The Dynamics of Extratextual Translatorship in Contemporary Sweden

A Mixed Methods Approach

Elin Svahn

Doctoral Thesis in Translation Studies at Stockholm University, Sweden 2020
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Abstract
This thesis is concerned with Swedish translators and the society in which they work. It begins with an exploration of the concept of translatorship, leading up to a three-part distinction of 1) textual translatorship, 2) paratextual translatorship, and 3) extratextual translatorship. Adopting a mixed methods approach, the empirical body of the thesis consists of three studies in which different aspects of extratextual translatorship – defined as the translator’s social role – are investigated. In doing so, the thesis makes new and valuable contributions to the field of agent-oriented translation sociology.

The first study explores translators’ perceptions of translatorship using data collected through a widely distributed questionnaire. It employs a comparative approach derived from questionnaire-based studies originally designed by Helle V. Dam and Karen Korning Zethsen and previously conducted in Denmark and Finland. Although the group of respondents are fractionalised in many respects, perceptions concerning both the profession’s characteristics and its value on a societal level are highly unanimous. Statistical tests, however, reveal interesting nuances within the broader unanimity. Furthermore, in relation to previous research on translator status conducted in Denmark and Finland, the results display significant similarities but also some noteworthy differences. The second study investigates the ongoing socialisation of two groups of translation students in the process of becoming translators through a longitudinal focus group study. The data, collected over the course of two years, are analysed through deductive thematic analysis. A special emphasis is placed upon exploring the contextual structures in which the students’ socialisation processes are embedded and the structural factors influencing it. In the third study, in-depth interviews were conducted with five individual translators with different specialisations. Using deductive thematic analysis, the functions of their translatorships are investigated from an individual-centred perspective focusing on their respective roles as translators on an individual, professional and societal level, which correspond, respectively, to a concern for personal satisfaction, a sense of social community, and a higher purpose. Such a framework distinguishes and differentiates individual translators’ approaches to the profession while simultaneously providing an encompassing picture of the different functions of translatorship in translators’ lives.

Overall, the thesis adopts a mixed methods approach in order to generate greater understanding of the dynamics of translatorship in contemporary Sweden. Targeting different levels of translatorship, it unravels a number of significant social dimensions of translatorship, such as the social recognition needed in order to become a translator. Together, the studies also point towards a number of common features as especially relevant for translatorship in contemporary Sweden, namely individualism, entrepreneurialism, collectiveness, translator status, responsibility and exit, i.e. the prospect of leaving the profession. Taken as a whole, the thesis demonstrates the value of a mixed methods approach in the field of agent-oriented translation sociology by shedding considerable light on the links between the translator and society and indicating further avenues through which these links can continue to be explored.

Keywords: translation studies, translation sociology, sociology of translators, translatorship, extratextual translatorship, mixed methods research, qualitative longitudinal research, questionnaire, focus groups, interviews, thematic analysis.

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Acknowledgements

Becoming a Translation Studies scholar is a socialisation process that involves many dimensions of a doctoral candidate’s life. In the socialisation framework that I use later in this thesis, knowledge acquisition, investments, and involvement with professional agents are put forward as core elements. Here I would like to focus on the involvement part of that process and take the opportunity to thank some of the people that have made this thesis possible.

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Stockholm, January 2020
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The present thesis sets out to explore extratextual translatorship, here defined as translators’ social role, in the Swedish context. The empirical body of this thesis consists of three studies, which investigate different facets of this notion. Each study adopts a different methodological approach, contributing to research on translators as a professional group. Yet, the three studies also complement one another and, collectively, enhance and enrich the overall understanding of the dynamics of translators’ role in society.

The theoretical framework of this study is that of translation sociology. Emerging as a new field within Translation Studies in the early 2000s, its focal point is the social contexts in which translations, translating and translators are embedded (e.g. Pym et al. 2006; Wolf and Fukari 2007). As a result, translation began to be regarded as a social practice, where the social nature of translation is at the core. This ‘social turn’ has given rise to an increased attention to the agents involved in the act and event of translation.

Following Andrew Chesterman (2006) and Michaela Wolf (2006), translation sociology is conceptualised on three levels focusing on the products, i.e. the translations; the agents involved; or the processes behind the translation process. Chesterman (2006:12, see also 2009) calls these three orientations the sociology of translations; the sociology of translators; and the sociology of translating. This thesis is concerned with the agent-oriented branch of translation sociology, and exclusively focuses on translators.

