of translator competences, namely domain-specific knowledge and writing skills (cf. figure 9). Given that this is a qualitative study, answer frequencies are obviously not a key piece of data. In fact, these findings did not emerge by counting incidences, but by recognising that writing style and experience in the art history sector were addressed in great detail by museum staff. [Section 4.3.2](#) gives a detailed account on participants' expectations in terms of writing style.

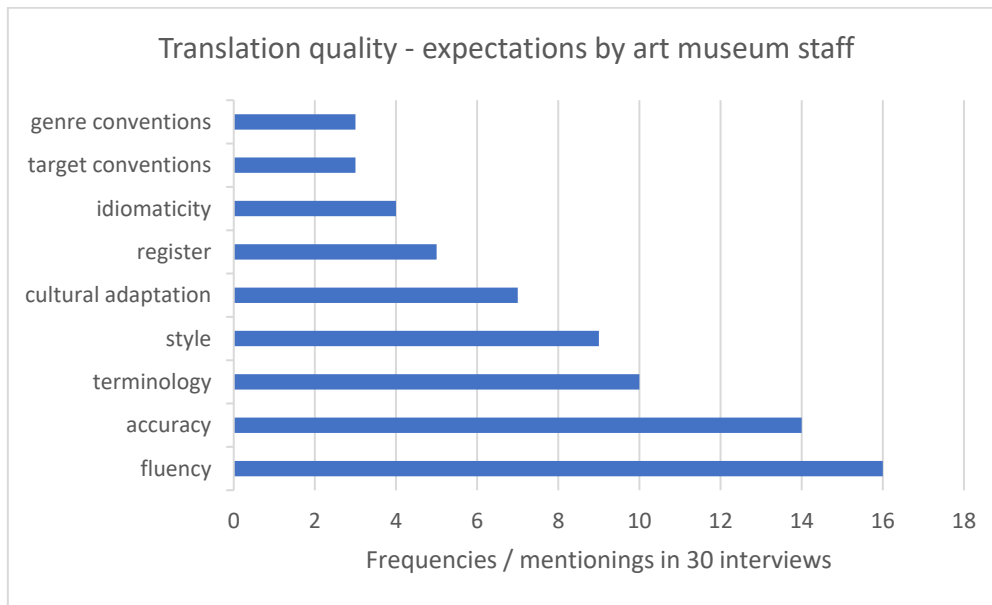


Figure 8: Expectations by art museum staff in terms of translation quality

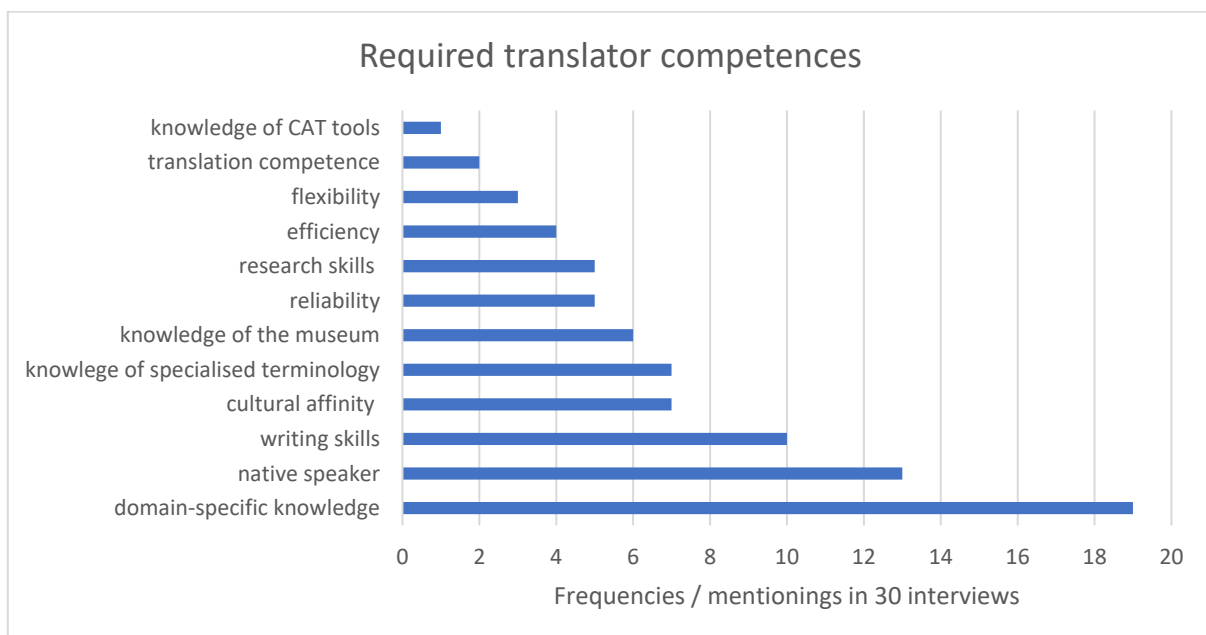


Figure 9: Translator competences required by art museum staff

Quality through close collaboration

The relational aspect of translation quality is a thread that runs consistently through the interview data. Long-lasting collaborations are considered a way to achieve the specific quality requirements of art museums in a process of approximation over time. This involves close collaboration and continual interaction between museum staff and the translator to align quality expectations and work towards a common goal, thus establishing a relationship. Taking an active part in the translation process is a *leitmotif* in many participants' responses – in line with predominant concepts in the literature (cf. [section 2.3.3](#)). The negotiation of translation quality between the art museum and the translator community is characterised by what Robert Neather (cf. [section 2.3.2](#)) calls “expertise anxieties”, meaning that museum staff are concerned that the translator may not have competence to deliver a quality product. In [section 4.5](#), I will investigate which strategies museums adopt to interact in order to integrate their expertise.

Translating art, knowing art

One of the anxieties mentioned by participants concerns the ability of the translator to interpret art discourse correctly (cf. extract 36). Participants from the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (GMB) and the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (KHM) expressed concerns that translators might misinterpret content about art due to a limited background in art history (cf. extracts 34 and 35). For this reason, the importance of domain-specific knowledge is an important factor when choosing translators (cf. [section 4.4.2](#)), as pointed out by the publications officer of the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt (SK) in extract 36. Moreover, a series of coping strategies are used to deal with differing expertise between translators and museum staff, such as checking translations in-house (cf. [section 4.5.1](#)).

- (34) The most recurring translation problems we have in more difficult texts, in more scholarly texts, are **interpretation problems**: “I do not understand what the author is trying to say”. [GMB]
- (35) The point is, you must be able to trust that the translator **grasps the content**, someone who knows the subject, or comes from the art sector, so that no **misinterpretations** can arise. [KHM-1]
- (36) For us it is extremely important that external collaborators have an **art historical knowledge**. [...] Sometimes, that is difficult. That is why we always review translations in-house. [...] Since catalogues contain very specialised in-depth content, we pay great attention at selecting the translator by verifying his or her background knowledge. [SK]

Knowing the museum and its spaces

Alongside domain-specific knowledge, a number of participants, among which the communication officer of the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (KK), pointed out the importance of translators knowing the museum spaces and its collection (cf. extract 37). Large museums, such as the Louvre Museum (Paris) and the Uffizi Galleries (Florence) stressed the importance of knowing the museum spaces, which is resolved by means of a glossary containing the names of specific rooms and museum areas. A participant from the Museion in Bolzano (MUS), a museum of contemporary art, stated that translation problems may occur due to a lack of knowledge about the architectural characteristics of the museum building. In fact, in the Museion, the architectural spaces have specific functions as well as specific names, that need to be taken into account when translating (cf. extract 38).

- (37) I think it is very important that our translators know our museum and **our collection**. [KK]
- (38) I: Which are recurring **translation problems** you encounter?
 P: Problems often emerge when translators do not know our building. [...] So, it can be hard to translate texts that refer to the **architecture of the museum**, such as the Museion Passage or the façade. [MUS-1]

Architectural spaces in contemporary museums play a major role – implying some tension between the architecture being an artwork itself and the artworks being displayed in the architectural spaces.³⁷ The director of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao claims that contemporary art demands exhibition spaces of huge scale and extraordinary character. In fact, the museum's audio guide addresses the architectural features of the gigantic building at the beginning of the guided tour. Similarly, the Kunsthaus Graz offers a media guide with detailed information on the peculiar architecture of the building, also known as the *friendly alien* due to its alienating appearance.

4.3.2 Translating art – the art of translation: the importance of writing style

As writing style emerged as a core quality requirement, in this section, I will focus on stylistic aspects at stake in different contexts of art museum translation. Cross-reference research within the archive of interview information revealed how different communication

³⁷ <https://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=487#FN19link> (last access 15/09/21)

models (academic vs. accessible – cf. [section 4.2.1](#)), people involved in content creation (curators vs. museum educators), differences of art discourse (pre-modern, modern, contemporary), and the text type correlate with different quality requirements for translations. Moreover, it should be pointed out that within the same museum, diverse communication approaches may co-exist, with the aim to provide different levels of access and respond to the diversity of visitor needs as claimed by Falk (cf. [section 2.1.2](#)). An example is the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao: while gallery texts are authored by curators with a rather academic stance, the so-called

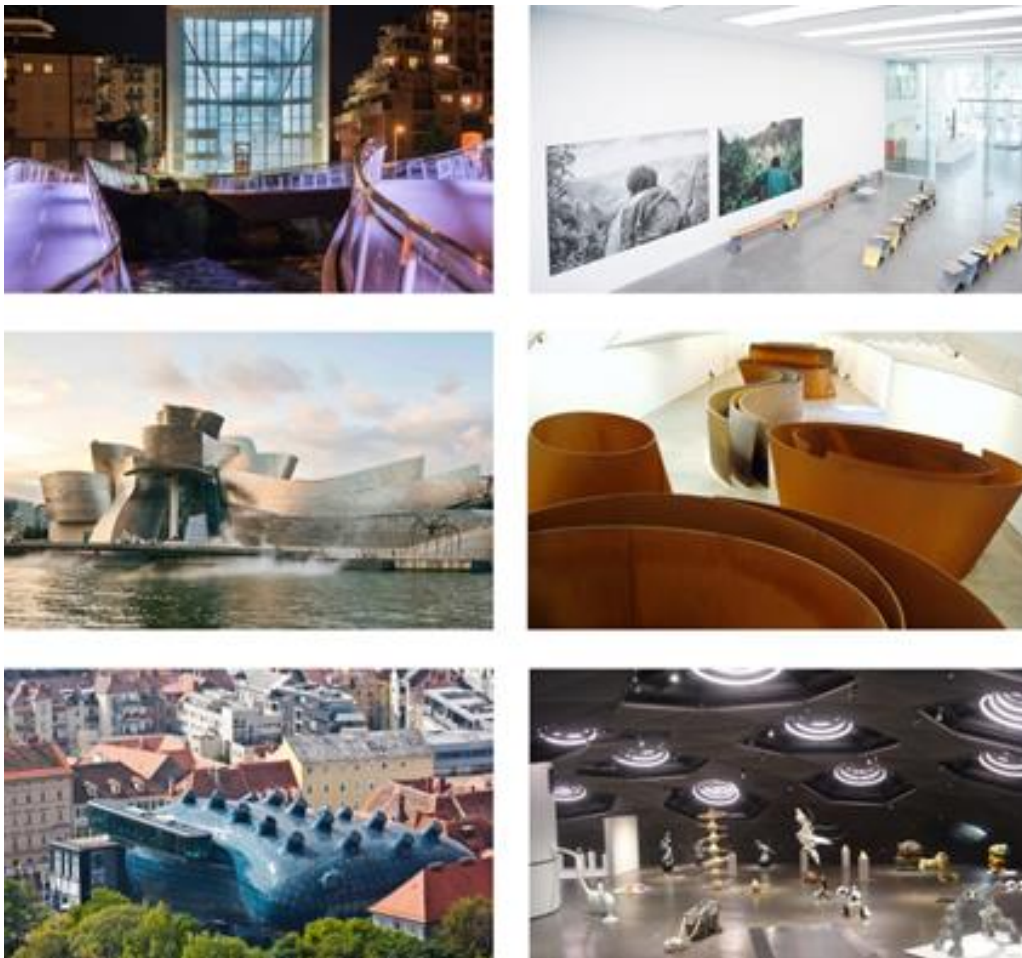


Figure 10: Exterior and interiors of contemporary art museums (Museion Bolzano, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Kunsthaus Graz)

Didaktika spaces created by museum educators provide more accessible and contextual content about the exhibition, elaborated by museum educators. In the following, I will present some of the most salient observations that emerged in terms of quality requirements at text level.

Literary translation

As discussed in [section 4.2.1](#), art museums have a strong curatorial tradition. The curator is a key figure in content creation, but also for the authoring of diverse text types in the museum, in particular catalogues and exhibition texts (i.e. wall text and text panels). Within this context, text has a special status, with writing style being attributed great importance. When questioning museum staff on suitable translation strategies for texts about art, the peculiarities of art discourse were persistently raised by participants. They ascribed content about art a literary and poetic dimension, that in their opinion can be challenging to transfer into another language. In fact, art discourse (interpretation of artworks by curators or art critics) has often been criticised for being inaccessible³⁸: just like artworks, art discourse often becomes a form of aesthetics itself. However, a great awareness on the part of museum professionals emerged from the interviews concerning the difficulty of translating such discourse. A curator from the Pinakotheken München (PM) pointed out the challenge of transferring the literary and poetic dimension of art discourse (cf. extract 39). For that very reason, the publications officer from the Peggy Guggenheim in Venice (PG) underlined the importance that translators have a passion for writing (cf. extract 40).

(39) I: What do you expect from translators?

P: Obviously, the correct transfer on a content level. But I am also an author. I try to furnish text with **poetry**. [...] And I want that to come across also in the translated content. That is the **real challenge**. [...] A good translation is more than transferring content. It is also the **transfer of the literary and poetic** content, and of the tone of voice. [...] We are aware about the high art of literary translation. [...] There are literary authors that receive translator awards. [PM-1]

(40) The translators that translate our texts well have a **passion for literature and for words**. [...] I mean, they have a passion for writing - not for communicating. [PG]

Translating ambiguity

The participants' accounts showed that contemporary art discourse, in particular, is considered a complex genre, characterised by a hermetic style, ambiguity, and the presence of multiple meanings – in line with Crețiu's (2013; cf. [section 2.1.3](#)) findings about “artspeak”. These characteristics seem to have a great impact on how museum professionals perceive translation, on what they expect from translators, and on their expectations of quality in a translation. A

³⁸ <https://merijnoudenampsen.org/2014/07/02/lost-in-translation-on-the-intelligibility-of-art-discourse/> (last access 15/09/21); In the Netherlands, there is a recurring and animated discussion on the intelligibility of art discourse between journalists and the modern art world.

museum educator from the Kunsthaus Graz (UJ) raised the issue that translators must also be able to convey content that is not explicitly expressed, while maintaining both the ambiguity and the multiple meanings of the discourse:

- (41) The translator must have a basic **understanding of what contemporary art** means. [...] If you think of a text with cross-connections about current issues: there is always **text between the lines**. When the translation achieves to maintain this, then the text works. So, I am looking for someone who also reads between the lines. [...] There are always **multiple meanings** and **ambiguity** [...] and that should not get lost in the translation. [UJ-1]

Similarly, a participant from the publications department of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (GMB) reported that the hermetic and ambiguous writing style of the author should be preserved in the translation:

- (42) Some curators write very **obscure texts**, so that you need to work with the author very much in order to understand. [...] Some curator does not want to be terribly specific about things because his style is a bit more **hermetic**. [...]. Sometimes we [from the publication department] strive to explain things and curators do not want to. So, translators may say “I don’t understand this” and we say: “Well this is what it means, but **don’t overexplain it**, because the curator doesn’t want it to be overexplained”. Sometimes if you try to interpret concepts, you may make a mistake. Because sometimes there are subtleties. So, you need to make sure that you are not betraying the curator’s idea. [GMB]

It clearly emerged that museum professionals do not desire that the ambiguous dimension of the source text is somehow made more explicit in the translation, since ambiguity is an intrinsic part of contemporary art discourse with a very specific aim: getting the audience to think about contemporary issues, as stated by a participant from the Kunsthaus Graz:

- (43) It is also important that the translator conveys the multiple meanings - both regarding certain terms and regarding art itself. That is very important for me. There is **no unequivocal explanation**. The text is supposed to **open doors** and make people think [...] about social issues, [...] identity, anything. [UJ-1]

Translating the author’s voice

Conveying the linguistic style and tone of voice of the source content emerged as an urgent concern of participants working in contemporary art museums (cf. extracts 41, 42, 43 above), considering text as the unique expression by an author – thus applying particularly to catalogue texts, publications, and exhibition content. Extract 44 stresses the priority of staying true to the author’s style in order to stay true to the author’s intentions – which may be rather ambiguous and equivocal. Given the complexity and ambiguity of contemporary art discourse which intentionally lacks a clear message, some participants expressed anxieties about translators

trying to reformulate content, as is shown by the statement of the publications officer from the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao:

- (44) In the case of an author, we really need to **stay true to what the author wants to say and how** he wants to say it. So, for me a good translation is the translation that says what it needs to say and **in the way the author expressed it**. [...] The way the original was written is the way the translation should be written. [...] If you want to stay true to his ideas, you cannot go around and re-explain the entire thing so that it sounds more natural, because you are going to get into **trouble** if you are trying to do that. [GMB]

Rewriting, reformulating

On the contrary, participants from art museums that favour more accessible and interactive content suitable for a wider audience – often co-created by curators and museum educators – rarely focused on the linguistic characteristics of the source content to be conveyed in the translation. Their focus was rather on target text characteristics. Major challenges referred to the creation of a fluent and intelligible text, that is adequate and engaging for the target audience, while conveying the purpose of the source text, as show the statements of two participants from the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum (WRM) and the Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (KK):

- (45) [Translating] is not about the transfer of terms, but about the **aim** of the text. [...] I prefer a **readable** English text [...]. Translators [...] need experience in how to write for the broad public [...]. That is difficult. I think it is easier to translate literally. [...] But when it comes to content addressed to a wide audience, you must create a text that is **enjoyable** to read. [...] Naturally, each translator has kind of his own style, just like authors. [WRM]
- (46) I: Which are the quality criteria you require for translations?
P: Is the language **adequate** and **intelligible** for an English-speaking or French-speaking audience? A **natural style**. [KK]

For some participants this involves to a certain extent the rewriting and reformulating of the text, as suggested by participants from the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan (PB) and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (SMB):

- (47) To translate is to betray [*traduttore, traditore* – in the original Italian extract]. The logic is to produce a text that is not misleading from the source text, but at the same time has its own coherence, intelligibility, and **beauty** in the target language. This somehow frees [the translator] from a total adherence to the source text. [...] Translating for me is **interpreting**. Transferring content into another language means **rewriting** it. [PB]
- (48) However, I think it is extremely important to take the target language into account. [...] We need somebody who knows to **deconstruct** sentences and who is able to **reassemble** them. [SMB-2]

When referring to style, participants pointed out the importance of natural-sounding style in the target language and the fact that each translator may have his or her own style. It can be said that a more audience-driven communication model is accompanied by a more target-oriented approach to translation (cf. [section 2.1](#); Nord 2000) – in line with the principles of a **functional approach** to translation, where purpose and target represent the decisive parameter for translation choices.

Simplifying language

A few museums showed a great awareness of the needs of multilingual audiences accessing English content as non-native speakers. Target-text characteristics, in particular a clear message and accessible language were their focus. Translators were thus required to use simple terminology, well-known verbs and adjectives, while keeping in mind the global audience, as suggested by a participant from the Louvre Museum (Paris):

- (49) We have got the **international audience in mind**. [...] The most important thing is to make sure the **message is understood**, and that content is made **accessible**. So, we try to use a **simpler terminology**. [...] Sometimes, we will **explain a term** that would be perfectly comprehensible for an English speaker. But we try to think, if someone who has **English as a second language**, would understand that term. [...] Maybe in the **choice of verbs and adjectives**, we might select a similar but simpler option. [LV]

4.4 [Theme 4] Translation management: assembling a translation team

In this section, I will show how art museums put forward very personalised solutions based on the competence of single people – concerning both in-house staff and external collaborators. A preference for trusted translators allowing for a direct dialogue suggests the desire of museum staff to exert influence on the translation product.

4.4.1 In-house staff: single person vs. systematic approach

Lack of interdepartmental collaboration

Among the 25 European art museums, only one museum, the Louvre Museum, reported to have built up an in-house translation unit with three staff members performing translation project management, revision, and to some extent translation itself. However, also in this exceptional case, most of the content is translated by external collaborators, while in-house staff is dedicated to translation project management and quality assurance. In a few cases, all translations are

handled by a single department, which usually is the publications department or the press office depending on the institutional structure of the museum. Nonetheless, it is very rare that museum staff be dedicated exclusively to handling translations. It is rather one of the many tasks a publication or press officer, a curator or museum educator performs – be it commissioning, managing, or checking translations. The most common situation revealed to be different departments managing diverse translations, since “nowadays, every museum has numerous channels of information which are originated in different departments”, as stated by the publication’s officer of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao.

Depending on the organisational structure of an art museum, various departments may be involved in performing translation-related tasks. Responsibilities can vary greatly across museums and are closely related to workflows of content creation, adaptation, and management. Table 16 gives a brief overview of types of museum content that are typically translated and the respective departments potentially in charge of handling its translation. These indications aim to reflect tendencies that have been observed in the interview data. Typically, the department that creates, adapts and/or manages a certain type of content will also provide for its translation, as they know most about it. Although there are many advantages in doing so, a major disadvantage is the lack of a central coordination by a dedicated staff member able to create synergies across departments in terms of project-related resources. While many participants report that translations are handled independently by the diverse departments, others recognise the need for interdepartmental collaboration, seeking for solutions, which remain rather unsystematic. Attempts to coordinate terminology issues, the provision of translation-related resources, or the choice of translators were reported by participants from the Universalmuseum Joanneum:

- (50) P1: Once we had the problem of an incoherence regarding the translation for an exhibition title. [...] We had a different title on the website. [...] I noticed the problem **by chance**, not because of an active exchange about the issue. [...] I typically send the proposal for the title translation to all departments, but then time passes until the exhibition and people may forget...
- P2: Yes, it is kind of a missing **structure** [...]. We have **no guidelines**. Our graphic designer often checks the translations. But it is rather a **work in progress**.
[UJ-6, UJ-4]

Content to be translated	Responsible department
Exhibition labels Wall panels	Curatorial department Education department
Catalogues Other publications	Publications department
Audio guides	Education department
Multimedia content Multimedia apps	Education department Communication department Curatorial department
Leaflets Maps Brochures	Marketing department Communication department Press office
Web content Social media content	Communication department Press office
Press releases	Press office Communication department

Table 16: Diverse types of content and respective departments in charge of handling translations

Translation quality based on the “passion” of a single person

A unique characteristic of the handling of translations in art museums is the fact that existing practices and quality management are often based on the competences of a single person, without capitalising such knowledge in the form of documented processes. Translation project and quality management often depend on the dedication and passion of one specific member of the museum staff. The publications officer of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice (PG) described translation practices as being the result of personal preferences interests, and competences rather than standardised processes to be continued by any staff member:

- (51) [Talking about translation quality management,] we manage things in a certain way because I have a certain background [as a literary translator]. There is **no standard recipe**. We are organised in a certain way according to my background, my interests and **my preferences**. [...] Probably, if I went away to work in another museum, and a new person arrived here to substitute me, things would work differently. [PG]

A participant from the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan (PB) reports about the extraordinary competences and personal resources feeding into the museum’s translation practices (cf. extract 52). However, these practices are impossible to be continued by other staff members as

procedures and resources are not capitalised – an approach in contradiction with the logic of standardised and documented processes as put forward by the translation industry and suggested by the ISO standards (cf. [section 2.5.1](#)).

(52) I: How are translations managed/commissioned?

P: The aspect of translation is **entirely organised by our director**. [...] He establishes all the contacts to translators – **personal contacts**. [...] We have the great fortune that our museum director is an **English native speaker**, who also knows fluently French, Russian, Japanese and Dutch. [PB]

4.4.2 Concept of “trusted translators”

A recurring theme in the interview data is the concept of “trusted translators”, which has a great impact on the choice of external collaborators. Long-lasting collaborations with translators that have been tested over time are preferred. This preference is closely related to demanding quality requirements at text level, and in terms of domain-specific expertise which are negotiated and achieved over time, while building a relationship with the translator. In fact, various participants expressed difficulty in finding translators able to fulfil their expectations, as pointed out by the press officer of the Kunsthalle Mannheim:

(53) We only have two translators that **meet our quality requirements**. With others it just did not work. [KM-1]

Once found, a trusted translator becomes part of the museum team, almost at the level of in-house staff. In fact, a certain degree of in-house knowledge paired with knowledge of the art sector was stated as a priority by many participants, which is one of the reasons that former staff sometimes work as translators for a museum (cf. extract 54). The concern that translators can misinterpret art discourse is addressed by collaborating with such trusted translators that know the museum, the collection, and the subject, as reported by participants from the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (KHM) and the Louvre Museum (LV):

(54) We also have a **former staff member**, who had worked in the mediation department, and who now translates for us. [...] That is someone who knows the museum, the collection, and the content really well. [...] The point is, you must be able to **trust** that the translator **grasps the content**, someone who knows the subject, or comes from the art sector, so that no **misinterpretations** can arise. [KHM-1]

(55) For the other languages, we have external translators and proof-readers. They are external, but they have been **collaborating for a long time** with the Louvre. So, they have the **in-house knowledge** [...]. They have built up a relationship with the museum. A lot of them studied at the École du Louvre, a higher education school [...] teaching art history. [...] So they really have a thorough **knowledge of the museum and its art works**. [LV]

Collaborating with freelance translators vs. translation agencies

The concept of “trusted translators” also has an impact on the choice of whether to collaborate with freelance translators or translation agencies. From the interviews, it emerged that translation agencies, especially large companies, are perceived as being less reliable in providing quality translations, as reported by the director of the Kunsthalle Baden-Baden:

- (56) We collaborate with small agencies and freelance translators. We do not collaborate with **large agencies**. Because **quality is really important**, and we have the feeling our translators have a **good knowledge about art** and the art discourse, which is of particular importance when it comes to the translation of catalogues. [KB]

Participants expressed concern over whether agencies could meet the expectations in terms of domain-specific knowledge. An element of uncertainty is also perceived by the fact that agencies may assign different translators. This absence of continuity is considered a major disadvantage when collaborating with a translation agency, as stated by a participant from the Kunsthaus Graz:

- (57) Personally, I prefer collaborating with **freelance translators**. Some of them know our working style quite well. [...] For me it is important to have a personal **relationship**. With **agencies** that is more difficult, because **you never know who is translating**. Sometimes translations are **mechanical** [...]. But when I work with translator that has come to know my texts, my work, and my intention – maybe we had a **coffee together** while talking about my expectations for the translation – then things work better. [UJ-1]

Since a direct contact and a personal relationship are deemed a prerequisite for translation quality (cf. extract 58), the collaboration with freelance translators is the preferred option in the majority of cases, and a must for the Louvre Museum:

- (58) I: You work with freelance translators, not agencies?
P: No, **never agencies**. We only work with freelance translators. [...] We avoid working with agencies as we like to be in direct contact with our translators. This allows us to work more efficiently and build working **relationships** with our collaborators. [LV]

In some museums, translation agencies are contracted for less well-known languages, for which it may be more difficult to find a freelance translator. A special case are translations of audio guides, which are typically assigned to specialised service providers, offering audio guide and multimedia products for museums, including content creation, adaptation, translation, and multilingual recordings on the one hand, as well as technological solutions on the other hand.

While acknowledging the advantages of an exclusive collaboration with freelance translators, which may satisfy preferences in writing style and allow a personal relationship with the translator to develop, various participants have also said that bespoke and personalised services by translation agencies can offer similar beneficial conditions. In fact, some participants said they had negotiated special conditions with translation agencies to accommodate their specific needs of a close collaboration or even a direct contact with the translator, as is the case of the MAMbo (Bologna):

- (59) P2: [When collaborating with a translation agency], we collaborate with three or four **recurring translators**, not with twenty.
 P1: It is easier for the agency if the client is comfortable with a specific translator.
 I: Are you in direct with the translators from the agency?
 P2: In some cases, we are. To clarify some **technical issue**.
 P1 The translation agency is the first **contact person**, a kind of mediator. I will explain my doubts to them, and they will get in touch with the translator and let me know. [...] But for very specific issues there is also a **direct contact** with the translator because it makes things much easier. [MBO-2, MBO-1]

Participants also explained that the translation agency guarantees continuity by assigning a fixed team of translators that have been appreciated by the client [museum] (cf. extract 59 above), or even by letting museum staff specify preferences regarding the choice of translators, as is the case of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao:

- (60) We also collaborate with translation companies. But we also know their translators, which ones we like and which ones we do not like. [...] So, we actually **specify the translator we prefer** for a certain translation. [GMB]

Thus, translation agencies specialised in art and museum translation, who are aware of the specific qualitative requirements of the sector are considered a valid alternative by some participants as they may offer tailored services, dedicated project managers, and a team of specialised translators.

Apart from personalised services, some participants pointed out the advantage of referring to a fixed translation project manager to coordinate and handle any type of translation issue rather than referring to various translators. A participant from the Uffizi Galleries in Florence (GUF) described the collaboration with a translation agency as a joint effort to coordinate translation projects, while appreciating the professional support:

- (61) We collaborate with a translation agency. At the beginning of our collaboration, we had various meetings with the **head of the agency** talking about our expectations. However, we discuss certain things in an ongoing process with a **dedicated project manager**. For me it is a task of coordination and organisation **jointly** with the external project manager. That is very **efficient**. [GUF]

Moreover, translation agencies were appreciated for their efficiency, availability, and additional services, which can be very important for museums with a tight schedule, which is typically the case of temporary exhibitions, when content needs to be translated, revised, updated, and delivered in quick turnarounds (cf. extract 62). In fact, the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt (SK) does not possess a permanent collection but organises frequently changing temporary exhibitions on contemporary issues as they do not possess a permanent collection.

- (62) The advantage of collaborating with translation agencies [...], you have fast turnaround times. They are available 365 days a year, they have a big team, they have a lead revisor [...] When we prepare **temporary exhibitions**, we have really **tight deadlines**. [SK]

Bureaucratic restrictions and the choice of collaborators

In museums that are public institutions, the possibility to establish long-term collaborations, while developing a relationship with external collaborators, is partly compromised by administrative regulations. Diverse participants mentioned bureaucratic restrictions, limiting to a certain degree the free choice of translation service providers. In Italy, public institutions need to select their service providers from a platform (Mepa³⁹) and are obliged to rotate providers. These regulations are perceived as a limit in terms of continuity and consequently of translation quality by the communication officer of the Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art:

- (63) Recently, we have the **problem** that we are obliged to **rotate services providers**. So, we cannot collaborate with the same translators. We have to alternate translators and translation agencies, changing between collaborators we already know and new ones. That is a problem for **continuity** and for **translation quality**. [CP]

Some institutions, as the MAMbo in Bologna (MBO), try to adapt to this situation, by contracting the most suitable translation service providers with specialised knowledge for large volumes in order to collaborate over a rather long period and develop some type of relationship:

- (64) Since we are a public institution, the choice of external translation service providers is **partially imposed** by administrative regulations [...] Our providers need to be subscribed to the Mepa platform. [...] So, we will make a research to choose a translation agency with specialised translators. [...] For us, it is very important to **develop a relationship** with the translators. [...] Since, we have tight deadlines, we usually place a large-scale contract to collaborate with a selected

³⁹ Mepa - Mercato Elettronico della Pubblica Amministrazione / Electronic Marketplace for the Public Administration

provider for a certain volume of translations, [...] before being obliged to change provider, usually after some months. [MBO-1]

Similarly, in Germany, public institutions need to issue tenders for any external collaboration. To avoid time-consuming administrative practices, many museums opt for a single frame contract with a translation agency to cover large volumes rather than contracting many different providers for each project. A participant from the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (SMB) stated that only for specific projects, museum staff will try find a way to involve a specialised translator of their choice:

- (65) For example, we have a frame contract with a translation agency for the entire foundation [comprising various museums]. But honestly, everybody tries to avoid them. But we are a public institution. Thus, **we cannot collaborate with a translator of our choice.** [...] So, for specific projects, we try to issue a tender for a specialised translator. [SMB-1]

In any case, given that museum staff fatigue in finding translators that meet their expectations, such restrictions further complicate the assembling of a pool of approved translators.

4.5 [Theme 5] Managing translation quality: lack of a systematic approach

In this section, I will look at which practices are put forward by European art museums to contribute to the overall translation quality, given that both academics (e.g. Dunne 2012, Drugan 2013) and industry (ISO standards) point out the centrality of client participation in the translation process. This also involves practices to bridge the gap in expertise between museums and the translation community and share knowledge, as stressed by Robert Neather, since “no one community possesses the complete set of competences required to produce a fully competent piece of translation” (2012: 266). Existing translation practices in art museums are characterised by their desire to maintain editorial control in the translation process (cf. [section 2.3.3](#)) and by the need for a direct exchange with translators, while lacking a systematic approach. In the following sub-sections, a range of aspects of how art museums try to enhance the quality of translated content will be discussed, also in the light of potential improvements, such as introducing standardised project specifications, fostering interdepartmental collaboration, or employing translation technology (cf. [section 4.6.1](#)).

4.5.1 Checking translations in-house: the desire to keep control

Keeping control

As emerged from the literature, the museum community prefers keeping control over their content; from Robert Neather's interview study (2012) involving Chinese museums emerged the term *gatekeeper* of museum knowledge. My interview analysis confirms this tendency to exert control over translations also in the case of European art museums. This attitude may be even accentuated in the context of art museum, as content creation is characterised by a strong curatorial tradition. As has been shown in [section 4.3.2](#), texts in art museums have a special status, there is a strong interpretative element in art discourse, and writing style matters a great deal. Contemporary art discourse, in particular, is considered a very complex genre. These specific conditions lead content creators to keep an eye on their contents when being translated.

The interviews show that museums' high-quality expectations are paired with a certain degree of doubt concerning the translators' competence in the art sector. Several accounts betray a sense of uncomfortable dependency on the translators' expertise, which is particularly evident in the case of less well-known languages, as pointed out in extract 66 by a museum educator of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (SMB). The participant from the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (KK) said that they apply *ad hoc* solutions to verify the quality of single translations, such as asking native-speaker friends (cf. extract 67) or a native speaker that collaborates as a museum tour guide. Still others developed strategies to deal with a variety of languages (cf. extract 68), as explained by a participant from the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (GMB). In any case, these attitudes stress the necessity and desire of keeping editorial control over their content in all languages.

- (66) I: How is the quality of translation ensured?
 P: That's a great **problem**, especially when offering **eleven languages**, as we are not able to check all translations. [...] Because nobody knows the subtleties of all these languages. **Checking remains difficult**. [SMB-2]
- (67) Sometimes I encounter things in translations that do not convince me. [...] Sometimes, I will contact my **French-speaking friends** and ask, "Can you express that in this way?", and they will give me feedback. [...] That helps when you are **insecure**. [KK]
- (68) I: How do you deal with the languages you cannot check in-house?
 P: Surprisingly, we have become **very proficient in checking certain things in languages that we do not speak**. In our methodology we also collaborate with external proof-readers. [...] For example, we have a *trusted* German proof-reader. [GMB]

Checking translations in-house

Checking translations in-house appeared to be common practice in art museums, involving a range of staff members. Irrespective of whether external revision is provided or not, nearly all participants underlined the significance of reviewing English translations in-house – a finding in line with Robert Neather’s observations (cf. [section 2.3.2](#)). From the interviews it emerged that specific text types receive greater attention in terms of quality control than others, as is shown by the statement of a publication officer of the Schirn Kunsthalle:

- (69) Catalogue texts containing very specialised in-depth content will be reviewed externally, but in addition, it will always be checked internally by more than one person. That is kind of an **eight or ten-eyes principle**⁴⁰. So, we often have very specific **discussions** focusing on **terminological issues**. [SK]

It emerged that catalogue texts and exhibition labels are typically checked by multiple people. This has obvious pragmatic reasons since such high-quality content must be impeccable before printing. Moreover, the publication officer from the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao explained that it is in these specific text types “where critical language happens”. In this case, critical language refers to the complexity of art discourse, both in terms of content and style as described in [section 4.3.2](#). The term “critical” however also suggests that the staff member feels the need for content to be controlled by in-house staff with domain expertise to ensure content accuracy. In fact, the interview accounts show that it is frequently curators or authors who expressly want to check the translation of their texts this being an expression of their identity as a curator or author, as reported by a participant of the MAMbo (Bologna):

- (70) What happens very often to me is that **authors** that contribute to a catalogue want to see the translation of their text. And it is hard to find an author that does not **know English**. Last year, for instance, I had a catalogue of 11 contributions [...] and I was the mediator between the translator and the authors. All of them wanted to check the translation of their text, making **comments**, and requiring **modifications**. [...] But I was relaxed that way [...], because if the authors somehow authorise the translation, they help me. I would not be able to decide which English term fits best in a certain context. [MBO-1]

When asking participants about in-house review practices, English language competence was rarely addressed spontaneously; extract 70 above represents an exception. When prompting participants on the issue, quite different perceptions of the curators’ expertise

⁴⁰ This refers to the four eyes principle (or the two-person rule) of the language business that is used to ensure that the translated materials had been checked by at least two professional linguists (typically the translator and a reviser) before the project is delivered.

in English emerged. A participant from the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne (WMR) showed a certain awareness of the varying degrees of language competence by museum staff, while claiming that even a minor degree of proficiency will be sufficient to identify translation problems thanks to staff members' experience in the art sector:

- (71) P: Our translations are checked in-house, by **curators** and **museum educators**.
 I: So, your in-house staff has English language competence?
 P: Yes. Well, **everybody always claims to know English**, which often is not the truth. But they have so much other **experience**, that they notice when there is something wrong. [WRM]

This attitude might be explained by the fact that curators presumably read specialised literature in English and are thus expected to be competent in recognising terminological problems in English translations. While many accounts on review practices suggested that in-house staff will somehow get back to the translator – though in a rather unsystematic way – some participants reported that translated content was being changed autonomously by museum staff:

- (72) P: When translations come back, the **curator** will have a look at the texts, if there is something to modify.
 I: So, most curators have English language knowledge?
 P: Yes, they do. And in some cases, depending on the proficiency level, somebody will **autonomously change** the translation. [LH-1]

Such an attitude contradicts the logic of continual quality improvement through interaction and exchange (cf. [section 2.4.4](#)), as feedback will not get back to the translator, thus precluding the opportunity for the translator to improve their understanding of the museum's quality expectations. However, in other cases, dialogue was considered crucial in achieving translation quality, as pointed out by a museum educator of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin:

- (73) I have studied **Anglistics**, and when I encounter a translation error at content level [...]. Well, we will have a **discussion** on that [...] I would never claim how to translate, but I can say that the way it was translated does not convey what we wanted to express in German. [SMB-2]

At this point, a short reflection on the distinction between translation review and revision is due. According to the ISO standards, reviewing involves a domain-specific expert, checking the accuracy of content and terminology, while revision should be carried out by a professional translator, checking linguistic accuracy and suitability for purpose. Fairly in line with the ISO definition, the interview participants see the museum's role as checking some terminological issues (cf. extract 71 above) and first and foremost content accuracy, as reported by a participant of the the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt:

- (74) We check translations in terms of **content**. We verify that the **message** is conveyed and that the writing style fits the genre. [...] It is important that translators penetrate the content; sometimes that is not the case. [SK]

In fact, given the domain-specific expertise of museum staff, it appears reasonable that curators or other museum staff with good English competence perform the review of translated content to ensure domain accuracy, while providing feedback on terminological preferences. In contrast, it is considered more difficult for museum staff to check linguistic accuracy; some participants report that the translation of high-quality content is therefore additionally checked by an external revisor, i.e. a professional translator, as pointed out by a participant of the Kunsthaus Graz:

- (75) We always check translations in-house. The authors always read the translation of their own texts, in case of English texts. [...] However, catalogue texts are also revised externally. [UJ-1]

To conclude on the issue of checking translations in-house, it seems that participants generally perceive the museum's role as a final supervising authority, a kind of guard of museum content, or as Robert Neather (2012) put it, a “gatekeeper” of museum knowledge.

Client feedback

For the participant of the Uffizi Galleries in Florence (GUF), providing feedback to the translation service provider is a way of participating in the translation process and contributing to quality, for example by commenting errors in the translation that may occur because of missing domain-specific or even museum-specific knowledge:

- (76) I: When you check translations, which are the aspects that require corrections?
P: [...] Our intervention is needed for things that can be known only by in-house staff. We often exchange ideas internally among colleagues before providing **feedback** to the translation agency. [GUF]

I argue that some such elements should be specified beforehand, although it is impossible to anticipate everything. However, client feedback is one of the practices that can help to bridge potential gaps, allowing museum staff to discuss critical issues and integrate their knowledge, as is the case in the Kunsthalle Mannheim:

- (77) However, we review all translations, and send the file back with comments. The translator goes over it and gets back to us. So, we collaborate and **discuss** about the text. [...] It goes back and forth until both sides are satisfied. [...] I have studied Anglistics. My comments are not always correct. But I know how **things are called in-house**, and the translator has the English language competence. And that is how we **get together**. [KM-1]

A few participants report that feedback comments sent by email are often accompanied by a conversation on the phone, indicating again the importance attributed to a direct dialogue. For large translation projects, it appears efficient to provide feedback in the early translation phase (cf. [section 2.4.4](#)) in order to adapt translations accordingly and share linguistic or terminological preferences with the team, avoiding time-consuming changes in the aftermath.

End-user feedback

Another way of controlling translation quality is through end-user feedback. A few participants reported positive experiences with visitor surveys on content quality among their international audiences. Suggestions by the international visitors provided valuable information regarding the international audiences' needs and preferences. The director of the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne (WRM) reports that, by means of a feedback form, valuable insights are gained into the perceived quality of translated content in terms of fluency and terminological choices, which help improving in-house translation practices and multilingual strategies:

- (78) We put great effort into [the quality] of our translations. And that is strongly accompanied and followed by our audience. [...] We have [feedback] forms, where visitors can express positive and/or negative **criticism**. For us that mirrors our **audiences' expectations**. [...] Very often, we have **feedback** when the English version is not good. When we used a term, for which there would have been a better option. They write that down, they tell us. [...] Many people perceive language in the museum intensely. [...] But we **learn from them** and take it their feedback seriously. [WRM]

Extending the quality judgement to museum visitors reflects the value of an audience-centred communication model, recognising the central role of the end-user. It further embraces Christiane Nord's (2000: 195) claim for translation quality that the addressee is the guiding criterion when authoring a text. Finally, such a user-based focus (cf. Fields et al., [section 2.4.1](#)) as part of an integrated approach to translation quality management is in line with process-based approaches to translation quality, aimed at monitoring and improving processes.

The value of translator feedback

To conclude this section, I will present a unique and effective way of collaboration, where the exchange between translator and museum staff not only enhances the quality of translated content, but also of the source content. A curator from the Lenbachhaus in Munich (LH) reports having established a working methodology of reciprocal feedback on both source and target text, which then feeds into both texts. This shows how close source content creation and

translation processes are connected, and how different perspectives and expertise of in-house and external staff can complement each other and create synergies:

- (79) P1: I can talk from my own approach as a curator. After I have written a German text, I will send it out for English translation [...]. That helps me **recognise problems of my German text**, which are reflected in the translation. So, I will edit the German text, and the English version accordingly. So, there is a **back and forth** with the translator until things fit.

P2: Yes, our translator always sends back the German texts with **comments** about problems that we might not **see from inside**. We appreciate that. [LH-1, LH-2]

4.5.2 Co-constructing quality: the importance of an efficient dialogue

As discussed in [section 2.4.3](#), within a customer-based approach to translation, project specifications are considered as crucial to ensure translation quality. Both academia (e.g. Risku 2006) and the translation industry (ISO standards) consider such specifications as an efficient way of negotiating quality requirements. In this section, I will investigate how art museums communicate their expectations regarding translation quality, while also addressing the provision of translation-related resources, such as glossaries or existing translations.

