

Book review

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Walker, Callum, 2023. *Translation Project Management*.

London and New York: Routledge

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Translation Project Management is a textbook written by Callum Walker, a lecturer in Translation Technology at the University of Leeds. The author has intended this textbook, on a topic that has not been extensively researched, to be an overview of all the processes and limitations present in any translation project. Furthermore, its aim is not to prescribe specific rules or claim that one approach to a project is better than the other, but rather to offer diverse solutions and insights that can be applied to different situations that can arise during a project. The primary audience of this textbook are students who are getting introduced to translation project management. It is also intended for instructors to use in classes. Each chapter starts with learning outcomes and, at the end of each chapter, topics for discussion and assignments are presented. Walker uses real-world examples.

The textbook is divided into two major parts, preceded by an introductory chapter titled *Translation Project Management*. The first part, titled *From Cradle to Grave: The Translation Project Lifecycle* (chapters 2-4), covers the three critical stages in the execution of a translation project: pre-production, production and post-production. The second part of the textbook, *Triangles, Diamonds, and Stars: Evaluating Translation Project Constraints* (chapters 5-10), analyzes several important factors which affect a translation project: timescales, costs, scope, quality, benefits, and risk. The textbook closes with a chapter titled *Post-mortem*, in which the author summarizes and ties together various aspects of translation project management brought up throughout the book.

In the introductory chapter *Transla* the author presents the textbook as a guideline, which will cover "the processes

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involved in translation project management across the project lifecycle, focusing on the practicalities of managing projects and understanding key project constraints such as timescales, costs, and quality" (p. 1). Walker draws on previous works dedicated to this field, defining key terms and concepts important for understanding the topic.

The first chapter of the first part, *Pre-production* (pp. 21-48), tackles all the necessary steps that need to be taken before the start of a translation project. According to Walker, this stage is essential to convince a potential client that "your LSP [language service provider] is the right business to handle their request by demonstrating that the service will be provided at a fair price, that the product will be delivered within a reasonable timescale, and that what is included in the service [...] will be to the client's satisfaction" (p. 21). To secure this, he underlines four key steps: the feasibility study, the client-LSP agreement, project preparation, and project administration. All these steps are explained in the rest of the chapter, with practical examples demonstrating their function and importance.

The next chapter, titled *Production* (pp. 49-81), analyzes the intricacies of the actual process of a translation project. This section of the textbook introduces various important stages that a project manager should be aware of and secure their execution. They follow what is known as a waterfall workflow model, meaning they are "fairly linear sequential steps" (p. 51), which consists of translation, check, revision, review, proofreading, and verification and release.

The final chapter of the first part of the textbook, *Post-production* (pp. 82-109), deals with "all elements that take place after the core production processes are complete" (p. 82). This stage of a translation project is dedicated to closing the project and determining whether all criteria and requirements from the client-LSP agreement have been met, and that any issues have been fully resolved. The author then points out other steps in the post-production stage. Firstly, he claims that feedback is one of the most important steps in this stage to ensure that future projects are carried out more successfully, and that clients will want to return to an LSP. Closely linked to this, client-LSP feedback ensures all the deliverables from the LSP have been received by the client, and gives the client the opportunity to bring up any potential problems or errors with the finished product. After all the feedback has been received, the next step is to take corrective action and "eliminate the cause of nonconformity or errors in the

translation process or target language content" (p. 86). After the project has been fully completed, the next step in the post-production stage is closing administration, and the first part of this step is invoicing. Ultimately, a substantial portion of this chapter is dedicated to record keeping and file management.

The author moves on to the next part of the textbook, *Triangles, Diamonds, and Stars: Evaluating Translation Project Constraints*, where he delves into more detail about six specific aspects of translation project management, with eponymous titles. The first chapter of part two is *Timescales* (pp. 113-128). As its title suggests, it deals with the temporal side of project management, i.e. it is "broken down into a discussion of how schedules are managed and the factors that can affect project schedules" (p. 114). One key aspect of schedule management, as Walker stated, is defining activities, that is, a "clear definition of precisely what tasks need to be carried out for any given project" (pp. 114). Final section of this chapter is dedicated to factors which can affect the schedule, such as cultural, geographical, human, and technological factors.

Chapter six is titled *Costs* (pp. 129-143), in which Walker explains how to manage the costs of a translation project. One sub-section is dedicated to vendor costs, which is the money an LSP will pay a vendor "to translate a document from language X into language Y" (p. 130). After vendor costs have been determined, the LSP must "calculate its own costs and margin before the quotation is ready to submit to the client" (p. 135).

Chapter seven, *Scope* (pp. 144-170), talks about the extent that a project should have, and the pitfalls one might fall into when defining it. To quote Walker, scope management "concerns developing an understanding of the items that need to be produced and the tasks to be carried out, the quantity and varieties needed of a particular product or service [...], and how all these considerations are linked to questions of time and resources" (pp. 145-146). Consequently, he offers multiple guidelines and methods, and gives advice on what course of action one might take in a given scenario.

In the beginning of chapter 8, titled *Quality* (pp. 171-193), emphasis is placed on the concept of quality, which is explained "in terms of its ability to satisfy needs and expectations" (p. 172). Therefore, the author's objective with this chapter is to help the reader understand and monitor the quality levels to

ensure that the end needs of a project are met. He offers two methodologies used for this purpose. The final segment of the chapter deals with the monetary restrictions in trying to achieve a desired quality for a project.

The penultimate chapter of part two is titled *Benefits* (pp. 194-212), in which the author mentions and describes several benefits of translation projects that are not as talked about as monetary gains. Some of these benefits are: facilitating intercultural communication, which Walker stresses due to globalization; client satisfaction, which leads to more business; and functionality and usability, meaning that the translations “fulfill their intended function” (p. 205).

Chapter ten, the last one in part two, is titled *Risk* (pp. 213-236), and it deals with the complexities of risk management. As Walker states, “risk is unpredictable and difficult to control directly” (p. 213), which is why he analyzes two categories of risk management necessary to minimize the damage that can be done. The author then closes this chapter by reaffirming that “risk management is *proactive* instead of *reactive*” (p. 234).

The eleventh and final chapter is *Post-mortem* (pp. 237-258), which is presented as a summary of the overarching themes presented in the textbook. The author also uses it to restate the project manager’s role in ensuring a successful translation project, and admits that this position is “incredibly challenging. It requires diverse skills going beyond an understanding of translation alone, and it can range from being exhausting to exhilarating” (p. 254).

To conclude, this textbook fulfills its purpose of providing readers with an introduction to the world of translation project management. Over the course of eleven chapters, Walker describes all stages of a successful translation project and offers real-world examples. Considering it is made for students and instructors, it is a valuable contribution to the study of translation project management.