Although the field of translation sociology as such is rather new, there are, as we will see throughout this thesis, a variety of different methodological, theoretical and empirical approaches towards the study of the different ‘agents of translation’ (Buzelin 2011). In recent years, translators as a subject of scholarly interest have shifted from being regarded as a hypothetical construction which existed as a consequence of the translation, to being a subject of empirical interest and research (see e.g. Prunč 2007). The shift from the hypothetical construct of the translator to an idealised profession (see e.g. Dam and Zethsen 2016) has lately invoked a renewed interest in the “motivations, aspirations, social background and social constraints of translators and interpreters as real people” (Sela-Sheffy and Shlesinger 2011:xii).

The notion of translatorship has, as will be shown in the next section, sporadically appeared, often undefined, in various discussions on translation agents or translations. As this thesis sets out to demonstrate, the recent growth
of interest in translators as a professional group as well as individuals would benefit from a notion such as translatorship. Yet, in order to be a useful conceptual tool for translation sociology, the notion needs to be well-defined. In the next section, I will unpack a number of translation scholars’ ideas on translatorship and propose a three-part distinction.

1.1 The notion of translatorship

Similarly with other key concepts in translation sociology such as visibility (Koskinen 2000) and agency (Paloposki 2009), I posit that it is worthwhile to distinguish between three types of translatorship: textual, paratextual, and extratextual. Kaisa Koskinen (2000:99) suggests a three-part distinction of visibility: textual visibility refers to the translator’s presence in the translation, on a textual level, whereas paratextual agency denotes translators’ visibility about their working procedures in paratextual material; “minimal paratextual visibility might consists of adding the translator’s signature to the text, or even just an indication of its status as a translation” (Koskinen 2000:99). Extratextual visibility, in turn, relates to “the social status of translation outside and beyond the immediate vicinity of the translated text” (Koskinen 2000:99). As an example of extratextual visibility, she mentions call for a translation criticism when translations are reviewed.

Outi Paloposki (2009:199) uses the same distinction for the notion of agency. Textual agency, she argues, refers to the translators’ “footprints, […] be they deliberate manipulations, stylistic preferences or habits”, in the actual translation (2009:191). Paratextual agency, then, consists of how translators have made their choices visible through, for example, prefaces or footnotes. Extratextual agency, in turn, refers to how translators can propose books to be translated but also the possibility for translators in “‘speaking out’, publicizing their translations, explaining their methods and strategies” (Paloposki 2009:191).

One can note that these six concepts are often interrelated. Textual visibility is, for example, in some way an effect of textual agency. In turn, paratextual visibility may be, but does not have to be, a result of paratextual agency. For example, an individual translator may exercise paratextual agency by writing a preface which exposes the translator’s paratextual visibility. In the case of displaying the translators name on the cover of a translation, as in the example of paratextual visibility provided by Koskinen above, this is an action taken by the publishing house and does not expose paratextual agency on behalf of the translator. Similarly, extratextual visibility can be a reflection of an individual translator’s extratextual agency, but extratextual agency does not necessarily result in extratextual visibility. Note also that Koskinen discuss extratextual visibility in relation to translations and not translators, which further positions visibility as something separate from agency. The main difference
between visibility and agency, to my mind, consists of the human factor behind agency.

Following Koskinen and Paloposki, I suggest that also the concept translation can also be characterised as either textual, paratextual, or extratextual. I will here argue that much of what has been written on translatorship as of yet (Toury 1995; Meylaerts 2008; Pym 2011; Flynn and Gambier 2011; Jansen and Wegener 2013; Paloposki 2016; Refsum 2019) can in effect be characterised as one of these kinds of translatorships.

To my knowledge, Gideon Toury (1995) was the first to use the notion of translatorship. He (1995:53, original emphasis) describes translatorship as follows:

[…] translatorship amounts first and foremost to being able to play a social role, i.e. to fulfil a function allotted by a community – to the activity, its practitioners and/or the products – in a way which is deemed appropriate in its own terms of reference. The acquisition of a set of norms for determining the suitability of that kind of behaviour, and for manoeuvring between all the factors which may constrain it, is therefore a prerequisite for becoming a translator within a cultural environment.

This widely quoted passage exposes a clear sociological line of thought with links to Toury’s (1995) influential work on norms, and the focus is here on the extratextual translatorship: “the social role” the translator must learn how to play. Of course, the acquisition of suitable norms for the community in question is central in this quote, but it also emphasises that this function is not only restrained to the activity and the product, i.e. to the translating and the final translation, but also to practitioners. Moreover, the quote also highlights a developmental character – the becoming of a translator – as it refers to the acquisition of favourable norms in order to play this social role. Given the emphasis on the context and what is considered as desirable in that specific context, extratextual translatorship stands out as flexible and highly context-dependent.