Missing awareness

Participants accounts show a very heterogeneous picture of how museum staff communicate project-specific quality requirements, with project specifications being no common practice apart from few exceptions. In some cases, there seems to be no awareness that agreeing on various aspects of a translation project may improve the translation quality, as the statement by a participant from the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin shows:

- (80) I: Is there a briefing for the translator, concerning project-specific issues?
P: Seldomly. **We leave that up to the translator**. [SMB-1]

Participants from the MAMbo Bologna (MBO) and the Kunsthalle Mannheim KM) confused project-specific indications with general indications that are typically part of a style guide, such as the use of American vs. British English or the rule of not translating the museum's name:

- (81) I: Do translators receive a kind of briefing for the translation projects?
P1: Sometimes, I will give some indications. For example, "do not translate the **name of the museum** into English". [MBO-1]
- (82) We make a few specifications, such as the use of **American English**. But it is more an approximation over time. [KM-1]

A participant from the publication department of the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt (SK) in charge of managing English translations of catalogues stated that translator briefing is not necessary, since content is checked in-house and critical issues are discussed after the delivery:

- (83) I: Do you brief your translators regarding quality requirements?
 P: Yes and no. Well... Actually, we don't. That is something we rather think of **afterwards** because we check translations anyway. [...] There are exhibitions that are historically loaded, and you have to think well which terminology to use. But we usually discuss that once the translation has been delivered. [SK]

As reported in the literature, if clients are involved in the quality management process only after delivery, this may cause time-consuming rework and increases the risk of failing deadlines (Dunne 2011: 163), which is a particularly critical issue in the case of temporary exhibitions with tight schedules. By means of project specifications potential translation problems can be avoided. However, some staff members expressed doubts about their ability to adequately express translation quality requirements (cf. [extract 31](#)) – confirming previous findings (e.g. Abdallah 2010, cf. [section 2.4.4](#)). As discussed at the end of [section 2.4.3](#), if project specifications are co-created between museum and translation service provider, they can represent an efficient way of elaborating a common vision of a translation project, which is in line with the declared aim of the ISO standard 11669 (cf. [section 2.4.3](#)). When requirements cannot be specified entirely in advance but rather emerge during the project, client feedback in the early stage of the translation process can integrate the specifications as suggested by Dunne (cf. [section 2.4.4](#)).

Defining quality through examples of “good translations”

A variety of the interviewed museums reported yet another approach to communicate their quality requirements, involving a very close collaboration and direct exchange on the museum's needs and expectations – a kind of approximation “over time” as a participant from the Lenbachhaus in Munich (LH) put it:

- (84) I: Do you have a style guide or do make indications regarding your quality requirements?
 P: No, translators **learn our preferences over time**. We have an **active exchange** with them. [LH-1]

Various participants, among which the Mart Museo in Rovereto (MM) reported that new translators are provided with examples of quality translations to get a feeling for the museum's preferences, while discussing and analysing the first deliveries in detail to find a common denominator:

- (85) We do not brief translators, but we rather provide them with **examples of good translations**. With a new translator, we will analyse and **discuss** the first translations he or she delivers to be on the same wavelength. [MM-2]

Due to the complexity of art discourse, the importance of a direct dialogue is undeniable. I therefore claim that formalising quality requirements in form of project specifications do not substitute, but rather support an efficient communication, as they may guide the exchange between the involved actors, while providing a documented account.

Communicating project specification

It is mainly large art museums with either a translation unit or a dedicated staff member possessing a background in translation that apply a structured approach to project specifications, while maintaining an active dialogue, as in the case of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice:

- (86) We specify the text genre, register, target audience, purpose of the text as well as the treatment of artist names and titles. However, **clarification** often occurs by telephone. Good translators ask for further specifications. [PG]

When asking the participant from the Louvre Museum (LV), the translation coordinator listed what are effectively the most salient aspects contained in the various ISO standards (ISO 17100, ISO 11669):

- (87) When we assign a project, we provide details on the **context**, whether the translation regards the permanent collections or a temporary exhibition, whether it is web content or a scientific article. We will specify the subject field, the target audience, as well as additional **resources** we think may be useful, such as our glossary, **images**, existing translations, links to websites, and so on. [LV]

A very interesting alternative of how to brief translators was described by a participant from the publications department of the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum (GMB); in a discursive description about the nature of the content that is to be translated, they aim at conveying a feeling for text:

- (88) I: How do you **specify your requirements** to the translator?
 P: We will tell the translator: "This is the translation for the press release. The press release is written in a certain style. This press release has been written as if you were running through the exhibition. [...] So it is a kind of itinerary through the exhibition. We find that it is very similar to the content of the wall texts. There is one wall text per gallery. We attach the wall texts for you reference." [...] So, they get that kind of information from us. [...] If they have doubts, they will ask us, and then there is a **dialogue**. [GMB]

Alongside communicating project-specific requirements, extract 88 also points out the importance of providing translation-related resources, such as glossaries, existing translations, and images. Both [section 4.5.3](#) and [section 4.6.1](#) will be dedicated to managing terminological resources and existing translations for their efficient reuse in more detail.

Finally, a participant from the Uffizi Galleries in Florence (GUF) pointed out the importance of providing images for further contextualisation (cf. extract 89). This is in line with observations in the literature (cf. [section 2.1.2](#)), claiming that to effectively translate museum content, the translator needs to understand the interaction between verbal and visual elements in the museum environment.

- (89) We share a glossary, links to websites and **images of the artworks** – they are of great help in order to contextualise the content. [GUF]

A last consideration concerning project specifications regards the question of whether quality requirements *always* need to be explicitly formalised. A participant from the communication department of the Uffizi Galleries stated that standard projects, such as the translation of content for the online collection, are well defined – and therefore do not require further formalisation. On the contrary, for specific projects, requirements need be agreed on:

- (90) I: What type specifications do you provide the translation agency with?
 P: The main work is translating information about the artworks [for the online collection]. [...] This type of work is well defined. They **know well** what we require. [...] For more **specific projects**, such as *Hypervisions*, there are more things to agree on. [GUF]

Thus, for standard translation projects with generally constant requirements, it may be appropriate and efficient to lay down pre-defined project specifications just once and reuse them in case of similar projects or with another translation service provider.

I will close this section with a Some museum staff members pointed out the importance of providing visual reference material to translators, showing that they are consciously or unconsciously aware of the multimodality of museum content, meaning that museum texts interact with other textual and visual elements and are thus embedded into a wider museum environment (cf. [section 2.1.3](#)). Such an awareness on the part of museum staff is an important precondition to set up an efficient collaboration with translation service providers as suggested by Neather (cf. [section 2.3.3](#)).

4.5.3 Losing control: terminological consistency

In [section 4.3.1](#), the accurate use of technical terminology as well as terminological coherence emerged as one of the main quality criteria of translations mentioned by art museum staff. Though a variety of strategies are adopted to cope with terminology issues by a range of museums, in most cases there are no processes in place to handle terminology issues efficiently, such as the systematic use of resources for terminology. Only a few museums provide their translators with glossaries, existing translations are often not provided due to time constraints and unsystematic archiving procedures. Moreover, the participants' accounts revealed that resources are generally not managed centrally as different departments assign translations – often to different service providers – without necessarily coordinating such tasks. Thus, ensuring terminological consistency remains a rather unstructured step within the management of translations in art museums, where responsibilities are not clearly assigned, and tasks are not coordinated, as is shown by the statement of a participant of the Kunsthaus Graz:

- (91) I: How is terminological consistency in translations ensured?
 P: That is the responsibility of... That is hard to say. If I have a text to be translated, I will have a look how other content has been translated before, or I will ask someone. Otherwise, in the meetings, **I hope to catch the necessary information.** [UJ-1]

In the following paragraphs, I will report the major approaches adopted by museums to handle terminology issues and ensure terminological consistency, while discussing potential improvements.

Interdepartmental collaboration

In a few of the participants' accounts, the need for interdepartmental coordination emerges as a major concern when it comes to handling terminology issues. In extract 92, a participant from the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt (SK) suggests that terminological consistency should be ensured by creating synergies between the departments, not only for translated content, but also for the source content:

- (92) Creating **synergies** [between departments] is sensible. I [as a publications officer] have an **in-depth knowledge of the catalogue texts** and I know all the discussions about it as well as terminological issues, so it is useful that I transfer and apply this knowledge also for other content, for example for the online magazine. So, I will always **check translations, but also the original text**, which is equally important. [SK]

The participant of the Schirn Kunsthalle advocated to create synergies between diverse departments by exploiting the deep knowledge of the publications officer at a text level to ensure terminological consistency of content, both in the source language and in translated languages. This view is in line with the literature (e.g. Risku 2006; cf. [section 2.3.3](#)), pointing out the provision of reliable source text material and terminology as being crucial when managing translations. Similarly, a participant of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (GMB) pointed out that source text editing and the harmonisation of source terminology are crucial steps before starting the translation phase, since the source content is produced in different departments:

- (93) Before translations are assigned, the **source text is edited** in order to anticipate translation problems. [...] In general texts, the usual problem is calling things the same way every time they happen to occur. [...] Nowadays, every museum has numerous channels of information and **not every channel of information is originated in the same department**. So, we need to **ensure that things are always called the same way**. [GMB]

Coordinating the choice of translators

A number of participants said that terminological consistency may be ensured by assigning translations of the same project to the same translator, as show the statements by participants from the Museion in Bolzano (MUS) and the Schirn Kunsthalle (SK):

- (94) In our experience, it is useful to collaborate as much as possible with one translator that knows our institution [...], our language, our tone of voice. [...] So, when it comes to translations, **if possible**, we [press office] **try to coordinate** the choice of the translator with the Production Department. If complex texts have already been translated and terminology has been already acquired, we will not choose another translator. [MUS-1]
- (95) When assigning translations, the press office **tends to choose** the same translators that had already translated the respective catalogue [publications department] – **although this is not always possible**. [SK]

However, rather vague formulations, such as “try to coordinate”, “tend to choose” and “not always possible” indicate a somewhat loose and unsystematic coordination among departments. Moreover, it may not always be possible to assign the same translator for a series of reasons, such as high volumes, or time constraints. To cope with such difficulties, a participant from the Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (KK) mentioned the usefulness of a project manager to coordinate a team of translators:

- (96) We collaborate with one translator [per language]. I think it is important that the person working with our texts knows the museum, our topics, and has a background in art history. I think it would be strange if three different translators would work on content for the same exhibition. [...] Moreover, it is more work and expense when three people must familiarise with a project. [...] For large projects in which it is not possible that one person can translate the whole content, [...] it is important to assign **one translator to lead the project**. [KK]

Providing existing translations

From the participants' accounts, it emerged that a large number of museum staff try to provide existing translations as reference materials to their translators. However, as is shown by the statement of a participant of the MAMbo in Bologna (MBO), the provision of such resources often remains a rather unstructured step in the workflow due to time constraints, missing interdepartmental coordination and a lack of established processes:

- (97) We try to guarantee terminological consistency by providing the translator with existing translations of the exhibition, but **sometimes there is just no time** to check and send all the available resources [MBO-2].

Coordinated and systematic processes could contribute to avoid such shortcomings. For instance, an efficient way to optimise the provision of existing translations may be the creation of a central archive. When asked about the management and storing of translation-related resources, most participants referred that no central archive is used, but translations are stored by each department separately. A participant from the digital communication department of the Kunsthalle Mannheim (KM) reflected on the usefulness of a central archive to efficiently retrieve topic- or project-specific bilingual text material:

- (98) That's an interesting point. It could be an idea to introduce a text management system that allows to search for terms, for example *Matisse*, and retrieve the German and English press release, but also the German and English wall texts, as well as catalogue and web texts – in one single place. That would be very useful. [KM-2]

Providing bilingual glossaries

While providing existing translations appears to be a common – though unsystematic – practice in art museums, only a few institutions provide a bilingual glossary with museum-specific terminology, including names for museum rooms, department names, etc. However, during the interviews, a variety of participants, among which the director of the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne (WRM) acknowledged the usefulness of such a document:

- (99) I: Talking of **terminology**, do you have a terminology database, glossary or wordlist?
 P: No, we do not have such a **structured process**. That could actually be an idea to elaborate a sheet and collect terms that have already been agreed upon. [WRM]

A participant from the Museion in Bolzano (MUS) mentioned the problem of translators not knowing institution-specific terminology, for example regarding the architecture of the museum building, or the specificities of the multilingualism in South Tyrol. The terminological problems mentioned in extract 100, such as an official translation for a part of the museum building, could be perfectly resolved by creating a glossary with institution-specific terminology.

- (100) I: Which are recurring **translation problems** you encounter?
 P: Problems often emerge when translators do not know our building, or do not live in South Tyrol. [...] So, they do not understand our multilingualism. So, a translator might prefer to leave a certain word in Italian without knowing that there is a German equivalent, an official translation in German. For example, he might use *Casa Atelier* because he likes the term. The official translation is *Atelierhaus*, so he needs to use that term. [...] Other problems can emerge if a translator does not know our building. So, it can be hard to translate texts that refer to the **architecture of the museum**, such as the *Museion Passage* or the façade. [MUS-1]

Checking terminological consistency

Some museums try to ensure terminological consistency by checking all content of a project after the translation process, either by a trusted translator as is the case of the Mart Museum in Rovereto (MM) or by in-house staff, which is common practice in the Schirn Kunsthalle (SK):

- (101) We assign the revision for all content of the same project to a single translator in order to guarantee coherence. [MM-1]
- (102) Terminological consistency is checked and ensured internally. However, terminology issues, also politically critical expressions, **are usually dealt with only after the translation**. [SK]

While museum staff widely acknowledged that the revision of translated content should include checking the terminological consistency, there is only little awareness that terminology issues should be dealt with from the very beginning of the translation process (cf. [section 2.6.2](#); ISO 17100, ISO 11669) in order to avoid time-consuming corrections and improve translation quality.

4.6 [Theme 6] The use of technology: managing translations efficiently

As was shown in [section 2.6](#), computer-assisted translation tools (CAT tools) offer a series of features and functions that can significantly contribute to the efficiency and quality of translation project management in museums. In this section, I will discuss the usefulness of CAT tools in art museums and briefly outline how a central content management may contribute to efficiently manage translations.

4.6.1 Underestimating translation technology

In [section 4.5](#), we saw that translation practices in art museums often lack a systematic approach. The majority of the interviewed museum staff ignored the potential of CAT tools for the management and maintenance of translation-related issues, as is shown by the statement of a participant from the Kunsthaus Graz:

(103) I: Do your translators use translation technology?

P: I wouldn't know. That's their profession, I'm only requiring a service. [UJ-1]

Only two participants from two major art museums, namely the Louvre Museum in Paris and the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao employ CAT tools. In the following paragraphs, I will report how these two institutions employ translation technology and expand on the topic by outlining how existing shortcomings in the handling of translations in art museums may be efficiently addressed by the use of CAT tools.

CAT tools in the Louvre and the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

Apart from their high profile, these two institutions have little in common. The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao organises frequently changing temporary exhibitions, that offer a broad panorama of the art of our time. The institution is further committed to showcasing its own permanent collection with key examples of contemporary practice, i.e. large-scale site-specific works and installations. Moreover, as part of the S. R. Guggenheim Foundation network, it exhibits modern and contemporary artworks from the various permanent collections of the network, including the Guggenheim Museum New York and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection Venice⁴¹. The Louvre Museum, on the other hand, houses a large permanent collection of fine art, comprising approximately 38,000 objects. Apart from the antiquities, the collection spans

⁴¹ Cirauqui, Manuel: Guggenheim Bilbao, in Oxford Art Online.

<https://www.oxfordartonline.com/page/guggenheim-bilbao-guide/guggenheim-bilbao> (last access: 15/09/2021)

seven centuries from 1250 to 1850, featuring French artists, Renaissance paintings from the Early Renaissance in Italy, the High Renaissance, and the Northern Renaissance in Flanders, the Netherlands and Germany, as well as oil paintings from art movements, such as Mannerism, Baroque, Rococo, Neoclassicism, Realism and Romanticism⁴².

Both institutions make an significant use of CAT tools in-house, though in a different manner. The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (GMB), in collaboration with a translation agency and on the basis of proofread translations, creates a terminology database to be shared with translators. Their aim is to ensure terminological consistency of more general and promotional texts regarding activities, programs, and initiatives – less for specialised content about art, as such discourse contains less recurring terminology (cf. extract 104). Additionally, this terminology database is also used to double-check terminological consistency during the in-house proofreading process, which also includes the checking of less well-known languages.

- (104) [Our terminology database] is usually more useful for more **general translations** and less for **specialised translations**, because if we have an activity, for example a talk with an artist, and the activity has a title, we need to make sure that the title stays the same in the press release, on the website and on the leaflet. In fact, this database is very useful to **double-check things**. [GMB]

The participant from the Louvre Museums (LV) stated that a terminology database is of less use since terms need to be searchable in context (cf. extract 105). In fact, the in-house translation unit feeds a translation memory database with proofread translations, which can be consulted online by external translators as a terminological and stylistic resource. The participant explained that the translation memories are not used for its original purpose to find matches, since it is rather unusual that the same sentence turns up twice in text about art.

- (105) The main reason we use **Wordfast** is so that we can have a **translation memory**. [...] The translation memory for us is not a question of being able to translate sentences that have been used before, because for most of the texts you never get the same sentence twice [...] So, it's really a question of using it as a database where you can **look up a word** and not just see how it has been **translated in the past**, but also see it in **different contexts**. [...] And it's not just for very **technical terms**, it's also for **phrasing**, a kind of **stylistic reference**. [...] Because we work with brilliant translators, and it's really inspiring to see how things have been translated in the past. It may give you an idea of other solutions when you may be stuck. [LV]

⁴² Encyclopedia of Art: <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com> (last access: 26/02/2021)

From the participant's account it becomes clear that the TM database is used as a kind of bilingual corpus, offering the possibility by means of the concordance search function to look up how terms and phrases have been translated in different contexts, while serving as a stylistic and phrasing reference. In fact, the participant further pointed out, that the translation memory is used like the Linguee platform to search for specific words and its contexts, which can be very useful as the same term may have different meanings according to the kind of art discourse (cf. extract 106). This may be particularly relevant in museums that deal with a variety of different artistic styles and periods of art – as in the case of the Louvre Museum:

- (106) I think [CAT tools] are more useful than people imagine, because although we do not have the same sentences coming up twice, it's really useful to be able to see things within **different contexts** [...]. Our translation memory is used like **the Linguee [platform]**: you can type a word and can see it come up in different contexts [...] This can be very useful, especially for **different fields of art**. For example, certain departments might use the same word that might not mean the same thing in both contexts. [LV]

By means of a cross reference search within the archive of interview information, I was able to connect the different approaches to employing CAT tools to the different types of art discourse as well as to the peculiarities of contemporary art discourse. In fact, a participant from the Museion (Bolzano) defined the terminology of contemporary art as “highly specialised and extremely different for each exhibition”, so that they considered a general glossary or terminology database inefficient and pointless. Another participant from the Kunsthaus Graz underlined the complexity of the genre, while affirming the frequency of multiple meanings, and content between the lines. According to the participant, these peculiarities of contemporary art discourse result in content which is devoid of recurring terms and phrases, explaining why neither a terminology database nor translation memories are considered useful. This is confirmed by the fact that the staff of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao claimed that their terminology database is useful for general or promotional texts, not for more specialised art discourse dealing with contemporary art. On the contrary, the participant from the Louvre Museum (Paris) claimed that for the translation of art discourse referring to previous periods of art, a database of translation memories can be useful to search for terms in context.

In conclusion, the participants' accounts suggest that the usefulness of the two core features of CAT tools – terminological databases and translation memories – can vary depending on the nature of content that will be translated in an art museum. In fact, it is quite reasonable that the translation of more general and promotional texts benefits from CAT tools, since such content presents standard information with recurring terminology and text segments.

In turn, the translation of specific content about art benefits to varying degrees, depending on the type of art discourse. In the view of museum staff, when translating contemporary art discourse, CAT tools are of little help as terminology is highly specialised and distinct for each exhibition. I argue that this applies even more to contemporary art galleries without a permanent collection, organising frequently changing exhibitions on the most varied topics, which further reduces the probability of encountering a recurring terminology. By contrast, the translation of art discourse referring to pre-modern periods of art presents a rather standardised terminology as well as recurring terms. I therefore argue that both termbases and translation memories may offer an efficient way of reusing terminology across projects. This can be particularly useful for museums that frequently rearrange their permanent collection and thus need to re-elaborated content, involving the same artworks.

The usefulness of CAT tools in art museums

Many participants recognised the need for systematic solutions and process optimisation, such as an efficient text management and storage in order to easily retrieve and share translation-related resources. I argue that translation technology can greatly support the handling of translations in art museums. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss how some of the existing shortcomings discussed in [section 4.5](#) may be efficiently addressed by employing CAT tools.

Although museum staff make an effort to ensure terminological consistency, their strategies often remain unsystematic and inefficient (cf. [section 4.5.3](#)). The employed strategies – trying to assign all translations of a project to a single translator, performing a coherence check in-house, or providing existing translations in a document file format – would be far more efficient if supported by the use of CAT tools. First, CAT tools offer an efficient way of sharing translation-related resources with all translators working on a project. Second, such tools can alleviate and simplify in-house checks on terminological consistency, while quality control features allow for quick and automated checking. Third, rather than providing loose files with existing translations, a translation memory database offers a much more efficient way of exploiting past translations. Finally, both terminological databases and translation memories can easily be handed over in case collaborators change, ensuring continuity by capitalising the past work.

Since a lack of interdepartmental collaboration appeared to be a major issue (cf. extract 107) in the handling of translations in art museums, CAT tools might efficiently bridge this gap

as they allow one to manage translation projects and resources centrally, providing access to all staff members of the different departments.

- (107) P2: There are three departments that assign translations: the press office, the communication department, and the curatorial department.
 P1: There is a desire to collaborate, but... Especially between the communication and the curatorial department, because the curators translate museum content, that we could reuse. But this happens very seldomly. **We would need to optimise processes** [...] because there are synergies. [KM1, KM-2]

Several museum staff members mentioned the problem of frequent updates of the source content, such as exhibition panels or catalogue texts, which may occur even after the content has already been translated into other languages – thus requiring the updating of translations. Other participants stated that translations are frequently reused on different channels: for instance, parts of a translated press release may be reused as web content or in an App. In some cases, in-house staff reassembles the respective parts to create new content. In other cases, the museum staff will try to contact the translator that has already worked on the translation, asking for a text adaptation by manually highlighting changes. Both text updates and adaptations could be efficiently dealt with by employing a TM database, as the relevant text passages including updates or changes would be automatically indicated by the tool. Finally, CAT tools could also be of great advantage in the case of travelling exhibitions, when existing content is reused and adapted. In extract 108, a participant from the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao explains the importance of consulting the existing documents during the translation process. However, if the material were fed into a TM database, both terminology and all text segments from the previous exhibition material could be reused in a much more efficient way.

- (108) For example, imagine an exhibition that is on a tour, and comes to Bilbao after it has been at the Tate or at the Kunsthalle in Munich. **There are materials that have already been created in different languages**. So, if we are going to have a different type of wall text because maybe the selection of artworks is not exactly the same and **there are things that vary**. But there is a basis that has already been done. So, what we say to translators is: "This is the text you have to translate, and this is the wall text that was translated before, and this is the essay of the catalogue that speaks about the exhibition. So, if you want to read it before, it will help you for translating". [GMB]

4.6.2 On everybody's lips: digital content management

In [section 2.7](#), I briefly outlined the principles of an integrated approach to content management, pointing out its benefits, both in terms of an efficient reuse of multilingual digital museum content on diverse channels, and within the context of translation management in museums.

Among the participating museums, I encountered the interesting case of the Kunsthalle Mannheim. Their department for Digital Content Management built a sophisticated, personalised, and integrated system – the so-called Museum Orchestration Server – which connects their object database, their CMS containing the online collection, and their CMS containing all media elements, including applications and the various media installations in the exhibition rooms. The great advantage of this system is a highly efficient reuse of content on a range of channels, which is centrally managed and updated. For example, the audio clips from the audio guide can easily be uploaded and become accessible within the online collection, enriching the textual and visual information of a specific webpage. Figure 11 shows different digital channels, all displaying information deriving from a centrally managed server.

It goes without saying that such a system also provides benefits for translated content, as it can equally be used on different channels. Moreover, potential content updates need to be performed only once, thanks to the central archiving system. Finally, managing content centrally can also contribute to the efficient management of translation projects, since relevant resources (e.g. images related to an exhibition text) are easily retrieved by all museum staff members across departments and provided to translators.

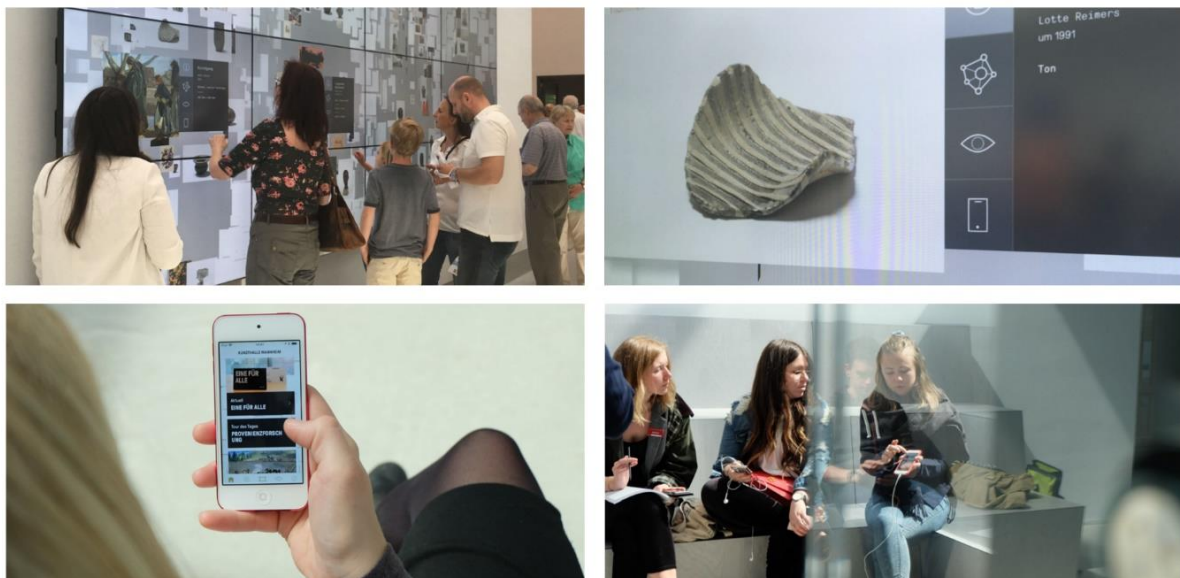


Figure 11: Different digital channels of the Kunsthalle Mannheim displaying information deriving from a centrally managed server

4.7 Critical reflections – a dialogue between research and practice

In various sections of this chapter on the results of the interviews, it emerged that participants appreciated the constructive exchange. In fact, while acknowledging some shortcomings in their practices, a number of museum staff showed a willingness to consider the issues and potential solutions raised during the interviews – in particular, the importance of implementing translation policies for more structured translation management. Some participants, among which the press officer of the Kunsthalle Mannheim (KM) further showed the intention of discussing such issues with the rest of their colleagues, and interest in examining the research results, which according to them may potentially inform and improve their current practice (cf. extract 109). This confirms that interviews may be “potentially a learning event for both parts” (Edwards & Holland 2013: 3) – the researcher and the person being interviewed.

- (109) I: Thank you so much for this very inspiring conversation.
 P1: Well, we thank you. We took many notes and will definitely share these ideas with our teams. [KM-1]

When addressing translation management workflows with staff from European art museums, many processes were shown to be rather unstructured. The interviews were an opportunity to reflect on potential translation policies in museums, aimed at improving these workflows, such as introducing standardised project specifications, employing computer-assisted translation tools to exploit previous translations, or creating a unit in charge of supervising translation issues. In fact, some participants from different departments of the Universalmuseum Joanneum (UJ) engaged in just such a critical reflection during the interview, reassessing their current practices and discussing potential improvements they could adopt – demonstrating a degree of openness towards the implementation of translation policies:

- (110) I: Thanks for this interesting discussion and the precious insights into your work.
 P1: It was really good for us to reflect about these issues, since we don't do that in the daily routine. For example, I think we should encourage the department to include the translators' name in relation to the stored texts in our text management system. [...] That would be perfect, because in case of content updates, we know who to contact.
 P2: Yes, I think, that's an important point.
 P3: I think, we need a person responsible for the proofreading of English content.
 P2: Yes, that is a key figure we are missing in-house.
 P4: It would be very helpful to have a competent person in-house, who is available for us as a central contact person. [UJ-4, UJ-5, UJ-6, UJ-7]

As discussed in [section 3.2](#), by enabling an exchange between researchers and participants, qualitative interviews can foster a dialogue between translation-related research

and professional practice, with the possibility of one feeding into the other. In line with the approach of Action Research, a set of best practices for translation policies in art museums will be developed in collaboration with the participants (cf. chapter 7).

5 Results: Interviewing translation service providers

This chapter aims to integrate the results presented in chapter 4, by adding the perspective of translation service providers, who professionally manage translation projects, and/or potentially collaborate with (art) museums. I considered this both necessary and useful as a major theoretical premise underlying this work is the efficient collaboration and communication between the different stakeholders of a translation project, pointed out by various scholars (Risku 2006, Dunne 2011, Abdallah 2012, Drugan 2013, Foedisch 2017; cf. [section 2.3.3](#)). In fact, the interviews with three language and translation service providers aimed to gain insights into professional practices in translation project management, while reflecting on how museums might contribute to the translation process. The interview thus aims to shed light on the last research question: Which enhancements to current translation practices could be introduced by art museums to contribute to the overall translation process?

Three very different language and translation service providers were involved: Art & Culture Translated (ACT), a translation and language services' company focused on the art and culture sectors, based in Barcelona and London, which collaborates with European art museums; Eriksen Translations (ET), a TSP based in New York, specialised in translating for museums and cultural institutions, which collaborates with US art museums; Acolad (ACO), a TSP with offices around the globe.

As in chapter 4, the results of the qualitative interviews with translation service providers are reported by discussing emerging themes, while employing participant quotes (cf. introductory words of chapter 4). Acronyms are used to indicate the specific participants referring to the company they belong to (cf. [Appendix F](#)).

My thematic analysis of the collected information through the interviews with TSPs produced three major themes with some sub-themes:

[Theme A] Dialoguing with art museums: improving collaboration

- Importance of detailed project specifications and related materials
- Need for an exchange of expertise, open dialogue, and trust
- Advising on a multilingual communication strategy
- Advantages of an interdepartmental approach to translation in museums
- Benefits of an exclusive collaboration

[Theme B] About the usefulness of CAT tools in art translation

- Enhancing project management
- Translation memory tools
- Centralised terminology management

[Theme C] Approaching art translation: a TSP perspective

- Contextualising art: from cultural adaptation to transcreation
- Addressing an international audience: simplification as enrichment

5.1 [Theme A] Enhancing collaboration: dialoguing with art museums

In this section, I will investigate which proposals for potential enhancements are put forward by translation professionals to improve the collaboration between art museums and translation service providers. In line with Cranmer’s (cf. [section 2.3.1](#)) and Neather’s (2012, cf. [section 2.3.2](#)) call to pay more attention to the relationship between museum and translation professionals, the four participants stressed the importance of an efficient dialogue between the different actors. The collaboration of different stakeholders in translation projects is also in the focus of a variety of translation scholars (e.g. Risku 2006, Abdallah 2021, Foedisch 2017).

5.1.1 Importance of detailed project specifications and related materials

From the interviews it emerged that the briefing phase is considered a crucial moment in defining the translation project and exchanging translation-related material, as stated by the director working for a TSP which is specialised in art and museum translation (ACT). The participant states that insufficient information and material in this phase may cause dissatisfaction and distrust, underlining that a close collaboration in the briefing phase may contribute decisively to improving translation processes. However, the closing sentence of extract 1 suggests that museums might not collaborate closely enough.

- (1) The briefing phase is crucial to define the project, understand client needs, deadlines, costs, and exchange translation-related material [...]. Insufficient information and material in this phase may lead to unsatisfaction and distrust. I think there is a **wide margin for improvement** during the briefing phase if agency and museums collaborated more closely. [ACT]

The company director’s persistent call for more collaboration in this initial phase may be explained by the fact that defining quality requirements appears to be no common practice in

museums (cf. [section 4.5.2](#)). In fact, the interviews with museum staff revealed a lack of awareness of the importance to agree on project requirements to improve translation quality.

However, this call for more collaboration is perfectly in line with the ISO standard 11669, that suggests the co-creation of project requirements as an efficient way of elaborating a common vision of a translation project (cf. [section 2.4.3](#)). It is equally in line with Risku (2006), claiming that the provision of reliable source text material is a core element in ensuring translation quality. In fact, the director of the specialised translation service company pointed out the urgency of providing previously translated material to guarantee consistency across content and putting the service provider into the position to satisfy the client’s terminological or stylistic preferences, while avoiding situations of distrust due to divergent translations – being translation quality a subjective matter:

- (2) We want to avoid situations in which the client comes to us pointing out: you translated this way, but in our brochure, it is translated in a different way. We carry out research and consult the museum website for related texts. [...] But it is important that the client provides us with a situation in which we **are able to create coherent and homogeneous content** with other products that we do not know. Sometimes a different translation is taken as a wrong translation. [...]. Actually, translation has always a subjective element, the perception of translation quality is also subjective. If there is some content that varies from the material they already possess, there is almost a moment of **distrust**, or at least some moment of suspect. [ACT]

The company director further stressed the importance of defining the tasks to allow for a smooth collaboration. While pointing out the differing expectations of clients, the participant explained how important it is to define which tasks in a translation project should be carried out by whom. The example of in-house revision versus revision carried out by the service provider was mentioned. Again, this confirms Abdallah’s (2012: 36) claim “Trust and cooperation, as well as the quality of the process and product, all improve when the actors know the extent and the boundaries of their accountability.”

When asked about the division of tasks between client and service provider, two production managers working for a large TSP, pointed out how important it is that museum staff know the translation sector and understand translation processes in order to be able to formulate useful quality requirements. The production managers (ACO) stressed that an efficient collaboration as well as translation quality also depend on the museum staff’s ability to provide relevant information and material (cf. extract 3). In fact, both the ASTM standard and the ISO standard 17100 envisage a certain degree of co-responsibility between client and

service provider, by leaving open the possibility for the client to take on a series of responsibilities within the translation project cycle – provided the necessary competence is possessed (cf. [section 2.5.1](#)).

- (3) P2: It can be said that the project management is a shared task between the localisation manager on the client side and the project manager of the TSP.
 I: How may this division of labour be organised?
 P2: Well, who manages translations within the museums needs to have some **experience in the translation sector**. You need to have an idea of what to send out and which **requirements** to make. Otherwise, you will make the translator's work a hard job, or in the worst case, waste your money. [...]
 P1: The museum needs to have a certain degree of **awareness of the translation process** and how to **ensure translation quality**. [ACO-1, ACO-2]

In contrast, a sales manager from a leading American TSP specialised in translating for museums and cultural institutions (ET), stated that project specifications are formulated under the guidance of the service provider, thus attributing the TSP with the task of advising the client in that process (cf. extract 4). This is in line with Joanna Drugan (2013), who claims that it is the TSP's responsibility to advise clients on the requirements to ensure a frictionless translation process, this being in the interest of all.

- (4) I: What about **project specifications**? How are they dealt with?
 P: I usually have a phone call with them, asking them what they want, and **I try to guide** them. [...] That's why they come to us, for services. [ET]

5.1.2 Need for an exchange of expertise, open dialogue and trust

The director of the specialised translation service company (ACT) who works closely with European art museums observed that an open dialogue and exchange of expertise are essential for an efficient collaboration between TSP and museum, not only in the briefing phase, but throughout the entire translation project cycle. Although a properly shared project management was not deemed useful during the translation phase, an open dialogue was seen as a way for the museum to contribute to the translation project – being available for potential queries and issues. In fact, the participant explained, that one important service their agency offers is to collect translators' doubts on a single form – an efficient instrument which is particularly helpful in case of diverse language version:

- (5) Once the translation phase starts, I think a shared project management is less helpful: the client should stay within the client's role, and the TSP stays within its role as a service provider. However, during that phase the possibility of an **open dialogue** and the clients' availability of providing us the **best possible working conditions**, is of crucial importance. [ACT]

The company director further stressed the importance of realistic deadlines, which includes reserving a time slot for the consultancy with the museum curator during the translation phase. This shows a degree of awareness of the usefulness of involving museum staff due to their expertise in the domain. Although the TSP exclusively employs translators with knowledge in the art and cultural sector, the director deemed the exchange of expertise with the museum staff a fruitful approach and revealed a high degree of respect for the expert role of the curator.

- (6) It is also very important that the translator approaches the translation with a certain degree of humility and asks the **curator as he is the expert**. We do not want to substitute the expert. The translator has linguistic expertise and a certain knowledge of the artistic field, but the last word is that of the curator. In case of a doubt regarding terminology for example, it is important to have an **exchange with the curator**. An open dialogue with the client is thus important. This is an approach that is working quite well. [ACT]

This is perfectly in line with Robert Neather (2012), who argues that the participation of museum staff in the translation workflow is fundamental, allowing for an exchange of knowledge and for different sets of expertise to merge into a joint effort (cf. [section 2.3.2](#)). At the same time, the participant's attitude of conceding museum curators a decisive role may also be the accommodation of museums' aspirations to be actively involved. In fact, from my interviews with museum staff, it emerged that the museums' tendency to exert control over translations is due to high-quality expectations paired with a certain degree of unease regarding the translators' competence in the art sector (cf. [section 4.5.1](#)).

The director of the specialised translation service company proved highly aware of the anxiety curators can feel when “their” content – exhibition content in particular – is translated into another language, and thus may undergo slight alterations. As a solution to this sensitive issue, the director (ACT) stated, that any potential changes are always agreed with the client (cf. extract 7). This perfectly mirrors the results from the interviews with museum staff, who said it was important for translations to stay true to the author's words, style, and intentions (cf. [section 4.3.2](#) – *Translating the author's voice*).

- (7) Obviously, there are considerations on how much the source text can be altered. [...] For **respect for the author**, content cannot be altered too much. When it comes to exhibition panels, changes are always agreed upon with the curator. In case we move away from the source text, we always do so with the **approval of the client**. [...] For example, we may agree to change content by creating a text which provokes the same emotions. [ACT]

The sales manager of the US company, when asked how art museums can contribute to improve the work of translation service providers, recommended that museums perform in-house reviews of translations. The reason for this is the domain-specific expertise possessed by museum staff, which can integrate the translator's work in a joint effort (cf. extract 8). The participant's recommendation is thus in line with the ISO standards 17100 and 11669, which define review as an accuracy check of content and terminology rather than linguistic issues to be performed by a domain-specific expert. The only incongruity is the participant's insistence that the reviewers be native speakers, while the ISO standards require simply "a high degree of proficiency in the target language" (ISO 11669).

- (8) I: What can museums do in order to improve your work as a translation agency?
 P: One suggestion: we usually ask museums to have an **in-house reviewer** because the information is so widely disseminated, [...] and content must be perfect. It can live for a long time: it is on the wall, in a book [...]. That in-house reviewer does **not necessarily need to be a linguist** but have knowledge of the **subject matter of the museum**, and he must be a **native speaker**. [...] So, we deliver the translate and ask them to review it. [...]. And then they come back to our linguists with their questions. [...] **That is a really good process in our experience.** [ET]

This recommendation for museums to perform in-house reviews made by a TSP operating in the USA is actually common practice in European art museums as far as translations into English are concerned. However, while the participant who works mainly with American museums stressed the importance of an in-house review being carried out by a native speaker, in-house reviews in European art museums are rarely performed by native speakers, but rather by curators who know the specialised English due to their research activity or by other staff who have studied English (cf. [section 4.5.1](#) – *Checking translations in-house*). This may be explained by the fact that English is a *lingua franca* in a large number of academic fields, while the participant was obviously referring to languages other than English, which are not equally well-known.

5.1.3 Advising on a multilingual communication strategy

The participant from the American TSP, which collaborates with a variety of American museums (ET) stated that the trend of language policy goes to serve not only international audiences, but also local language communities, since multilingualism is on the rise. Within this situation, translation service providers may take on an advisory role when museums decide on multilingual communication strategies:

- (9) We definitely talk to museums about multilingual communication strategies. [...] Very often, **we are advising museums**. When they come to us, we suggest languages, strategies, services that would apply well to them. When they have questions, we can say “Well, this is what your peers are doing in this city.” [...] You see, America is increasingly multilingual. So, museums are not only looking for international visitors, but also for their home communities. [ET]

In Europe, multilingualism and the presence of diverse local language communities are increasingly considered in art museums as had emerged from the interviews with museum staff (cf [section 4.1.1](#)). However, the company director working with European museums (ACT) reported a rather weak approach to elaborating multilingual communication strategies, lamenting that museums often fail to reflect relevant questions, while providing insufficient information on their communication strategy. In the company director’s view, the multilingual communication strategy should be reflected in a coordinated approach involving the various departments of a museum together with the translation service provider:

- (10) P: [T]he more information we receive on the multilingual communication strategy [...], the better we can satisfy the client’s needs. A fundamental question is how audience-oriented we want to be. But the client does not think about these problems. [...] In an ideal world it would be very useful to have a **meeting between the translation agency and all the involved departments** to reflect on the multilingual communication strategy in general or for an exhibition. [ACT]

The company director’s account is in line with Robin Cranmer’s claim that museum staff need to develop an increasing awareness of the intercultural complexities in order to develop adequate multilingual communication strategies (2016: 103). The question raised by the participant in extract 10, of how audience-oriented the translated content should be is closely related to the question of how far the translation may or may not move away from the source text:

- (11) Translation is not just transferring one word to another word, but communicating a message, with the possibility that the target text moves away from the source text. Sometimes, we are criticised for not having respected the source text literally [...] Sometimes, when museum staff encounters a phrase which is not perfectly conform, the translation is not considered faithful. [...] In this context, it is useful to “educate” the museum staff on what translation actually means.” [ACT]

In extract 11, the director of the specialised translation service company (ACT) observed that in the view of the commissioning museums, many text types are expected to be translated into largely equivalent text types in the target language, whereas translators may have a different view and feel that it is necessary to adapt the source text. With this issue, the participant addresses the core question, which is at the basis of Cranmer’s (2016) distinction of four

multilingual communication strategies employed in museums, i.e. the degree to which the source text needs to be (culturally) adapted (cf. [section 4.2.2](#)). Given the divide between museum staff and translation professionals, close collaboration between them, in a process of exchange, discovery, and co-creation would make it easier to elaborate a common vision of the best multilingual communication strategy. In fact, in Cranmer’s (ibid.) view, museums should “exploit” the translator’s intercultural competence when defining a multilingual communication strategy.

5.1.4 Advantages of an interdepartmental approach to translation in museums

Another observation of the director of the specialised translation service company (ACT) is the lack of interdepartmental coordination regarding translations in the museum, stating that in their experience, it is unusual for museums to provide relevant content that may have been translated for and by other departments (cf. extract 12), pointing out that the lack of a coordinated approach may have a negative effect in terms of terminological and stylistic coherence.

- (12) Often museums **lack a coordinated approach**. For example, we translate didactic material for the Education Department of a museum. For us [translation agency], it would be important to know if other departments have already translated material on the topic, in terms **of terminological and stylistic coherence**. This is not an automatic step carried out by the museum, but it is us who need to advance such a request, which is not always fulfilled. I am wondering how much coordination there is internally in museums. Maybe there is a coordination regarding source texts, but **there seems to be no coordinated approach regarding translation. At least this is my impression.** [ACT]

This is in line with the results obtained from the analysis of the interviews with museum staff (cf. [section 4.4.1](#)): the most common situation in European art museums is shown to be different departments managing different translations, without creating synergies across departments in terms of project-related resources. To overcome these existing shortcomings, the company director suggested an interdepartmental meeting with the translation service provider to enable a strategic planning of translations within a coordinated approach, aimed at ensuring coherence and a holistic approach to the translation activity:

- (13) [I]t would be important to have an **interdepartmental meeting** together with the translation agency for the strategic planning of translations. Otherwise, the **vision will be limited** without knowing the whole picture, which will create **problems for translation and for coherence.** [ACT]

As will emerge in chapter 7, which focuses on the participants' feedback on the guidelines for translation practices in museums, the call for interdepartmental collaboration in terms of translation is extended to the need for a coordinated and centrally managed organisation of source text material – considered as the basis of an efficient translation management by a museum staff member, namely the publication officer of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection (Venice).

5.1.5 Benefits of an exclusive collaboration

The director of the specialised translation service company, who earlier had mentioned the shortcomings of museums in providing sufficient reference materials, such as previous translations created by other providers and for other departments (cf. section 5.1.1; [extract 2](#)), advanced a proposal for museums to choose a single translation service provider. According to the company director (ACT), such an exclusive collaboration could reduce the disadvantages caused by a lack of interdepartmental coordination in museums, as a single interlocutor would have a global picture of all translation activities concerning a specific topic or exhibition (cf. extract 14):

- (14) I think, just as there is probably an exchange between the various departments in the phase of the source content [...], it would be an option to consider one single translation service provider for the translation of all content inherent of an exhibition, including content for social media, website, exhibitions panels, brochures, audio guides – all types of text connected to an exhibition or a topic. Just as there is a coordination for the creation of the source content, I think it would be important to have **a single translation service provider to coordinate translations** – or at least a dialogue between the different service providers if the latter is not possible. [ACT]

The company director stressed the importance of a coordinated approach when it comes to translated content belonging to the same project or exhibition and the advantage of a single provider taking care of the different text types to ensure coherence across different forms of content. The results reported in chapter 4 have shown that in art museums, issues of coherence are often approached after the production phase, which is problematic. As reported in the literature, this can lead to time-consuming re-working if no strategic planning is carried out in the early phase of the project (Dunne 2011: 163). In the opinion of the company director (ACT), an exclusive collaboration between museum and TSP provides the benefit of smoother workflows, and linguistic, organisational, and strategic advantages, also in terms of defining a multilingual strategy:

- (15) I: So, from your point of view, the most efficient way for a museum to handle translations is to collaborate with a single translation agency?
 P: Exactly, because there are **linguistic, organisational, and strategic advantages**, also regarding the multilingual strategy of the museum. Having a single interlocutor – at least for a specific project or exhibition – makes things much easier. If more providers work on the same project, materials are not always efficiently exchanged. [ACT]

5.2 [Theme B] About the usefulness of CAT tools in art translation

The usefulness of CAT tools in art museums was discussed from a theoretical viewpoint in [section 2.6](#), while their practical application in art museums was addressed in [section 4.6.1](#), reporting the views of museum staff. This section adds the perspective of three translation service providers on the issue.

5.2.1 Enhancing project management

Three out of four participants pointed out the project management benefits of CAT tools in the context of museum translation. The two production managers working for a large TSP (ACO) mentioned efficient translation workflow (cf. extract 16), while referring to a series of functions and features that allow for a seamless collaboration: group share functions enhancing the communication with and among translators, collaborative terminology management features, review features facilitating feedback processes, and quality control functions allowing for trackable review. The sales manager from the American TSP (ET) observed that the review process in particular is much more frictionless and quicker when employing the diverse QA functions, while avoiding time-consuming email sending (cf. extract 17).

- (16) I: Is the use of CAT tools a sensible choice in a museum context to manage translations?
 P: Yes, they allow to have everything in one place. [...] CAT tools are also called Translation Management System as they allow to **manage the entire translation workflow**. [...] Obviously, the choice of using CAT tools requires investment, in terms of the acquisition of the actual tool and of **staff training**. [ACO-2]
- (17) I: Which advantages do you see in using CAT tools in the museum context?
 P: I think the **review process is much quicker**. You don't have to send an email saying, "I am sending this to you". You don't have to appoint people, the museum reviewer can just log into the system, and it's visible to everybody. So, there is a lot **more speed**, there are **fewer barriers**, it's **frictionless**. [...] However, the use of CAT tools by museums does **require training**, which can be an **obstacle**. [ET]

It is noteworthy the three participants all underlined the need for training if museum staff decide to use CAT tools in-house. While the sales manager of the American TSP stressed potential

obstacles (cf. extract 17) in acquiring the necessary competences to employ such tools, the production manager (ACO) considered the use of CAT tools by museums a sensible and even necessary choice, if a museum wants to address international visitors (cf. extract 18). The option to outsource translation management entirely is considered less advantageous.

- (18) It is advisable that anyone working with translations uses a CAT tool. However, you need to evaluate the context and needs. A museum that translates very occasionally, does not need such tools. A museum that wants to be international and **address international visitors** needs a CAT tool, in my opinion. The museum cannot delegate everything to a third party. [ACO-1]

This attitude strongly favouring the use of CAT tools by museum staff may depend on the fact that the participant works for a large translation service provider and is probably used to collaborating with large companies, who translate content into multiple languages. In fact, when asked about the division of labour within translation projects, the production manager's (ACO) answer suggested a shared project management involving both client and TSP (cf. extract 19), which may greatly benefit from the use of such CAT tools.

- (19) It can be said the **project management is a shared task** between the localisation manager of the client and the project manager of the translation service provider. (ACO-1)

This position is in contrast with that of the director of the specialised translation service company (ACT), who deemed a shared project management to be of little help, while acknowledging the necessity of an open dialogue with the museum to support the work of the translation service provider (cf. extract 20). A possible explanation for this viewpoint in favour of a strict division of roles might be the fact that in the experience of this participant, museum staff does not possess the necessary competence to perform a shared project management.

- (20) Once the translation phase starts, I think a **shared project management is less helpful**: the **client should stay within the client's role**, and the TSP stays within its role as a service provider. However, during that phase the possibility of an **open dialogue** and the clients' availability of providing us the best possible working conditions, is of crucial importance. [ACT]

As discussed at the end of [section 2.5.1](#), the question of who should be responsible for the translation project management is not explicitly answered in the ISO standard 11669, while ISO 17100 implicitly suggests that PM is performed by the translation service provider. In contrast, the American translation service standard *ASTM F2575-14 Standard Guide for*

Quality Assurance in Translation leaves translation project management tasks up to either the client or the TSP.

To judge from the museum staff accounts (cf. chapter 4), few museums actually possess the necessary in-house competence to undertake a shared project management. However, considering the tendency of art museums to want to be involved, neither option should be precluded. Based on the specific situation of each museum in terms of resources, needs, and objectives, it is necessary to evaluate the extent to which museum staff can become involved in managing translation projects.

5.2.2 Translation memory tools

A general premise shared by all four participants was: “the more recurring the text, the more useful the TM tool – that’s the secret.” [ACO-2]. From the participants’ accounts it emerged that translation memory tools – typically employed in technical translation – may have a limited usefulness in art museums as art discourse may not have so much recurring text. The sales manager from an American TSP working with many different types of museums (ET) explained that content that requires a creative approach to translation may gain less from the use of such a tool (cf. extract 21). The production manager of a large TSP (ACO) observed that even for the translation of similar content, TMs might not be a great advantage, as creative translations can require very different styles in conveying similar content (cf. extract 22). This is in line with the opinion expressed by the museum staff of the Louvre Museum, which is why they do not use TMs in their original function, but as a kind of corpus – a stylistic and terminological reference (cf. section 4.6.1; [extracts 105](#) and [106](#)).

- (21) I: Are TM tools used for all sorts of text in the art sector, or are there some text types for which they are less useful?
 P: I think it’s more useful for certain types of text, and **less for creative texts**, but it always helps to track materials rather than working off the word file. [ET]
- (22) In **creative translation**, it is little useful to reuse something translated before. [...]. Even if the content is similar, you need **to convey it in a very different manner**. [ACO-1]

In slight contradiction with the opinion stated in extract 22, the American sales manager (ET) observed that translation memories may be very useful, when content is adapted, and different but similar text versions are needed, e.g. in the case of reusing digital content on different channels (cf. extract 23). However, the same participant also acknowledged that reusing content

by means of TM tools is not always possible: first, because museums often lack interdepartmental collaboration, and second, because of the different linguistic styles employed by the diverse departments, addressing different audiences (cf. extract 24).

- (23) How to you ensure efficient translation processes when you have various materials to be reused on different channels?
 P: [...] We will use either a style guide or translation memory. [...] For example, for the Whitney Biennial we translated text into Spanish. So, we would translate the scripts for the audio tour and then, that gets reused and put on the wall as exhibition text. So, museums will **reuse content for multi-purpose** fountains, and **translation memory tools** may be of **great help** in such a case. [ET]
- (24) Often, we will work with an exhibition team, with an education team and a communications team. In in large museums, these **departments** can be very **siloed**: you are talking to different people. And they are talking to different audiences. The exhibition team is addressing visitors, the press is going to speak differently and educators still differently. So, surprisingly, there is **not that much overlap where translation memory would help**. [ET]

Finally, the participants mentioned specific contexts, where a TM database can be a valuable tool in art museums. In line with the participant from the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (cf. [section 4.6.1](#)), all four TSP participants stated that promotional museum texts can be translated efficiently with the help of TMs, as they usually contain recurring text elements. The production manager (ACO) pointed out that TM tools can contribute to more efficiency in case of source text updates, requiring the updating of translations (cf. extract 25). Another observation worth mentioning is the usefulness of a TM database in ensuring consistency in ongoing projects with large text volumes, such as catalogues (cf. extract 26), as stated by the sales manager (ET)

- (25) One evident advantage when using a translation memory tools is when it comes to **adapting and updating** a document on the basis of a source text that has slightly been changed. [The employment of a TM tools] avoids to manually compare the original with the translation, but the update of the original can efficiently be applied in the translation. [ACO-1]
- (26) I: Are translation memories useful when translating for art museums?
 P: Yes, definitely, because the translation memory can be very useful in **ongoing projects**, especially in very large projects. [...] TM are useful for **catalogues** to make sure that we're consistent. [ET]

The observations made by the participants from the selected translation service providers are partially in direct response to some of the difficulties reported by the participants working for the different art museums. In fact, several museum staff members mentioned the problem of frequent updates of the source content, such as exhibition panels or catalogue texts,

requiring translation updates of the last minute. Other museum staff stated that translations are frequently reused on different channels, without employing a systematic approach. Thus, the participants of the TSPs confirm my claims – expressed at the end of [section 4.6.1](#) – that both text updates and text adaptations can be efficiently dealt with by employing a TM database. This equally applies for the adaptation of travelling exhibitions, as stated by a participant of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (cf. section 4.6.1; [extract 108](#)).

5.2.3 Centralised terminology management

The sales manager of the American TSP (ET) working with different types of museums reported about the efficiency of creating a termbase and agreeing on terminology with the museum before the production phase (cf. extract 27). Such an approach further supports terminological consistency in case of multiple translators working on the same projects. However, the sales manager stated that the creation of a terminology database is particularly useful in the context of science museums, exhibiting on specific topics with very technical terminology.

- (27) I: Another main function of CAT tools is the creation of terminology databases. Is that a service, museums require, and do you create a termbase when translating for museums?
 P: We often use the **termbase** [...] for **science museums**. There may be an exhibition about bugs, or butterflies, or about climate change. So, you are drilling into a very narrow topic you can't expect everybody to know. So, a termbase can be very helpful. [...] So, we will develop a glossary for them, the **glossary will be approved** by [the museum] – this makes the process much quicker rather than doing the translation, having it reviewed, coming back, revising, etc. [ET]

The director of the specialised translation service company (ACT) raised the issue that terminology management for museums – just as project management for museums – is often a rather decentralised process. During the interview, the participant started a reflection on a more efficient use of terminology, considering the possibility of a dedicated TSP to create a termbase, which could then be shared with the client as well as the different translators or translation service providers (cf. extract 28). A second idea expressed by the company director is the co-creation of a termbase in collaboration among the diverse service providers (cf. extract 29).

- (28) We need to understand how to **centralise processes** and who should be in charge. Terminology management may be an additional service offered by the translation agency to the museum. This is something I will be reflecting on, since terminology up to now is an instrument, we create internally for our use without sharing it with the client. However, our terminology management is limited and could instead be created on the basis of much more content [...] using also content translated by other translators or agencies. [ACT]

- (29) If a museum [...] collaborates with diverse translation service providers, it would in fact be desirable to invest in the creation of [terminological] resources, maybe by creating a collaboration between the diverse TSPs, a kind of **teamwork**. [ACT]

Both options aimed at improving terminological consistency could efficiently be supported by the use of group share functions included in CAT tools. The company director's account shows that such practices are far from reality in the museum context, though diverse solutions are available.

5.3 [Theme C] Approaching art translation: a TSP perspective

This section is the counterpart to [section 4.3](#), investigating how art museums approach translation and which are their quality expectations. In this section, I will report experiences, difficulties, and observations by translation service providers when negotiating translation requirements with museums, while drawing comparisons with the accounts from museum staff.

5.3.1 Contextualising art: from cultural adaptation to transcreation

As emerged from the analysis of the interviews with museum staff, the concept of creating culturally customized content for diverse target groups as proposed by Cranmer (cf. [section 4.2.2](#)) has been embraced to a very limited degree by museum staff, with the exception of promotional content. In marketing and web communication, creating such tailor-made content for a specific target group has lately been referred to as *transcreation*—referring to the linguistic and cultural adaptation to the target audience (Rike 2014: 8). The question, which kind of museum content requires to be culturally customised, may create a gap between museum staff and translation professionals, as claimed by Cranmer (cf. [section 5.1.3](#)). This claim is confirmed by the director of the specialised translation service company who collaborates with art museums. When asked about the art museums' awareness of the need for cultural adaptation, the company director stated “[I]t is useful to “educate” the museum staff on what translation actually means.” (cf. [section 5.1.3](#); [extract 11](#)). From the director's (ACT) account emerged a missing openness for customising content for different target groups on the side of museum staff, leaving translation service providers little leeway to move away from the source text:

- (30) **The client does not always allow to move away from the source text**, sometimes they won't let us change anything. Obviously, for some text types, transcreation is not desirable. [...] In the museum context there are various texts that need to remain close to the source text, such as scientific articles. [...]

However, when the text needs to **involve the visitor**, [...] the language needs to be highly natural and idiomatic. In this case, **some clients agree with us** on the necessity to create content that raises the same emotions [...] In this case, the emotion created is more important than the message. [ACT]

As shown in extract 30, the necessity to adapt translated content in order to involve the visitor was accepted only by some museums. According to the results of the analysis of interviews with museum staff, such a functional approach is typically accepted by art museums that favour more accessible and interactive content.

The difficulties described of negotiating with art museums confirm Cranmer's observation of a client-translator "divide in cultural awareness" (2019: 56), requiring the translation service provider to deal with a series of communicative challenges (cf. [section 2.3.1](#)). Although museum staff are generally expected to have a rather high level of cultural awareness as they habitually work with cultural content, the participant reported a missing awareness of the need for cultural adaptations. Museum staff seems to be much concentrated on the source text production, while translation seems to be a secondary concern, something that is not much talked about:

- (31) **Cultural adaptations** are necessary [...] **there is not much talk about this in the museum context**. For example, when translating informative exhibition panels, it would be important to provide visitors with content enabling them to **contextualise artworks**, for example citing events that temporarily happened in their culture of reference of the target audience. This is something we have realised for the Mantegna exhibition room [...], where diverse elements have been added on the timeline for a better contextualisation of the artworks. [ACT]

In extract 31, the company director (ACT) also raised the issue of contextualising artworks to make them more accessible to the intended target audience, for example by adding culture-specific references of the target audience. However, the interview analysis in chapter 4 showed that few museums embrace the idea of contextualising exhibition content to the needs of different target groups. One of the few exceptions was the Louvre Museum (Paris), which comes as no surprise, given the fact that they have an in-house translation unit.

In the literature, the concept of *transcreation* is typically referred to the translation of marketing content and web communication (Rike 2014: 8). In fact, the sales manager from the American TSP (ET), reported about an advertisement campaign of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, when asked about transcreation in art museums (cf. extract 32).

- (32) I: Is transcreation applicable in the art sector [...] and for which text types is transcreation an option?
 P: [...] For example, the MET had a big **advertisement campaign** [...] entitled *This is the moment, this is the MET* to be translated into multiple languages – this requires transcreation. [...] Art historical texts don't require transcreation, they require a highly skilled team, but not so much transcreation. [ET]

While in extract 32, texts about art history are excluded from transcreation practices, the director of the specialised translation service company (ACT) extended the concept of transcreation by also including exhibition content. Their definition of transcreation is somewhat wider, claiming that any cultural translation in some way requires a kind of transcreation, as the content needs to be adapted and partially rewritten:

- (33) Transcreate or translate? Is there a difference between transcreation and a good translation? In the end, a good translation is similar to a transcreation, especially in the case of **cultural translations**, since there are culture-specific elements that **require a kind of transcreation**. [...] For us, transcreation is **half-way between translation and rewriting** a new text, a **blend between translation and copywriting**. [ACT]

This whole issue is at the heart of the dilemma of a customer-oriented approach (e.g. Shreve 2000, Abdallah 2010, Drugan 2013), with a customer that may not necessarily have the competence to communicate efficiently their requirements. Consequently, serving the client may not necessarily mean providing the end user with an adequate translation. A solution to the dilemma may be offered by an integrated approach to translation quality management (cf. [section 2.4.2](#)) suggested by an international research group (Fields et al. 2014) as well as by Keiran Dunne's agile approach (cf. [section 2.4.4](#)). The first approach enables to address many diverse components of translation quality, while serving the expectations of both the client and the end users. The second focuses the active involvement of the client throughout the entire translation project to co-create quality requirements – supporting the client in expressing the proper needs, while giving the chance to adapt requirements “along the way”.

5.3.2 Addressing an international audience: simplification as enrichment

Apart from cultural adaptation, another issue that emerged from the interviews was the question of simplification. In contradiction to the participant of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, who said that the curator's words should not be altered or explained, as ambiguities may be intentional, the director of the specialised translation service company (ACT) stated that their mission is to “facilitate the comprehension of artworks, of a collection, of an exhibition, to make content accessible to an international audience, just as in the source language.” In fact,

this participant observed a great resistance on the part of museum staff to simplify content, as they consider simplification an impoverishment rather than an enrichment:

- (34) The simplification of texts before translating is usually considered an impoverishment [...] I think **museum staff are terrified of simplifying**. But on the contrary, simplification can be an enrichment, as the text is freed by the superfluous, thus communicating the essential. [ACT]

To further explain the idea, the company director cited Alice Lucarelli (2001): “The term simplifying is all too often understood as an impoverishment and limited complexity; but it is on the contrary an act of refining with the aim of eliminating superfluous complications, while adding sense”.⁴³ Later on in the interview, however, the director (ACT) acknowledged a certain level of receptiveness on the part of some museums, who were willing to establish a dialogue on how to achieve more readability and accessibility of translations, while observing similarities in the profiles of a translator and museum editing staff (cf. extract 35).

- (35) Some clients are very receptive. In case of ambiguous content, we get in touch with curators. (...) In the end, the **translator’s profile** is somewhat similar to that of the **editing staff of the museum**. (...) However, we also observe the **will to facilitate content on the side of the client** [museum]. [ACT]

Finally, the company director (ACT) claimed that translation can also help to improve the source content, reporting an example where a more synthetic version of an audio guide content was then used to revise the source language version. A similar experience has also been reported by museum staff (cf. section 4.5.1; [extract 79](#)).

- (36) I: Do you mean that the translator may contribute to **improve the source text**?
P: Yes. When it comes to translating audio guides, content is sometimes too long when translated into Italian. [...] So, we try to eliminate redundant elements, elements which at times are eliminated subsequently also in the English source text. [...] **Sometimes translation is the attempt to say the same thing in a less promiscuous and more synthetic way**. [ACT]

5.3.3 Critical reflection: a collaboration between museum and translation professionals

The analysis of the interviews with translation professionals has allowed for important insights. The results have confirmed a series of findings reported in chapter 4, such as a certain lack of awareness on the part of museum staff regarding the importance of the briefing phase in

⁴³ My translation of the Italian citation by Aurora Lucarelli (2001) “Semplificare il linguaggio burocratico. Meccanismi e tecniche, p.3.

translation projects. Furthermore, translation professionals confirmed a lack of interdepartmental collaboration in many museums, pointing out the negative effects of such an uncoordinated approach, which may entail an inefficient collaboration and communication with the translation service provider. Finally, the concerns and anxieties of museum staff regarding translators' knowledge in the art sector were also reflected in the perceptions of translation professionals, who observed "a moment of distrust" on the part of the museum professionals. Interestingly, while suffering a sense of distrust by museum staff regarding their expertise in the art sector, translation professionals stated that museum staff have limited professional competence to deal with some translation-specific issues and therefore "should stay within the client's role" (cf. [extract 20](#)). This entire conflict recalls the question of professional expertise and the negotiation of responsibilities as discussed by Robert Neather (2012), who calls for greater attention to the relationship between museum and translation professionals as well as for boundary practices to enable an efficient dialogue between the two actors. The importance of trust and cooperation is also addressed by Abdallah (2012: 36), underlining the need for actors to "know the extent and the boundaries of their accountability". However, despite of this complex constellation of entrenched positions and claims on professional know-how, both museum and translation professionals recognised the importance of an open dialogue. In fact, it is the concept of an exchange of professional expertise that was one of the core elements to feed into the design of my proposed guidelines (chapter 7).

6 Analysing and developing translation policies in museums

As outlined in [section 2.5.2](#), with *translation policies* I refer to the translation procedures and guiding principles underlying translation practices in museums. In addition to the thematic analysis of the interviews on translation practices in art museums (chapter 4), in this chapter, I will analyse their translation policies by means of a *grid of key features*. In a first step (cf. [section 6.1](#)), I will develop the grid, which is inspired by Peter Sandrini's work (2018) on quality standards for translation policies in official institutions. The ISO standards for translation, namely ISO 11669 and ISO 17000 (cf. [section 2.5.1](#)), further informed the elaboration of my grid model. In a second step (cf. [section 6.2](#)), I will apply the grid to analyse and assess the translation policies of the 25 interviewed art museums, and report the results, both in a discursive analysis and graphically.

The diverse types of analysis carried out in this thesis, ranging from the analysis of the interviews with both museum staff and translation service providers, up to this grid analysis, will altogether inform the proposal for a set of guidelines on how to implement translation policies and best practices in museums presented in chapter 7.

6.1 Developing a grid of key features to analyse translation policies in (art) museums

The structure of the grid is inspired by the Maturity Model (Crawford 2007; CMMI 2010), a widely used tool to indicate potential improvements of processes and technologies in the professional world, mainly in the context of project management and software technology. As explicated in more detail in [section 3.5](#), I elaborated a simplified structure of the Maturity Model, able to respond to the specific needs of my project, and with the aim to describe potential enhancements of translation policies in art museums. To emphasise that aspects of evaluation and measurement are secondary, I preferred the term *grid of key features* rather than *metrics*, while favouring the term *degree of application* rather than *maturity level*. In fact, the objective here is not a value judgement of translation policies in European art museums, but an assessment of the degree of application of certain policies in different areas, with the aim of proposing possible enhancements of existing approaches.

To describe the degrees of application for the defined key features, I chose a bottom-up approach. Therefore, although the descriptions are based on established practices of existing

quality standards (ISO), at the same time they consider some specific conditions of art museums that had emerged from the interviews. In general terms, the three degrees of application (DA) represent a development towards an optimised application (cf. table 17). Thus, potential steps and actions for optimisation can be inferred, once the assessment has been completed. Institutions of the first degree (initial) organise tasks with ad-hoc actions, while lacking defined processes and the division of labour. The second degree (defined) implies that institutions define roles and responsibilities as well as processes and strive to apply them consistently. Institutions that reach the third degree (optimised) have a well-defined translation management workflow, aimed at optimising processes in order to ensure a high degree of efficiency.

Degrees of application – general	
DA 1 (initial)	no processes in place, processes are performed ad hoc, without being defined; single process elements are in place but are applied in an intuitive manner
DA 2 (defined)	defined processes are performed in a partially systematic and coordinated manner, relying on previous positive experiences
DA 3 (optimised)	processes are controlled and continually improved; the optimisation of processes on the basis of a systematic analysis of upcoming problems

Table 17: Degrees of application (DA)

In very general terms, the grid aims to assess “institutional translation competence”, defined by Peter Sandrini (2018: 394-395) as the capacity of an institution, organisation, or company to combine the competences of collaborators (internal and external) and the use of technology in such a way as to optimise translation within its defined goals. (cf. [section 2.5.2](#)). Based on the quality criteria of Sandrini’s Translation Policy Metrics (2018) as well as the international standards ISO 11669 and ISO 17000, I identified three key domain areas (KDA) as relevant to support translation practices in art museums: Translation management, Translation quality assurance, and Translation technology – which will be described in the following sections.

6.1.1 Translation management

The key domain area Translation management addresses questions of how museums organise their translation practices: How is translation management structured in-house? How do museums collaborate with external translators? How are translation projects managed? In this context, the planning competence of museums is a priority. One key focus is a central and

coordinated approach to managing translation. The advantages of a central management, involving an interdepartmental collaboration, are briefly outlined here:

- optimised use of resources due to central management allow to share them with all involved actors;
- specialised knowledge is efficiently exchanged;
- consistent workflows foster efficient collaboration.

Generally, I distinguished between two levels: the overall organisation of translation-related tasks and the project-specific translation management. While the first two key features focusing on in-house coordination and external collaborations regard the overall translation management, the third key feature concerning project specifications refers to the management of single translation projects.

Coordination of in-house translation management

Any museum offering content in more than one language needs to manage translation to some extent. Since translations are often handled by diverse departments, it is crucial to establish a coordination among the different actors involve. Critical factors when managing translations in-house are a central management and shared processes in order to create synergies among departments and guarantee efficiency. Table 18 illustrates the characteristics of the three degrees of application, from an initial to an optimised condition.

Coordination of in-house translation management (MGMT-1)	
DA 1 (initial)	uncoordinated translation management, single departments carry out translation-related tasks ad hoc; process are neither defined nor coordinated
DA 2 (defined)	interdepartmental collaboration to manage translations; defined processes are performed in a partially systematic and coordinated manner
DA 3 (optimised)	central translation management by a translation unit or dedicated person in charge of coordinating, controlling; and optimising translation-related tasks

Table 18: Key feature – coordination of in-house translation management

Collaboration with external translators

The actual translation work can be carried out by either a freelance translator, a translation agency, or an in-house translator (Gouadec 1989: 72), each having specific advantages and disadvantages. While freelance translators may offer fewer services than a translation agency,

a close relationship and specific knowledge of the art sector can be beneficial. Translation agencies, on the other hand, offer a wide range of services, such as terminology and project management, while offering less opportunity for direct contact with the translator. In [section 4.4](#), I discussed the preferences of the interviewed museum staff, who indeed were referring to precisely these points. I argue that well-organised outsourcing practices can exploit the benefits of different types of service providers. Crucial factors when assigning translations are a coordinated approach, the systematic documentation of relevant information on external collaborators, and feedback about their performances allowing for an optimisation of assigning processes.

Collaboration with external translators (MGMT-2)	
DA 1 (initial)	no planning of the assignment of translations to external service providers; translations are assigned ad hoc
DA 2 (defined)	translations are assigned to trusted translation service providers who have been tested over time according to defined criteria
DA 3 (optimised)	translation projects are assigned to trusted translation service providers by means of a database, containing information on a set of criteria to choose the most adequate translator for each project from an extensive pool of translators; translator feedback feeds the database to optimise the process

Table 19: Key feature – collaboration with external translators

Translation project management: project specifications

Project management comprises the planning and controlling of tasks and resources to achieve the quality requirements of a translation project. Given the fact that art museums make substantial use of external translation service providers – more often freelance translators than translation agencies – but at the same time wish to keep editorial control over translated content (e.g. by carrying out in-house reviews), I argue that there are good reasons that at least some organisational tasks of translation project management (PM) be carried out within the museum.

According to both the ISO and the ASTM standard (cf. [section 2.5.1](#)), there is no clear line defining which tasks fall under the responsibility of clients, project managers, and translators. It goes without saying that there is no one size fits all solution. Depending on economic and infrastructural resources, staff competences, museum size and the specific context of a museum, the implementation of procedures aimed at managing translation projects will vary in their complexity and must be decided upon specifically. However, as reported in

the literature (cf. [section 2.3.2](#)), successful translation practices in museums depend on the efficient collaboration with the TSP, while defining accurately the division of labour. Similarly, both ISO 11669 (2012: 12-13) and ISO 17100 (2015: 2) underline the importance of interaction between the client and the external TSP in the various phases of the translation cycle.

Both ISO standards put project specifications at the heart of a successful collaboration between client and TSP, as this allows them to negotiate quality requirements in a systematic way. The decisive factor is that all translation projects be documented and checked to enable the optimisation of processes, and more specifically the cataloguing of parameters for defining project specifications.

Translation project management: project specifications (MGMT-3)	
DA 1 (initial)	no project specifications are provided; translation projects are handled ad-hoc
DA 2 (defined)	translation project management is performed in a partially systematic manner as minimum standard procedures are defined to provide project specifications and reference materials
DA 3 (optimised)	translation project management is systematically performed on the basis of well-defined parameters for translation project specifications, which are continually optimised by means of feedback from single projects

Table 20: Key feature – translation project management: project specifications

6.1.2 Translation quality

In this section, I will address how museums deal with questions of translation quality, or more precisely with quality assurance. A precondition for establishing processes of quality assurance is a thoughtful consideration of the concept of quality in translation and a discussion of different quality criteria. Project specifications based on a set of translation parameters may “not only define and guide a translation project, but also allow for the entire translation project to be assessed” (ISO 11669, 2012: 18). Thus, standardised project specifications may allow museums and TSPs to negotiate quality requirements, while providing an efficient instrument of quality assurance. For example, when museums perform in-house reviews and provide translator feedback, this becomes part of the quality assurance process, which again may lean on the quality criteria agreed in the project specifications. According to the ISO standard 11669, in-process quality assurance (2012: 13) is a task that may as well be performed by the client, while contributing to the overall quality.

Process standards for quality assurance

This key feature sheds light on the question of whether museums employ any standard processes for quality assurance. A number of international standards were discussed in [section 2.5.1](#). The literature emphasises that standardised project specifications are of paramount importance in ensuring translation quality (e.g. Mossop 2001, Risku 2006, Gouadec 2010, cf. [section 2.4.3](#)). I claim that standardised project specifications represent an efficient way for museums to negotiate, assess, and adapt quality requirements in all phases of the translation project. Crucial factors regarding this key feature are the consistent use of standard processes across departments, their continual optimisation according to the specific needs of the institution, while employing them systematically throughout the entire translation project cycle.

Process standards for quality assurance (QA-1)	
DA 1 (initial)	no processes for quality assurance employed
DA 2 (defined)	diverse processes for quality assurance are defined by each department and employed independently and in a partially systematic manner
DA 3 (optimised)	standard processes for quality assurance are systematically referred to across departments, which are documented and optimised according to the specific needs of an institution; standard processes are employed throughout the entire translation project cycle

Table 21: Key feature – process standards for quality assurance

In-house review and feedback

While in-house review is a common practice among the interviewed museums of this study, feedback to translators is rarely given (cf. [section 4.5.1](#)). This is line with results from other studies (cf. Neather 2012). As discussed in [section 2.4.4](#), Keiran Dunne underlines the importance of translation review and feedback by the client during the production phase to avoid time-consuming updates at a later stage. According to the ISO standard 11669 (2012: 13), review tasks may be performed by either the client or the TSP, stressing the importance of an efficient interaction to ensure that quality requirements are met. The fundamental factor when museums review translations in-house is that there be a systematic dialogue with the TSP by referring to a set of previously negotiated quality requirements. In this way, the translation process quality is enhanced, and at the same time the process may be continually optimised.

In-house review and feedback (QA-2)	
DA 1 (initial)	sporadic and intuitive in-house review
DA 2 (defined)	continuous but unsystematic in-house review of translations; occasional exchange with or feedback to translators
DA 3 (optimised)	systematic in-house review, feedback, and exchange on the basis of defined quality criteria, contributing to the translation process quality, while enabling continuous process optimisation

Table 22: Key feature – in-house review and feedback

6.1.3 Translation technology

This section addresses the key domain area of Translation technology. As discussed in [section 2.6](#), computer-aided translation tools (CAT tools) may offer a series of advantages to museums in managing translation projects. CAT tools can ensure efficient communication between all involved actors in a translation project allowing them to access the same resources in a managed way. Moreover, these tools include a series of features to centralise project and asset management, e.g. translation workflow management, terminology, and translation memory management as well as quality assurance. In fact, both ISO 11669 and ISO 17100 recommend the employment of translation technology.

Translation management systems

ISO 17100 lists a series of tools which can be employed to efficiently manage translation projects: “translation management systems, terminology management systems, and other systems for managing translation-related language resources”. (2015: 7). As claimed by Sin-wai Chan (2017: 39), translation has become a collective task: “At present, translation is done largely through teamwork and translators are commonly linked by a server-based computer-aided translation system.” Thus, such tools facilitate the efficient management of translation projects, allowing for frictionless collaboration between the involved actors, while enabling centralised processes. Given the fact that museums want to be actively involved in translation projects, translation management systems represent a bridge between the two professional groups, in particular in enabling an efficient dialogue and exchange for tasks of quality assurance.

Translation management systems (TECH-1)	
DA 1 (initial)	no translation management systems employed
DA 2 (defined)	translation management systems are employed for single tasks or projects
DA 3 (optimised)	translation management systems are employed to centralize processes; processes are controlled and continually optimised

Table 23: Key feature: translation management applications

Terminology management

ISO 11669 focuses on terminology management, stressing that “terminology work is crucial in nearly all translation projects at all stages of the translation project” (2012: 11). Annex B further specifies the various terminology tasks in the pre-production and the production phase, underlining the close collaboration between client and translation service provider – in line with the literature (e.g. Dunne 2011). As for the provision of reference materials, ISO 11669 lists a series of resources to be provided by the client: “related documents from the requester (both in the source and target languages), glossaries or terminology databases, and translation memories created in related projects” (2021: 27). A centralised approach to terminology management in the museum context was also an issue mentioned by one TSP participant, who raised the problem of different service providers working on the same project, without exchanging resources. This creates a number of disadvantages: first, the lack of collaboration can have a negative impact on terminological consistency; second, synergies are wasted leading to inefficient workflows.

Terminology management (TECH-2)	
DA 1 (initial)	no terminology management in place
DA 2 (defined)	no terminology management in place, but project-specific terminological specifications and a bilingual glossary sheet are provided
DA 3 (optimised)	centralised terminology management; a comprehensive termbase is continually updated, maintained and optimised to be shared with translators

Table 24: Key feature: terminology management

Management and provision of TM and corpus data

By employing the Translation Memory feature (TM) of a CAT tool, translation data is systematically produced which can be efficiently reused for future translation tasks in different ways. If a museum stores translation data in a central TM database, it can efficiently share translation data with all translation service providers – either in form of TM data or in form of a parallel corpus, which can easily be produced out of the TM data.

Management and provision of TM and corpus data (TECH-3)	
DA 1 (initial)	no storage of TM data; the provision of existing translations in document file formats requires time-consuming research
DA 2 (defined)	no storage of TM data; however selected translation data is stored centrally to facilitate the provision of existing translations in document file formats
DA 3 (optimised)	central and systematic storage of TM data, which is continually updated, optimised, and shared with translators, either in form of TM data or in form of a parallel corpus

Table 25: Key feature: TM and corpus data

6.1.4 Synopsis: grid of key features

Grid of key features for translation policies in (art) museums		
Key Domain Area (KDA)	Key Features (KF)	DA
(MGMT) Translation Management	(MGMT-1) Coordination of in-house translation management	
	(MGMT-2) Collaboration with external translators	
	(MGMT-3) Translation project management: project specifications	
(QA) Translation Quality Assurance	(QA-1) Process standards for quality assurance	
	(QA-2) In-house review and feedback	
(TECH) Translation Technology	(TECH-1) Translation management systems	
	(TECH-2) Terminology management	
	(TECH-3) Management and provision of TM and corpus data	

Table 26: Summary – Grid of key features for translation policies in (art) museums

6.2 Results: assessing translation policies of 25 European art museums

In this section, I will report how the grid of key features introduced in [section 6.1](#) was applied in order to “assess” the translations policies of the 25 European art museums that have been interviewed. To do so, I attributed each key feature a degree of application, ranging from initial (1), defined (2) to optimised (3). To assess the DAs, I drew on the results of the interview analysis and reported in a discursive analysis, while using exemplary and anonymised interview extracts. More specifically, I assessed the DAs of the eight key features for each of the 25 participating museums. However, for reasons of anonymity, I reported the results for each key feature as percentage distributions of the degree, which I represented graphically in form of pie charts. In other words, based on the results of the interview analysis, I established the degree of application (initial, defined, optimised) for the eight key features and for each museum, while illustrating tendencies in the pie charts. Where no data was gained about an issue in the interviews, the category “n.a.” (not applicable) was applied.

The assessment of the degree of application for the key features within the three areas must always take the effective aims of the institutions into account. Thus, for each of the three areas, it is necessary to consider if the represented aims actually correspond with the aims of the translation policy as defined by each museum. With this in mind, the degree of application may provide an indication regarding the quality of a translation policy and the efficiency of translation practices in museums. The aim is to identify possible shortcomings as well as potential for optimisation. The grid analysis can be conducted as a form of self-assessment by an institution, or by interviewing key participants of relevant institutions, leaving the assessment up to the interviewer/researcher – as was the case of this study. Obviously, a certain degree of subjectivity cannot be excluded in such an analysis.

6.2.1 Translation management: towards a systematic, coordinated and central approach

Coordination of in-house translation management

All interviewed art museums face a considerable load of translation-related tasks, involving a series of departments, such as the press office, the education department, the publications department, etc. Nonetheless, only two museums have a centralised translation management, with documented processes aimed at optimisation – thus reaching DA 3. In the majority of cases, translations are handled independently by the different departments, while lacking the

coordination to create synergies (cf. [section 4.4.1](#)). This condition often goes hand in hand with an intuitive approach to managing translations. This group of museums is classified as DA 1, as processes are neither defined, nor coordinated. Extract 1 is typical of this group:

- (1) I: How are translation-related tasks coordinated among the departments to create synergies? [...]
 P1: It's kind of a missing structure, these things just happen. We have no guidelines. [...] It is rather work in progress.

Finally, there is a small group of museums who recognise the need for interdepartmental collaboration and who seek solutions, which mostly remain unsystematic. This group of museums can be classed DA 2. Extract 2 shows that the effort of interdepartmental coordination is only partially systematic:

- (2) **If possible**, the diverse departments coordinate translation-related tasks, but sometimes it's an **unstructured step in the workflow**.

Figure 12 illustrates the percentage distribution of the reached degrees for this first key feature, i.e. coordination of in-house translation management. Apparently, more than half of the interviewed museums lack a coordinated approach to translation management, indicating a great potential for optimising their workflows by moving towards a more systematic, coordinated, and centralised approach.

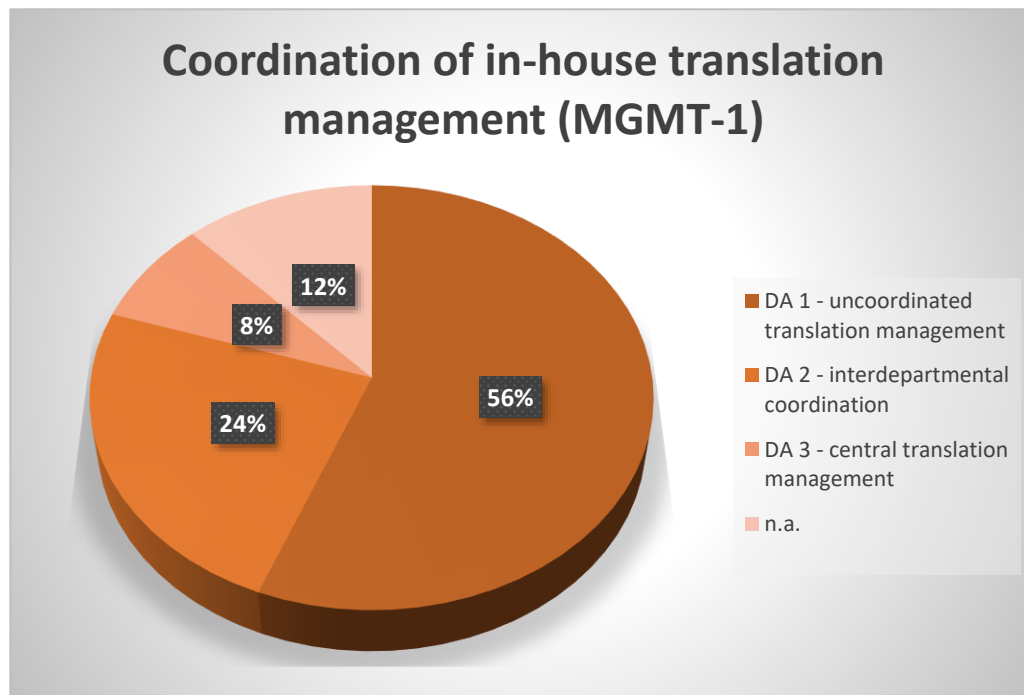


Figure 12: Results for key feature – Coordination of in-house translation management

Collaboration with external translators

Establishing processes of how to choose translation service providers and how to collaborate – for example by defining feedback practices – can enhance the overall quality of the translation project. As outlined in [section 4.4.2](#), the concept of trusted translators is widespread among the interviewed art museums, while practices of systematic translator feedback to optimise processes are the exception (cf. [section 4.5.1](#)). The majority of the involved museums was therefore assessed as DA 2. As museums generally pay great attention to the translation of their content, it is not surprising that only a very small group of museums (12%) seems to lack any planning of their external collaborations – which remain within the first degree of application. Finally, there are again two museums, that reach the highest degree of application: both museums use a detailed database to assign the most adequate translator for their projects, while performing regular translator feedback in order to optimise processes. In extract 3, a participant describes how they use their database:

- (3) P: We have a kind of **database** where we specify the translator's languages, proficiency levels and fields of specialisation. And we also know who can translate best art historical texts. [...] So, we select the translators not only in terms of the language they translate into, but also in terms of what type of text it is, how difficult the text is, and which register is used.

The results show that the majority of art museums collaborate with trusted translators, which certainly is a benefit for translation quality. However, efficiency could be further enhanced by integrating systematic translator feedback to optimise processes. Another issue is that some museums that collaborate with a rather small number of trusted translators might consider increasing this number by creating a pool of translators. Another possible enhancement might be to organise translation projects in such a way that new incoming translators find the conditions to produce quality translations without facing a lengthy phase of “approximation over time”. This issue is closely related to many of the key features discussed within the following paragraphs and sections, aimed at capitalising existing practices and resources.