In connection to Toury’s norm system, Reine Meylaerts (2008) discusses translatorship in a historical case study of two Belgian translators from the 20th century in relation to the Bourdieusian term habitus, i.e. “the subjects’ internalized system of social structures in the form of dispositions” (Meylaerts 2008:93). She defines translatorship as “an individuation of collective schemes related to personal history, the collective history of the source culture, the collective history of the target culture, and their intersections” (Meylaerts 2008:100–101). She also states that “translatorship can be redefined in terms of habitus” (2008:91). At the same time, Meylaerts (2008:94) criticises the use of habitus within Translation Studies since it has often prioritised the translator as a professional. Contrarily, she points out that there is always more to a translator than the professional belonging: “[a] socialized individual can-
not be reduced to a profession” (Meylaerts 2008:94). In the light of this statement, redefining translatorship in terms of habitus, as she suggests, seems somewhat out of place since it contrarily to her motives stresses the professional aspect of the translator. In every case, the translatorship Meylaerts discusses is the extratextual one, since it clearly places the translator as an agent in society. In later articles, Meylaerts (e.g. 2010, 2013) has developed the notion of a translator’s plural and dynamic habitus, with a point of departure in Bruno Lahire (2004), but without discussing it in terms of translatorship.

In an article on methodology in Translation Studies, Peter Flynn and Yves Gambier (2011) discuss Toury’s above-stated quote in relation to the suffix -ship, which, they claim, “implies, among other things, the ‘quality or condition’, the ‘status’ or the ‘competence’ pertaining to individual translators or group of translators” (2011:93). They present four factors related to translators: discourses, practices, contexts, and actors. Although translatorship remains undefined in the article, they identify it as a concept that could be investigated on all four levels: “Translators’ social roles become visible or manifest in their discourses, practices, the contexts in which they work and which they help to construct and maintain, along with the networks of actors they are involved with” (Flynn and Gambier 2011:94). Furthermore, they, just as Toury above, take the perspective of the becoming of a translator, and ask

[...] what “translatorship” means outside the institution, when the knowledge and competences developed during training are put into practice and further developed. It is then that translators learn to play a more complex social role (Toury 1995:23) outside the relatively protected educational environment they have come from. Here too other institutions (e.g. European Commission and Parliament, government translation agencies, etc.) and associations (international, national or regional associations of translator and interpreters) may play an important part in defining and regulating what this social role means in practice. One can then ask what “translatorship” means in an even broader social sense. Which form does this social role then take. (Flynn and Gambier 2011:94)

Here, the focus is on the social context and how it affects what it means to be a translator in a specific time and place; the focus is on the extratextual translatorship. Following Toury, the socialisation process of novices and the “more complex social role” outside of training is addressed, as well as “what the social role means in practice”. By highlighting different institutions – both the training institution, institutions where translators can work such as the EU institutions, and different kinds of associations – they also point towards different external factors which may shape the extratextual translatorship.

A different take on translatorship in a literary context is proposed by Hanne Jansen and Anne Wegener (2013; see also Alvstad et al. 2019). They dismiss “the singular translatorship” as they claim that it “cannot be sustained empirically” and, they continue, “accordingly, we draw on Stillinger’s insight to
coin the concept *multiple translatorship* to signal the reality that, for better or worse, translation is frequently collaborative in nature” (Jansen and Wegener 2013:5, original emphasis). The concept of multiple translatorship refers to the collaboration between different agents (translator, copy-editors, publishers etc.) governing the translation event in the context of literary translation. Within this product- and process-oriented framework, translatorship is mainly textual, but also to a certain extent paratextual and, albeit in a restricted sense, extratextual. Since the extratextual dimension is restrained to the collaboration with the publishing house and its agents in a quite practical sense, it does not reach the same scope as in for instance Flynn and Gambier’s quote above, where the translatorship is seen in a “broader social sense” (Flynn and Gambier 2011:94).

Also Anthony Pym (2011) discusses translatorship, which for him seems to equate “the translator’s authorship” in relation to the author’s authorship. In his theoretically-oriented article, he clearly operates on the textual level; he discusses to what extent the translator’s discursive effect can be traced in the target text. Nevertheless, “the ethical responsibility” that he ties to translatorship also shapes the translator’s social role, although based on his material mainly literary translators, I assume.