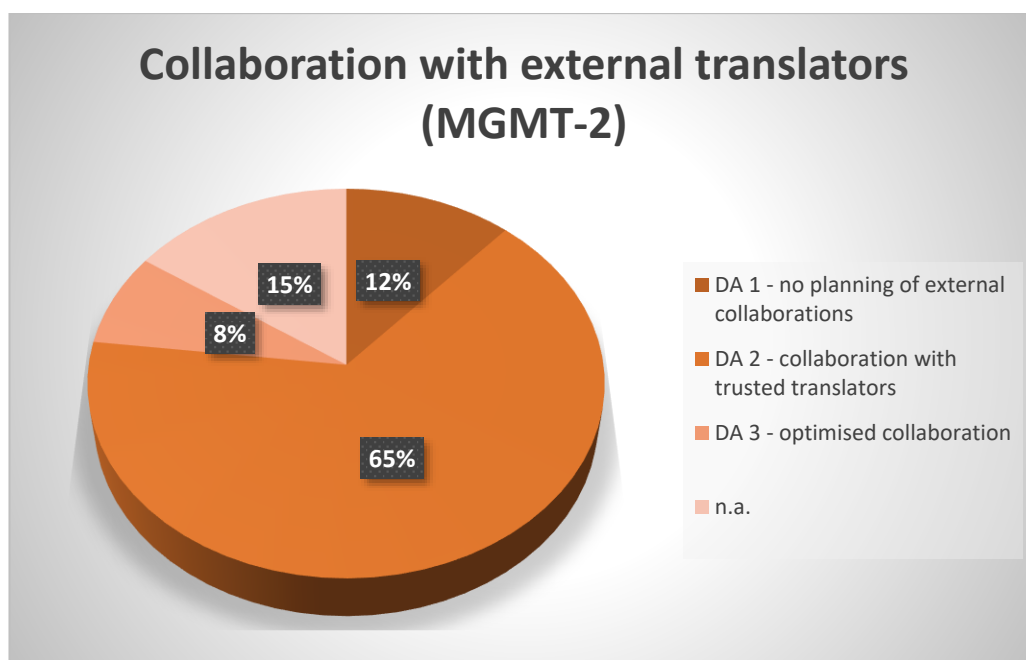


Figure 13: Results for key feature – Collaboration with external translators

Translation project management: project specifications

As discussed in [section 4.5.2](#), the accounts of the interviewed museum staff showed a very heterogeneous picture of how museum staff communicate project-specific quality requirements, with project specifications being no common practice apart from few exceptions. In many cases (32% of the museums) there seemed to be no awareness that agreeing on various aspects of a translation project can improve the translation quality. This group remains at the lowest degree of application as no project specifications are agreed upon and translations projects are handled rather intuitively. Extract 4 is an example of this group's approach:

- (4) I: Is there a briefing for the translator, concerning project-specific issues?
P: Seldomly. We leave that up to the translator.

Quite a large number of museums regularly provide some project-specific indications as well as reference material. However, project specifications are communicated mostly orally, lacking a documentation, to which all actors may refer to during the translation project, reason for which they reach only DA2. A small number of four museums reach the highest degree of application, employing a structured approach to project specifications, with a complete set of parameters for the formulation of quality requirements, which are adapted to the needs of each specific project. Extract 5 shows the extensive list of specifications one of the museums:

- (5) When we assign a project, we provide details on the context, whether the translation regards the permanent collections or a temporary exhibition, whether it is web content or a scientific article. We will specify the subject field, the target audience, as well as additional resources we think may be useful, such as our glossary, images, existing translations, links to websites, and so on.

The results show that a great number of museums are unsystematic in managing their translation projects and communicating their quality requirements. Negotiating project specifications can offer museums an uncomplicated and straightforward way to enhance efficiency, collaboration, and the overall quality of translation projects.

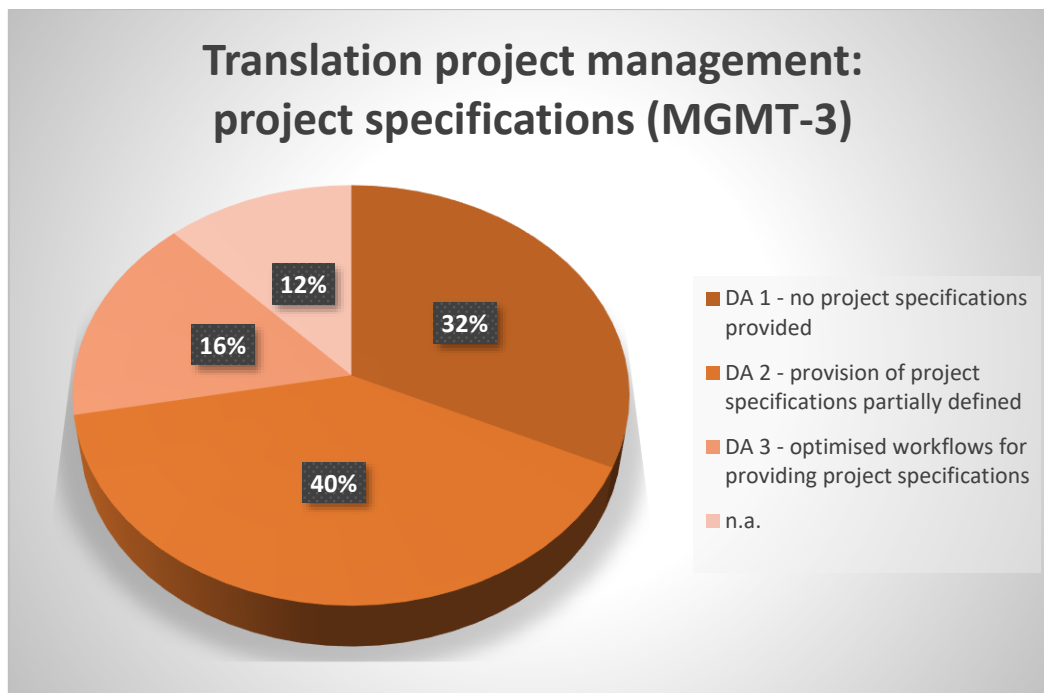


Figure 14: Results for key feature – Translation project management: project specifications

6.2.2 Translation quality: towards a standardised quality assurance

Process standards for quality assurance

As claimed by Joanna Drugan (2013: cf. [section 2.4.1](#)), quality assurance (QA) involves defining processes for all stages of the translation project aimed at achieving quality, including planning, defining quality requirements, and controlling quality. For a museum, this means establishing procedures to provide quality reference materials, formulate project specifications, review translations, and provide feedback. Except for two cases, none of the interviewed museums employed such an all-encompassing approach to quality assurance. Approximately a third had no processes for quality assurance in place, while 40 % attempted to perform some

quality assurance measures, which remained rather uncoordinated and only partially systematic: this group was assessed as DA2. If museums aim at to be actively involved in translation projects, they can enhance their QA practices by adopting a holistic approach to quality, while referring to standard processes in all those areas where their expertise is crucial in contributing to the overall quality of the translation project.

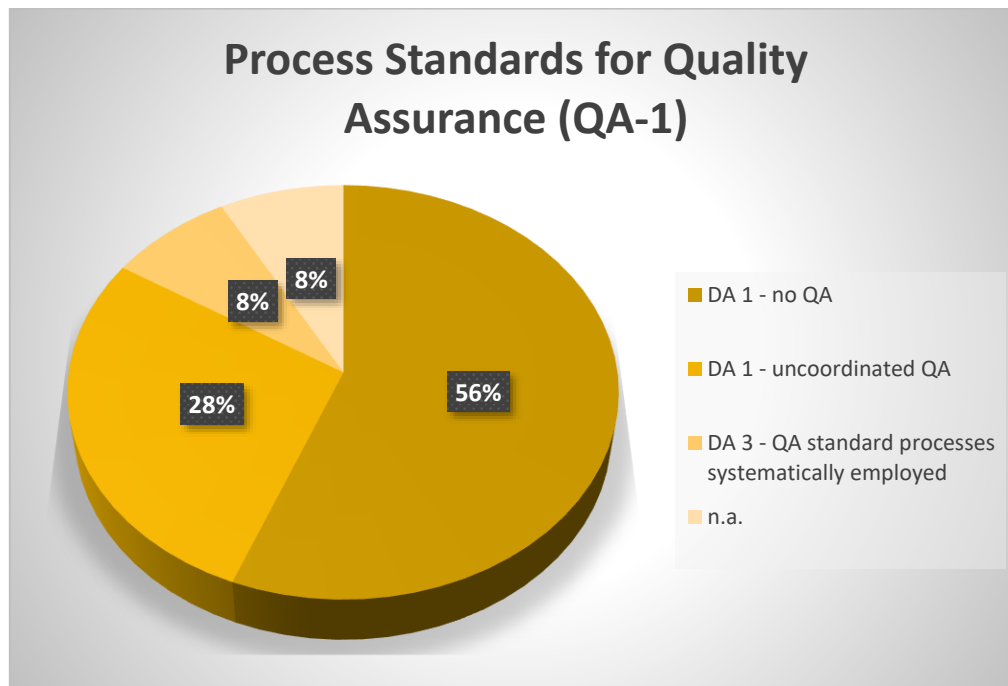


Figure 15: Results for key feature – Process standards for quality assurance

In-house review and feedback

As emerged from the interviews, in-house review is a common practice in art museums due to a strong tendency to keep control over translated content. In fact, only an extremely low number of museums fail to regularly review externally produced translations. The great majority perform continual in-house reviews of translations, while lacking systematicity in referring to a defined set of quality criteria and in providing translator feedback, as is shown in extract 6, where modifications are carried out in-house rather than referring back to the translator:

- (6) When translations come back, the curator will have a look at the texts, if there is something to modify. [...] Depending on the proficiency level, somebody will autonomously change the translation.

Due to this unsystematic approach which does not allow for process optimisation, this large group reaches only DA2. Moreover, performing in-house review without providing feedback, does not allow the translator to improve his knowledge regarding the museum's preferences.

Though many museums may be aware of the importance of exchange with TSPs, they do not establish an efficient dialogue in terms of translator feedback – which becomes the missing link in the chain of process optimisation. Only a small group of museums makes a qualitative leap by integrating feedback practices. Thus, a potential enhancement can be achieved by establishing continual feedback loops between client and TSP as proposed by Keiran Dunne (2011; cf. [section 2.4.4](#)), who claims that such practices contribute decisively to the product and process quality, as client preferences can be taken into account during the production phase.

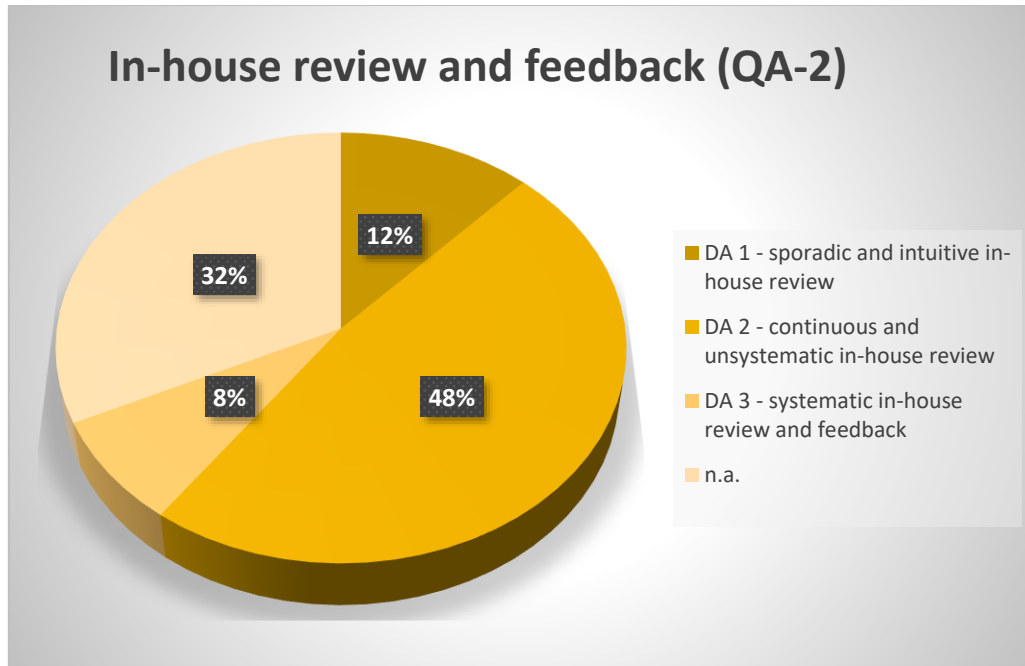


Figure 16: Results for key feature – In-house review and feedback

6.2.3 Translation technology: towards efficiency

Translation management systems

Although many participants recognised the need for more efficient solutions and process optimisation, such as the importance of providing translation-related materials or an efficient text management to easily retrieve and share translation-related resources, their approaches remained largely unsystematic and inefficient (cf. [section 4.6.1](#)). While two museums actually employed CAT tools to manage translation projects, the great majority of the interviewed museum staff were unaware of the potential of CAT tools for the management and maintenance of translation-related issues:

- (7) I: Do your translators employ translation technology?
 P: I would not know. That is their profession, I am only requiring a service.

Translation technology can greatly support the handling of translations in art museums, facilitating interdepartmental collaboration and the efficient management and provision of resources, while allowing for a central translation project management. Depending on the goals of the translation policy, each museum must evaluate the option to work with CAT tools individually. Obviously, the use of such tools requires some training as well as some knowledge of translation processes. However, more specific tasks requiring expert knowledge (e.g. terminology management) can be performed in collaboration with a dedicated translation service provider. Undoubtedly, employing translation technology offers a great potential for enhancing museums' translation practices in terms of efficiency.

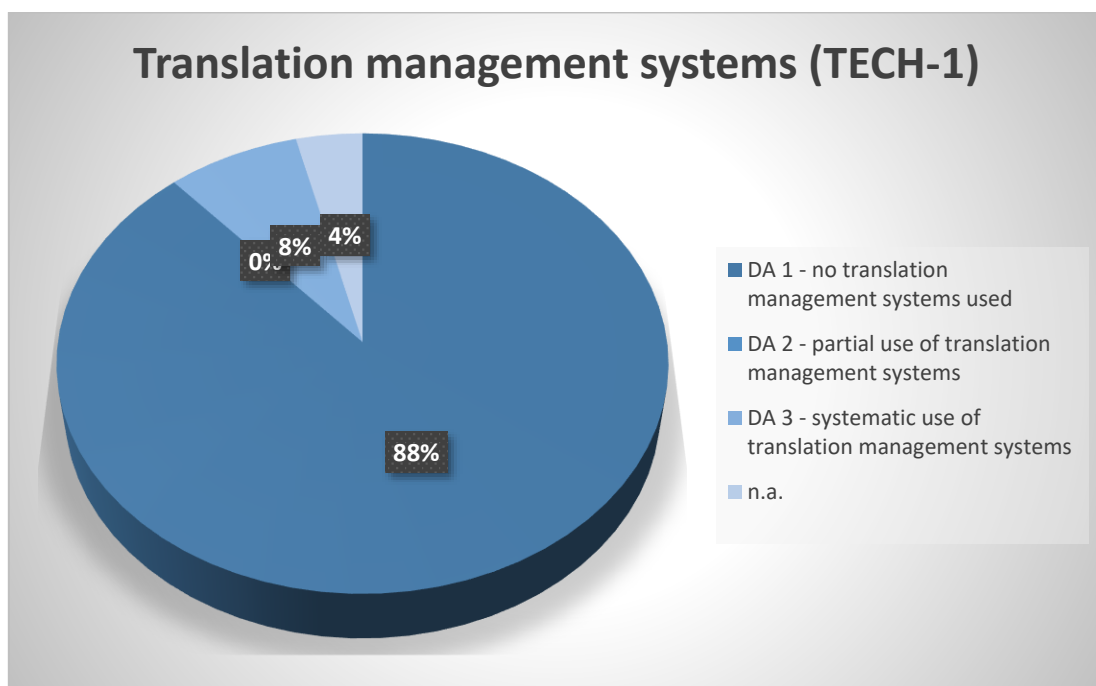


Figure 17: Results for key feature – Translation management systems

Terminology management

The main feature which can support an efficient terminology management is the so-called termbase (i.e. terminology database). Among the participating museums, only one had a centralised system of terminology management, maintaining and optimising a comprehensive termbase to be shared with translation service providers. Next to this single case reaching the highest degree of application, there were a few cases, who provided bilingual glossary sheets and terminological specifications by email in a partially structured manner – a group I assessed as DA2. Although a great number of museum staff said they made efforts to ensure terminological consistency, their strategies remained mostly unsystematic; in most cases there

were no processes in place to handle terminology issues efficiently (cf. [section 4.5.3](#)). This large group remained within the first degree of application. Extract 8 is an example of this group:

- (8) I: Talking of **terminology**, do you have a terminology database or glossary?
 P: No, we do not have such a **structured process**. ... Buy that could actually be an idea to elaborate a sheet and collect terms that have already been agreed upon.

As terminological issues emerged as one of the major concerns of the interviewed art museums (cf. section 4.3.1, [fig. 8](#)), it appears reasonable that museums enhance their practices by employing a more systematic and efficient way of ensuring the consistent use of terminology among their collaborators. Apart from employing a termbase, the systematic provision of general and project-specific bilingual glossary sheets may also improve their practices. Finally, there is a quite efficient way of handling terminology, i.e. the provision of corpus data, an issue that will be discussed in the next paragraph dealing with the last key feature.

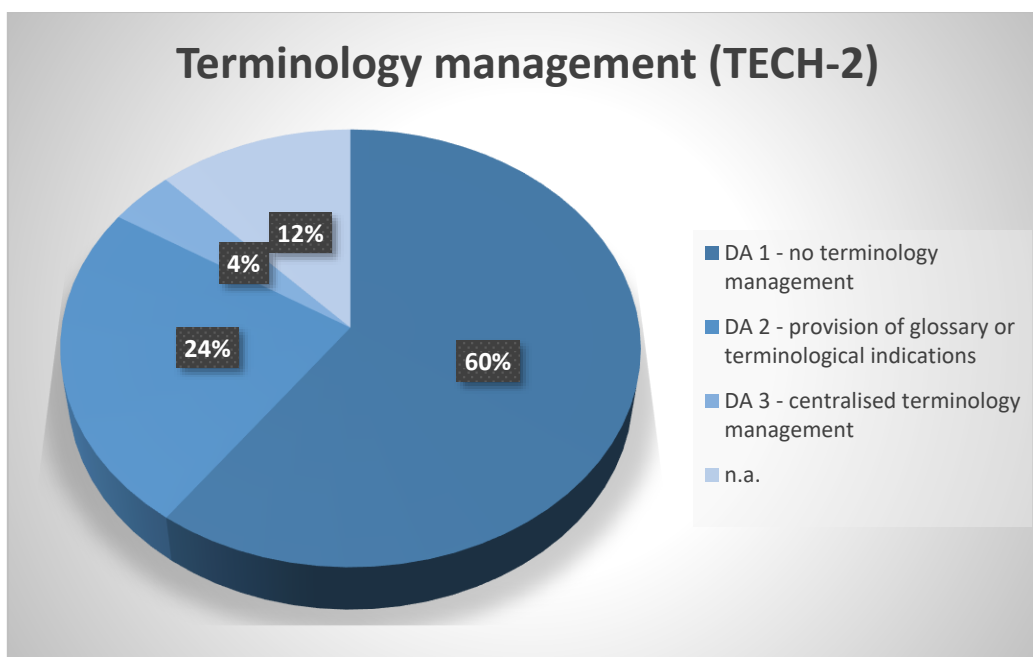


Figure 18: Results for key feature – Terminology management

Management and provision of TM and corpus data

From the participants' accounts, it emerged that a large part of the museum staff attempts to provide existing translations to their translators. However, their strategies remain inefficient. When asked about the provision of resources, time constraints were frequently mentioned (cf. extract 9). One efficient way to optimise the provision of existing translations and other materials is the creation of a central archive. As most museums have no processes for the central storage of translation data, they remained within the first degree of application.

- (9) We try to [...] provide the translator with existing translations of the exhibition, but **sometimes there is just no time** to check and send all the available resources.

However, almost a third of the participants said they possessed a central archive for the storage of selected translation data in document file formats, thus facilitating the provision of existing translations; this group thus reached DA2. Only a very small number of museums reached the highest degree of application. These two institutions, namely the Louvre Museum in Paris and the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, employed CAT tools to create a TM database of all existing translations, which is continually updated and optimised to be shared with translators. While in one museum, the TM database is used in its usual way, in the other case the TM database becomes the source for creating parallel corpora to be exploited as a terminological and stylistic reference by their translators:

- (10) Our translation memory is used like **the Linguee [platform]**: you can type a word and can see it come up in different contexts [...] [I]t's not just for very **technical terms**, it's also for **phrasing**, a kind of **stylistic reference**.

There is great leeway for museums to enhance their practices in managing and providing translation data. As has been shown, a TM database can have various uses and provide diverse benefits. Storing TM data is a very efficient way of recording all translation choices centrally, allowing to perform searches within the entirety of data, and hand on easily existing resources.

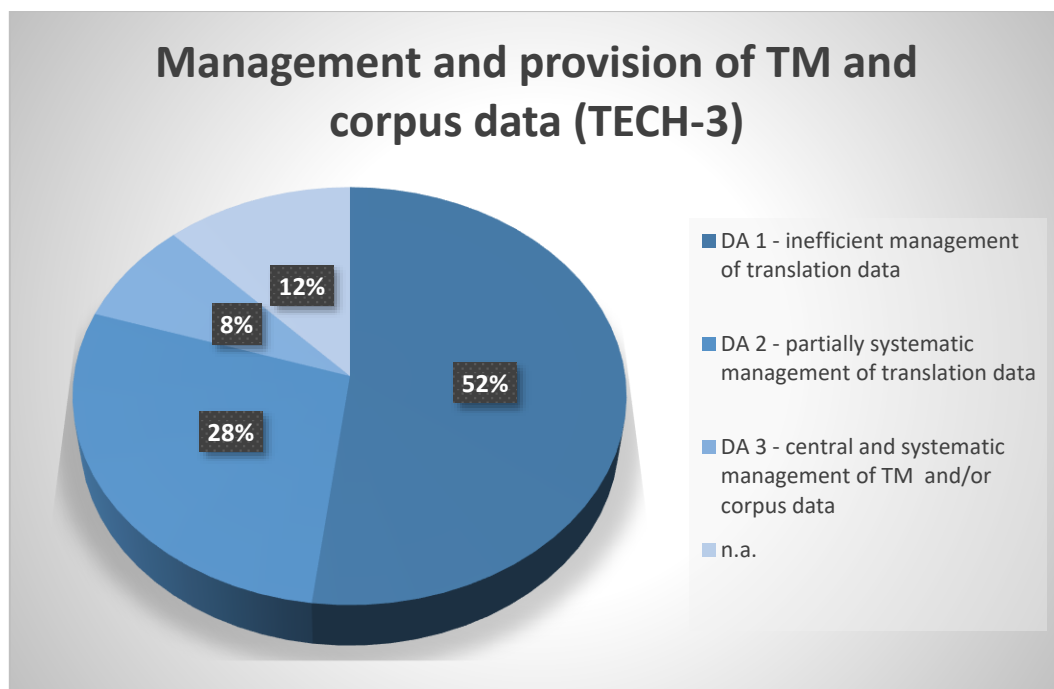


Figure 19: Results for key feature – Management and provision of TM and corpus data

6.2.4 Summary of the results

The application of the grid for the case studies of the 25 interviewed European art museums produced the following results:

Grid of key features applied for the case study of 25 European art museums – results					
Key Domain Area (KDA)	Key Features (KF)	Degree of application (DA)			
		DA 1	DA 2	DA 3	n.a.
(MGMT) Translation Management	(MGMT-1) Coordination of in-house translation management	56%	24%	8%	12%
	(MGMT-2) Collaboration with external translators	12%	65%	8%	15%
	(MGMT-3) Translation project management: project specifications	32%	40%	16%	12%
(QA) Translation Quality Assurance	(QA-1) Process standards for quality assurance	56%	28%	8%	8%
	(QA-2) In-house review and feedback	12%	48%	8%	32%
(TECH) Translation Technology	(TECH-1) Translation management systems	88%	0%	8%	4%
	(TECH-2) Terminology management	60%	24%	4%	12%
	(TECH-3) Management and provision of TM and corpus data	52%	28%	8%	12%

Table 27: Grid of key features applied for the case study of 25 European art museums – summary of results

The analysis has shown that the interviewed art museums rarely reach the highest degree of application, which corresponds to optimised processes and workflows. In particular, there is considerable room for improvement in the employment of CAT tools and the use of structured project specifications – both in terms of project management and quality assurance. Another key feature which needs to be developed further is interdepartmental coordination and collaboration. It is noticeable that the third degree of application was mostly reached by two art museums throughout all key features, namely the Louvre Museum and the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. It is not by chance that these institutions are considered the highest standard among art museums, a fact that is apparently reflected in their translation policies and practices (cf. [sections 4.6.1](#) and [4.5.2](#)).

7 Quality in museum translation: a proposed set of guidelines

In the first section of this chapter, I will present the development of a set of guidelines (cf. [Appendix E](#)) on how to design and implement translation policies and best practices in art museums. To do so, I drew on the results from the analysis of the interviews with museum staff (cf. chapter 4) and translation service providers (cf. chapters 5), on the results from the assessment of translation policies by means of the grid of key features (cf. chapter 6), as well as on general trends in the literature and translation industry (in particular ISO 17100 and ISO 11669). Within a participatory approach, the accuracy of the findings was validated by the interview participants, providing feedback on the proposed guidelines – a strategy referred to as *member checking* (Creswell & Creswell 2018: 200). The results of a questionnaire survey and a small number of follow-up interviews are discussed in the second section of this chapter (cf. [section 7.2](#)), also in terms of how the practitioners' evaluation contributed to improve and refine the guidelines, which can be considered a co-creation by the researcher, museum staff, and translation professionals.

7.1 Developing a set of guidelines

7.1.1 General notions

The proposed guidelines on translation policies and practices in art museums focus on organisational aspects of translation. Given the fact that art museums make substantial use of external translators, but at the same time wish to keep editorial control over translated content, I argue that there are good reasons why at least some organisational tasks of translation project management (PM) and translation quality assurance (QA) be carried out within the museum. According to both the ISO and the ASTM standard (cf. [section 2.5.1](#)), there is no clear line defining which tasks fall under the responsibility of clients, project managers, and translators. It goes without saying that there is no one size fits all solution. Depending on economic and infrastructural resources, staff competences, museum size and the specific context of a museum, the implementation of procedures aimed at managing translation projects and assuring translation quality will vary in their complexity and must be decided upon specifically. However, the close collaboration with TSPs is essential (cf. [section 2.3.3](#)), especially for tasks requiring specific competences (e.g. terminology management), while defining accurately the

division of labour. To enable an efficient exchange of expertise and information between the museum and TSP, collaborative processes must be implemented.

As outlined in [section 2.5.2](#), I developed my guidelines by observing existing norms in professional practice – an approach in line with Andrew Chesterman’s claim that norms grow out of common practice. The aim of developing a set of guidelines was to enhance current practices, which sometimes lack a systematic approach and efficient collaboration. As emerged in chapter 4, current practices are often based on the competences of individual people; thus they do not capitalise on related knowledge in the form of resources and practices. The quality model underlying my proposed guidelines therefore advocates a collaborative approach based on standard processes, fostering an efficient exchange between museum staff and TSPs as well as the active participation of the museum in achieving translation quality.

While developing the guidelines, I realised that many recommendations regarding the formulation of translation policies and practices were not specific to art museums but can apply to other types of museums as well as to any entity working within the cultural economy. I therefore opted for a modular approach, separating the general aspects that apply to any type of museum from those aspects that are specific to art museums. Moreover, I intend the guidelines as general recommendations for museums, which may be adapted according to the specific needs and contexts of each institution, while responding flexibly to different situations.

Apart from the last section of the guidelines (section 4), which provides reflections and recommendations specific to art museums, I chose a tripartite structure, moving from the general to the more specific:

- I therefore started out with translation policies, focusing on the choices and decision regarding the multilingual communication strategy, the structure and organisation of translation management, procedures of translation quality assurance, and the employment of CAT tools (section 1).
- In section 2, I focused more specifically on the workflows of translation project quality management, suggesting core tasks and processes within a three-phase workflow, aimed at ensuring an efficient collaboration among the actors.
- In the third section, I provide tailored parameters for client specifications, which support the workflow described under section 2, by guiding the formulation of quality requirements and their assessment, while enhancing the communication between museum and TSP.

7.1.2 Key features of translation policies in museums

The first section of the guidelines leans heavily on the findings of chapter 6, where I elaborated and assessed the key features of translation policies in museums – in the three key domain areas: translation management, translation quality assurance and translation technology. While taking into account the results and achievements of the interviewed museums, the key features were the starting point to formulating a step-by-step *iter* to implement translation best practices in museums. Two additional aspects were integrated, i.e. indications on how to develop a multilingual communication strategy and a list of key competences museum staff should possess (cf. fig. 20).

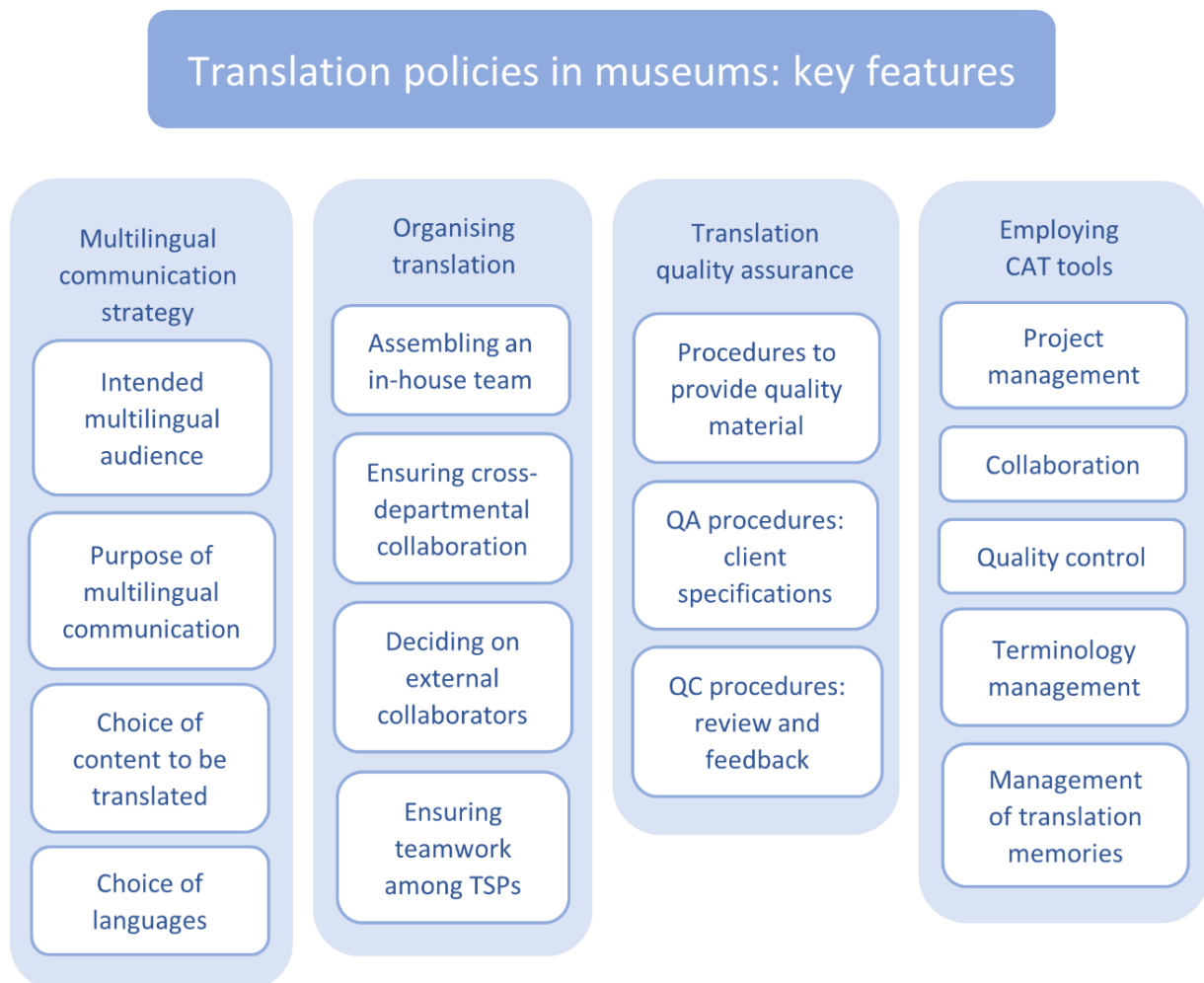


Figure 20: Translation policies in museums: key features

7.1.3 Translation practices in museums: key competences of in-house staff

Museums can contribute decisively to the quality of the translation process and product, as suggested by various scholars (Foedisch 2017, Dunne 2011) who stress the role played by clients (cf. [sections 2.3.3](#) and [2.4.4](#)). Museum staff members possess significant domain-specific knowledge. However, to efficiently manage translations, museums need to acquire a set of basic competences, such as cultural competence, project management skills, or the knowledge of translation technology. Figure 21 outlines the key competences museum staff should possess to efficiently carry out translation-related tasks.

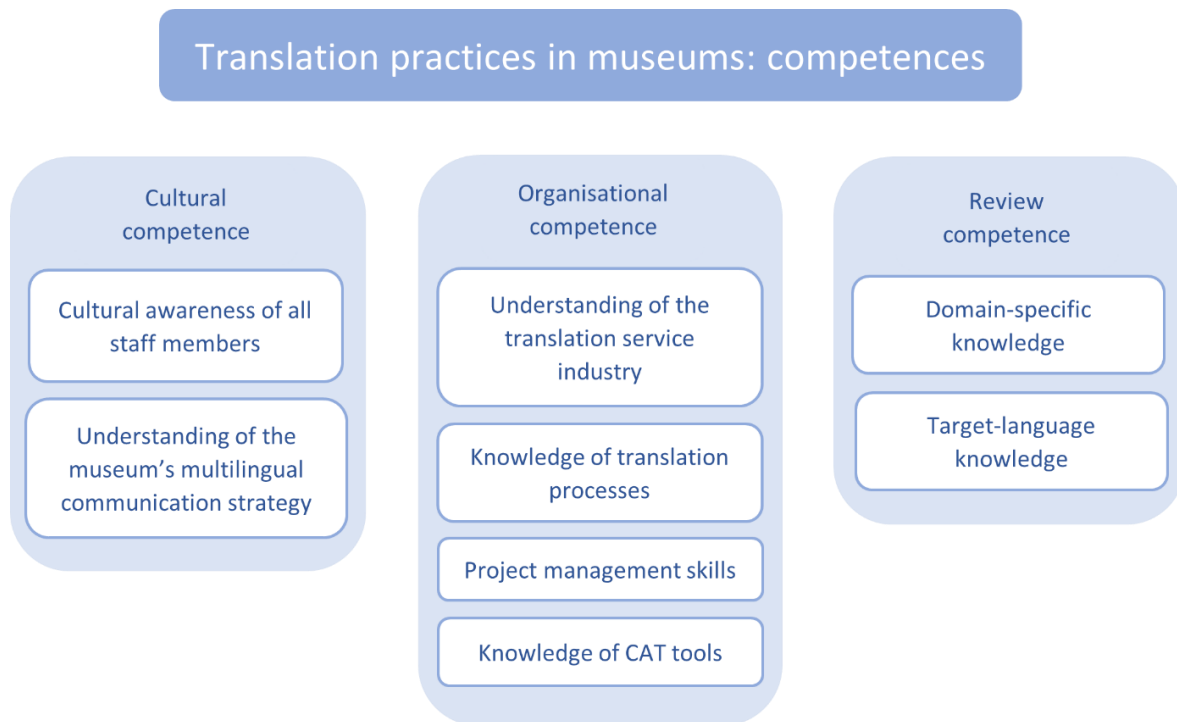


Figure 21: Translation practices in museums: key competences of in-house staff

7.1.4 An interactive model of translation quality management in art museums

In section 2 of the guidelines, I propose an interactive model of translation quality management in art museums which integrates a series of quality-assuring tasks performed by the museum, drawing on Keiran Dunne's (2011) flexible approach to translation projects. Both interview analysis (cf. chapters 4 and 5) confirmed the need for a close collaboration and interaction between museum and TSP. Likewise, in the literature, trust building, a common goal and the smooth flow of information are widely considered to be key factors for an efficient collaboration in translation projects. Thus, my model aims to address these issues by focusing on the client perspective of museums, in some respect hybrid actors – halfway between client

and project manager – depending on the extent to which they are involved in managing and QA tasks. Figure 22 illustrates the diverse points of contact between museum and TSP. For example, after an initial phase of project preparation, the preliminary specifications should be further elaborated together with the TSP. The review and feedback by the museum should be provided to the TSP in order to feed into their quality design and to update client specifications if necessary. Another level of quality improvement is represented by end-user feedback which may improve the museum’s multilingual communication strategy.

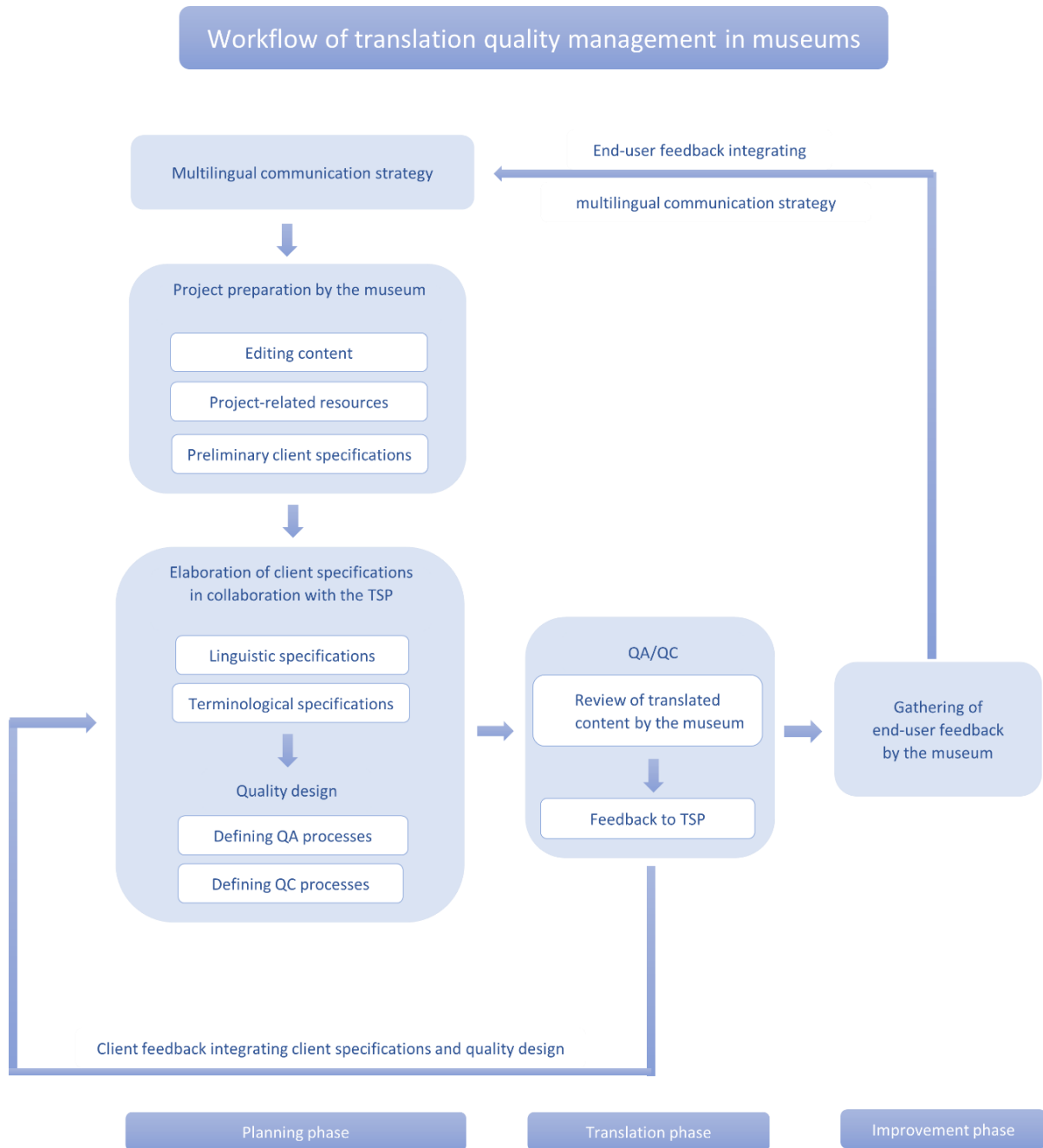


Figure 22: Workflow of translation quality management in museums

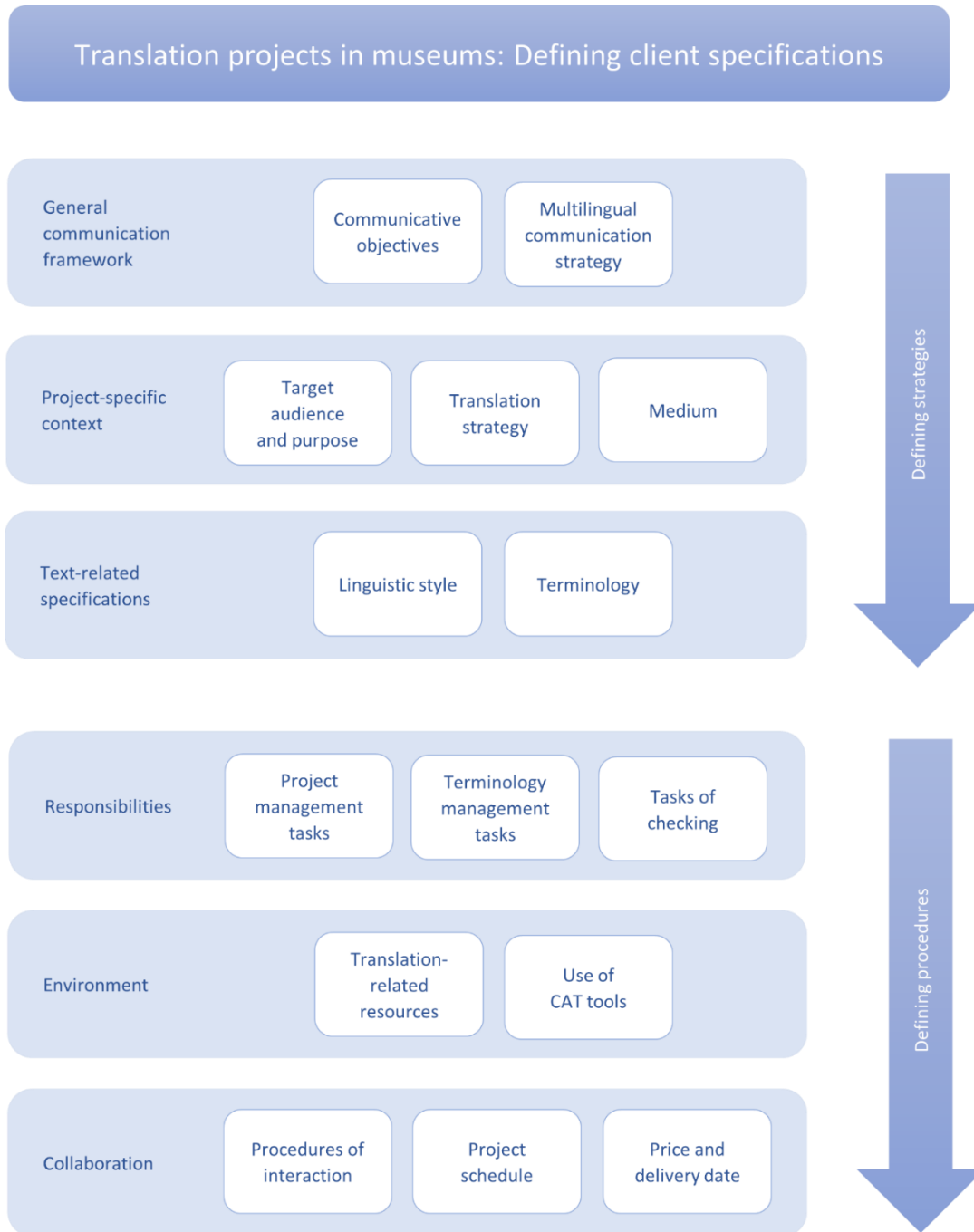


Figure 23: Translation projects in museums: Defining client specifications

7.1.5 Defining client specifications

The prevailing approaches to quality management and assessment in the translation industry are process-based and customer-oriented, relying heavily on client specifications ([section 2.4.2](#)). In [section 4.5.2](#), I argued that within a museum context, client specifications represent an efficient way for the museum and TSPs to elaborate a common vision of a translation project – in a process of exchange, discovery, and co-creation. To elaborate the parameters for defining

client specifications, I drew on the international quality standards for translation ISO 17000 and ISO 16699, which offer suitable frameworks for museums to negotiate their requirements. Figure 23 resumes the key parameters when defining a translation project. The upper part of the graphic outlines the main aspects when defining communicative and translation strategies for a specific translation project, moving from the general communication framework and aspects of the project-specific context, up to text-related aspects. The lower part of the graphic comprises the definition of procedures, such as assigning the diverse roles and responsibilities, defining the resources and tools to be employed, and defining the modalities of collaboration.

7.2 Validity of guidelines: practitioners respond

All participants of both museums and translation service providers that had participated in the interview phase were contacted for the validation phase, involving a questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews. As the availability of the participants was compromised by the COVID-19 emergency, I left the choice up to the participants whether to engage in the questionnaire survey or in a follow-up interview. In fact, this final phase was seriously complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to difficult working conditions both in museums and companies, the participation in the validation phase was significantly lowered. Many participants expressed their deep regret of not being able to engage in this final phase of the project. Nonetheless, in the period between November 2020 and February 2021, 8 staff members from 7 museums took part in the questionnaire survey, while two follow-up interviews were performed, involving one museum and one TSP. As in chapters 4 and 5, the results of both the questionnaire survey and the follow-up interviews are reported by discussing the main issues that had emerged, while employing participant quotes. Acronyms are used to indicate the specific participants referring to the institution or company they belong (cf. [Appendix F](#)).

7.2.1 Results: questionnaire survey

The results of the questionnaire survey are reported on the basis of six questions (cf. section 3.6.2; [Appendix D](#)). The first five questions include both a closed and an open part, which allowed the participants to explain their choices, add further opinions, or highlight a specific issue. The set of questions (cf. section 3.6.2, [table 13](#)) aimed at receiving feedback from the interview participants – from practitioners – on the usefulness of the proposed guidelines, on their practical applicability in museums, and on potential improvements. In line with the

participatory approach, I have adopted in this project, the suggestions to improve the guidelines were integrated in the proposed set of guidelines, where applicable.

Question 1: Do you think the guidelines would be useful for your museum?

All eight participants responded positively to the first question concerning the usefulness of the proposed guidelines, while putting forward diverse motivations. In very general terms, the guidelines were recognised as an instrument of “self-assessment of existing practices” by the director of the Pinakotheken München. The communication officer of the Mart Museo (Rovereto) acknowledged that the guidelines “precisely address those types of problems that we are actually facing”. Interestingly, what emerged prominently from the participants’ answers was an appreciation of the guidelines as an instrument for raising awareness among museum staff concerning the complexity of translation management, the necessity to engage in a deeper reflection on workflows, and the professional recognition of staff handling translations, as pointed out by participants from the Ca’ Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art in Venice (CP) and the Museion in Bolzano (MUS):

- (1) The guidelines could impart translation projects with greater rationality, while **increasing the awareness of staff members** of the required steps and competences. [CP-3]
- (2) The guidelines may be useful for a more accurate organisation of processes underlying translation best practices [...] and for pointing out the **necessity of reflecting before acting when it comes to translations**. [CP-1]
- (3) I think it would be useful to discuss and adopt guidelines [...] to **increase the professional recognition of the staff handling translations**. [MUS-1]

Evidently, staff members involved in handling translations in museums are “suffering” from the fact that translation management is considered a marginal task, which lacks method and procedures – a situation that can create uncomfortable working conditions, as the statement by a participant from the Uffizi Galleries (Florence) shows:

- (4) I am very grateful for this study aimed at giving **value to the translation-related work** in the museum context, which unfortunately is often **underestimated**, and thus lacks an efficient organisation and collaboration. [GUF]

The participant’s responses confirmed the value of the guidelines in raising awareness and stimulating a reflection on translation practices in museums, aimed at defining procedures, and acknowledging the importance of translation-related tasks. In fact, a second set of answers acknowledged that the guidelines could help to improve workflows, optimise processes, and enhance quality management, as reported by participants from the Universalmuseum Joanneum

in Graz (UJ) the Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art (CP), and the Uffizi Galleries in Florence (GUF):

- (5) [The guidelines] contain a series of workflows and criteria, which are extremely valuable in terms of **quality management**. [UJ-7]
- (6) On the whole, this could contribute to an **optimisation of processes** and a higher awareness of potential critical issues. [CP-3]
- (7) For a better organisation, entailing benefits in terms of consistency, time-management, coordination, and **quality**. [GUF]

These accounts show that the main purpose of the guidelines, i.e. promoting a more systematic approach to translation management while capitalising on related knowledge in form of resources and practices, has been grasped and appreciated, a result that may be considered an important first step towards optimising workflows.

The guidelines also propose a collaborative approach, calling both for cross-departmental collaboration and for an efficient exchange between museum staff and translation service providers. As emerged from the survey, the proposal for a greater coordination among departments was largely embraced and appreciated by many participants, e.g. by the communication officer of the Mart Museo (MM) and the press officer of the Museion in Bolzano (MUS) as show extracts 8 and 9. In fact, difficulties in terms of missing coordination had already emerged during the interview phase. Thus, the participants found the guidelines very useful to harmonise translation procedures among departments and to share know-how.

- (8) To **harmonise existing procedures in the diverse departments** where translation projects are managed. [MM-1]
- (9) I think it would be useful to discuss and adopt guidelines in order to **share know-how among the diverse departments** that handle translations. [MUS-1]

Apart from an improved teamwork between departments, a participant from the MAMbo in Bologna (MBO) seemed to mention teamwork in a wider sense and might refer to the collaboration between museum and translation service provider:

- (10) The guidelines provide very useful instruments [...] Translation is described as a **teamwork**, which in my opinion is the ideal situation. [MBO-1]

Unfortunately, the issue of an efficient collaboration with translation service providers did not emerge prominently in the questionnaire survey. Since the concept of a close collaboration between museum and TSP is one of the underlying principles of my quality model, I added a

paragraph at the beginning of the section on “External collaborators” (section 1.2.4 of the guidelines) to further stress the issue.

Question 2: In your opinion, are there any aspects of the guidelines that need improvement?

Half of the staff members participating in the survey put forward proposals to improve the guidelines. A participant from the Pinakotheken München (PM) suggested integrating short summaries to improve the readability of the guidelines:

- (11) The guidelines are very detailed; **short summaries** might support the reading. [PM-1]

I agree that short summaries represent an efficient way of facilitating the reader. However, in my opinion the guidelines already contain such a support, as four major schemes outline graphically the written recommendations. In fact, in section 1 of the guidelines, the key features of translation policies in museums are summed up in figure 1, while figure 2 resumes the key competences of museum staff necessary to perform translation practices. In section 2, the described workflow of translation quality management in museums is graphically illustrated in figure 3. Finally, figure 4 summarises schematically the relevant parameters for client specifications necessary to define a translation project, which are described in chapter 4.

Two participants, respectively from the Uffizi Galleries (GUF) and the Mart Museo in Rovereto (MM), raised the question of integrating “application models” for different situations or scenarios in different museum contexts:

- (12) It might be helpful to hypothesise **application models** for diverse situations. [GUF]
- (13) It might be an idea defining **multiple scenarios** of diverse museum contexts, e.g. small museums, large museums, public institutions, private foundations. [MM-1]

Such a differentiated approach to the guidelines had actually been among my considerations when drawing up the guidelines. So far, the concept of modularity has been realised by separating general aspects that apply to any type of museum from those aspects that are specific to art museums. However, modularity may be expanded by including a differentiation aimed at illustrating different scenarios, such as

- small and medium-sized museum vs. large museum;
- public institution vs. private institution.
- museums with / without an in-house translation unit.

The objective of these guidelines is to offer a general and flexible structure which could be useful to any type of museum, as the contexts of museums can be extremely varied. In fact, as observed by the communication officer of the Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art in Venice (CP), the guidelines require each museum to adapt the document accordingly:

- (14) The guidelines are very useful, but obviously they are characterised by a strong generalisation. I think each museum must create a proper document and adapt strategies and procedures according to the specific characteristics, objectives, and targets. [CP-3]

This is also stated in the foreword of the guidelines under the point “How to use the guidelines”:

The modular structure of the guidelines is intended to allow them to be used flexibly in different situations, and to support museums in optimising their individual approach to translation policies and practices. The recommendations should therefore be considered in relation to the specific needs and context of each institution. In fact, museums can select those recommendations that are most relevant to them, customise them, and omit those that are not applicable. [guidelines, foreword]

Question 3: In your opinion, is there anything missing from the guidelines?

Half of the participating staff members put forward ideas on how the guidelines might be integrated. Some participants mentioned the usefulness of practical examples to accompany the theoretical explanations (cf. extract 15). I added some examples in the section 3 (“Parameters for client specifications”) in support of defining quality requirements.

- (15) Some **practical examples** that accompany the theoretical explanations. [CP-3]

The director of the Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art expressed the need for defining in detail the different types of content that may require translation, while pointing out the importance of different content requiring different translation strategies:

- (16) I think it might be useful to describe in more detail the various areas in which museums need translations. In my opinion, what is missing is a **detailed differentiation of the types of content** that are produced and translated in the museum. Different text types have different linguistic codes, which require different types of translations. [CP-1]

In addition to the indication in the guidelines under section 3.1.5 “Translation strategy”, pointing out how important it is to “keep in mind that different text types may require different translation strategies”, I added a differentiated (though non-exhaustive) list of content potentially translated in museums in the section 1.1.3 “Defining content and languages of translation”:

Evidently, different text types and media may require diverse translation strategies (see 3.1.5). The following types of content may require translation:

External communication

- ✓ exhibition labels
- ✓ wall panels
- ✓ multimedia content
- ✓ multimedia apps
- ✓ leaflets
- ✓ maps
- ✓ brochures

- ✓ catalogues
- ✓ publications
- ✓ web content
- ✓ social media content
- ✓ press releases
- ✓ audio guides

Internal communication:

- ✓ contracts
- ✓ agreements
- ✓ email correspondence

[guidelines, section 1.1.3]

Question 4: *In your opinion, how likely is it that your museum could adopt these guidelines, either entirely or partially? Please answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is the most likely.*

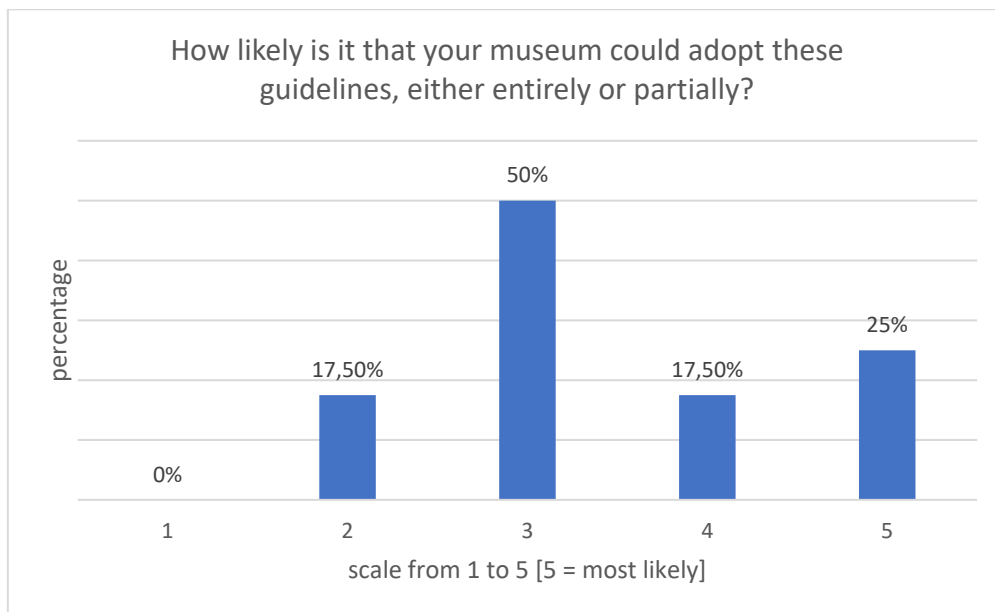


Figure 24: Answers from 8 museum staff members to question 4 of the questionnaire survey

The feedback concerning the question whether the museums might adopt my guidelines was rather positive (cf. fig. 24). Although 50 % evaluated the question by selecting the mid-point on the scale, only one participant from the Pinakotheken München (PM) evaluated the adoption at a low level due to the urgency of everyday business and staff constraints:

- (17) The dynamics of the **everyday business** can easily **obstacle** a differentiated debate on issues that are not immediately applicable in the daily routine. [...] For example, creating bilingual glossaries is practically chimerical, due to **staff constraints**. [...] The implementation of the guidelines in our institution is rather improbable given that we have a series of other priorities in need of innovation. [PM-1]

In fact, a number of participants pointed out a series of obstacles, such as specific organisational structures, binding bureaucratic norms, existing workflows, and a lack of the necessary in-house resources, that may hinder the consistent application of the guidelines, as show the following statements by participants from the Universalmuseum Joanneum in Graz (UJ), the Uffizi Galleries (GUF) and the Mart Museo Rovereto (MM):

- (18) Being a multidisciplinary museum gathering diverse institutions under one roof, the guidelines might be **applied partially**, as both **complex and heterogeneous organisational structures** of the various museums and departments might complicate and impede its consistent application. [UJ-7]
- (19) I think it is impossible to adopt the guidelines entirely, given that any working context is subject to **binding bureaucratic norms**, which strongly impact workflows and often obstacle the need for coordination. However, I am convinced that they can find a **partial application**, in particular concerning single projects and in single departments. [GUF]
- (20) The extreme accuracy of the guidelines requires **considerable in-house resources**, which are difficult to find. However, the guidelines **may correct and integrate existing procedures**. [MM-1]

However, these participants recognised the potential of at least partially applying the guidelines, for example in single projects or in single departments. Moreover, the guidelines' function is perceived as potentially correcting and integrating existing procedures. Such corrective actions of existing workflows as well as the partial adoption of the proposed best practices are perfectly in line with the scope of the guidelines. The need for adaptation was both expected and considered by the guidelines' design (cf. foreword), given the evident heterogeneity of institutions in terms of organisation, objectives, context, etc.

Not surprisingly, the two highest evaluations came from two institutions that already have some of the proposed procedures in place. For these institutions, the guidelines may represent an instrument with which to refine their workflows. In fact, a participant from the Museion in Bolzano (MUS) mentioned that they will be considering introducing a system of terminology management:

- (21) I think that a range of **aspect of the guidelines could be adopted**; some of them are already in place in our institution [...]. The proposal of a termbase to manage terminology is something we will be reflecting on. [MUS-1]

The other participant from the Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art in Venice (CP) pointed out that although a series of procedures are already applied, there are no documented workflows (cf. extract 22). Thus, the proposed guidelines can offer the chance to make a qualitative leap by documenting processes and procedures. According to the participant, such

a step forward requires a greater awareness among the decision makers, an issue insistently pointed out already under question 1.

- (22) Many of the proposed processes and procedures are already applied in our institution, though only partially and without explicit guidelines. The probability for the guidelines to be applied entirely would increase considerably if more **awareness** for this issue was raised among the **decision makers**. [CP-3]

Question 5: In your opinion, how likely is it that Art museums in general could adopt these guidelines, either entirely or partially? Please answer on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is the most likely.

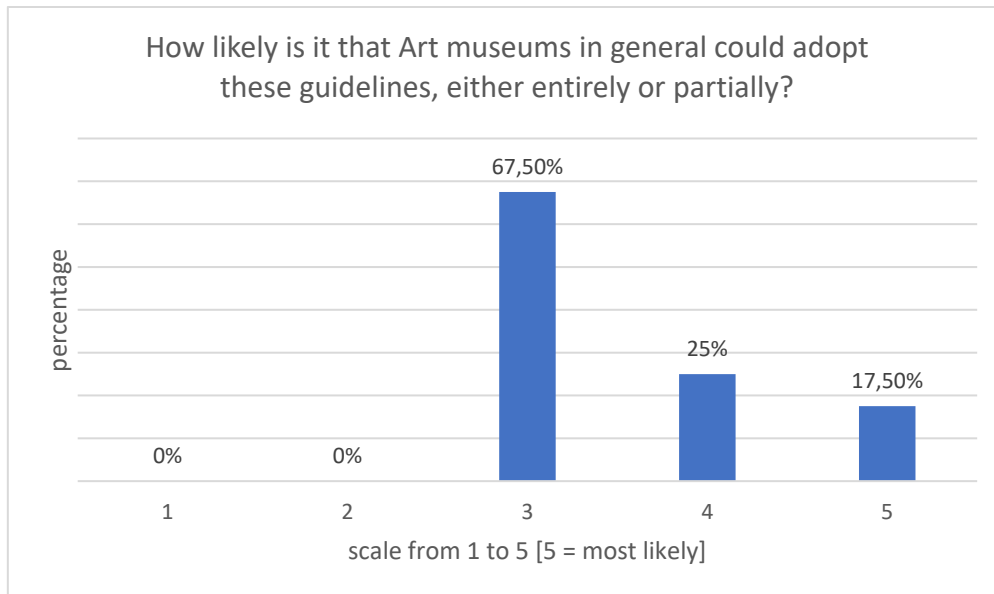


Figure 25: Answers from 8 museum staff members to question 5 of the questionnaire survey

An extremely high percentage answered question 4 by selecting the mid-point on the scale. In retrospect, it might have been better to avoid using an uneven-numbered scale, as participants have a tendency to select the mid-point when they are unsure what to answer. However, the space for further explanations provided some additional information. Many participants stated that they have not worked in other museums, had no direct knowledge of other institutions, or did not know the organisational structures of other museums; so in many cases they were not sure how to answer this question.

From the more positive answers it emerged that the guidelines are definitely applicable in museums, provided the “right ambitions”, “suitable organisational structures” and a certain

degree of “awareness of the decision makers”, as pointed out by participants from the Universalmuseum Joanneum in Graz (UJ) and the Ca’ Pesaro in Venice (CP):

- (23) Provided an institution has the **right ambitions** and the **suitable organisational structures**, the guidelines may definitely be applied in art museums, at least partially. [UJ-7]
- (24) I think that depends very much on the **awareness of the decision-makers** within each museum, and on the ability of curatorial staff to adopt and internalise the idea. [CP-3]

It goes without saying that the implementation of guidelines to promote efficient procedures in handling translations in museums requires some degree of reorganisation of existing structures and practices. Any enhancement requires an investment. Each institution may evaluate the extent to which the guidelines can help to improve their translation policies and practices. I think the decisive point is to initiate and engage in an open debate between decision-makers and museum staff involved in translation-related task to discuss existing strengths and weaknesses in order to make informed decisions. I hope the proposed guidelines may contribute to this process.

Question 6: Anything else you wish to add?

Concerning the final question, I would like to report the response of a participant from the Museion in Bolzano (MUS). It emerged that the section 4 of the Guidelines dedicated to art museums stimulated a reflection on the different text types that are specific to contemporary art discourse and the implications for their translation. The participant felt that such a reflection should be extended, and suggested the guidelines be shared with AMACI, an association of Italian contemporary art museums:

- (25) For our institution, the part dedicated to art museums is very interesting, in particular the issue of a specific art discourse, which becomes part of the artwork itself, and almost “needs” to be complex or obscure. The borders between curatorial texts and text written in the communication office are often not clear cut – an informed process could help to recognise the distinction between these two areas and foster the quality and efficiency of the translation work. [...] I find the guidelines highly useful, and I would like them to be available for museums. In particular, I would like to suggest your work to AMACI⁴⁴ [Associazione dei Musei d’Arte Contemporanea Italiani – Association of Italian Contemporary Art Museums] [MUS-1]

⁴⁴ <http://www.aap.beniculturali.it/amaci.html> (last access: 15/09/2021)

7.2.2 Results: follow-up interviews

For a more in-depth and exploratory inquiry of the issues addressed in the questionnaires, I carried out two follow-up interviews. As already mentioned in [section 3.6](#), such “communicative validation” is a typical asset of action research (Stern 2014: 214). The aim of such a detailed evaluation by practitioners was to further improve and refine the guidelines within an approach of co-construction. The two follow-up interviews involved one staff member of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice (PG) and one participant from the translation and language services’ company Art and Culture Translated (ACT), based in Barcelona and London. Both participants provided very interesting feedback thanks to their specific profiles. The museum staff member has a background in translation, and long-term experience as head of the publications office, who manages all translation-related tasks of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection. The translation professional directs a translation agency, which is specialised in art and museum translation. In fact, the criteria for the selection of these two participants were due to their long-term experience in the sector, their specific profiles, and their extraordinary engagement in the interview phase.

The two sets of questions (cf. section 3.6.2, [tables 13+14](#)) served as a kind of interview guide and aimed to solicit feedback from practitioners on the usefulness of the proposed guidelines and on potential enhancements. Involving both a museum staff member and a professional from a translation service provider allowed for a comparison between two different perspectives. The focus of the interview with the TSP was slightly different, reflecting on the question of whether the guidelines may effectively support collaboration between museum and TSP.

Usefulness of the guidelines

From the two interviews, it emerged that the proposed guidelines were highly appreciated on both sides – museum staff and translation professional. Their answers reported in extracts 26 and 27 perfectly complement each other. While the translation professional from Art and Culture Translated (ACT) valued the guidelines for outlining the key factors museums often do not consider, the museum staff member from the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice (PG) member valued the guidelines for raising awareness for the need for museums to take over more responsibilities and understand the complexity of the translation work. Interestingly, both perspectives acknowledged the same benefit, i.e. empowering museums in order to support coordinated processes, in particular the briefing process.

- (26) You have done a great work, which is very precious for us who work with museums. Seeing such **guidelines on paper with a structure** for our work is very important. I think in research there was a gap, which you have filled with your contribution. [...] I was reading this with a TSP hat on and looking at how all the strategies you outlined can help us work successfully and effectively with the museum client. And I think you outlined a lot of **key factors which clients often do not take into account**, and which are actually vital in order to provide a fit for purpose translation [...]. I think the actual **briefing process** is quite weak at the moment [...] it's patchy and **uncoordinated** – which creates problems down the line [...]. So, you really have to dig deeper and ask a lot of questions. This is a brilliant list of issues you have to take into account [...] I think, it's very useful. [ACT]
- (27) Your work [guidelines] is a kind of **empowering the institution**, calling museums to take over some **responsibilities** and getting away from the mentality: “this is my text, it's perfect, you just need to send it out for translation, can you have it translated till tomorrow?”. [...] It is important that the institutions **understand the complexity of translation work**. In fact, you employed some 30 pages or so to explain it. [PG]

These responses are in line with those of the questionnaire survey, where the appreciation of the guidelines as an instrument of raising awareness among museum staff concerning the complexity of translation management and the necessity to engage in a deeper reflection on workflows emerged prominently.

Confusion about the division of labour?

Although the guidelines are addressed to museum staff, they inevitably contain tasks of the workflow that may be performed by either museum staff or translation service provider. In fact, one of the underlying principles of the quality model is the close collaboration between museum and TSP to enhance translation quality. In the follow-up interview, the translation professional from the specialised language and translation company (ACT) mentioned that there was a certain degree of confusion regarding the division of labour and that the guidelines should stress the importance of defining roles and responsibility for tasks:

- (28) I think there is a bit of confusion regarding the division of labour. [...] I realise that you are providing a general framework and then it's up to us and the client to define the relationship. But maybe you can **explain this a little bit more explicitly** ... the point about the **definition of roles** [...] and that the museum must clarify in the brief which steps of the process will be covered by the museum or by the provider. [ACT]

This input was crucial, as it helped to introduce the guidelines as a general framework. Although this information was already included in section 3.3 (“Responsibilities”), it was important to make this point earlier in the document. For this reason, I added a short note, both in the introduction of the guidelines (“How to use the guidelines”) and in the introduction of section 2 (“Workflows on translation project quality management”):

Analogously, each museum can approach the question of responsibilities based on its specific organisational structures, resources, and competences. Since many tasks can be performed by either in-house staff, the translation service provider, or in collaboration, the division of labour should be formalised. [guidelines, foreword]

Please note: For the various steps of the workflow, museums need to clearly define the division of labour, establishing which tasks are to be covered by the museum or by the translation service provider. [guidelines, section 2]

However, the staff member from the Peggy Guggenheim did not see this as a problem:

- (29) I: I had feedback from a translation agency perceiving some confusion concerning the division of labour in the guidelines? What perception did you have?
P: I did not feel confused, because to me it was clear that the division of labour may change according to the institution. Each museum establishes a **different way of collaborating with an external service provider** or freelance translator. The distinction of what should be performed in-house or externally depends on the institutions. [...] I think it is up to each museum to apply the guidelines according to their needs. [PG]

What the participant stated here in reference to the division of labour, actually applies to the guidelines in general. As stated in the foreword, the recommendations should be customised by each institution according to their specific needs and context.

A remark on the term communication

Among other feedback, I received a remark on the use of the term *communication*. Apparently, in some museum contexts, the term *communication* is strongly associated with the communication department, referring to a specific type of text production and content (cf. extract 30). This critical perspective from inside the museum institution was very important to avoid potential misunderstandings or a shift in focus of what I actually intended by multilingual communication strategy. Following the advice from the staff member of the Guggenheim (PG), I included a short text at the very beginning of section 1.1 (“Communication strategies for a multilingual audience”) of the guidelines, explaining that the term *communication* refers to all text production within the museum in general, and not a specific type.

- (30) When you are talking [in the guidelines] about the definition of a multilingual communication strategy, the **term communication** might be a little bit misleading, as communication, at least within my institution, is associated with the communication office. At the Peggy Guggenheim, we do have a communication strategy, but it is rather dictated by the **institution’s mission**. So, I would recommend adding some **extra explanation** that communication refers to the totality of text production in the museum, and not just to content concerning the communication office. [PG]

Remarks on the concept of cross-departmental coordination

The concept of cross-departmental coordination presented in the guidelines was commented on in various ways. On the part of the translation professional from Art and Culture Translated (ACT), a meeting between the translation provider and all the different departments to gather the diverse requirements and issues was suggested (cf. extract 31). Such an approach obviously requires the museum to collaborate with a single TSP, which will coordinate the different requests and “take care of all this headache”, while relieving museum staff to a great extent:

- (31) A possibility is to have a **meeting with all departments**. [...] People from different departments will have **different translation needs**. And the smart thing – and that’s what multilingual policy is all about – is when the team comes together and states: “We need all these things to be translated across different departments. How are we going to do this?” And not: I choose one translator and you choose another, and we hope for the best. Because that’s a recipe for disaster. [...] The job of a translation agency obviously will take care of all this headache for the museums, so that **they don’t have to worry of any of the coordination**. Because it is a fulltime job, which sometimes is hard for museum staff to do on top of their job. [ACT]

According to the publication officer of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection (PG), this “headache” is due to a lack of cross-departmental collaboration in a much earlier phase, i.e. during the production of the source text. In the view of the museum staff member, translation-related tasks might be handled and coordinated with much more ease if the fragmentation at source language level was avoided. The publication officer thus suggested that awareness needed to be raised of the need for greater interdepartmental coordination at source text level to facilitate translation-related tasks:

- (32) What I would like to say is, that a **cross-departmental collaboration** is difficult to realise for translation-related tasks if there has not been an analogue work at source language level. You mention that in your guidelines, but it needs to be further stressed. In my experience, coordinating the source content creation should be the starting point [...] because translation and source text production go hand in hand. So, I suggest that the guidelines raise awareness for the **need of coordinating source text production** first of all. [...] **Fragmentation** at source language level is a huge problem in many institutions. [...] which has **negative effects on the translation level**. Accepting that every department works separately and imposes the same structure at a translation level, that equals a capitulation. I am convinced that we need to **instil the idea** that a coordinated work concerning the source text production would extremely facilitate translation tasks. Otherwise, fragmentation will lead the institution to present itself in 50 different ways. If this point could be conveyed, you would offer a great service to museum institutions. What you have written is very important and positive. If you further stress this point, you might **trigger a deep reflection**. [PG]

In fact, the two levels of text production – source text and translation – cannot be considered separately, as they are the two sides of the same coin. Again, the participant pointed out the awareness-raising role of the guidelines as an instrument to “trigger a deep reflection” on this

issue. The participant's input was integrated in the guidelines, in section 1.2.3 ("Cross-departmental control") by adding the importance of coordinating the text production at source text level before passing on to translation-related tasks, which again need to be coordinated.

The question of editorial control

From the interview analysis in chapter 4, the desire for editorial control of translated content had already emerged as a widespread phenomenon in European art museums. In the follow-up interview, the staff member of the Guggenheim (PG) stressed the key role of the editorial office in coordinating text production both at source text and translation level. This claim is motivated by the fact that the editorial office handles the content, which is at the base of all other text production – i.e. the catalogue. Therefore, editorial staff not only know the content and potential problems, but they are also able to mediate the different needs of the various departments.

- (33) Editorial control of translations should be in the hands of who is able to mediate the different needs of the various departments, by someone who oversees the text production in the source language, as they know the content and potential problems. The **editorial office** may be predestined considering its **key role**. Just think of the catalogue. The **catalogue is the origin of everything**. The education department reads the essays of the catalogue to develop its work. They need the curator's catalogue contributions to start developing the exhibition. The communication office needs the curator's input to write the press release. [...] The catalogue is really the starting point for the work of the other departments. Therefore, the editorial office is the generator of content for other departments. [PG]

This participant's stating that the catalogue is the starting point of content production in art museums, was also pointed out by a number of museums during the first interview phase. In fact, in several institutions, it is the editorial or publications department that perform most of the translation management. Therefore, in section 1.2.2 of the guidelines, I added the option of the editorial office to take on a coordinating role in translation management, as they oversee the source text production.

The translation professional from Art and Culture Translated (ACT) addressed yet another aspect of editorial control, by questioning the need for museums to perform in-house checking and provide feedback. The participant claimed that such type of editorial control may not be necessary if museums collaborate with a translation service provider, who ensures a series of quality standards, such as the vetting of translators specialised in the art sector. In that case, the key task of museums consists in providing all the necessary material to the TSP:

- (34) The need for a museum to have an **editorial control** [...] is something that has historically always happened. But do they really need to have so much editorial control? [...] If I look at the way we operate... If you work with a translation agency that has **systems in place**

and the right vetting of translators with specific background in arts [...]. If all that work is done externally, does the museum really need to be involved in checking the translation and providing feedback? In my eyes, the clients should only really fulfil the client’s brief which is giving us everything possible that translators need to do a good job [...] That would make the rest of the translation process much smoother. [ACT]

Such an all-encompassing service can alleviate museum staff, by delegating responsibilities to a third party. This is perfectly in line with the literature (e.g. Risku 2006, Abdallah 2010), which considers the provision of quality reference material a key responsibility of the client in contributing to the overall quality of the translation. However, within the logic of an active participation throughout the entire translation project cycle to ensure translation quality as suggested by Keiran Dunne (cf. [section 2.4.4](#)), client review and feedback can be an efficient instrument to exploit the expertise of the two actors. This vision is also put forward by Robert Neather (2012), calling for practices to overcome boundaries, while enabling the exchange of expertise between both professional communities (cf. [section 2.3.3](#)). In fact, extract 34 raises the complex question of entrenched positions, power relations and claims on professional expertise (cf. [section 2.3.2](#)). While museum staff members claim to keep editorial control of “their content” (cf. [section 4.5.1](#)), the translation professional’s statement here creates the impression of a professional silo-ing: “Does the museum really need to be involved in checking the translation and providing feedback?”. It is this kind of attitudes that the guidelines I produced within this study will go towards breaking down or questioning, while calling for efficient ways of interaction.

Emphasizing the advantages of translation agencies

In the view of the director of the translation and language services’ company Art and Culture Translated (ACT) it is important to point out the benefits of collaborating with a translation agency, this being a valid alternative to working with “trusted” freelance translators, who had emerged as the museums’ preferred choice from the first round of interviews. In extract 35, the participant points out that translation agencies can also employ a preferred translator for the client, while being well prepared to substitute the translator when they are unavailable – a situation which may not be dealt with adequately with a freelance translator:

- (35) If there is a translator that fulfils the brief and the client is happy, **then there is no sense in changing a winning team**. In fact, I think it would be a good practice for the TSP to always employ the same translators for the same client. When that’s not possible the TSP should be able to support the substitute translator with all the necessary material [...] I will put the other translator in the condition to be able to do that job, and I’m pretty sure that doesn’t happen if the freelance translator a museum might be collaborating with is not available. [ACT]

This was an important observation, as translation agencies can offer a series of additional services to museums, including personalised services. I thus added a paragraph in the guidelines' section 1.2.4 (“External collaborators”), outlining the advantages and disadvantages of the two options, with the aim of showing that it is not true that only freelance translators can provide tailor-made services, and that specialised translation providers can also offer personalised and bespoke solutions.

Underlining the need for cultural competence

A last point worth mentioning is an observation by the participant from the Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice (PG), who insisted on the need to further emphasise cultural awareness as a key competence for museums handling translations:

- (36) When you talk about the museum's competences when handling translations, you mentioned **cultural awareness**. I would really try to **stress this point much more** because it is so fundamental. In my opinion, the relevance, and the consequences of this key competence cannot be underlined enough. [PG]

I strongly agree with this statement, which is also in line with the literature (e.g. Cranmer; cf. [section 2.3.1](#)). In fact, in the graphic illustrating the key competences of museum staff (cf. [fig. 21](#)), cultural awareness appears in the first position. To further stress the significance of this competence, within the guidelines' section 1.6. (“Competences of museum staff”), I added a short paragraph to underline that this competence feeds into all the other competences and is thus of fundamental importance, not only for staff directly involved in translation-related tasks, but for all staff members of the museum.

8 Conclusions

By means of qualitative interviews, this research project has depicted the prevailing attitude of museum staff in managing translations, an attitude which is characterised by specific quality expectations, a certain degree of distrust regarding the translators' competences in the art sector, a preference to collaborate with trusted translators, and the tendency to keep control over translated content. As a result, their notion of quality focuses on textual aspects, and generally fails to integrate procedural aspects of quality. Consequently, much translation-related activity in museums is characterised by an unsystematic and inefficient approach in commissioning, managing, and checking translations provided by external collaborators.

To further investigate this issue, I defined eight key features of translation policies in museums, intended to promote potential enhancements, which are based on a series of theoretical principles. First, a centralised approach to translation management, ensuring cross-departmental collaboration. Second, capitalising on existing practices in the form of documented processes. Third, the interaction between museum and TSP in terms of translation quality management (cf. Dunne 2011). Fourth, the use of standardised procedures to both define and assess quality requirements. And fifth, the strategic employment of translation technology to promote efficiency.

My assessment of the degree to which such translation policies were in place showed that there is considerable room for improvement in a range of key areas. The translation management procedures I observed in the museums generally lack cross-departmental coordination and did not make systematic use of project specifications to interact and collaborate with the translation service provider. Standard procedures for quality assurance were rarely adopted, while in-house checking of translations lacked well-defined quality criteria and feedback loops with the translation service provider. Finally, computer-aided translation tools were rarely employed, and their potential completely underestimated. Furthermore, only a few museums had efficient archiving systems in place in order to facilitate the management and provision of translation-related references and resources.

This catalogue of key features became an integral part of the guidelines and best practices that I have designed. A range of findings fed into the guidelines: I have outlined the cultural and organisational competences which are needed to successfully manage translation practices in museums. By drawing on Keiran J. Dunne's (2001) flexible approach to translation

projects, I developed an interactive model of translation quality management in art museums, ensuring an efficient exchange between the museum and the translation provider during the entire translation project cycle. Finally, I proposed a quality model for the elaboration of project specifications, by drawing on the international quality standards for translation ISO 17000 and ISO/TS 11669, while taking the specificities of translation projects in art museums into account. Adopting a participatory approach, my proposed guidelines were validated and integrated by some of the participating practitioners, including both museum and translation professionals in an iterative process.

With this research, I hope to have raised the awareness of the need for closer collaboration between the different actors involved in museum translation, as well as the need for museums to take on more responsibilities and understand the complexity of translation work. By empowering museums, museum staff members may support workflows and contribute to translation quality decisively. Moreover, I hope that this research has raised awareness, among the participants of the project, of the interdependencies between source text production and translation-related tasks. This can help to integrate translation and multilingual practices within the museum's wider communication approach, rather than delegating such practices to translators as a final and isolated step. Within a holistic vision of museum communication (cf. Eilean Hooper Greenhill 1999a), a translator's linguistic and cultural expertise could be integrated into the phase of exhibition making. In such a scenario, any critical issues concerning the appropriateness of content for an international audience could be dealt with early on, so that later stages of the translation or content adaptation are streamlined.

Understanding translation policies and practices in museums involved investigating the topic from different perspectives. My aim was to gain an overview of the organisational and managerial aspects of translation in art museums which contribute to the overall translation quality. The Action Research approach I used involved a theoretical and a practical element – combining theoretical reflection with an in-depth interaction with practitioners. The decision to engage in such a participatory exercise arose from the focus of my research on professional practices as well as from the belief that bringing together different perspectives creates valuable synergies. In fact, this research project did become an opportunity to raise awareness among the participants involved, while empowering them to move towards change and practical improvement. I finally chose to develop a set of guidelines, combining the outcome of the dialogic exchange with my theoretical reflections in order to generate solutions for the practical

problems that emerged during the project. The guidelines I have prepared are neither a “one size fits all” solution nor are they mandatory. Any enhancement requires an investment and a reorganisation of existing structures. It is up to the museum professional to decide whether to adopt the guidelines and to what extent, depending on the specific context of the institution. I would like to believe that my research may stimulate a debate between decision-makers and museum staff involved in translation-related activity reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of existing practices in order to make informed decisions.

Another issue that I hope to have brought to the fore is that this kind of research can significantly benefit from a dialogue between translation-related research and professional practice, with the one feeding into the other. In the future, it would be desirable for research to continue the dialogue with practitioners possessing different professional backgrounds to further discuss and define best practices of museum translation.

This thesis aimed to provide an overview of the organisational and managerial aspects of translation in museums by elaborating a quality model based on the principles of a systematic and collaborative approach. The proposed set of guidelines has a modular structure, separating general aspects of translation policies and practices that apply to any type of museum from those aspects that are specific to art museums. The modularity of my model can be expanded: for example, by developing specific modules for other types of museums, such as natural history and natural science museums, science and technology museums, or history and archaeological museums. Moreover, this work could also be extended by including a differentiation aimed at illustrating different application scenarios, such as small and medium-sized museum vs. large museum, public institution vs. private foundation, or museums with / without an in-house translation unit.

A core issue of my study was the complex question of entrenched positions, power relations and claims on professional expertise concerning museum translation. The aim of the guidelines I produced within this study goes towards breaking down or questioning professional silo-ing, while calling for efficient ways of interaction between museum and translation professionals. It would therefore be desirable to carry out a follow-up study to measure the impact of the guidelines and assess the extent to which professional silo-ing is still prevalent. In more general terms, it would be useful to examine the impact of the research on the collaborators – a gap that I hope can be filled in the future.

Due to the Covid restrictions as well as time constraints, it was not possible to carry out case studies to apply and test the guidelines in some selected institutions, as I had originally planned. Within the logic of Action Research, such a testing experience would go beyond the dialogic *interaction*, by permitting a hands-on collaborative action – another gap to be filled in the future. Finally, there is also space for future work on how museums outside of Europe approach translation practices.

The last year has left a mark on how museums communicate: the Covid pandemic has stimulated many institutions to go digital, to become even more creative and innovative in order to reach their audience virtually. Any change can also bring great opportunities. For that reason, rethinking museum communication by introducing new digital approaches to museum communication, is an opportunity to animate a reflection on how to reach multilingual audiences. I hope the guidelines provided in this study may contribute to this aim.

References

- Abdallah, Kristiina (2010). Translators' Agency in Production Networks. In Kinnunen, Tuija & Koskinen, Kaisa (Eds.) *Translators' Agency* (pp. 11–46). Tampere: Tampere University Press.
- Abdallah, Kristiina (2012). *Translators in Production Networks: Reflections on agency, quality and ethics*. Joensuu: Publications of the University of Eastern Finland.
- Adams, William (2015⁴). Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews. In Newcomer, Kathryn E. & Hatry, Harry P. & Wholey, Joseph S. (Eds.), *Handbook of practical program evaluation* (pp. 492-505). New York: Wiley.
- Alonso, Elisa & Calvo, Elisa (2015). Developing a blueprint for a technology-mediated approach to Translation Studies. *Meta*, 60(1): 135-157.
- Alonso, Elisa (2016). Conflict, opacity and mistrust in the digital management of professional translation projects. *Translation & Interpreting* 8(1):19-29.
- Ames, Heather & Glenton, Claire & Lewin, Simon (2019). Purposive sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis: a worked example from a synthesis on parental perceptions of vaccination communication. *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 19(26): 1-9.
- Arevalillo, Juan José (2015). Gestión de proyectos, control de calidad y categorización de errores a partir del proceso de revisión. PhD Thesis, University of Málaga.
- ASTM International (2014). *ASTM F2575 Standard Guide for Quality Assurance in Translation*. ASTM International.
- Bartolini, Chiara (2019). *An audience-oriented approach to online communication in English: The case of European university museums' websites*. PhD thesis. University of Bologna.
- Bartolini, Ilaria & Moscato, Vincenzo & Pensa, Ruggero G. (2016). Recommending multimedia visiting paths in cultural heritage applications. In *Multimed Tools Appl* 75: 3813–3842.
- Bhatia, Vijay K. (2004). *Worlds of Written Discourse: A Genre-Based View*. London: Continuum.
- Braun, Virginia, & Clarke, Victoria (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3(2), 77-101.
- Braun, Virginia & Clarke, Victoria (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners*. London: Sage.
- Braun, Virginia, & Clarke, Victoria (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. In *Sport, Exercise and Health* 11(4): 589-597.
- Brinkmann, Svend (2013). *Qualitative Interviewing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, Alice & Danaher, Patrick A. (2019). CHE Principles: facilitating authentic and dialogical semi-structured interviews in educational research. In *International Journal of Research & Method in Education* 42(1): 76-90.
- Byrne, Jody (2006). *Technical Translation: Usability Studies for Translating Technical Documentation*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Calvo, Elisa (2018). From translation briefs to quality standards: Functionalist theories in today's translation processes. *Translation & Interpreting*, 10(1): 18-32.
- Cameron, Fiona (2008). Object-oriented democracies: conceptualising museum collections in networks. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 23(3): 229-243.
- Chan, Sin-wai (2017). *The future of translation technology: towards a world without Babel*. New York: Routledge.

- Chesterman, Andrew (1993). *From 'Is' to 'Ought': Laws, Norms and Strategies in Translation Studies*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Chesterman, Andrew & Wagner, Emma (2002). *Can Theory Help Translators? A Dialogue Between the Ivory Tower and the Wordface*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Choudhury, Rahzeb & McConnell, Brian (2013). *TAUS Translation Technology Landscape Report*. De Rijp: Taus BV.
- CMMI (2010). CMMI for Services. Software Engineering Institute, Carnegie Mellon University. https://resources.sei.cmu.edu/asset_files/TechnicalReport/2010_005_001_15290.pdf
- Coghlan, David & Brannick, Teresa (2001). *Doing Action research in your own organization*. London: Sage.
- Colina, Sonia (2008). Translation Quality Evaluation. Empirical Evidence for a Functionalist Approach. *The Translator* 14(1): 97-134.
- Cranmer, Robin (2016). Communicating with International Visitors – the Case of Muesums and Galleries. *Cultus* 9(2): 91-105.
- Cranmer, Robin (2019). The inclusion of international tourists: developing the translator-client relationship. *Altre Modernità* 21(2019): 55-68.
- Cravo, Ana & Neves, Joselia (2007). Action Research in Translation Studies. *JoSTrans* 7(2007): 92-107.
- Crawford, J. Kent (2007). *Project Management Maturity Model*. Boca Raton/New York: Auerbach Publications.
- Creswell, John W. & Creswell, J. David (2018⁵). *Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks/CA: Sage.
- Crețiu, Anda-Elena (2013). “Artspeaking” about art. Discourse features of English for Art Purposes. https://www.academia.edu/10359422/_Artspeaking_About_Art._Discourse_Features_of_English_for_Art_Purposes
- Daniel Pedersen (2014). Exploring the concept of transcreation – transcreation as ‘more than translation’? In *Cultus* 7(2014): 57-71.
- Denzin, Norman K. & Lincoln, Yvonna S. (Eds.) (2011⁴). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks/CA: Sage.
- Dick, Bob (1993). *You want to do an action research thesis? How to Conduct and Report Action Research*. London: British Library Publishing.
- Doherty, Stephen (2016). The Impact of Translation Technologies on the Process and Product of Translation. *International Journal of Communication* 10(2016): 947-969.
- Dörnyei, Zoltán (2009). *Questionnaires in Second Language Research: Construction, Administration, and Processing*. London: Routledge.
- Drugan, Joanna. (2013). *Quality in professional translation. Assessment and improvement*, London: Bloomsbury.
- Dunne, Keiran J. (2011). From vicious to virtuous cycle. Customer-focused translation quality management using ISO 9001 principles and Agile methodologies. In Dunne, Keiran J. & Dunne, Elena S. (Eds.) *Translation and Localization Project Management: The art of the possible*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Edley, Nigel & Litosseliti, Lia (2010). Contemplating interviews and focus groups. In Litosseliti, Lia (Ed.), *Research Methods in Linguistics* (pp. 155-179). London: Continuum.
- Edwards, Rosalind & Holland, Janet (2013). *What is qualitative interviewing?*. London/New York: Bloomsbury.