Just like Meylaerts (2008), Paloposki (2016) makes use of the notion of translatorship in a historical setting when she investigates the attribution of translatorship in the late 19th century Finland. In doing so, she examines “what it meant to be a translator” (Paloposki 2016:25) at that time, by means of looking into paratextual source material but seeking traces of extratextual agency. She examines what I would like to call the paratextual translatorship, by focusing on the issue of naming, i.e. “how people were named in connection with translation, by themselves and by their contemporaries” (Paloposki 2016:27). Though the empirical focus is paratextual, the greater aim of the study is to discern “the nature of translatorship in the 19th century” (Paloposki 2016:19), thereby focusing on what I would call extratextual translatorship. Concentrating on the attribution of translatorship, Paloposki sets out to study the actors from the starting point of assuming: “Is, then, a person a translator not when he or she has/possesses certain characteristics or traits but when he or she is *assumed* to be one?”, she asks (Paloposki 2016:20, original emphasis), thereby making a parallel to Toury’s (1995) notion of assumed translations, i.e. texts that are *assumed* to be translations in the target culture. Paloposki’s case is historical, but considering the porous boundaries separating the translatorial occupations in most Western countries (see 2.2), this notion of assumed translatorship might prove to be relevant also for investigating translatorship in a contemporary setting, not least since it situates translatorship in relation to an external authority that is making the assumptions about it.
Lastly, Christian Refsum (2019) examines ownership in the cases of three poet-translators, that is, poets who also translate. He explores “what […] characterizes the creative tensions between authorship and translatorship in translated poetry” (Refsum 2019:1). Using Foucault’s term ‘author function’, he suggests the term ‘translator function’ to ascribe ownership of a translation. While Refsum is mainly operating on a textual level and thereby, I would suggest, discusses textual translatorship, he also briefly touches on paratextual translatorship in connection to the question of the naming of translations.

Following this overview of how some contemporary translation scholars have made use of the notion translatorship, it is obvious that the analytical focus has changed depending on scholar and context. The usefulness of the notion, in line with the overall growing interest in the translator as an agent, would benefit from clarification. To this end, the three-folded distinction of the notion – the textual, paratextual, and extratextual translatorship – offers a solution. The discussed scholars’ use of the notion of translatorship following this distinction is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of translation scholars’ writings on translatorship characterised as textual, paratextual, or extratextual translatorship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholars</th>
<th>Textual translatorship</th>
<th>Paratextual translatorship</th>
<th>Extratextual translatorship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toury (1995)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meylaerts (2008)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pym (2011)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flynn and Gambier (2011)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jansen and Wegener (2013)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(X)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paloposki (2016)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(X)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refsum (2019)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is shown in Table 1, most of the scholars discussed here have – in one way or another and to various degrees – dealt with translatorship in the extratextual sense. It includes how translators’ social role can be theorised (Toury 1995; Flynn and Gambier 2011), how it has been played out in historical settings (Meylaerts 2008; Paloposki 2016), and how it interplays with other agents of translation in a translation event (Jansen and Wegener 2013). This underlying focus – present but not explicitly expressed – on the extratextual dimension, I argue, further supports the interest in studies on extratextual translatorship.

As could be seen in the overview above, these have been attempts at equating translatorship with the Bourdieusian notion of habitus (Meylaerts 2008).
In effect, many studies looking at translators have used this and related concepts (see 2.2 and 4.2). The habitus concept is rooted in the cultural sociology theory developed by Bourdieu (1990) and related to a number of other concepts, most notably field, different sorts of capitals, doxa and illusio. In time, these concepts have become popular within translation sociological research, to the point that they are sometimes even used without anchoring them in an autonomous field in a Bourdieusian sense (e.g. Axelsson 2016). Another tendency is to operationalise habitus as a highly specific and limited form of translation practice, such as when Solum (2018) discusses literary translators’ willingness to accept copy-editors’ proposed changes and states that “it is possible to regard such [negotiation] strategies as the agents’ habitus (Solum 2018:546, emphasis added). To my mind, habitus is a broader concept than translatorship and includes many non-professional aspects, whereas translatorship is purely profession-oriented. In this view, I follow Meylaerts (2008:94) who emphasises that habitus has often been seen as a professional-oriented concept within Translation Studies (see also Meylaerts 2013:108). With that said, I see possibilities of discussing translatorship in terms of habitus, anchored in a Bourdieusian framework, but not as the only possibility of discussing translatorship. Rather, based on the overview above as well as the overall field of agent-oriented research within translation sociology (see 2.2 and 4.2), there seems to be a need for concepts related to translators, as individuals or as an occupational group, using different methodological and theoretical influences (see Kinnunen and Koskinen 2010:5–6, for a similar discussion regarding habitus and agency).

Regarding the notion of multiple translatorship, it is in my view more closely related to the sociology of translating rather than the sociology of translators, since the analytical focus lies on the translation event and not on the agents. For this reason, it is not directly applicable to the present thesis. A novelty in Jansen and Wegener’s contribution is also the addition of “multiple” before translatorship. Although the translation event is arguably “frequently collaborative in nature” (Jansen and Wegener 2013:5) and that there may be a need for a term to coin the nature of that collaboration, I do not see that as a rationale for disregarding the ‘single’ translatorship. Contrarily, one could assume that ‘single’ translatorship would have significant influence on the collaboration taking place between the different agents in the translation event, for instance in the individual translator’s ethical stance or position-taking vis-à-vis the source text, the author, the reader etc. These position-takings are likely to be influenced by the individual’s background and socialisation process, among other things, why the ‘single’ translatorship is still of paramount interest and cannot be disregarded.