- Emmanouilidis, Christos & Koutsiamanis, Remous-Aris & Tasidou, Aimilia (2013). Mobile guides: Taxonomy of architectures, context awareness, technologies and applications. *Journal of Network and Computer Applications*, 36(2013): 103-125.
- Ermert, Axel (2021). Terminologie – Bedeutung, Erarbeitung, professionelle Strukturierung und Management. Der 13. Deutsche Terminologietag vom 19. bis 21. April 2012 in Heidelberg. *Information. Wissenschaft & Praxis* 63(3): 203–205.
- Falk, John H. & Dierking, Lynn D. (2013). *The museum experience revisited*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast; London: Eurospan distributor.
- Falk, John H. (2016). Museum audiences: A visitor-centered perspective. *Loisir et Societe*, 39(3): 1-14.
- Feldermann, Sina K. & Hiebl, Martin R. W. (2020). Using quotations from non-English interviews in accounting research. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management* 17(2): 229-262.
- Ferrance, Eileen (2000). *Action Research*. Providence: Brown University.
- Fields, Paul J. & Hague, Daryl & Koby, Geoffrey & Lommel, Arle (2014). What is Quality? A Management Discipline and the Translation Industry get acquainted. *Revista Tradumática* 12(2014): 404-412.
- Flyvbjerg, Bent (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 12: 219–245.
- Foedisch, Melanie (2017). *Managing Translation Projects: Practices and Quality in Production Networks*. Thesis, University of Manchester.
- ELIA, EMT, EUATC, GALA and LIND (2018). 2018 Language Industry Survey — Expectations and Concerns of the European Language Industry. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017_language_industry_survey_report_en.pdf
- Garcia, Ignacio (2014). Computer Aided Translation. In Chan, Sin-wai (Ed.), *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Technology*. London: Routledge.
- Gardner, Howard & Davis, Jessica (1999). Open windows, open doors. In Hooper-Greenhill, Eileen (Ed.), *The Educational Role of the Museum* (pp. 99-104). London: Routledge.
- Garvin, David A. (1984). What Does Product Quality Really Mean? *Sloan Management Review* 26(1): 25-43.
- Getty Research Institute (2004). Art & Architecture Thesaurus Online. <http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat>
- Glaser, Barney G. & Strauss, Anselm L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Gouadec, Daniel (1989). *Le traducteur, la traduction e l'entreprise*. Paris: Afnor.
- Gouadec, Daniel (2010²). *Translation as a Profession*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Grbich, Carol (2013). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction*. London: Sage.
- Greco, Gian Maria (2018). The nature of accessibility. *Journal of Audiovisual Translation* 1(1): 205-232.
- Guillot, Marie-Noëlle (2014). Cross-Cultural Pragmatics and Translation: The Case of Museum Texts as Interlingual Representation. In House, Juliane (Ed.) *Translation: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (pp. 73-95). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hagedorn-Saupe, Monika & Kampschulte, Lorenz & Noschka-Roos, Anette (2014). Informal, Participatory Learning with Interactive Exhibit Settings and Online Services. In Drotner, Kirsten & Schroder, Kim C. (Eds.), *Museum Communication and Social Media*. London: Routledge.
- Hague, Daryl & Melby, Alan & Zheng, Wang (2011). Surveying Translation Quality Assessment. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* 5(2): 243-267.

- Halcomb, Elizabeth J. & Davidson, Patricia M. (2006). Is verbatim transcription of interview data always necessary? *Applied Nursing Research* 19(1): 38-42.
- Hein, George (1999²). The constructivist Museum. In Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean (Ed.), *The Educational Role of the Museum* (pp. 73-79). London: Routledge.
- Heinisch, Barbara & Iacono, Katia (2019). Attitudes of professional translators and translation students towards order management and translator platforms. *JoSTrans* 32(2019): 61-89.
- Heron, John & Reason, Peter (2008²). Extending Epistemology within a Co-Operative Inquiry. In Reason, Peter & Bradbury, Hilary (Eds.), *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*. London: Sage.
- Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean (Ed.) (1999²a) *The Educational Role of the Museum*. London: Routledge.
- Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean (1999²b). Communication in theory and practice. In Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean (Ed.), *The Educational Role of the Museum* (pp. 28-43). London: Routledge.
- Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean (1999²c). Museum learners as active postmodernists: contextualizing constructivism. In Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean (Ed.), *The Educational Role of the Museum* (pp. 67-79). London: Routledge.
- Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean (2000). *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Hopkins, David (1993). *A teacher's guide to classroom research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- ISO (2012). *Translation Projects – General Guidance* (PD ISO/TS 11669:2012). Geneva: ISO
- ISO (2015). *Quality Management Systems – Requirements* (BS EN ISO 9001:2015). Geneva: ISO.
- ISO (2015). *Translation Services – Requirements for Translation Services* (BS EN ISO 17100:2015). Geneva: ISO
- Jakobson, Roman. (2000). On linguistic aspects of translation. In Venuti Lawrence (Ed.), *The translation studies reader* (pp. 113-118). London & New York: Routledge.
- Jiménez Hurtado, Catalina & Soler Gallego, Silvia & Seibel, Claudia (2012). Museums for all. Translation and Interpreting for Multimodal Space as a Tool for Universal Accessibility. *MonTI4trans*.
- Kallio, Hanna & Pietilä, Anna-Maija & Johnson, Martin & Kangasniemi, Mari (2016). Systematic methodological review: developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing Research* 72(12): 2954-2965.
- Kiraly, Don (2000). *A social constructivist approach to translator education – empowerment from theory to practice*. Manchester: St Jerome.
- Koby, Geoffrey & Fields, Paul J. & Hague, Daryl & Lommel, Arle (2014). Defining Translation Quality. *Revista Tradumatica* 12(2014): 413-420.
- Kress, Gunther & van Leeuwen, Theo (1996). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Krüger, Ralph (2015). Fachübersetzen aus kognitionstranslatologischer Perspektive – Das Kölner Modell des situierten Fachübersetzers. In *TransKom* 8(2): 273-313.
- Kvale, Steinar (2008). *Doing Interviews*. London: Sage.
- Langdridge, Darren & Hagger-Johnson, Gareth (2009²). *Introduction to Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Liao, Min-Hsiu (2018). Museums and creative industries: The contribution of Translation Studies. *JoSTrans* 29(2018): 45-62.

- Lloyd-Baynes, Frances & Lynn, Joshua (2016). A museum goes meta: Initiating enterprise content management at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. *Journal of Digital Media Management* 5(1):46-61.
- Martin, Jenni, & Jennings, Marilee. (2015). Tomorrow's Museum: Multilingual Audiences and the Learning Institution. *Museums & Social Issues*, 10(1): 83–94.
- Martin-Mor, Adrià (2012). Le tecnologie della traduzione e il loro effetto nei testi. Design sperimentale e risultati preliminari di uno studio con strumenti CAT. In *Rivista Internazionale di Tecnica della Traduzione*, 14 (2012): 79-94
- Marty, Paul F. & Burton Jones, Katherine (Eds.) (2008). *Museum Informatics: People, Information, and Technology in Museums*. New York: Routledge.
- Mason, Jennifer (2018). *Qualitative Researching*. Thousand Oaks/CA: Sage.
- Massardo, Isabella, Jaap van der Meer and Maxim Khalilov (2016). *TAUS Translation Technology Landscape Report*. De Rijp: Taus BV.
- Matthews, Bob & Ross, Liz (2010). *Research Methods. A practical guide for the social sciences*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Maxwell, Joseph A. (2009²). Designing Qualitative Study. In Bickman, Leonard & Rog, Debra J. (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks/CA: Sage.
- Mayer, Felix (1998): *Eintragsmodelle für terminologische Datenbanken: ein Beitrag zur übersetzungsorientierten Terminographie*. Tübingen: Narr.
- Melby, Alan K. (2008). TBX-Basic. Translation-oriented Terminology made simple. *Revista Tradumatica* 6(2008).
- Melby, Alan K. (2012). Terminology in the age of multilingual corpora. *JoSTrans* 18(2012).
- Meylaerts, Reine (2011). Translation policy. In Gambier, Yves & van Doorslaer, Luc (Eds.) *Handbook of Translation Studies: Volume 2*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Minichiello, Victor & Aroni, Rosalie & Timewell, Eric & Loris, Alexander (1990). *In-Depth Interviewing: Researching People*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.
- Minichiello, Victor & Madison, Jeanne & Neville Hays, Terrence & Parmenter, Glenda (2004). Doing qualitative in-depth interviews. In Minichiello, Victor & Sullivan, Gerard & Greenwood, Kenneth & Axford, Rita (Eds.), *Research Methods for Nursing and Health Science*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall.
- Mossop, Brian (2001). *Revising and Editing for Translators*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Neather, Robert (2005). Translation quality in the museum: Towards a greater awareness of end-user needs. *Translation Quarterly*, 38: 1–24.
- Neather, Robert (2008). Translating Tea: On the Semiotics of Interlingual Practice in the Hong Kong Museum of Tea Ware. *Meta*, 53(1): 218-240.
- Neather, Robert (2009). Translation in a 'Non-Translation' Community: Practices, Ideologies and Conceptualizations of Translation in the PRC Museum Discourse Community. *Translation Quarterly* 51&52: 145-176.
- Neather, Robert (2012). 'Non-Expert' Translators in a Professional Community. *The Translator*, 18(2): 245-286.
- Neves, Joselia (2005). *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing*. PhD Thesis, Roehampton University.
- Neves, Joselia (2016). Action research. So much to account for. *Target* 28(2): 237-247. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

- Neves, Joselia (2018). Cultures of accessibility. Translation making cultural heritage in museums accessible to people of all abilities. In Harding, Sue-Ann & Carbonell Cortés, Ovidi (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Culture* (pp. 415-430). London: Routledge.
- Nord, Christiane (1997). *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Nord, Christiane (2000). What do We Know About the Target-Text Receiver? In Beeby, Allison & Ensinger, Doris & Presas, Marisa (Eds.), *Investigating Translation: Selected papers from the 4th International Congress on Translation, Barcelona, 1998* (pp. 195-212). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Lucarelli, Aurora (2001). *Semplificare il linguaggio burocratico. Meccanismi e tecniche*. Communication and Public Relations Office, Emilia-Romagna Region.
- Pani, Filippo E. & Porru, Simone & Orrù, Matteo & Ibba, Simona (2015). A Complex Network Approach for Museum Services - A Model for Digital Content Management. In *Proceedings of the 7th International Joint Conference on Knowledge Discovery, Knowledge Engineering and Knowledge Management* (pp. 216-221). Volume 3 KMIS: KMIS, (IC3K 2015).
- Parry, Ross (2005). Digital heritage and the rise of theory in museum computing. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 20: 333–348.
- Pashuysen, Tim (2017). You need modular content creation for better omni channel. Stylelabs. <https://stylelabs.com/2017/09/05/you-need-modular-content-creation-for-better-omni-channel/>
- Popiolek, Monika (2015). Terminology management within a translation quality assurance process. In Kockaert, Hendrik J. & Steurs, Frieda (Eds.), *Handbook of Terminology Volume 1* (pp. 341-358). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Prokop, Josephine (2003). Museen – Kulturschöpfer und ihre Markenidentität. Phd Thesis. Wuppertal.
- Ravelli, Louise (2006). *Museum texts: communication frameworks*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Reason, Peter & Bradbury, Hilary (Eds.) (2001). *Handbook of Action Research – participative inquiry and practice*. London: Sage.
- Rike, Sissel M. (2014). Transcreation – A Service to be Provided by Translators and an Area of Research for Translation Studies? *EST Newsletter* 44/2014: 8-9.
- Risku, Hanna (2004). The role of technology in translation management. In Gambier, Yves & Shlesinger, Miriam & Stolze, Radegunde (Eds.), *Doubts and Directions in Translation Studies* (pp. 85-98). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Risku, Hanna (2006). Cooperation and Quality Assurance in Technical Translation Projects. In *Language at Work – Bridging Theory and Practice* 1(1).
- Risku, Hanna & Windhager, Florian (2013). Extended Translation. A Sociocognitive Research Agenda. *Target* 25(1): 33-45.
- Romero Fresco, Pablo (2018). In support of a wide notion of media accessibility: Access to content and access to creation. *Journal of Audiovisual Translation* 1(1): 187-204.
- Saldanha, Gabriela, & O'Brien, Sharon (2013). *Research Methodologies in Translation Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Sandrini, Peter (2018). *Translationspolitik für Regional- und Minderheitensprachen: Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung einer Strategie der Offenheit*. Berlin: Frank & Timme.
- Schnierer, Madeleine (2019). *Qualitätssicherung. Die Praxis der Übersetzungsrevision im Zusammenhang mit EN 15038 und ISO 17100*, Berlin: Frank & Timme
- Seidman, Irving (1998). *Interviewing in Qualitative Research. A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: TCP.

- Self, Tony (2010). Context-Agnostic Writing in Modular Documents". Research Gate.
- Shreve, Gregory M. (2000). Translation at the millennium: Prospects for the evolution of a profession. In Schmitt, Peter A. (Ed.), *Paradigmenwechsel in der Translation. Festschrift für Albrecht Neubert zum 70. Geburtstag* (pp. 217–234). Tübingen: Stauffenburg.
- Simon, Nina (2010). *The participatory museum*. Santa Cruz, California: Museum 2.0.
- Solar, Mauricio & Sabattin, Jorge & Parada, Victor (2013). A Maturity Model for Assessing the Use of ICT in School Education. *Educational Technology & Society* 16(1): 206–218.
- Stern, Thomas (2014). What is good Action Research? Considerations about quality criteria. In Stern, Thomas & Townsend, Andrew & Rauch, Franz & Schuster, Angela (Eds.), *Action Research. International perspectives across disciplines*. London: Routledge.
- Stoeller, Willem (2011). Global virtual teams. In Dunne, Keiran J. & Dunne, Elena S. (Eds.) *Translation and Localization Project Management: The art of the possible* (289-318). Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Stringer, Ernest T. (2007³). *Action Research*. Thousand Oaks/CA: Sage.
- Sunwoo, Min (2007). Operationalizing the translation purpose (skopos). *MuTra 2007 Conference Proceedings*.
- Svenungsson, Jan (2007). *An Artist's Text Book*. Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Fine Arts.
- Teddle, Charles & Yu, Fen (2007). Mixed Methods Sampling: A Typology with Examples. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 1(1): 77-100.
- Temple, Bogusia & Young, Alys (2004). Qualitative Research and Translation Dilemmas. *Qualitative Research* 4(2): 161-178.
- Terry, Gareth & Hayfield, Nikki & Clarke, Victoria & Braun, Virginia (2017). Thematic Analysis. In Willig, Carla & Stainton Rogers, Wendy (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*. London: Sage.
- Timpson, Corey (2017). The Pursuit of Efficient Relevance. An Enterprise content Management System. In Hossaini, Ali & Blankenberg, Ngaire (Eds.), *Manual of Digital Museum Planning*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Toury, Gideon (1995). *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Vermeer, Hans Josef (1996). *A Skopos Theory of Translation (Some Arguments for and against)*. Heidelberg: TEXTconTEXT.
- Wengraf, Tom (2001). *Qualitative Research interviewing. Biographic narrative and semi-structured methods*. London: Sage.
- Yalowitz, Steve & Garibay, Cecilia & Renner, Nan & Plaza, Carlos (2013). Bilingual Exhibit Research Initiative: Institutional and Intergenerational Experiences with Bilingual Exhibitions. BERI Report.
- Zetzsche, Jost (2008). A Maze of TEnTs. *The ATA Chronicle* July 2018:47.

Works consulted but not cited

- Adams, Anne & Cox, Anna L. (2008). Questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus groups. In: Cairns, Paul & Cox, Anna L. (Eds.), *Research Methods for Human Computer Interaction* (pp. 17–34). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Alcina, Amparo (2014). Translation Technologies: Scope, Tools and Resources. *Target* 20:1: 79-102.
- Attride-Stirling, Jennifer (2001). Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research* 1(3): 385-405.
- Braun, Virginia, & Clarke, Victoria (2016). (Mis)conceptualising themes, thematic analysis and other problems with Fugard and Potts' (2015) sample-size tool for thematic analysis. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 19(6): 739-743.
- Brinkmeyer, Diana (2014). Museum ohne Grenzen – Multimediale Anwendungen und Barrierefreiheit in der Berlinischen Galerie. In Hausmann, Andrea & Frenzel, Linda (Eds.), *Kunstvermittlung 2.0: Neue Medien und ihre Potenziale* (pp. 105-121). Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Burmeister, Stefan (2014). Der schöne Schein. Aura und Authentizität im Museum. In Fitzenreiter, Martin (Ed.), *Authentizität. Artefakt und Versprechen in der Archäologie* (pp. 99–108). Internet-Beiträge zur Ägyptologie und Sudanarchäologie 15(2014).
- Cranmer, Robin (2013). Welcoming International Visitors – Communication and Culture. *Transcultural Visions* 2(2): 3-10.
- Dawid, Evelyn & Schlesinger, Robert (2012). *Texte in Museen und Ausstellungen*. Transcript.
- Dimitrova, Brigitta E. (2010). Translation process. In Gambier, Yves & Van Doorslaer, Luc (Eds.) *Handbook of Translation Studies* Volume 1. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Dörnyei, Zoltán (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eardley, Alison F. & Mineiro, Clara & Neves Joselia & Ride, Peter (2016). Redefining Access: Embracing multimodality, memorability and shared experience in Museums. *Curator. The Museum Journal* 59(3): 263–286.
- Flick, Uwe & Von Kardoff, Ernst & Steinke, Ines (2004). *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Galletta, Anne (2013). *Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond: From Research Design to Analysis and Publication*. New York: New York University Press.
- Garibay, Cecilia & Yalowitz, Steven (2015). Redefining Multilingualism in Museums: A Case for Broadening Our Thinking. *Museums & Social Issues*, 10(1): 2-7.
- Hagedorn-Saupe, Monika (2015). Digitization – a potential for museums to encourage creativity and new cultural experiences. Paper presented at the E | Space 2nd International Conference, Tallinn, 10-11 December 2015.
- House, Juliane (1997). *Translation quality assessment. A model revisited*. Tübingen: Narr.
- House, Juliane (1998). Quality of translation. In Baker, Mona (Ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (pp. 197-200). London/New York: Routledge.
- Jiang, Chengzhi (2010). Quality assessment for the translation of museum texts: application of a systemic functional model. *Perspectives*, 18(2): 109-126.
- Kvale, Steiner & Brinkmann, Svend (2009). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage.
- Martín-Mor, Adrià (2019). Do translation memories affect translations? Final results of the TRACE project. *Perspectives* 27(3): 455-476.

- Mellinger, Christopher D. (2018). Re-thinking translation quality. Revision in the digital age. *Target* 30(2): 310-331.
- Neather, Robert (2012). Intertextuality, translation and the semiotics of museum presentation: The case of bilingual texts in Chinese museums. *Semiotica* 2012(192): 197-218.
- Nowell, Lorelli S. & Norris, Jill M. & White, Deborah E. & Moules, Nancy J. (2017). Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16(1): 1-13.
- Pym, Anthony (2003). Redefining Translation Competence in an Electronic Age. In Defence of a Minimalist Approach. *Meta* 48(4): 481-497.
- Silverman, Raymond (Ed.) (2014). *Museum as Process: Translating Local and Global Knowledges*. London: Routledge.
- Sonaglio, Claudia (2016). *Translation of museum narratives: linguistic and cultural interpretation of museum bilingual texts*. Master Thesis, University of East Anglia.
- Stack, John (2013). Tate Digital Strategy 2013–15: Digital as a Dimension of Everything. *Tate Papers* 19(2013).
- Sturge, Kate (2007). *Representing others: translation, ethnography and the museum*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Tempel, Marisa & ten Thije, Jan D. (2012). The appreciation of cultural and linguistic adjustments in multilingual museum audio tours by international tourists. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 33(7): 643-664.
- Williams, Jenny & Chesterman, Andrew (2002). *The Map: A beginner's guide to doing research in translation studies*. Manchester: St. Jerome.

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview guides

Interview guide (museum staff)

INTERVIEW GUIDE – museum staff

Institution, City, Country

Name of the participant, Role

Date and hour of the interview

Introduction

Present yourself and establish a level of comfort
Express gratitude for the participant's involvement
State the purpose and collaborative nature of the research
Explain why the museum was chosen

Practical Aspects

Inform on the duration of the interview
Ask the permission for recording
Explain that quotes will be anonymised in publications

Opening the interview

Start with a general question for building rapport
Ask open-ended questions to create a space for the participant

Interview

Shift into more specific questions
Use follow-up questions to guide the dialogic flow towards the research topic

Concluding the interview

Ask the participant for additional thoughts
Ask availability for a second session in the final project phase
State that results will be shared after concluding the project
Thank participant for contributing to the research

Topic	Question / <i>Follow-up question</i>
Opening	Would you like to present yourself and explain your role within the institution?
Communication strategies for international audiences	<p>Which languages and which contents are involved when communicating with your multilingual audience?</p> <p><i>How is decided which content is translated into which languages?</i></p> <hr/> <p>Which international target groups do you address?</p> <p><i>To which extent are you addressing an international audience or local linguistic communities?</i></p> <hr/> <p>What potential do you see in employing digital technologies in the art museum to involve an to involve your multilingual audience?</p> <hr/> <p>Should the translated content be adapted according to the cultural conventions of the target language?</p> <hr/> <p>To which extent do you consider translation issues when creating content in the original language?</p>
Managing translations	<p>Who translates the various contents?</p> <p><i>Can you explain why you prefer collaborating with freelance translators rather than with agencies (or vice versa)?</i></p> <hr/> <p>Which criteria do you consider when selecting external collaborators for translation tasks?</p> <hr/> <p>Who is involved in managing and commissioning translation projects?</p> <p><i>To which extent is cross-departmental collaboration implemented?</i></p> <hr/> <p>How are project-specific requirements communicated to the translators / agencies?</p> <hr/> <p>Which resources are translators / agencies provided with?</p>
Enhancing practices	To which extent are procedures of managing and commissioning translation projects documented and systematised?

Topic	Question / <i>Follow-up question</i>
Assuring translation quality	What do you expect from translators / agencies in terms of quality? <i>What is a quality translation for you?</i>
	How are quality requirements communicated to the translators / agencies?
	How is the revision / review of translations organised?
	How is translator feedback handled?
Enhancing Practices	To which extent are procedures of assuring translation quality documented and systematised?
Translation Technology	Which tools are used for managing, commissioning, and checking translations?
	How do you ensure consistent terminology across contents? <i>Which tools are used to ensure consistent terminology across contents?</i>
	Which tools are employed to reuse existing translations in future translations?
	Which systems are employed to manage (multilingual) digital content?
Conclusion	Would you like to add anything else that we have not covered so far?

Interview guide (TSPs)

INTERVIEW GUIDE – TSPs

Company, City, Country

Name of the participant, Role

Date and hour of the interview

Introduction

Present yourself and establish a level of comfort
Express gratitude for the participant's involvement
State the purpose and collaborative nature of the research
Explain why the TSP was chosen

Practical Aspects

Inform on the duration of the interview
Ask the permission for recording
Explain that quotes will be anonymised in publications

Opening the interview

Start with a general question for building rapport
Ask open-ended questions to create a space for the participant

Interview

Shift into more specific questions
Use follow-up questions to guide the dialogic flow towards the research topic

Concluding the interview

Ask the participant for additional thoughts
State that results will be shared after concluding the project
Thank participant for contributing to the research

Topic	Interview questions / <i>follow-up questions</i>
Opening	Would you like to present yourself and explain your role within the company?
Project Management	To which extent is project management a shared practice between museum and TSP? <i>To which extent is the museum involved in the translation project cycle?</i>
	Which channels and tools are used to support the dialogue between museum and TSP in the various phases of a translation project?
	How are communication strategies for international audiences agreed upon?
	How are client requirements agreed upon?
Enhancing translation practices	Which are potential problems when collaborating with art museums? <i>How could these problems be resolved?</i>
	What can museums do to help improve your work and contribute to translation quality?
Translation technology	How do you evaluate the usefulness of computer-aided translation tools for museum translation, especially in the art sector?
	Which CAT tool functions are most useful for translation, project management and quality assurance in the context of museum translation?
	How could terminology be managed efficiently?
	How may web-based CAT tools contribute to an efficient collaboration between museum and TSP?
Conclusion	Would you like to add anything else that we have not covered so far?

Appendix B: Index, keyword maps, and examples of data insertion in analysis tool

Index for data insertion of case summaries (interviews with museum staff)

1 Content Creation and Management in the art museum

- 1.1 Models of Museum Communication
 - 1.1.1 Audience-centered communication
 - 1.1.2 Diversification of content
- 1.2 Multilingual content
 - 1.2.1 International target audiences
 - 1.2.2 Potential of digital technologies to involve a multilingual audience
- 1.3 Digital Content Management

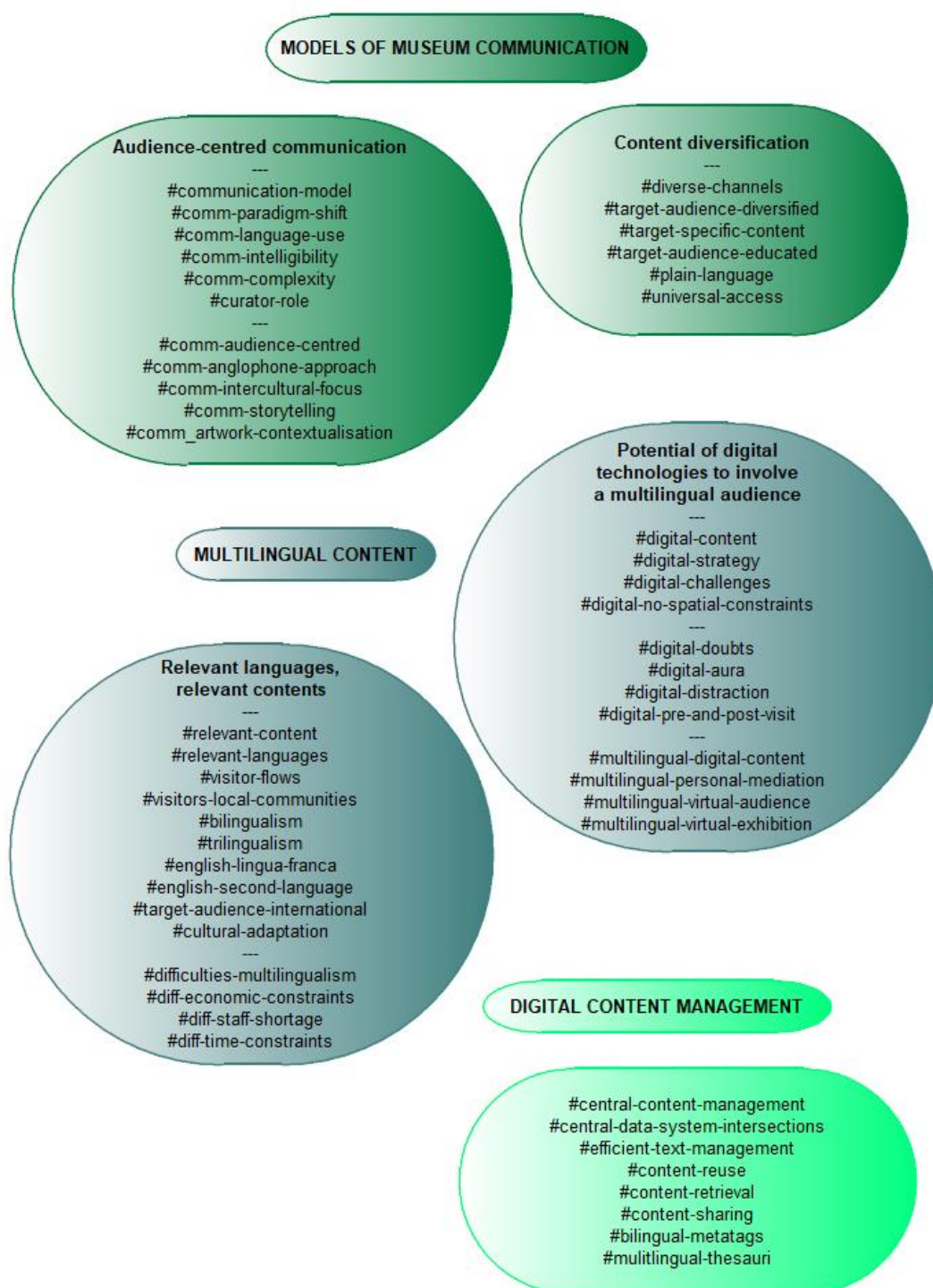
2 Translation Practices in the art museum

- 2.1 Translation Approach
 - 2.1.1 Reflecting on multilingual communication strategies
 - 2.1.2 Translation competences
- 2.2 Organisation of Translation
 - 2.2.1 Translation management
 - 2.2.2 External translators
 - 2.2.3 Translation project management
- 2.3 Translation Technology
 - 2.3.1 Terminology management
 - 2.3.2 Management and provision of translation memory data
- 2.4 Translation Quality Assurance
 - 2.4.1 Quality criteria
 - 2.4.2 Quality assurance and revision

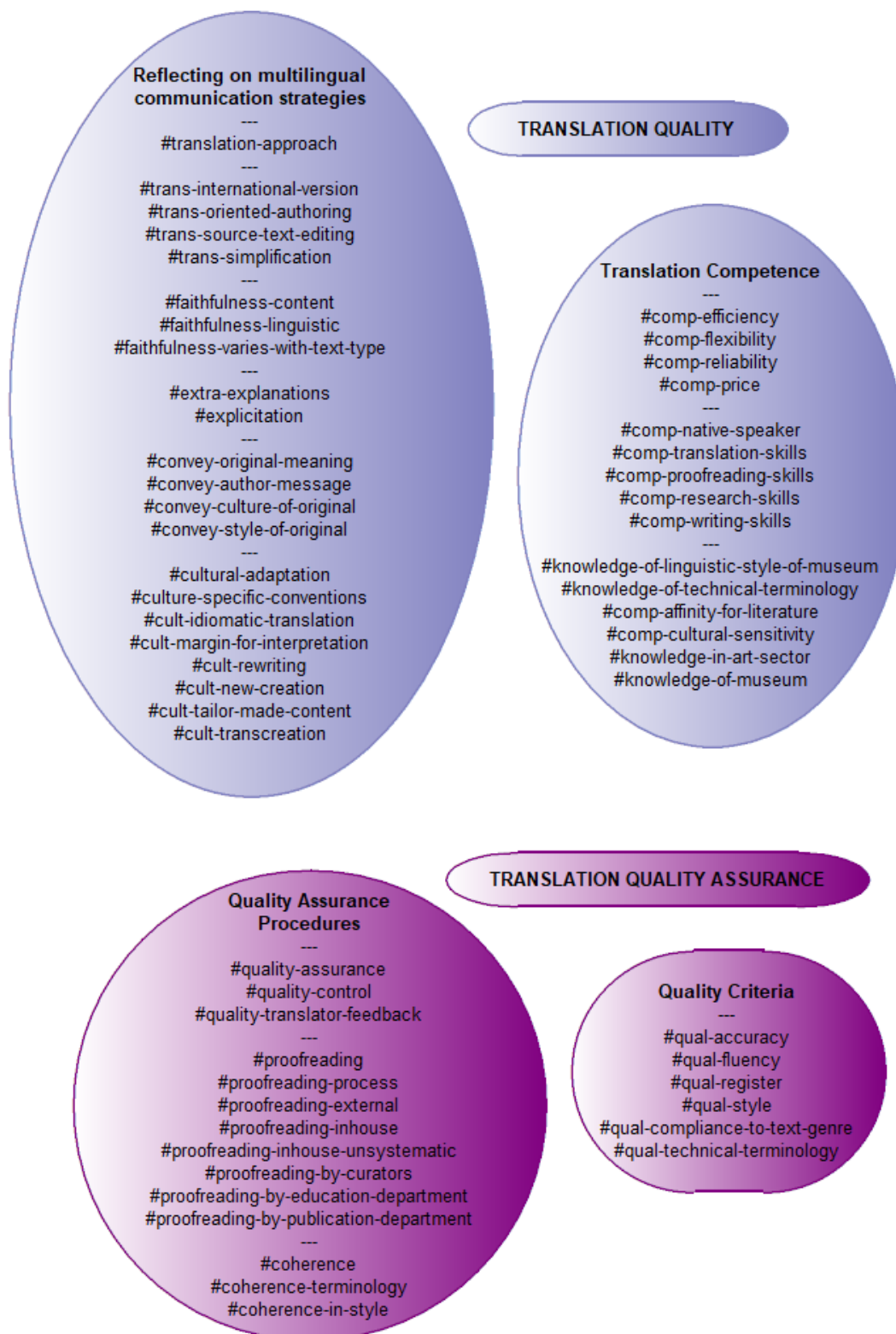
Index for data insertion of case summaries (interviews with TSPs)

- A) Collaboration with museums
- B) Enhancing practices
- C) CAT Tools
- D) Multilingual communication strategy

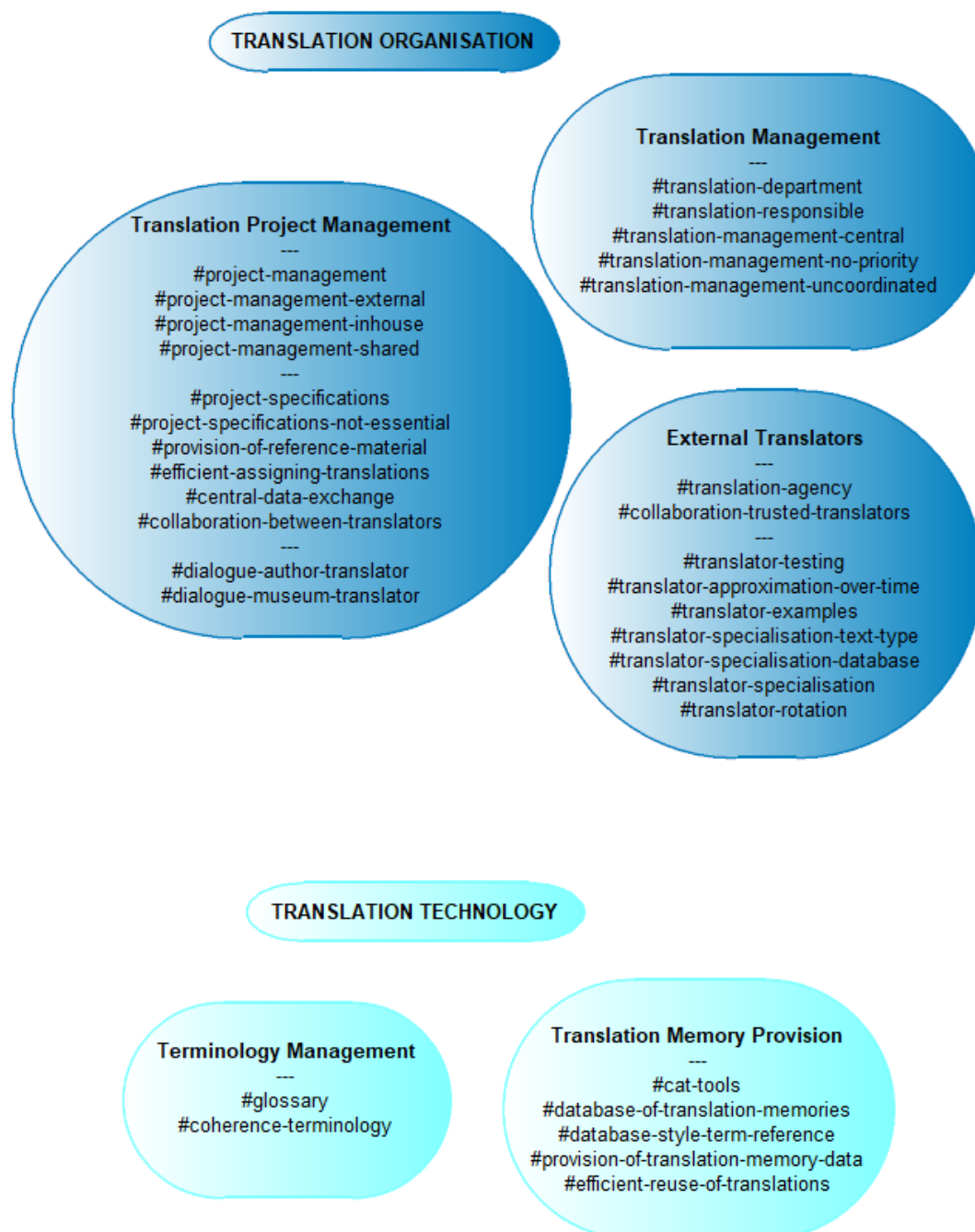
Map of keywords for data insertion (interviews with museum staff -1-)



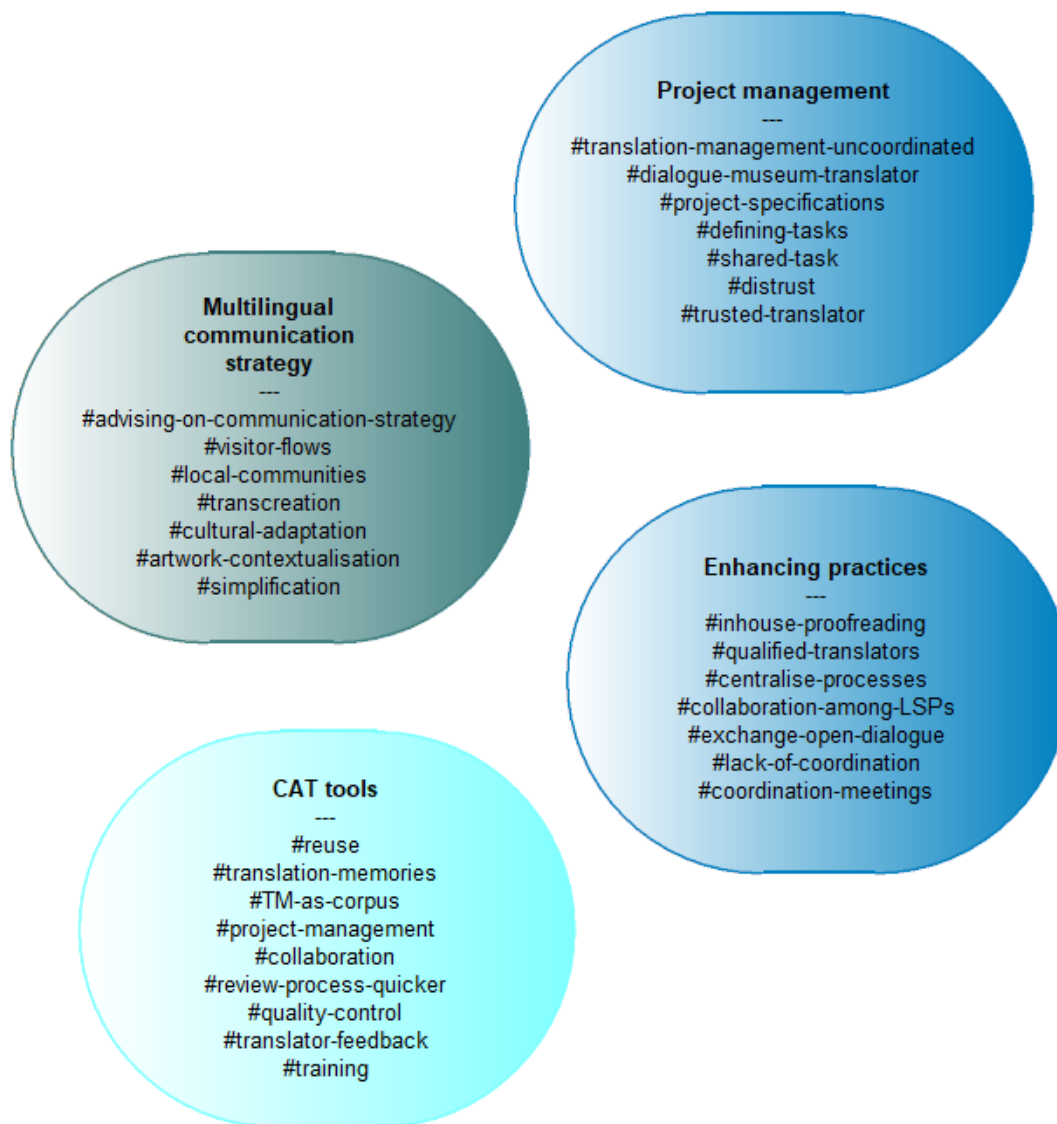
Map of keywords for data insertion (interviews with museum staff -2-)



Map of keywords for data insertion (interviews with museum staff -3-)



Map of keywords for data insertion (interviews with TSPs)



Example of a case summary (interview with museum staff)

author: Sandra

date: 2019-12-16

noteID: 201912162013

title: Louvre_Translation-Technology(2.3)

tags: #AD-Louvre, #Translation-Technology, #glossary, #coherence-terminology, #database-of-translation-memories, #database-style-term-reference, #cat-tools

related: [202006240805] AA_Notes_cat-tools, [202007021052] AA_Notes_control-of-content, [202008022233] AA_Theory_terminology-management, [201912162007] Guggenheim-Bilbao_TranslationTechnology(2.3)

Louvre Museum, Paris

15 July 2019, 14 PM

Participant: LP, Translation Office, Editorial Services, Research Department

201912162013 Louvre_Translation-Technology(2.3)

2.3 Translation Technology

2.3.1 Terminology management

The participant refers that a general glossary is provided to translators, containing room names, areas of museum, department names, museum directions. (00:44:45-00:45-45)

2.3.2 Management and provision of translation memory data

The participant refers that translators are not asked to use computer-aided translation tools while translating as many translators are not used to working with CAT tools, but they are provided with translation memories - via an online version of Wordfast without editing option. Translators thus have the possibility to search for a word and then visualize the different contexts. The participant further states that the database is not fed directly by the translators, but the system is fed in-house with all the provided (and internally proofread) translations. The in-house translation department uses Wordfast to create translation memories and build up a database of existing translations to ensure terminological coherence.

The participant underlines that the function is that of a stylistic and terminological reference as well as a reference for questions of phrasing. She further stresses that translation memories are not used to find matches, since in texts on artworks it is unusual that the same sentences will turn up twice; translation memories are rather used as a database to look up a word and see how it has been translated in the past and in which contexts or different fields of art it has been used. She concludes that translation memories are useful in the art sector to translate in context as well as for stylistic and phrasing inspiration.

From the participants statements it becomes clear that maintaining control over translations is a priority, as all translations are proofread in-house and translators may not edit the TM database. The TM database provided to translators is not used in its original function (providing matches), but seems to fulfil the functions of a bilingual corpus, providing a stylistic and terminological reference to look up a word in context and to be inspired for questions of phrasing.