To conclude, in the present thesis, the translatorship under inquiry is the extratextual one. Following Toury (1995) and Flynn and Gambier (2011), I regard the extratextual translatorship as a translator’s social role in a given time and place, which in this study is a contemporary Swedish setting. This
thesis aims at presenting three different ways of studying translatorship focusing on different levels (profession, group, individual), which will be further presented in the next section. Toury and Flynn and Gambier discuss the acquisition of translatorship on a theoretical level and relate this process to different contextual factors, e.g. educational institutions and professional associations, which may influence it. These kinds of institutions will play a large part in this study where I will also empirically investigate the becoming of a translator.

In the next section, the research design of this thesis is presented together with the research questions. Thereafter, the remaining sections in this chapter aim at contextualising the thesis as to the study’s methodological foundation in 1.3, my own position as a practiresearcher in 1.4, and the Swedish context the study investigates in 1.5.

1.2 Research design

In order to investigate different aspects of extratextual translatorship, I adopt a mixed methods approach. The empirical body of the dissertation is divided into three studies, namely a questionnaire study, a focus group study, and an interview study. The three studies focus on different levels of translatorships and apply different methods of analysis. The research design is outlined in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Overview of research design](image)

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1 The notion of translatorship will, for the remainder of this thesis, be used to denote extratextual translatorship.
The general research question guiding this thesis is how translatorship can be understood in the Swedish context. In Study 1, the translatorship of professional translators in a Swedish context is investigated through an online questionnaire originally developed by Helle V. Dam and Karen Korning Zethsen (e.g. 2008, 2009, 2010; see also Ruokonen 2018, 2019).

Study 1 aims at mapping the nature of the translatorship in a Swedish context, covering a range of different translational occupations, such as business translators, literary translators, authorised translators and EU translators. The respondents represent freelance translators as well as in-house translators. A number of questionnaire items – concerning the profile of the respondents, the characteristics of the profession as well as the profession’s value in society – are investigated through the use of descriptive statistics and non-parametric statistical tests, the Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis H test. In a second stage, translator status in Sweden is investigated by means of contrasting the findings from this study with previous research on translator status in Denmark and Finland. The research questions for the first study are:

1a. What are the respondents’ perceptions on items related to translatorship in contemporary Sweden?
1b. In what ways do the findings relate to corresponding research on translator status carried out by Dam and Zethsen in Denmark and Ruokonen in Finland?

Study 2 consists of a longitudinal focus group study with two group of students in a MA programme in Translation Studies at a Swedish university. Here, the process of acquiring a translatorship is at the centre, i.e. the students’ socialisation into the social role of translators and the acquisition of translatorship. During a two-year period of time, I met with each group of students (four students in Group 1 and three students in Group 2) in four focus group sessions. These focus group sessions took place from the first semester in the MA programme to six to seven months after their graduation. The transcribed material is analysed through thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) with regard to the student socialisation process as put forward by John Weidman et al. (2001), in particular the model’s three core elements: knowledge acquisition, investment, and involvement. The research questions for the second study are:

2a. How can translation students’ socialisation process during formal training be characterised using Weidman et al.’s (2001) core elements?
2b. How do structural factors affect the socialisation process of the two groups?
In Study 3, I investigate how five translators perceive the function of translatorship on the level of the individual. The interviewees include three professional translators who participated in the questionnaire study and two of the former students, now professional translators, who participated in the focus group study. The focus is on “what it mean[s] to be a translator”, as Paloposki (2009:25) puts it, or, in Rakefet Sela-Sheffy’s (2016:134) words, “questions related to translators’ own sense of their occupational world and its role in organizing their lives”. The transcribed material is analysed with thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) with a point of departure in the three levels of functions (adapted from Nymans 2009). The research question of the third study is:

3. How do five translators perceive the functions of their translatorship on an individual, a professional, and a societal level?

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The present chapter aims at situating the thesis. Chapter 2–4 form the empirical body of the thesis. Each study starts with an introduction to the specific research question. Thereafter follows a research overview of the object of analysis in the respective study: the translation profession (2.2), the translation student (3.2), and the individual translator (4.2). After that, the method and material of the different studies are presented, followed by the results section. The studies are concluded with discussion and concluding remarks. In Chapter 5, the three studies are summarised and discussed.

1.3 Mixed methods research

The present study adopts a mixed methods approach to explore translatorship in a Swedish context, since mixed methods can offer “different perspectives on understanding important social phenomena” (Greene 2015:608). Mixed methods research is frequently defined as research that

combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. (Johnson et al. 2007:123)

Donna Mertens et al. (2016), on the other hand, opt for a definition that does not include prescriptions on whether to include both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and instead suggest the following two definitions: the “use of more than one method, methodology, approach, theoretical or paradigmatic framework” and “integration of results from those different components” (Mertens et al. 2016:3). In this specific project, the majority of the studies have
a qualitative backdrop (see Figure 1). Johnson et al. (2007:124) describe such studies as qualitative dominant mixed methods research, where the project is characterised by a qualitative understanding of the research process while at the same time acknowledging the value of quantitative data (Johnson et al. 2007:124). In this sense, the present thesis can be labelled QUAL+quan, according to Johnson et al.’s definition. Moreover, several different theoretical frameworks are used for the different studies in the thesis, which is highlighted in Mertens et al.’s definition above. Instead of choosing one overall framework for the whole thesis, e.g. a Bourdieusian framework, different theoretical approaches are sought to match the different studies and highlight their particularities.

Lova Meister (2018:72) argues for an increased use of mixed methods research within Translation Studies, and especially highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the discipline:

If we accept that translation studies research is interdisciplinary in that researchers draw on theories and methods from a wide range of disciplines, and that borrowing, combining and adapting theories as well as methods from different research traditions is common practice, then it has to be acknowledged that this practice poses special methodological challenges […]

She emphasises the interactive nature of mixed methods studies, where the mixing can occur “at any level of the research design and at any stage of the research process” and where the result is “integrated to provide a better understanding of the research problem” (Meister 2018:68).

Following Meister (2018:70), mixed methods research can be conceptualised to contain three domains: philosophical and conceptual stances, inquiry logic, and research methods (methods for data collection analysis, interpretation and reporting). The present thesis is positioned within a socio-constructionist framework, i.e. instead of adopting an essentialist stance, this thesis is concerned with the social dimension pertaining to translators and how translators’ social roles can be perceived. As with much research conducted within the sociological turn of Translation Studies, a socio-constructionist perspective, which considers meaning and experience to be “socially produced and reproduced” (Braun and Clarke 2006:85), is employed. Further, the inquiry logics in the different studies include, as presented in the previous section, both deductive and inductive sets of inference techniques, as well as various methods for data collection and analysis. To recapitulate, the inquiry logics and research methods employed in this thesis consists of: descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing in the statistical tests conducted on the questionnaire data (Study 1); a two-level deductive and inductive thematic analysis on the longitudinal focus group material (Study 2); and a two-level deductive and inductive thematic analysis on the in-depth interview data (Study 3). The different methods are discussed throughout the thesis as they are employed.
Jennifer Greene et al. (1989) distinguish five purposes for adopting a mixed methods approach: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation, and expansion. *Triangulation* refers to the convergence of different methods for investigating the same phenomena. Greene et al. (1989:255) point out that triangulation is often misused or misinterpreted, and Meister (2018:71) notices the same tendency in Translation Studies. The rationale of *complementarity* is based on the use of different methods “to measure overlapping but also different facets of a phenomenon, yielding an enriched, elaborated understanding of that phenomenon” (Greene et al. 1989:258). Furthermore, they point out that complementarity can shed light on different levels of a phenomenon and compare this to the peeling of an onion. Next, the purpose of *development* consists of a sequential use of different methods, where one part of the study informs the next. Research conducted with mixed methods for the reason of *initiation* then unveils paradoxes and new perspectives of a phenomenon. Greene et al. (1989:260) emphasise that in the case of initiation, the purpose may appear as a result of the research process rather than being a planned outcome by the researcher at the beginning of the project. Finally, using a mixed-method framework for the purpose of *expansion* aims “for scope and breadth by including multiple components” (1989:260).

Greene et al. (1989:261) recognise that there might be several reasons for mixing methods within a research project, and they label these primary and secondary purposes. Following this overview, we can conclude that the primary purpose for adopting a mixed methods approach for this thesis lies in the complementary nature of studying the phenomenon translatorship from three different perspectives. Through the different studies, translatorship is explored on a professional, group and individual level (see Figure 1), which seeks to produce an enriched understanding of translatorship in the Swedish context. As secondary purposes, both development and expansion can be distinguished. The methods in the different studies are partly informed by those in the other studies in a sequential manner, which reflects the rationale development. By including translation students in a thesis that is primarily focused on professional translators, the thesis broadens its scope, thereby complying with the rationale of expansion.