INTERVIEW EXTRACTS

00:34:30

INTERVIEWER: Being in charge of the translation project management, which CAT tools do you use?

PARTICIPANT: We've got Wordfast and we try to use it as much as possible. But it is quite time consuming. (...) The main reason why we use Wordfast is so that we can have the translation memory. It just makes things much quicker when we are able to look things up and see how things have been translated in the past. So, that is the main advantage for us.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of terminology?

PARTICIPANT: Terminology, yes. It is not that we want to process everything for speed through Wordfast, but it is really a question of building up a database of past translations.

INTERVIEWER: Which other uses or advantages may this database provide?

PARTICIPANT: Also, for coherence.

INTERVIEWER: How is this useful to your translators?

PARTICIPANT: Our translators are provided with translation memories from Wordfast, for the languages possible. The Asian languages aren't so compatible with translation memories.

00:35:50-00:36:28

PARTICIPANT: If we are translating text that we know that we have translated in the past, we always provide reference documents to our translators as well. (...) For example if there's a message about some exhibition, adding for some practical information such as the museum closing for a certain period, so we know we have already translated a similar sentence, we will go and find the materials in order to keep everything as coherent as possible.

00:36:29-00:36:53

INTERVIEWER: To what extent are your translators using CAT tools?

PARTICIPANT: We do not ask them to use anything. My colleague carried out a study last year asking our translators whether they used CAT tools or not, and a lot of them said they knew how to use them, but they do not use them very often.

00:37:13-00:37:53

PARTICIPANT: The translation memory for us is not a question of being able to translate sentences that have been used before, because for most of the texts you never get the same sentence twice, apart from the practical information that can be more repetitive. But for all the information on the artworks and the rooms, it is very rare to find the same sentence twice. So, it's really a question of using it as a database where you can look up a word and not just see how it has been translated in the past, but also see it in different contexts. And see the best way to translate based on how it has been translated in context in the past.

00:37:55-00:38:45

INTERVIEWER: A kind of corpus almost?

PARTICIPANT: Yes, kind of. To see how terminology is used in different contexts and especially in different fields of art. So, for example, certain departments might use the same word that might not mean the same thing in different contexts. (...) That's why it is important to see the information around the word to be able to understand which translation to use. (This database of translation memories) makes the translator's job much easier to check how a word has been translated in context.

00:38:50-00:39:13

INTERVIEWER: Do you make a choice of which translation memories to provide for diverse translation tasks?

PARTICIPANT: We just usually provide them with the online version of Wordfast, so basically, they cannot edit it, but they can only look into it. But (we provide) basically everything for the language pair.

00:39:48-00:40:08

PARTICIPANT: They cannot access the content, but they can search for a word within the translation memory. And then (the tool) will come up with all the sentences that are relevant.

00:40:09-00:40:39

INTERVIEWER: And the terminology database? Is that something you also build up in Wordfast?

PARTICIPANT: We don't really have a list of terminology as such (...) Having a list for us is not any different than using a dictionary, but we really need the translators to check within the context and not just have the English translation of a French term for example.

00:40:48-00:42:19

INTERVIEWER: Since you have translated in the art field, do you think CAT tools are useful in the art sector?

PARTICIPANT: I think it's probably more useful than people imagine, because although we do not have the same sentences coming up (...), we basically use the translation memory to search for a term and see it come up in different contexts. (...) Obviously, when you find something in the translation memory, you always have to double check online and with different resources. So, we always check how the terms are used in scientific publications or in English-speaking museums, in different dictionaries. You always have to double check everything, but it gives you an idea of where you should be looking. Sometimes, you can get very technical terms and it can take quite a while to find the right translation and to be able to have this key that gives you the answer a bit quicker as it would usually take. I think that is quite valuable.

00:42:27-00:42:45

PARTICIPANT: And it is not just for very technical terms, it is also a kind of stylistic reference. Because we work with really brilliant translators, and it's really inspiring to see how things have been translated in the past. It may give you an idea of other solutions when you may be stuck.

Example of a case summary (interview with TSPs)

author: Sandra

date: 2020-06-13

noteID: 202007131316

title: AB_Art&Culture_enhancing-practices

tags: #AB-Art-Culture, #Translation-Organisation, #dialogue-museum-translator, #translation-management-uncoordinated, #open-dialogue, #trust-building, #lack-of-coordinated-approach

related: [202007061745] AA_Method_dialogue-museum-translator, [202006301149] AA_Notes_project-management

Arts & Culture Translated

8 June 2020, 10-12 AM

Participant: ACT

AB_Art&Culture_enhancing practices

--- B) Enhancing practices ---

NEED FOR TRUST, OPEN DIALOGUE AND EXCHANGE

The **briefing phase** is considered crucial to define the project, understand client needs, deadlines, costs, and exchange resources, such as previous translations. Insufficient information and material in this phase may lead to dissatisfaction and distrust.

(00:2:58-00:04:45)

"We want to avoid situations in which the client comes to us pointing out: you translated this way, but in our brochure, it is translated in a different way. We carry out research and consult the museum website for related texts. (...) But it is **important that the client provides us with a situation in which we are able to create coherent and homogeneous content** with other products that we do not know. Sometimes a different translation is taken as a wrong translation. (...) Actually, translation has always a subjective element, the perception of translation quality is subjective. If our translation varies from the material they already possess, there is almost a moment of **distrust**, or at least a moment of **suspect**."

[202007021322] AA_Method_thematic-analysis (diffident attitude towards translators)

The participant observes that an **open dialogue and exchange of expertise** are essential for an efficient collaboration between TSP and museum.

(00:10:43-00:11:20)

"It is also very important that the translator approaches the translation with a certain degree of humility and asks the curator as he is the expert. We do not want to substitute the expert. The translator has linguistic expertise and a certain knowledge of the artistic field, but the last word is that of the curator. In case of a doubt regarding terminology for example, it is important to have an **exchange with the curator**. An **open dialogue with the client** is thus important. This is an approach that is working quite well."

She further stresses the importance of realistic deadlines, leaving a **timeslot for consultancy with the curator during the translation phase**. During this phase, the main channel for dialogue is a form provided by the project manager to the client, including issues by one or more translators working on the project (00:05:45-00:06:20) to be clarified the museum.

(00:12:00-00:12:20)

"We try to collect all doubts on one single form for reasons of efficiency".

LACK OF COORDINATED APPROACH REGARDING TRANSLATION IN MUSEUMS

The participant observes a **lack of a coordinated approach** regarding translation in the museum.

(00:13:55-00:15:40)

"I think, just as there is probably an exchange between the various departments in the phase of the source content (...), it would be an option to consider **one single translation service provider** for the translation of all content inherent of an exhibition, including content for social media, website, exhibitions panels, brochures, audio guides - all types of text connected to an exhibition or a topic. Just as there is a coordination for the creation of the source content, I think it would be important to have a single translation service provider or at least a dialogue between the different service providers if the latter is not possible.

However, it would also be important to have an **(interdepartmental) meeting for the strategic planning of translations**. Otherwise, the **vision will be limited** without knowing the whole picture. This will create problems for translation and of coherence."

(00:01:55-00:2:57)

"Often the museum lacks a coordinated approach. For example, we translate didactic material for the Education Department of the museum. For us (as translation agency), it would be important to know if other departments have already translated related material on the topic, in terms of terminological and stylistic coherence. This is not an automatic step carried out by the museum, but it is us who need to advance such a request, which is not always fulfilled. I am wondering how much coordination there is internally in museums. Maybe there is a coordination regarding the source texts, but there does not seem to be a coordinated approach regarding translation. At least this is my impression."

[202006301149] AA_Notes_project-management (unstructured project management)

ADVANTAGES OF EXCLUSIVE AND CLOSE COLLABORATION

(00:45:25-00:46:05)

INTERVIEWER: So, from your point of view, which are the advantages for a museum to collaborate with a single translator or translation agency translating all material within an exhibition?

(00:46:15-00:47:15)

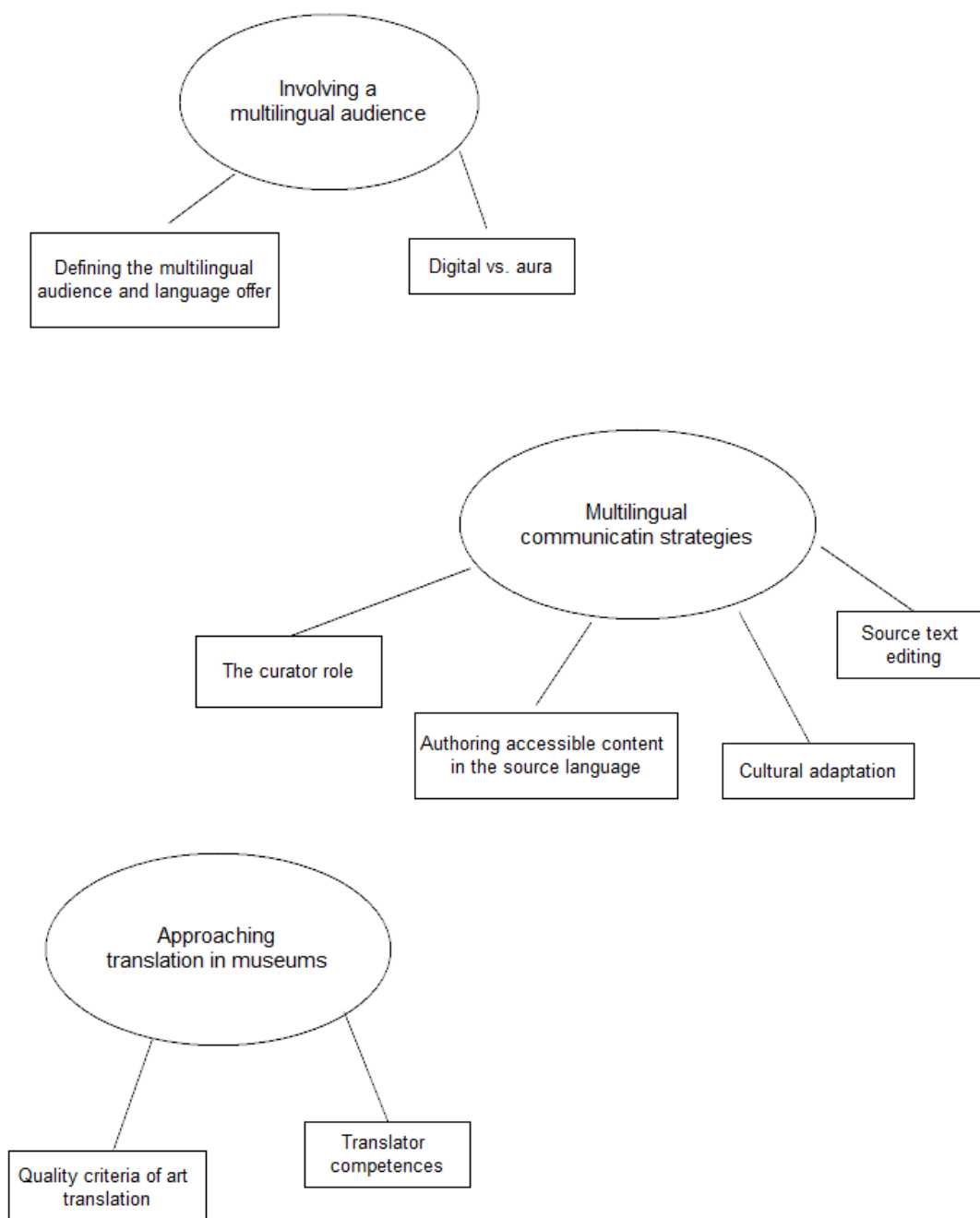
PARTICIPANT: Exactly, there are linguistic, organisational, and strategic advantages, maybe also regarding the multilingual strategy of the museum. Having a single interlocutor may help. (...) I think, in an ideal world it would be very useful to have a meeting between the translation agency and all the involved departments to reflect on the multilingual communication strategy in general or for a certain exhibition.

(00:10:43-00:11:20)

It is also very important that the translator approaches the translation with a certain degree of humility and asks the curator as he is the expert. We do not want to substitute the expert. The translator has linguistic expertise and a certain knowledge of the artistic field, but the last word is that of the curator. In case of a doubt regarding terminology for example, it is important to have an exchange with the curator. An open dialogue with the client is thus important. This is an approach that is working quite well.

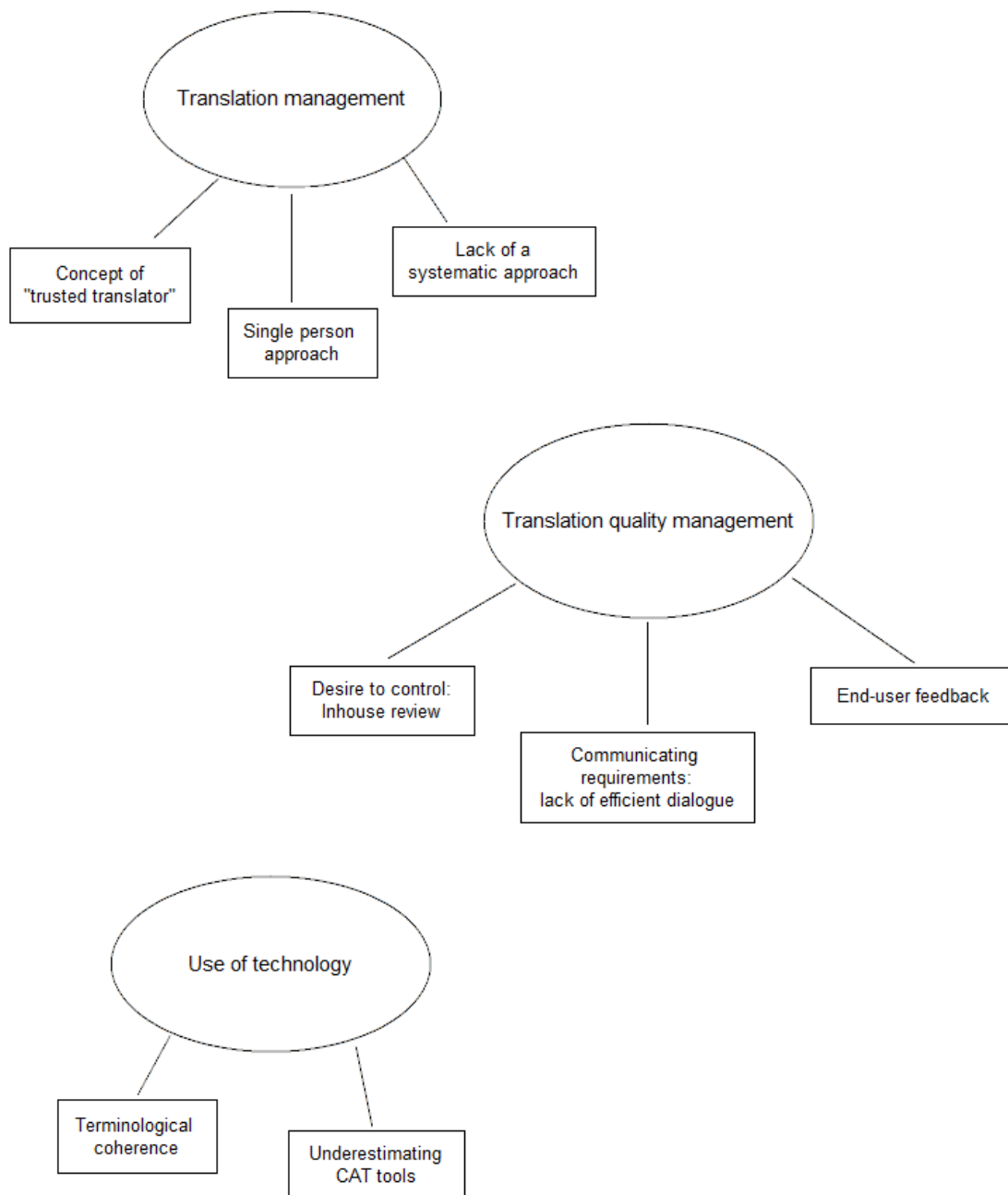
Appendix C: Thematic maps

Thematic map: interviews with museums staff (1)⁴⁵



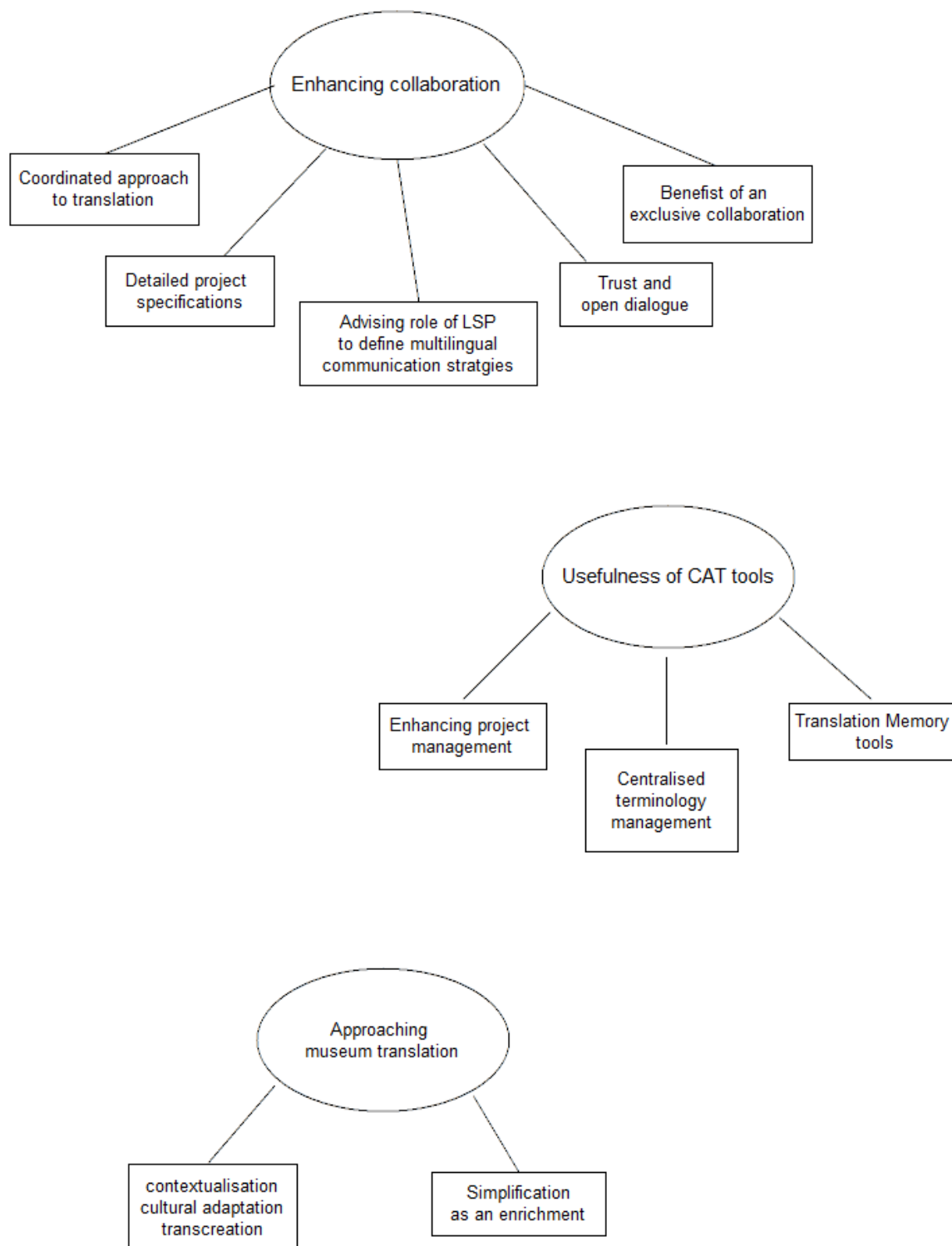
⁴⁵ The three thematic clusters (starting from the top) refer to Themes 1, 2, and 3 developed in Chapter 4.

Thematic map: interviews with museums staff (2)⁴⁶



⁴⁶ The three thematic clusters (starting from the top) refer to Themes 4, 5, and 6 developed in Chapter 4.

Thematic map: interviews with TSPs⁴⁷



⁴⁷ The three thematic clusters (starting from the top) refer to Themes A, B, and C developed in Chapter 5.

Appendix D: Questionnaires

Questionnaire (museum staff)

Questionnaire

about the attached guidelines

Translation Best Practices in Museums A proposed set of Guidelines

as part of the research project

Translation Policies and Practices in European Art Museums

PhD project by Sandra Nauert, University of Bologna, Italy

This questionnaire survey is aimed at the participants that have collaborated in this research in form of qualitative interviews. The project has been realised thanks to **your precious collaboration**. I therefore gratefully acknowledge the many insights provided.

The present survey is intended as a **member check** of the research results aimed at integrating practitioners' experiences to **improve and refine** the elaborated set of guidelines. I would very much appreciate your contribution in this final and crucial phase of my project.

If you prefer answering to the questions orally, we can arrange a **short online interview** (30 minutes) on a platform of your choice (MS Teams, Zoom, Skype).

Please do **not** consider the current state of emergency due to **COVID-19**, when answering the questions.

Please note:

- The research results in form of a set of guidelines in English language are attached.
- Total time required: approx. 90 minutes (60 minutes for reading the guidelines, 30 minutes for answering the questions or interview).
- Submission date: 21 December 2020.
- The data will be treated confidentially, and quotes will be anonymised in publications.

Please answer the following questions.

1) Do you think the guidelines would be useful for your museum?

yes no

Please explain why?

2) In your opinion, are there any aspects of the guidelines that need improvement?

yes no

If yes, please explain why and how the guidelines could be improved?

3) In your opinion, is there anything missing from the guidelines?

yes no

If yes, please explain.

4) In your opinion, how likely is it that your museum could adopt these guidelines, either entirely or partially? Please answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is the most likely.

- 1 2 3 4 5

Please explain.

5) In your opinion, how likely is it that Art museums in general could adopt these guidelines, either entirely or partially? Please answer on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is the most likely.

- 1 2 3 4 5

Please explain.

6) Anything else you wish to add?

Questionnaire (TSPs)

Questionnaire

about the attached guidelines

Translation Best Practices in Museums A proposed set of Guidelines

as part of the research project

Translation Policies and Practices in European Art Museums

PhD project by Sandra Nauert, University of Bologna, Italy

This questionnaire survey is aimed at the participants that have collaborated in this research in form of qualitative interviews. The project has been realised thanks to **your precious collaboration**. I therefore gratefully acknowledge the many insights provided.

The present survey is intended as a **member check** of the research results aimed at integrating practitioners' experiences to **improve and refine** the elaborated set of guidelines. I would very much appreciate your contribution in this final and crucial phase of my project.

If you prefer answering to the questions orally, we can arrange a **short online interview** (30 minutes) on a platform of your choice (MS Teams, Zoom, Skype).

Please do **not** consider the current state of emergency due to **COVID-19**, when answering the questions.

Please note:

- The research results in form of a set of guidelines in English language are attached.
- Total time required: approx. 90 minutes (60 minutes for reading the guidelines, 30 minutes for answering the questions or interview).
- Submission date: 21 December 2020.
- The data will be treated confidentially, and quotes will be anonymised in publications.

Please answer the following questions.

- 7) Do you think the guidelines could support the collaboration between museums and translation service providers?

yes no

Please explain why?

- 8) In your opinion, are there any aspects of the guidelines that need improvement?

yes no

If yes, please explain why and how the guidelines could be improved?

- 9) In your opinion, is there anything missing from the guidelines?

yes no

If yes, please explain.

- 10) Anything else you wish to add?

Appendix E: Proposed guidelines



Translation Best Practices in Museums

A proposed set of Guidelines

Contents

Foreword

Introduction & Scope

1 Translation policies: implementing best practices

1.1 Communication strategies for a multilingual audience

- 1.1.1 General
- 1.1.2 Defining multilingual audience and purpose
- 1.1.3 Defining content and languages of translation
- 1.1.4 Optimising content for translation
- 1.1.5 Style guides

1.2 Organising translation

- 1.2.1 General
- 1.2.2 In-house staff
- 1.2.3 Cross-departmental collaboration
- 1.2.4 External collaborators
- 1.2.5 Teamwork among TSPs
- 1.2.6 Managing translation projects
- 1.2.7 Managing resources centrally

1.3 Computer-assisted translation tools

- 1.3.1 General
- 1.3.2 Translation project management and quality control
- 1.3.3 Terminology management
- 1.3.4 Management of translation memories
- 1.3.5 Archiving resources

1.4 Translation quality assurance

- 1.4.1 General
- 1.4.2 Procedures to provide quality resources
- 1.4.3 Standards for QA procedures: client specifications
- 1.4.4 Quality control: review and feedback processes

1.5 Competences of TSPs

- 1.5.1 General
- 1.5.2 Translation and revision
- 1.5.3 Terminology management

1.6 Competences of museum staff

- 1.6.1 General
- 1.6.2 Building cultural competence
- 1.6.3 Organisational competence
- 1.6.4 Review competence
- 1.6.5 Translation, revision, and terminological competence

2 Workflows of translation project quality management

2.1 Planning phase (quality planning)

- 2.1.1 Editing content
- 2.1.2 Preparing translation-related resources
- 2.1.3 Defining preliminary client specifications
- 2.1.4 Refining and agreeing on client specifications
- 2.1.5 Defining QA processes
- 2.1.6 Defining quality control processes

2.2 Translation phase (quality control)

- 2.2.1 Review and feedback by the museum

2.3 Improvement phase (quality improvement)

- 2.3.1 End-user feedback

3 Parameters for client specifications

3.1 Project-specific context

- 3.1.1 General
- 3.1.2 Target audience
- 3.1.3 Purpose of the translation
- 3.1.4 Medium
- 3.1.5 Translation strategy

3.2 Linguistic style

- 3.2.1 Accuracy
- 3.2.2 Fluency and readability
- 3.2.3 Register
- 3.2.4 Terminology

3.3 Responsibilities

- 3.3.1 Assigning tasks
- 3.3.2 Tasks of checking

3.4 Environment

- 3.4.1 CAT tools
- 3.4.2 Translation-related resources

3.5 Collaboration

- 3.5.1 Price and delivery date
- 3.5.2 Project schedule
- 3.5.3 Communication and interaction

4 Recommendations for art museums

4.1 Premise

4.2 Multilingual communication strategies

- 4.2.1 Translation strategies
- 4.2.2 Cultural adaptation

4.3 Organising translation

- 4.3.1 External collaborators

4.4 Translation quality assurance

4.4.1 In-house review and feedback

4.5 CAT tools

4.5.1 Usefulness of CAT tools for art museums

4.5.2 Termbase

4.5.3 Translation memories

A. Theoretical framework

B Glossary of key concepts

Foreword

This document contains a proposed set of guidelines on how to implement translation policies and best practices in museums. It is the result of a PhD project, carried out between November 2017 and March 2021 by Sandra Nauert at Department of Interpretation and Translation of the University of Bologna. The guidelines are based on research conducted in the field and, in particular, on a series of interviews with art museum staff and translation service providers in a range of European art museums in Italy, Germany, Austria, France and Spain. These guidelines also take into account the state of the art both in academia and in the translation industry, especially the international ISO standards on translation. The guidelines also benefitted from feedback provided by the operators interviewed during this project.

Introduction & Scope

Who is this document for?

This document is addressed both to decision-makers in museums and to any museum staff involved in organizing and managing translation tasks. It is designed as a resource for any type of museum who desires to offer content in multiple languages. A dedicated section addresses some issues that are specific to art museums, which can be skipped by readers from other types of museums.

What is this document for?

This document contains a proposed set of guidelines serving two main purposes. First, it provides recommendations on how to implement translation policies and best practices in museums, and on how to define the parameters that shape translation practices and the quality of the output. Secondly, it offers guidance on the core tasks that museums should perform during the various phases of a translation project.

Quality model and underlying principles

The guidelines contain a quality model, proposing a systematic and collaborative approach for managing translation in museums. There are two underlying principles to this quality model:

- ✓ First, that translation-related knowledge should be built up in the form of resources and best practices.
- ✓ Second, that museums and translation service providers (TSPs) should work in close collaboration in order to enhance translation quality.

Thus, the active participation of the museum in the translation workflow is crucial in ensuring that quality requirements are met. For further details on the research that went into the preparation of these guidelines, see the section on the [Theoretical framework](#) at the end of this document.

How to use the guidelines

The modular structure of the guidelines is intended to allow them to be used flexibly in different situations, and to support museums in optimising their individual approach to translation policies and practices. The recommendations should therefore be considered in relation to the specific needs and context of each institution. In fact, museums can select those recommendations that are most relevant to them, customise them, and omit those that are not applicable.

Analogously, each museum can approach the question of responsibilities based on its specific organisational structures, resources, and competences. Since many tasks can be performed by either in-house staff, the translation service provider, or in collaboration, the division of labour should be formalised.

To facilitate reading, the section [Glossary of key concepts](#) provides a list of terms and definitions that apply to this document.

Structure of the guidelines

The guidelines are divided in four main sections:

- 1) [Translation policies: implementing best practices](#)
This section focuses on those choices and decisions that should be made before embarking on translation projects, such as your multilingual communication strategy, your organisational structure, the quality standards you wish to adopt, the technological tools and competences required.
- 2) [Workflows of translation project quality management](#)
This section provides a quality model for translation management. It proposes a series of core tasks and processes within a three-phase workflow, ensuring an efficient collaboration with translation service providers.
- 3) [Parameters for client specifications](#)
This section provides you with a tool to formulate your quality requirements for a translation project – also known as client specifications. These specifications enhance communication with TSPs and can be used to assess translation quality.
- 4) [Recommendations for art museums](#)
This section provides some reflections and recommendations specific to art museums, addressing problems, choices, and priorities of this specific context.

Standards

These guidelines draw on the following international standards which offer frameworks to describe and assess quality requirements for translation projects:

- Translation Projects – General Guidance (PD ISO/TS 11669:2012). Geneva: ISO.
- Translation Services – Requirements for Translation Services (BS EN ISO 17100:2015). Geneva: ISO

Translation Best Practices in Museums

A proposed set of Guidelines

1 Translation policies: implementing best practices

This section offers a series of guidelines on implementing translation policies, centred around the following key questions:

- ✓ *How should you define your multilingual communication strategy?*
- ✓ *How should you organise your translation practices?*
- ✓ *Which quality-assurance*
- ✓ *Which tools should you use?*

1.1 Communication strategies for a multilingual audience

1.1.1 General

As a preliminary remark, it is important to stress that ‘communication’ refers to the entirety of text production within the museum, i.e. from catalogue and exhibition panel up to web texts, etc. Given that museum translation is embedded in a wider context of museum communication, it is important to draw up a multilingual communication strategy document. Based on the museum’s general communication objectives (which may be defined by the museum’s mission), you should define the intended multilingual audience and the purpose of communicating with them. Once you have defined your multilingual communication strategy you can establish the more specific parameters of a translation project. It is advisable to share your strategy document with TSPs so that you can establish a shared vision of the kind of translation you need. Since many TSPs also offer **language consultancy services**, they can be consulted during the definition of your multilingual communication strategy. In the following, TSP refers to both freelance translators and translation agencies.

1.1.2 Defining multilingual audience and purpose

If possible, it is useful to gather information on the characteristics of your intended multilingual audience:

- ✓ age and educational background
- ✓ knowledge of the domain or subject field
- ✓ any needs and expectations
- ✓ geographical origin and languages spoken
- ✓ international visitors vs. local linguistic communities

Your intended multilingual audience may include both **international visitors** and **local linguistic communities** – implying different communication priorities. While the first is connected to the purpose of attracting international visitors, the latter serves reasons of integration.

1.1.3 Defining content and languages of translation

Depending on the intended multilingual audience and your communication purposes, you should define what type of content is to be translated and into which languages. You may decide to offer all content bilingually with English as a *lingua franca*, while providing selected content in more than two languages. Your language strategy may also vary based on a specific exhibition or project. These decisions need to be made by staff with the appropriate cultural competence (see [1.6.2](#)) to ensure that language and content choices are suitable for international visitors and/or local linguistic communities.

Evidently, different text types and media may require diverse translation strategies (see [3.1.5](#)). The following types of content might require translation:

External communication

- ✓ exhibition labels
- ✓ wall panels
- ✓ multimedia content
- ✓ multimedia apps
- ✓ leaflets
- ✓ maps
- ✓ brochures

- ✓ catalogues
- ✓ publications
- ✓ web texts
- ✓ social media texts
- ✓ press releases
- ✓ audio guides
- ✓ media guides

Internal communication:

- ✓ contracts
- ✓ agreements
- ✓ email correspondence

1.1.4 Optimising content for translation

Preparing content for translation

The content that will be translated should first go through a quality check, and any revisions or improvements carried out that can enhance the translation process. This also includes ensuring that specialised content is clear and accessible. Optimising content for clarity, conciseness, and consistency can make the content much easier to translate, allowing for a more efficient and less costly translation process.

Translation-oriented authoring

In alternative to optimising content after its creation, your institution might consider taking translation issues into account already when creating the content, by adopting an approach to writing that facilitates and supports later translation and adaptation. It is a very effective strategy to author any new content in such a way that it is already ready to be translated as effectively as possible.

1.1.5 Style guides

It can be useful for museums to elaborate language-specific style guides containing a set of editing and formatting instructions. Providing TSPs with a style guide can avoid corrections at a later stage.

1.2 Organising translation

1.2.1 General

The fundamental questions when organising translation in museums are:

- ✓ Which tasks in the translation cycle can be carried out by in-house staff?
- ✓ Which tasks in the translation cycle should be given to external collaborators?
- ✓ How should the collaboration between the involved parties be organised?

1.2.2 In-house staff

Keeping in mind the skills and competences of your staff, you need to decide which tasks of the translation process can be carried out in-house. Typically, museums outsource the actual translation. However, management tasks, such as commissioning, managing, and checking translations may be handled in-house. This reduces costs and allows for a certain degree of **editorial control**.

It is advisable that translation-related tasks are performed by staff that oversee the text production in the source language (e.g. the editorial or publication's office), as they know the content and potential problems. Moreover, they should have the relevant competences outlined in section [1.6](#).

For museums with reduced volumes of translation, it is advisable to assign at least one **trained staff member** to manage translation tasks and coordinate other in-house staff involved in handling translations. Museums with substantial volumes of translation may opt to set up an **in-house translation unit** responsible for: translation project management, terminology management, quality assurance and, to varying degrees, translation itself, either independently or in collaboration with external TSPs.

1.2.3 Cross-departmental collaboration

It is advisable that translation-related tasks in the museum be coordinated centrally and/or across departments to create **synergies**. In this way, translations and terminological resources produced at an early stage of a project can be exploited in later translation tasks.

At this point, it should be noted that cross-departmental coordination in terms of source text production is crucial to enable an efficient translation management, as a coordinated work at the level of source text production facilitates any translation tasks.

To manage translations efficiently, it is advisable to coordinate the following tasks:

- ✓ the management of any project-related resources, such as existing translations or terminological resources
- ✓ the commissioning of translation tasks belonging to the same project
- ✓ the collection of potential doubts from TSPs and the sharing of solutions
- ✓ ensuring effective collaboration of different TSPs working on the same project (see [1.2.5](#))

1.2.4 External collaborators

A close collaboration with external translation service providers is crucial to enhancing translation quality and ensuring that quality requirements are met.

You should decide which tasks should be performed by external collaborators, specify the required competences (see [1.5](#)), and identify adequate collaborators. It can be very useful to build and maintain a document or **database** containing information on the translation agencies and translators you collaborate with. Such information may include language combinations, fields of specialisation, etc.

External collaborators can be either translation agencies or freelance translators. **Large translation agencies** typically offer a wide range of services (see [3.3.1](#)), including terminology management, language consultancy and project management. Another benefit is that you will have a single contact person, as you will be assigned a fixed translation project manager to handle any type of communication with you. Agencies specialised in a certain field may as well offer tailored and personalised services, while guaranteeing expertise in a specific sector.

The advantage of working with **freelance translators** may be that you can develop a more personal relationship with the person that is translating – collaborators become part of the team. This can be relevant if you have preferences concerning the writing style of specific translators.

In this document, the term ‘translation service provider’ (TSPs) will be used when referring to both freelance translators and translation agencies.

1.2.5 Teamwork among TSPs

If two or more translators work on the same project, it is advantageous to put them into contact enabling teamwork, e.g. by means of technological tools (see [1.3.1](#)). You should also assign a translation **project manager** (either in-house or external) to coordinate the communication within the team.

1.2.6 Managing translation projects

Dedicated museum staff should manage translation projects in accordance with the quality and process requirements, that have been agreed upon with the TSP. The involved workflow is outlined in [section 2](#) and illustrated in [figure 3](#).

Managing translation projects includes the following:

- ✓ gathering and preparing project-related resources
- ✓ identifying key requirements and elaborating client specifications
- ✓ assigning competent TSP(s)
- ✓ refining client specifications together with TSP(s)
- ✓ answering any queries, the TSP(s) may have
- ✓ coordinating review and feedback tasks to be carried out by museum staff
- ✓ when necessary, informing the TSP(s) promptly of any changes to the client specifications

1.2.7 Managing resources centrally

In order for translation tasks to be organized efficiently, relevant data should be archived centrally and be easily retrievable across departments. Relevant resources include:

- a) documentation on in-house procedures (see [figure 3](#))
- b) documentation on how to define client specifications (see [figure 4](#))
- c) document which lays out your multilingual communication strategy (see [1.1.1](#))
- d) style guides (see [1.1.5](#))
- e) bilingual glossaries in pdf, MS Word, MS Excel format, and/or
- f) terminological database (TB) (see [1.3.3](#))
- g) existing translations in pdf, MS Word, MS Excel format, and/or
- h) translation memories (TMs) (see [1.3.4](#))

Managing resources with CAT tools

The management and maintenance of translation-related resources that record translation choices under points f) and h) can be performed by means of computer-assisted translation tools (CAT tools) described in the sections [1.3.3](#) and [1.3.4](#).

Managing resources without CAT tools

If you do not intend to use CAT tools, you should efficiently archive **existing translations** (for example by topic) in order to provide translators with relevant resources. Moreover, you should create **bilingual glossaries** (e.g. in pdf, MS Word or MS Excel format) to record important translation choices.

It is advisable to create an **institutional bilingual glossary** with indications on how to translate proper nouns and any other domain- or institution-specific terminology. The glossary should be constantly maintained and updated by adding new terms from ongoing translation projects by a project manager. For large translation projects, it can be useful to create a **project-specific bilingual glossary** prior to the translation phase in collaboration with a trusted TSP.

1.3 Computer-assisted translation tools

1.3.1 General

Depending on the complexity of translation-related tasks carried out in-house, you should consider using computer-assisted translation tools (CAT tools) and various translation management tools:

- ✓ computer-assisted translation tools
- ✓ translation management systems
- ✓ translation platforms

Depending on their level of complexity, all these tools will require some degree of **training** for the people who will be using them. These tools, each with a different focus, support the following:

- ✓ translation project management
- ✓ quality control
- ✓ central management of translation resources
- ✓ terminology management
- ✓ management of translation memories
- ✓ human translation

The diverse tools are available as **software applications** and/or as **cloud-based** solutions. It is not within the scope of these guidelines to recommend specific tools or applications. For a detailed overview on diverse solutions, see Barbara Heinisch and Katia Iacono's article on translator platforms ([2019](#)), the TAUS Translation Technology Landscape Reports (2013, [2016](#)) as well as the Language Industry Survey by GALA and ELIA ([2018](#)).

From now on, we will use the term **CAT tools** to refer to all the diverse types of applications that support an efficient translation workflow. If you decide not to use CAT tools, neither in-house, nor by asking your collaborators to use them, you can skip this section and continue reading at section [1.4](#). Refer to section [1.2.7](#) for an efficient management of translation resources without using CAT tools.

1.3.2 Translation project management and quality control

CAT tools are especially useful when you are collaborating with one or more translation service providers, or in a situation where a number of people are working together on a translation project. In this scenario, CAT tools offer a series of advantages. They allow you to:

- ✓ commission and manage translation projects centrally
- ✓ manage resources centrally and share them with all translators working on the same project
- ✓ perform in-house reviews by using the quality control features and pass feedback back to translators

1.3.3 Terminology management

CAT tools also provide an integrated feature for the shared management, maintenance, and automated use of terminology, known as a **termbase** (terminological database).

Benefits

Terminology management ensures the use of **consistent terminology** in translations, both at project level and across different projects. It ensures that everyone involved in a translation project uses a consistent terminology. In fact, the termbase (TB) can be shared and integrated into the working environment of each team member using a CAT tool.

Creating a termbase

It can be very useful to prepare a TB in collaboration with a trusted TSP based on your existing resources. This allows you to incorporate your terminological preferences, and it is also a way to adopt some knowledge in terminology management. The TB then grows with each translation project.

Managing and maintaining a termbase

A TB needs to be continually maintained and updated after each translation project. New terms must be checked by the translation project manager before including them in the TB. This task can be performed by a qualified member of your staff, or a trusted TSP in close collaboration with your staff.

Where appropriate, it can also be useful that a member of the museum staff and a trusted TSP agree on the translation of project-specific terminology prior to the translation. In this way, the translator(s) will be provided with ready-to-use project-specific terminology.

1.3.4 Management of translation memories

CAT tools also include a translation memory (TM) feature.

Benefits

Translation memories record translation choices and allow them to be reused if the same (or similar) content should reappear in a different text. This is useful when content includes recurring segments or is updated. In those instances where there are no recurring segments, the TM can still be used as a **bilingual parallel corpus**, which can be a very useful stylistic and terminological resource in a very accessible format.

Creating a TM database

It can be very useful to create a TM database in collaboration with a trusted TSP based on your existing resources. Only revised quality translations should feed the TM.

Managing and maintaining the TM database

The TM database must be continually maintained and updated after each translation project by a trained in-house member of your staff or a trusted TSP. New TMs must be checked before including them in the database.

1.3.5 Archiving resources

It is very important for your museum to archive all resources created in CAT tools, even if you do not directly work with such data. In the termbase and the translation memories, all translation choices are recorded. Storing this data ensures continuity in case you change translator or translation agency, as the resources may be handed on to the new collaborators.

1.4 Translation quality assurance

1.4.1 General

It is very important to define your quality requirements and put in place the processes and procedures that will ensure they are complied with.

1.4.2 Procedures to provide quality resources

It is advisable to establish procedures that will ensure the quality of the content to be translated (see [1.1.4](#)) as well as any project-related resources.

1.4.3 Standards for QA procedures: client specifications

It is useful to adopt standards for translation **quality assurance** procedures. QA procedures in the translation industry are typically based on client specifications, an approach by which the client specifies a series of quality requirements and agrees on them with the translation service provider. [Section 3](#) provides a set of parameters for such client specifications.

1.4.4 Quality control: review and feedback processes

You should define processes to ensure that the quality requirements you have specified are complied with. Museum staff should therefore perform review tasks during the translation process and provide feedback to TSPs (see [2.1.5](#), [2.1.6](#)).

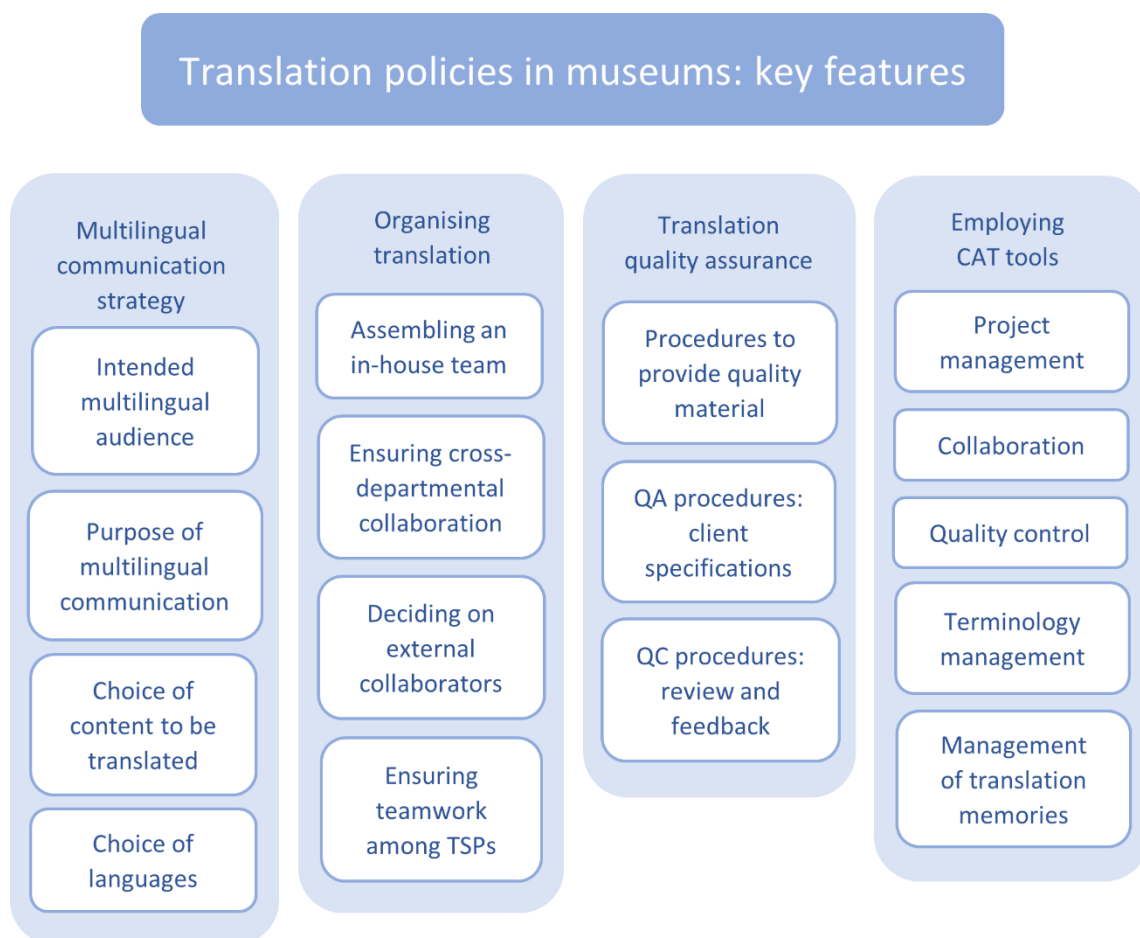


Figure 1: Translation policies in museums: key features

1.5 Competences of TSPs

1.5.1 General

You should ensure that the TSPs you collaborate with possess the necessary competences for the tasks they will perform.

1.5.2 Translation and revision

TSPs who carry out translation and revision tasks should possess the following competences:

- ✓ translation competence
- ✓ competence in the source and the target language, including target language conventions
- ✓ writing competence, including knowledge of museum text type conventions
- ✓ domain-specific competence, knowledge of domain-specific linguistic style and terminology
- ✓ research competence
- ✓ cultural competence
- ✓ technical competence to employ CAT tools (see [1.3](#)) supporting the translation process

1.5.3 Terminology management

TSPs managing a comprehensive bilingual or multilingual terminology database should have:

- ✓ knowledge and experience in terminology management and in the use of CAT tools to ensure that key vocabulary for a project is maintained, updated, and accessible
- ✓ use of term extraction tools to compile termbases from diverse documents, such as bilingual glossaries or translation memories

1.6 Competences of museum staff

1.6.1 General

Based on the how translation is organised in your museum, you should ensure that in-house staff members involved in translation-related tasks possess the necessary competences.

1.6.2 Building cultural competence

It is essential that the museum build cultural competence among *all* staff members by means of **ongoing communication** and/or regular meetings to help staff at various levels understand the museum's goals and its multilingual communication strategy. Increased **cultural awareness** can also feed into tasks that at first sight do not seem to be directly connected with translation. For instance, taking into account the needs of the multilingual audience during the creation of new content can bring significant benefits when this content is translated. Cultural awareness is the core competence at the basis of all other competences museum staff should possess to handle translations.

1.6.3 Organisational competence

Staff whose job is to manage translation projects should know how to collaborate with TSPs, how to set and achieve quality standards, and how to manage translation resources. They should possess or acquire a set of specific competences:

- ✓ basic understanding of the translation service industry
- ✓ knowledge of the translation process
- ✓ translation project management skills
- ✓ competence in using CAT tools (see [1.3](#))
- ✓ knowledge of one or more of the languages into which the content is translated
- ✓ good understanding of the museum's multilingual communication strategy

1.6.4 Review competence

In-house staff who check translations and provide feedback for the TSP should possess the following competences:

- ✓ expertise in the domain or subject field
- ✓ good command of the target language
- ✓ good understanding of the museum's multilingual communication strategy

For example, if one of your staff has a good passive knowledge of the language of the translation, he/she may be in a position to check the translation based on his/her expertise on the topic of the text. English being a lingua franca might be one of the languages most likely to be covered inhouse, while for less well-known languages editorial control remains more difficult.

Please note: the distinction between review and revision. Review tasks may be performed by domain experts, as they include the checking of content accuracy and terminological issues. In contrast, revision should be carried out by a professional translator, checking linguistic accuracy and suitability for purpose (see [1.6.5](#)).

1.6.5 Translation, revision, and terminological competence

If a museum decides to set up an in-house translation unit, the staff in the unit should possess the necessary competences to carry out translation and revision tasks, and to manage and maintain any termbases and translation memories as described in [1.5](#).

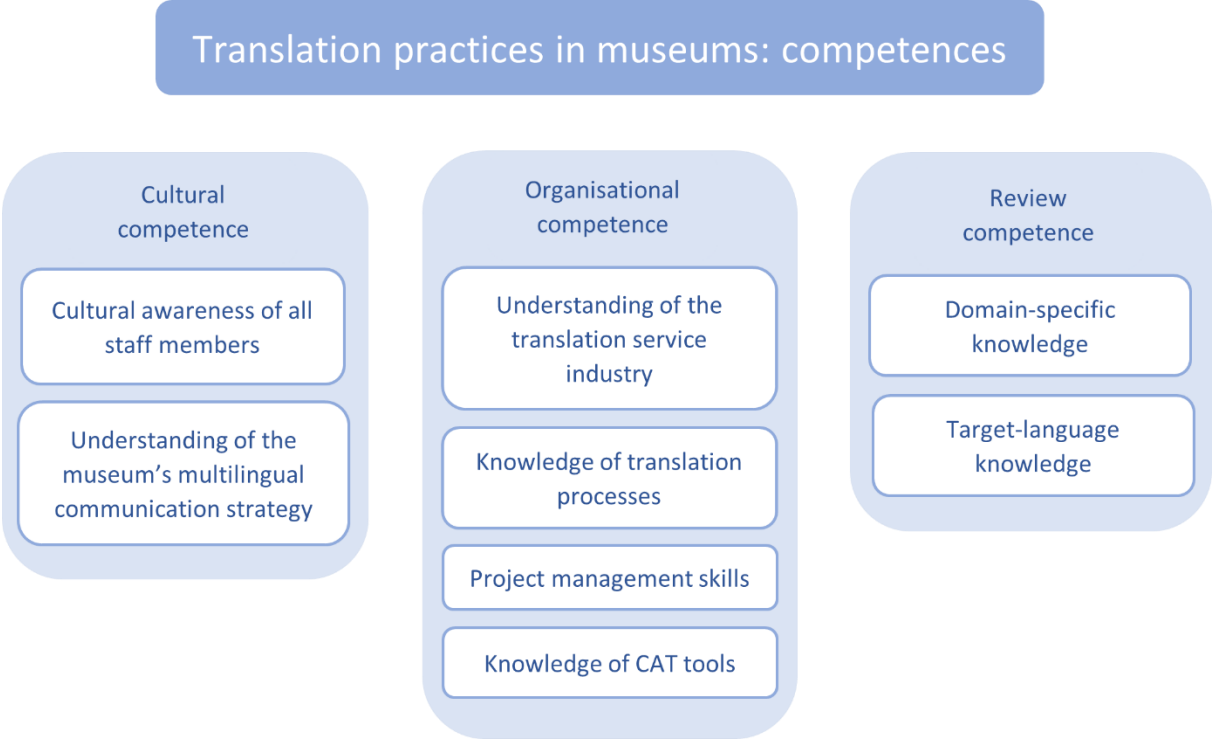


Figure 2: Translation practices in museums: key competences of in-house staff

2 Workflows of translation project quality management

This section proposes a tailored workflow, providing you with concrete steps to put into action during the three phases of a translation project. It supports museum staff in taking an active part in the translation process, contributing to translation quality within the logic of quality management (see [figure 3](#)).

Please note: For the various steps of the workflow, museums need to define the division of labour, establishing which tasks are to be covered by the museum or by the translation service provider.

2.1 Planning phase (quality planning)

2.1.1 Editing content

You should ensure that the content to be translated is of high quality and possibly represents the final version. Content should be optimised for clarity, conciseness, and consistency to allow for an efficient translation process (see [1.1.4](#)). It is also an option to ask the TSP for advice on relevant issues of such of **content optimisation**.

2.1.2 Preparing translation-related resources

To support the translation process, you should gather and prepare all relevant resources. This includes some general documents as well as project-specific material:

- a) document that lays out your multilingual communication strategy (see [1.1](#))
- b) style guide for the target language (see [1.1.5](#))
- c) contextual images
- d) terminological database, or
- e) bilingual glossaries in pdf, MS Word, MS Excel format
- f) translation memories, or
- g) relevant existing translations in pdf, MS Word, MS Excel format

For museums using CAT tools, the resources under points d) and f) can be efficiently created and shared within CAT tools (see [1.3.3](#), [1.3.4](#)). Otherwise, museums may provide bilingual glossaries and existing translations in common file formats, such as pdf, MS Word, MS Excel (see [1.2.7](#)).

2.1.3 Defining preliminary client specifications

You should prepare preliminary client specifications for the translation project, addressing a series of parameters (see [figure 4](#)). Based on these specifications, you should select a TSP from your database, who is able to meet the requirements of the project. Various aspects should be considered when

selecting the TSP, such as the degree of specialisation in the relevant domain, language combinations in case of multilingual projects, or the competence to carry out extra services if necessary.

Pre-defined client specifications?

It is advisable to establish if client specifications should *always* be explicitly formalised. For standard translation projects with generally constant requirements and little variation from project to project, you may find it more appropriate and efficient to lay down pre-defined client specifications just once and reuse them. For non-standard projects, client specifications should be elaborated specifically for each project.

2.1.4 Refining and agreeing on client specifications

Once you have provided the TSP with the client specifications and with the document that lays out your multilingual communication strategy (see [1.1.1](#)), you should refine your requirements in close collaboration with the TSP. In this way, you can develop a common vision of the translation project and avoid that your expectations are misunderstood. Client specifications may need further adaptation during the translation phase as a result of your review and feedback.

2.1.5 Defining QA processes

When refining client specifications together with the TSP, you should also agree on how your **client feedback** should be handled (see [3.5.3](#)). It is advisable for museums to perform continual reviews and provide feedback at an early stage of the translation process. In this way, the client specifications, terminological resources, and the translated content can still be updated according to stylistic or terminological preferences that may emerge.

2.1.6 Defining quality control processes

You should define processes to control that the quality requirements you have specified are complied with. The **review parameters** when performing in-house review tasks should focus on aspects of domain accuracy and terminology. In contrast, parameters for the revision performed by a professional translator should focus on linguistic aspects (see [3.3](#)), which should be formalised agreed with the TSP:

- ✓ linguistic accuracy
- ✓ appropriate register
- ✓ compliance with the style guide
- ✓ correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar, syntax
- ✓ compliance with domain- and institution-specific terminology
- ✓ suitability for target audience and purpose of translation

2.2 Translation phase (quality control)

2.2.1 Review and feedback by the museum

Qualified museum staff (see [1.6.4](#)) should control the quality of translations by carrying out continual reviews and provide feedback to the TSP. QC features in CAT tools (see [1.3.2](#)) support museums in performing review tasks and sharing feedback with the TSP.

2.3 Improvement phase (quality improvement)

2.3.1 End-user feedback

To promote an ongoing improvement, you may gather end-user feedback. This step is *not* part of a specific translation project cycle but can take place at any moment. **Visitor surveys** on translation quality, for instance, can provide insights into the preferences of your multilingual audience. Such feedback can help to improve your multilingual communication strategy.

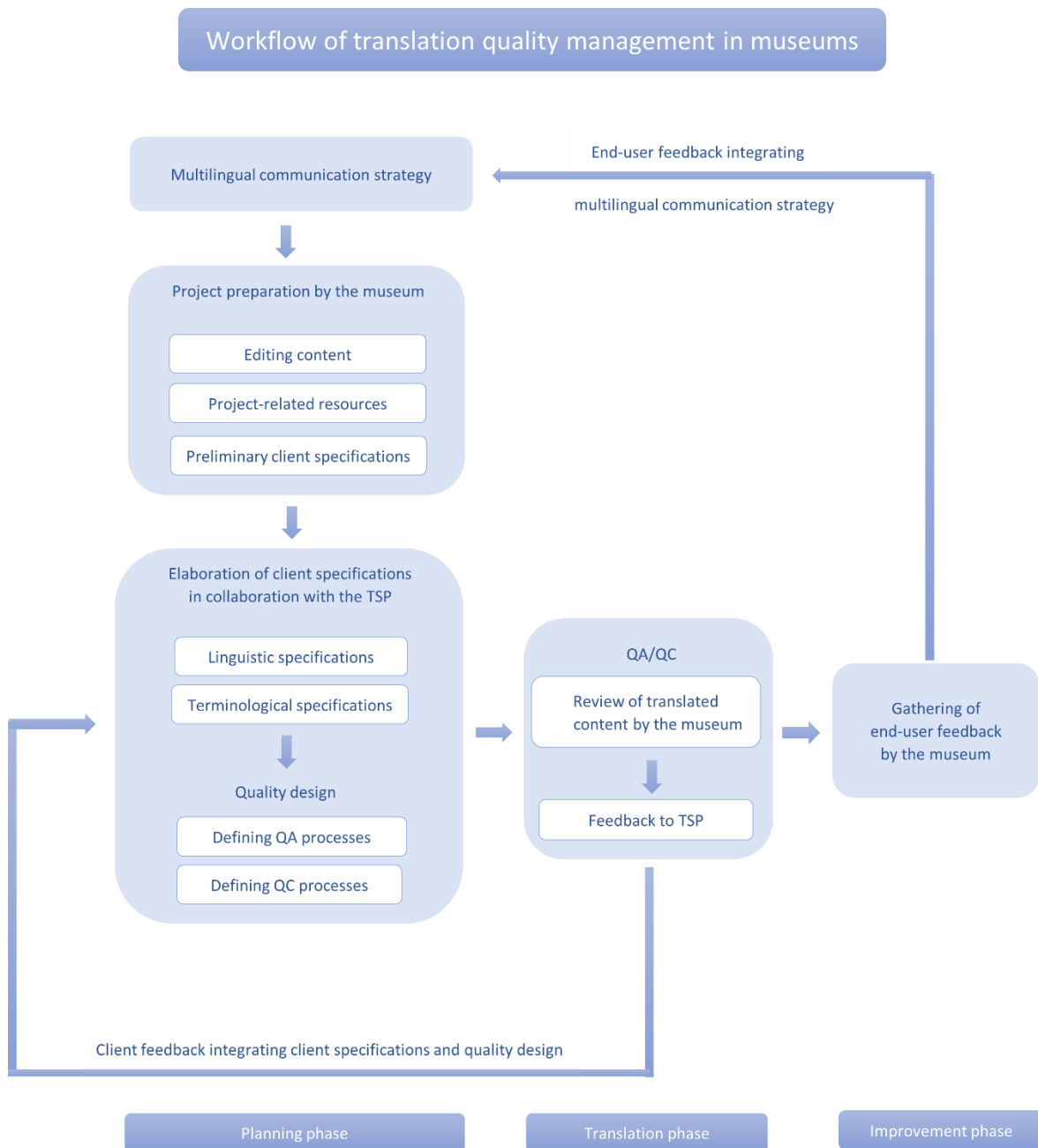


Figure 3: Workflow of translation quality management in museums

3 Parameters for client specifications

This section offers a set of parameters to formulate quality requirements for a translation project. Such client specifications support you in communicating your expectations and in checking that requirements are complied with.

3.1 Project-specific context

3.1.1 General

With the multilingual communication strategy in mind, you should make indications on the context of a specific translation project by specifying target audience, purpose, medium and translation strategy.

3.1.2 Target audience

You should provide information on the target audience of the translation project. In case a project involves diverse target groups, differentiated indications are necessary. To describe your target audience or target groups, you may refer to the items listed in section [1.1.2](#).

3.1.3 Purpose of the translation

You should specify the purpose of the translation. Clear indications are necessary:

- ✓ if the purpose of the translation differs from the purpose of the source content
- ✓ if there are multiple purposes (e.g. information and entertainment)

3.1.4 Medium

You should specify the medium by which content will be made available. In case a project involves diverse media and text types (see [1.1.3](#)), differentiated indications are necessary. Sometimes, the same translation may be used on diverse media. This issue should be discussed with the TSP in order to find suitable and efficient solutions to deal with the situation.

3.1.5 Translation strategy

It is very important to specify which translation strategy you want the TSP to use.

Examples of questions that may help defining a suitable strategy:

- ✓ Do you want a close translation or a creative translation?
- ✓ To which extent should the translator rewrite, reformulate and reorder content?
- ✓ How much freedom do you intend to give the translator to adapt the text according to the cultural conventions of the target language?

It can be very helpful to discuss these questions with the TSP in order to agree on a suitable strategy. It is also important to keep in mind that different text types may require different strategies.

3.2 Linguistic style

3.2.1 Accuracy

Accuracy refers to the relation between your content and the translation. However, accuracy is relative and depends on the agreed translation strategy (see [3.1.5](#)). When requiring a close translation, you will require a correct and complete transfer of your content. In a more creative translation, you will rather require a correct transfer focusing on the intent, tone, and context. Examples for accuracy errors are misinterpretations of your content and inappropriate additions or omissions of content.

3.2.2 Fluency and readability

Fluency refers to the readability of the translated content. You should require a fluent, readable text:

- ✓ correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar
- ✓ natural-sounding style in terms of word choice and syntax

3.2.3 Register

You should specify the register of the translation. Register concerns the **degree of formality** of the content and the type of relationship between author and audience. This involves various issues:

- ✓ direct reader address or not
- ✓ formal vs. informal
- ✓ academic vs. accessible

Typically, the register of your content determines the register of the translation. However, due to different cultural and **linguistic conventions**, you may also require a shift in register.

Examples:

- ✓ Spanish version rather informal using “tu”, French version: rather formal using “vous”
- ✓ Shift from academic Italian content to more accessible content in English language

3.2.4 Terminology

It is advisable to specify that TSPs should comply with:

- ✓ the provided terminological resources
- ✓ the terminological conventions of the institution
- ✓ the terminological conventions of the domain or subject field
- ✓ the terminological conventions of the target language

You should specify terminological preferences in form of a **bilingual glossary** (see [1.2.7](#)) or a **terminology database** (see [1.3.3](#)). Especially domain- and institution-specific terminology should be provided to ensure terminological consistency.

3.3 Responsibilities

3.3.1 Assigning tasks

Since many tasks can be performed by either in-house staff, the TSP, or in collaboration, you should formalise the division of labour, especially for the following tasks:

- ✓ project management (see [1.2.6](#))
- ✓ terminology management (see [1.3.3](#))
- ✓ tasks of checking translated content ([3.3.2](#))

The following non-exhaustive list gives an overview on services offered by TSPs:

- ✓ translation
- ✓ revision
- ✓ review
- ✓ content updates
- ✓ project management
- ✓ translation memory alignment
- ✓ terminology management
- ✓ language and culture consultancy
- ✓ transcreation of promotional content
- ✓ adaptation of audio and multimedia content
- ✓ subtitling of audio-visual content

3.3.2 Tasks of checking

Different projects require diverse degrees of checking and editing. You should define which of the following tasks are required and by whom they should be performed:

- ✓ Self-revision of the translation is performed by the translator as part of the translation task.
- ✓ Revision is performed by a second translator involving a bilingual examination.
- ✓ Review is performed by a domain expert involving a monolingual examination to ensure domain accuracy, including domain-specific terminology and text-type conventions.
- ✓ Proofreading refers to a final examination of the revised translation before printing.

While revision tasks require translation-specific competences, review and proofreading require domain-specific knowledge and a good command of the target language (see [1.6.4](#)).

3.4 Environment

3.4.1 CAT tools

If you decide to use CAT tools, you should agree upon the tools to be used in the translation project (see [1.3](#)). This includes the following issues:

- ✓ Which tools should be used?
- ✓ Who should use the tools?
- ✓ Who manages, maintains, and updates resources?
- ✓ How are resources archived?

3.4.2 Translation-related resources

It is important to define all resources that TSPs should refer to throughout the translation project. To prepare your list of resources, you may refer to the list provided in section [2.1.2](#).

3.5 Collaboration

3.5.1 Price and delivery date

Price and delivery date should be agreed upon and formalised. It is advisable to choose a delivery date should that leaves a timeslot for consultancy between you and the TSP.

3.5.2 Project schedule

Where appropriate, you should define a project schedule to coordinate tasks and collaboration. This can be very important to coordinate collaborative tasks (e.g. terminology management), or the handling of feedback from in-house staff that should feed into the translators' work.

3.5.3 Communication and interaction

To guarantee an efficient interaction, it is very important to designate **contact persons**, both of in-house staff and of the TSP. You should also agree upon procedures for asking and answering questions and for handling your feedback. Possible forms of communication are:

- ✓ telephone contact
- ✓ e-mail contact
- ✓ feedback form
- ✓ CAT tools (see [1.3.1](#))

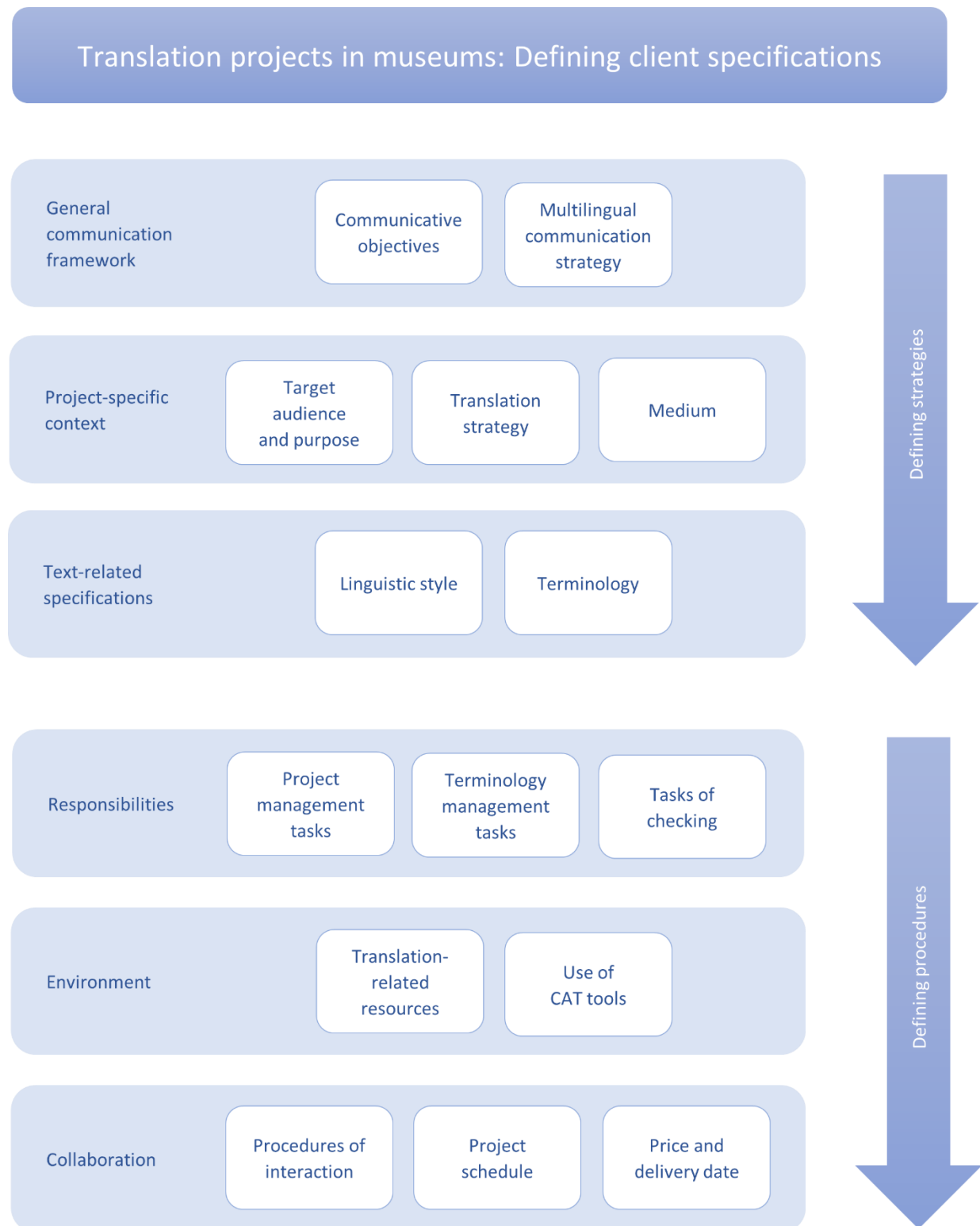


Figure 4: Translation projects in museums: Defining client specifications

4 Recommendations for art museums

This section offers some reflections and recommendations that are specific to art museums with the aim of addressing the priorities and problems that art museums face when implementing their translation policies.

4.1 Premise

Art museums – like any other type of museum – are currently facing a **paradigm shift**, involving a profound reflection on the nature of museum content. This is creating a situation where a range of heterogeneous communication approaches are being used. The traditional approach of offering more formal and academic content intended for the expert and educated visitor, is contrasted by new approaches which favour more accessible and interactive content which does not require prior knowledge and is suitable for a wide audience.

What distinguishes art museums from other types of museums in terms of content creation, is a strong curating tradition. Texts in art museums have a special status, there is a strong interpretative element in art discourse, and **writing style** matters a great deal. Contemporary art discourse, in particular, is considered a very complex genre. These particular conditions have implications for various aspects of translation policies in art museums.

4.2 Multilingual communication strategies

4.2.1 Translation strategies

This central role of writing style in art museums must be addressed when communicating with translators about translation strategies (see [3.1.5](#)). Translators should understand your communication approach since this will help them to better understand your quality requirements. The following questions present possible choices and may offer support when defining strategies:

- ✓ Should translated content reflect the **linguistic style**, the **register**, and the **aesthetics** of the original text?
- ✓ Or should the register of translated content be defined according to the **linguistic conventions** of the target language? Art museum content in the Anglo-Saxon area, for instance, is typically more accessible than content in other European languages, such as Italian, Spanish, French, or German.
- ✓ Should content in **English as a lingua franca** be somewhat more accessible when addressing a multilingual audience partly composed of non-native speakers? This implies a slight shift in register, while preserving the aesthetics of the original text.
- ✓ Are linguistics style, register, and the aesthetics of a text equally important for all types of museum content (catalogue, text panels, brochures, audio, video, web content)?

4.2.2 Cultural adaptation

Irrespective of the communication approach of your museum, it is worth reflecting on the cultural adaptation that may be needed to make your content accessible to the target audience.

Examples of questions that may help to define where adaptation is appropriate:

- ✓ Should references to historical events or figures include extra explanation, be left unchanged, or be accompanied by a reference which is specific to the target culture?
- ✓ Should proverbs, sayings and jokes be replaced by their “equivalents” or be omitted?
- ✓ Should concepts specific to the source culture be substituted for concepts specific to the target culture?

4.3 Organising translation

4.3.1 External collaborators

The importance given to writing style in art museums has a great impact on the choice of external collaborators providing translation services. Writing skills are considered the key competence for translating art discourse. For this reason, art museums may prefer the writing style of a specific translator and prefer to work with **trusted collaborators**. This is especially true for contemporary art discourse, which is considered a highly complex genre and difficult to translate.

Given this priority, some museums prefer collaborating with freelance translators (see [1.2.4](#)). This allows them to develop a personal relationship with the translator, who becomes **part of the museum team**. However, some freelance translators may not offer certain services, such as terminology management or language consultancy. It can be a good option to involve a translation agency for selected tasks.

A valid alternative can be **translation agencies specialised in art and museum translation**, who are aware of the specific qualitative requirements of the sector. Such agencies can offer tailored and personalised services, dedicated project managers and a team of specialised translators.

4.4 Translation quality assurance

4.4.1 In-house review and feedback

The importance of writing style is also reflected in the way art museums handle the checking and editing of translations. In many cases, translated content is reviewed in-house, either by curators or other staff. The quality model of these guidelines, which propose an active participation of museums throughout the translation project, responds precisely to the art museum’s need of being **directly involved at text level** with the possibility to express **stylistic and terminological preferences**. It is thus advisable for art museums to ensure efficient review and feedback processes in close collaboration with the translator as proposed in section [2.1.5](#) (see also [figure 3](#)).

4.5 CAT tools

4.5.1 Usefulness of CAT tools for art museums

The usefulness of the two core features of CAT tools – terminological database and translation memories – can vary depending on the nature of content that will be translated. **Promotional content**, such as brochures, maps, or any type of visitor information, typically benefits from CAT tools since such content presents standard information with recurring terminology and text segments. **Artistic content** will benefit from CAT tools to varying degrees, depending on the type of art discourse.

4.5.2 Termbase

A termbase (see [1.3.3](#)) offers a series of benefits:

- ✓ ensures terminological consistency both at project level and across projects
- ✓ efficient way for translators of exploiting terminological choices of past translations
- ✓ the museum's terminological preferences can easily be incorporated in the termbase
- ✓ the archive of terminological choices can easily be handed over in case collaborators change

Content about pre-modern art

The terminology of texts about pre-modern art is rather standardised, thus presents recurring terms. For the translation of such content, a termbase offers an efficient way of reusing terminology across projects. For instance, this can be useful for museums that often rearrange their permanent collection.

Modern and contemporary art discourse

Terminology of modern and contemporary art discourse is highly specialised and distinct for each exhibition. This applies especially to contemporary art galleries without a permanent collection organising ever changing exhibitions on the most varied topics. Consequently, there is little recurring terminology when translating such content – making the use of a termbase across projects less useful.

4.5.3 Translation memories

Translation memories (see [1.3.4](#)) offer a series of benefits:

- ✓ efficient way for translators of exploiting translation choices that have been taken in the past
- ✓ the archive of translation choices can easily be handed over in case collaborators change

Content about pre-modern art

Translation memories (TM) can be very helpful when translating content about pre-modern art. The main benefit is not in the reuse of entire sentences but using the TM as a **bilingual parallel corpus** to look up terms in different contexts. It thus represents a valuable **stylistic and terminological resource**.

Modern and contemporary art discourse

As with terminology management, the use of TM when translating modern and contemporary art is more limited due to the complexity of the genre and the relative absence of recurring terminology.

A. Theoretical framework

This section offers a brief outline of the theoretical premises of this set of guidelines, including recent research in museum and translation studies, as well as current trends in the translation industry.

Active participation

The interaction between museum and translation community is often complicated by differing levels of expertise – making negotiation and dialogue a difficult undertaking. Translation scholar Robert Neather (2012) therefore calls for ‘boundary practices’ to overcome such difficulties and enable an efficient collaboration between the diverse actors. This is in line with observations by various scholars investigating aspects of translation quality management (Risku 2006, Dunne 2011, Abdallah 2012, Alonso 2016, Foedisch 2017). Trust building, a common goal, and the smooth flow of information are considered key factors for an efficient collaboration in translation projects. These studies underline the role of clients in the translation production cycle, while calling for the active participation of clients. One way in which clients can affect positively on the translation process is by providing source content and other resources of high quality. Client feedback during the translation phase represent another opportunity for clients to contribute to translation quality.

The client perspective of museums is a special case since museums are somewhat hybrid actors – halfway between client and translation project manager – depending on the extent to which they are involved in managing and checking translations. However, irrespective of the degree of involvement, close collaboration remains the key concept. Museum staff can contribute decisively to translation quality as they possess significant domain-specific knowledge, which should feed into the translation process. To efficiently collaborate with TSPs, museum staff should know how to manage translation projects, how to set and achieve quality standards, and how to manage translation resources.

Client specifications

The prevailing approaches to quality management in the translation industry are both process-based and customer-oriented, relying heavily on client specifications (also project specifications), i.e. quality requirements for a translation project provided by the client. Various scholars address potential difficulties of customer-based approaches, pointing out that many clients may not be able to communicate their requirements efficiently. A more interactive approach to quality management may alleviate such difficulties, with clients providing feedback at an early stage of the translation process. In this way, stylistic or terminological preferences may emerge when there is still time to update the client specifications and adapt translations.

Within a museum context, client specifications represent an efficient way for the museum and translation service provider to elaborate a common vision of a translation project – within a process of exchange and co-creation. The client specifications approach coupled with an active involvement throughout the entire translation project cycle allows museums to exert editorial control of translated content and ensures an efficient dialogue regarding the museums’ expectations and preferences.

Quality standards

The international quality standards for translation BS EN ISO 17000:2015 and PD ISO/TS 16699:2012 offer a series of quality recommendations aimed at an efficient communication and exchange between the diverse actors. Both documents offer suitable frameworks for museums to negotiate their requirements and contribute with domain-specific expertise to an efficient translation process. Peter Sandrini (2018) elaborated a set of quality standards for translation policies in official institutions. His extensive research addresses organisational and planning aspects of translation management within institutions, while providing recommendations concerning project management, quality assurance and the use of translation technology.

According to the ISO standards, there is no clear line defining which organisational translation tasks fall under the responsibility of clients, translation project managers, or translators. Given the fact that museums make substantial use of external collaborators, but at the same time wish to keep editorial control over translated content, it is reasonable that at least some organisational tasks of translation project management and translation quality assurance be carried out within the museum. It goes without saying that there is no 'one size fits all' solution. Depending on economic and infrastructural resources, staff competences, museum size and the specific context of a museum, the implementation of procedures aimed at managing translation projects and assuring translation quality will vary in their complexity and must be decided upon individually.

Translation policy and institutional translation competence

Translation policy in a broad definition refers to the guiding principles that shape the conditions of the concrete translation practices. It thus involves a series of decisions when implementing efficient procedures, such as: how do museums organise their translation practices? how is a multilingual communication strategy defined? which quality-assurance measures are implemented?

Closely related to the concept of 'translation policy' is that of 'institutional translation competence' defined as the capacity of an institution, organisation, or company to combine the competences of collaborators and the use of technology in such a way as to optimise translation within its defined goals. This does not necessarily involve the setting up of a translation unit within the institution but may also mean the outsourcing of translations to external collaborators. In any case, the planning competence of the institution is an absolute priority. Staff should know how to collaborate with TSPs in managing translation projects, setting quality standards, employing CAT tools, and managing translation resources.

Select bibliography

Museum translation

- Cranmer, Robin (2016). Communicating with International Visitors – the Case of Museums and Galleries. *Cultus* 9(2): 91-105.
- Cranmer, Robin (2019). The inclusion of international tourists: developing the translator-client relationship. *Altre Modernità* 21(2019): 55-68.
- Martin, Jenni, & Jennings, Marilee. (2015). Tomorrow's Museum: Multilingual Audiences and the Learning Institution. *Museums & Social Issues*, 10(1): 83–94.
- Neather, Robert (2012a). 'Non-Expert' Translators in a Professional Community. *The Translator*, 18(2): 245-286.

Translation technology

- ELIA, EMT, EUATC, GALA and LIND (2018). 2018 Language Industry Survey — Expectations and Concerns of the European Language Industry.
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017_language_industry_survey_report_en.pdf
- Garcia, Ignacio (2014). Computer Aided Translation. In Chan, Sin-wai (Ed.), *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Technology*. London: Routledge.
- Heinisch, Barbara & Iacono, Katia (2019). Attitudes of professional translators and translation students towards order management and translator platforms. *JoSTrans* 32(2019): 61-89.
- Massardo, Isabella, Jaap van der Meer and Maxim Khalilov (2016). *TAUS Translation Technology Landscape Report*. De Rijp: Taus BV. <https://www.taus.net/think-tank/reports/translate-reports/taus-translation-technology-landscape-report-2016>
- Popiolek, Monika (2015). Terminology management within a translation quality assurance process. In Kockaert, Hendrik J. & Steurs, Frieda (Eds.), *Handbook of Terminology* Volume 1 (pp. 341-358). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Quality standards

- ISO (2012). *Translation Projects – General Guidance* (PD ISO/TS 11669:2012). Geneva: ISO
- ISO (2015). *Translation Services – Requirements for Translation Services* (BS EN ISO 17100:2015). Geneva: ISO
- ISO (2015). *Quality Management Systems – Requirements* (BS EN ISO 9001:2015). Geneva: ISO.
- Sandrini, Peter (2018). *Translationspolitik für Regional- und Minderheitensprachen: Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung einer Strategie der Offenheit*. Berlin: Frank & Timme.

Translation quality management

Drugan, Joanna. (2013). *Quality in professional translation. Assessment and improvement*, London: Bloomsbury.

Dunne, Keiran J. (2011). From vicious to virtuous cycle. Customer-focused translation quality management using ISO 9001 principles and Agile methodologies. In Dunne, Keiran J. & Dunne, Elena S. (Eds.) *Translation and Localization Project Management: The art of the possible*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Foedisch, Melanie (2017). *Managing Translation Projects: Practices and Quality in Production Networks*. Thesis.
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Managing-translation-projects-%3A-practices-and-in-Foedisch/d4ccf7296fa0a2c0ed1e83f7f3289eb528464786>

Risku, Hanna (2006). Cooperation and Quality Assurance in Technical Translation Projects. In *Language at Work – Bridging Theory and Practice* 1(1).

B Glossary of key concepts

To facilitate the reading of these guidelines, major concepts are defined as they apply for the purpose of this document.

Concepts related to language and content

Source language

Language from which content is translated.

Target language

Language into which content is translated.

Source content

Content to be translated.

Target content

Content that is translated from the source content.

Domain

Field of knowledge characterised by a set of linguistic characteristics, a specific terminology and phraseology.

Text type convention

Set of textual specifications related to the type of content and domain.

Register

Set of characteristics of a specific type of content, considering the subject treated, the degree of formality of the content, as well as the type of relationship between the creator and the audience.

Cultural adaptation

This occurs in translations where there is no equivalent in the target culture for the cultural references in the source content.

Transcreation

Re-creation of a text for a new target audience, while maintaining its intent, style, tone, and context. Typically used for marketing material, brochures, and websites.

Concepts related to the translation process

Translation

Transfer of content (e.g. written text, audio and video files, etc.) from one language into another.

Translation service

Product as the result of interaction between client and TSP.

Translation project management

Coordinating, managing, and monitoring a translation project throughout the entire translation process, performed by the project manager.

Translation quality assurance

All measures ensuring the quality at process and product level during all stages of the translation project cycle.

Translation quality control

Checking translated content for compliance to client specifications (i.e. quality requirements) and arranging corrective actions.

Self-revision

Revision of the translation, checking linguistic issues and ensuring compliance with client specifications, performed by the translator himself.

Revision

Bilingual examination of the target content against the source content for any errors and for its suitability for purpose, performed by a second translator.

Review

Monolingual examination of the translation for its suitability, including text-type conventions and domain accuracy, performed by a domain expert.

Proofreading

Final examination of the revised translation, making corrections before printing.

Client specifications

A set of translation parameters specifying the client's quality requirements for a particular translation project.

Bilingual glossary

Bilingual word list with institution- and domain-specific terms in the source and target language.

Concepts related to translation technology

Computer-assisted translation tools (CAT tools)

Software and cloud-based applications to support the task of human translation as well as translation project management.

Translation management systems

Software and cloud-based application to support translation project management and the handling of translation resources.

Translation platforms

Cloud-based application to support the collaboration between diverse actors in translation projects.

Terminology database (short: termbase)

Tool for the management, maintenance, and automated use of terminology in translation projects. Integrated tool of CAT tools.

Terminology management

Terminology management in the translation industry refers to the systematic collection, processing, and application of vocabulary that has specific meaning in a given subject field or context.

Translation memory

Electronic collection of text segment pairs in the source and target language. Integrated tool of CAT tools.

Concepts related to the parties involved in a translation project

Client

Customer requesting a translation service from a TSP.

Translation service provider (TSP)

Person or organisation providing professional translation services. TSP may refer to a freelance translator (i.e. a TSP acting as an individual) or a translation agency (i.e. a multi-person TSP).

End-user

Group of persons who makes use of the translation product.

Appendix F: Acronyms of interview participants

Acronyms of interview participants (museum staff)

Participant	Team / Department	Date and Modality	Institution
AM	Press Office	31/05/2019 online	Albertina Museum Vienna
BKH	Museum Direction	15/02/2019 face-to-face	Bundeskunsthalle Bonn
BM-1	Press & Marketing	23/01/2019 face-to-face	Barberini Museum Potsdam
BM-2	Information Management		
BV	Digital Communication	24/05/2019 face-to-face	Belvedere Museum Vienna
CP-1	Museum Direction	03/06/2019 face-to-face	Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art, Venice
CP-2	Educational Services	03/06/2019 face-to-face	Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art, Venice
CP-3	Communication	04/06/2019 face-to-face	Ca' Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art, Venice
GMB	Publications Department	28/08/2019 face-to-face	Guggenheim Museum Bilbao
GUF	Communication Department	18/04/2019 face-to-face	Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence
KB	Museum Direction	30/11/2018 face-to-face	Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-B.
KK	Communication Department	19/12//2018 face-to-face	Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe
KHM-1	Press Office	24/05/2019 face-to-face	Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
KHM-2	Publications Department		
KM-1	Press Office	12/02/2019 face-to-face	Kunsthalle Mannheim
KM-2	Digital Strategy / New Media		
LH-1	Curatorial Team	09/01/2019 face-to-face	Lenbachhaus, Munich
LH-2	Digital Communication		
LV	Translation Coordination Editorial Services, Research Department	15/07/2019 face-to-face	Louvre Museum, Paris

MBO-1	Publications Department	04/07/2019	MAMbo Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bologna
MBO-2	Communication, Press & Marketing	face-to-face	
MM-1	Digital Communication	21/03/2019	Mart Museo, Rovereto
MM-2	Editorial Department	face-to-face	
MOD	Communication Department	29/03/2019	Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence
MUS-1	Press Office	21/03/2019	Museion, Bolzano
MUS-2	Digital Communication	face-to-face	
MSD	Communication Department of sustaining foundation	27/06/2019	Musei San Domenico, Forlì
PB	Communication Department	26/06/2019	Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan
		face-to-face	
PG	Publications	05/06/2019	Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice
		face-to-face	
PM-1	Museum Direction	07/12/2018	Pinakotheken, Munich
PM-2	Press Office	face-to-face	
PM-3	Education Office		
SK	Press Office	18/12/2018	Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt
		face-to-face	
SMB-1	Communication Department	24/01/2019	Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
SMB-2	Education & Mediation	face-to-face	
UJ-1	Education Department	15/05/2019	Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz (Neue Galerie, Kunsthaus)
		face-to-face	
UJ-2	Inclusion & Participation	20/05/2019	Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz
UJ-3	Inclusion & Participation	face-to-face	
UJ-4	Marketing	21/05/2019	Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz
UJ-5	Digital Communication	face-to-face	
UJ-6	Press Office		
UJ-7	Editorial Department		
UJ-8	Curatorial Team	22/05/2019	Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz
		face-to-face	
WRM	Museum Direction	15/02/2019	Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne
		face-to-face	

Acronyms of interview participants (TSPs)

Participant	Team / Department	Date and Modality	Company
ACO-1 ACO-2	Production Production	9 June 2020 online	Acolad Bologna
ACT	Director	8 June 2020 online	Arts & Culture Translated Barcelona & London
ET	Sales	24 June 2020 online	Eriksen Translations New York