The methodological challenges pertaining to mixed methods as pointed out by Meister (2018), increased the importance of a reflexive approach, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

### 1.4 On reflexivity

In one of the earliest writings on the translation agent, Simeoni (1995:452, original emphasis) states:
Conceptualizing translation studies in a way that makes sense of the current diversity of the field may be facilitated then by focussing on the translating agent, and on the epistemic ‘subject’ that is trying to make sense of him/her. The latter is also an ‘agent’, this time a scholarly agent, struggling to appear detached, yet just as involved as his/her object in the interplay of social forces in society.

I embarked on this project from a practice-oriented perspective and have with time moved from being a translating agent towards becoming a scholarly agent. My time as a PhD student in Translation Studies can be characterised as a blend of my own research into translators, teaching translation, and translating professionally myself. This is not a unique position within Translation Studies (see Abdallah 2012; Tiselius 2013; Duflou 2016), but this fusion of practitioner and researcher, commonly referred to as being a practiresearcher, calls for an increased reflexive awareness.

Reflexivity itself is a multifaceted concept. One common distinction is drawn between personal reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity (e.g. Dowling 2006; Willig 2010), and yet another between reflexivity connected to either the product or process of research (e.g. Dowling 2006; Berger 2015). Personal reflexivity refers to “reflecting upon the ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research” (Willig 2010:10). It is important at this point to note that I share a similar background with several of the participants in the different studies of this thesis. I have a background as a translation student in an MA programme in Translation Studies just like the translation students in Study 2. Before I started my doctoral studies, I worked as an inhouse translator in a translation agency, specialising in IT translation. During the course of my PhD, I have gradually started to do literary translations. I have also been a member of the editorial committee of the journal Med andra ord. Tidskrift om litterär översättning (‘In Other Words. Journal on Literary Translation’) since 2017. This is a member journal published by the translator association Översätтарcentrum (‘Translator Centre’, see 1.5.1 for more information). In sum, in many ways I resemble the translation scholar reported on by Esther Torres-Simón and Anthony Pym (2016) in their questionnaire study on translation scholars with a background in professional translation. While the insider perspective can lead to an affinity with the object of study and access to the field, it may also pose problems in terms of blurred boundaries and imposing the researcher’s own values or biases (Berger 2015:220). Being a translating agent in the context I study, a reflexive approach is therefore a necessity. In practical terms, my different roles sometimes crossed paths. For example, as a member of the association for literary
translators Översättarsektionen within Sveriges Författarförbund (‘the Translator Section’ within the Swedish Writers’ Union; see 1.5.1 for more information) and the Translator Centre, I received my own questionnaire in my mailbox. Needless to say, I did not complete the survey.

One way of avoiding the negative consequences of having an insider’s perspective is to continuously maintain a reflexive approach throughout all the different stages of the research process (Dowling 2006; Berger 2015). In a participant-dense study such as the present one, these questions have been brought to the fore regularly throughout the research process. My level of engagement with the participants differed in the three studies. My involvement with the participants in Study 1 was mainly restricted to the questionnaire form and can be labelled as indirect. However, conducting quantitative analysis also comes with a certain degree of interpretative action, when it comes to choosing statistical tests, appropriate forms of presenting the results, and the conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis. In the two latter studies, I participated in a practical sense as a moderator and interviewer during both the focus group sessions and the interviews. The discussions sometimes touched upon potentially sensitive issues, not least with the translation students who were in a somewhat vulnerable position and openly discussed their fears and hopes for their future. To some extent, my personal background also affected the participants’ behaviour towards me. The translation students, with whom I met four times during the course of two years, sometimes after the focus group, off-mic, could ask questions about my internship at the European Commission, for example. There were also examples of what can be described as test questions, such as “you know [how Trados] used to look before”, asked in passing by some of the translators in the interview study, which may also have been a way to see what kind of knowledge of translation and the translation profession I really possessed. The participants in the second and third studies have been given an opportunity to read the chapters in which they appear. Some of the participants proposed minimal changes of factual matters that had no effect on the final analysis.

Epistemological reflexivity invites researchers to consider their methodological assumptions. Carla Willig (2001:10) highlights that epistemological reflexivity is associated with questions such as:

How has the research question defined and limited what can be ‘found’? How has the design of the study and the method of analysis ‘constructed’ the data and the findings? How could the research question have been investigated differently? To what extent would this have given rise to a different understanding of the phenomenon under investigation?

In a mixed methods study such as the present one, these questions are at the core of the research process. The complementarity rationale for conducting mixed methods research also contributed to keeping these questions relevant throughout the research process. Since the data collection and analysis phase
in the three studies overlapped in time, the continuous process both highlighted the characteristics of each study as well as the potential overlap of recurrent topics across the studies. Working with several datasets and several methods within a mixed methods framework may also contribute to an increased attention on how methods delimit research and favour certain aspects of the phenomenon under investigation, in this case, translatorship. As Meister (2018:77) asserts, a mixed methods framework “calls attention to the reasons for mixing, the kind of integration and the nature of inferences derived from the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches”. Thus, an effect of working with a mixed methods framework may contribute to increased reflexive awareness.

Regarding the product of the research process – the present thesis – reflexivity can also be “demonstrated by use of first-person language and provision of a detailed and transparent report of decisions and their rationale” (Berger 2015:222). Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldberg (2019) stress that reflexivity concerns not only reflexivity in regard to the different research methods but also the interpretation of the results. Consequently, I have aimed to state explicitly the principles guiding the methods and the interpretation of the results throughout the thesis by attempting to clarify the procedure and rationale for different decisions affecting the research process.

Having positioned myself as both a scholarly and a translating agent in the field I research, I will now offer a brief introduction of translation and the translation profession from a Swedish perspective.

1.5 Translation in the Swedish context

Sweden has traditionally been considered a country with a high proportion of translated content including books, films, and other media. Yvonne Lindqvist (2002, 2012) has pointed out the importance of translation for the Swedish literary system, and Jan Pedersen (2019:51) calls Sweden a “traditional subtitling country”. According to Lars Wollin (2011:7; see also Kleberg 2009, 2012), translations have made up a large share of the published books since the 14th century, with the exception of the time during the Swedish Empire in the 17th and early 18th century. In modern time, the proportion of literary translations in relation to literature written in Swedish differs slightly depending on sources and time span but often falls between 16–41% (Lindqvist 2002:36, 2016:178; Axelsson 2016:21). Malin Podlevskikh Carlström (forthcoming:104–105) notes a decline in number of translated literary titles between the years 2002 and 2016: from 55% in 2002 to 36% in 2016. Notwithstanding this decline, Sweden has been assigned a central position within a greater Scandinavian sub-system in a polysystemic sense (Lindqvist 2016), and, despite its relatively few speakers of around ten million, Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro (2016:378) considers the Swedish language to occupy a semi-
central position on a global scale, alongside languages such as Spanish and Italian. In connection to this, the Swedish language is considered one of the world’s most literary languages, in terms of its influence and socio-literary prestige, within the international translation system (e.g. Lindqvist 2016:174, 2018:301; Nauwerck 2018:27–34).

Taking the above considerations as a whole, it seems safe to conclude that translation as a phenomenon assumes an important position in Swedish society. When investigating agents of flesh and blood and the diverse forms of the contemporary translation profession, however, discussing the position of translators from a purely “Swedish” perspective soon comes across as problematic for several reasons. It would, for example, be misleading to discuss only translators living in Sweden. Among the participants in Study 1, for example, there is a relatively large group of translators working outside of Sweden, for example EU translators living and working in Brussels or Luxembourg. However, Swedish EU translators comprise an important part of the Swedish translation profession, not least since it is one of few well-paid career paths within the profession. There is also a non-neglectable group of freelance translators living abroad, which further shows that business translation today is a largely international and border-crossing profession. Conversely, some freelance translators based in Sweden work only with translation agencies based outside of Sweden, and then there are also translation teams in translation agencies, translating from or into Swedish situated outside of Sweden. Yet limiting the scope to translators working with the Swedish language as either source language (SL) or target language (TL) would also be problematic, since, as we will see, some of the respondents in Study 1 translate neither into nor from Swedish (see Table 6). For these reasons, I often use terms such as “a Swedish context” or similar constructs instead of simply “Swedish” or “Sweden” in this thesis. At the same time, the present thesis as a whole is of course connected to Sweden in fundamental ways, for example by its focus on translator training in a Swedish university or Swedish translator associations. Furthermore, the translation profession has naturally developed historically within a national context, which must be taken into account, not least when making comparisons between Sweden and Denmark and Finland in Study 1.

Within the contemporary Swedish public debate, translators’ voices have often gone unheard. One exception in recent years occurred in 2013, when the public broadcaster Swedish Radio generated some publicity with a radio reportage series on the conditions of subtitlers (Wikström 2013a, 2013b; Farran-Lee 2014). The low wages for subtitlers were discussed, in particular one of the lowest paying subtitling agencies who worked for the public broadcaster UR. The chief negotiator Johannes Isaksson for the Journalist union concludes that “these are not conditions that ought to exist in a modern society” (Wikström 2013a, translation mine).

Later, the radio journalist Victoria Greve followed up with a questionnaire on the conditions of literary translators, which resulted in a series of radio
Representatives from the Swedish Writers’ Union, publishers from several publishing houses, and the coordinator for the MA programme in Translation at Uppsala University discussed different angles of the situation for literary translators. One of the translators who participated in the radio show is the literary translator Annakarin Thorburn. In an interview, she said that she had chosen a certain way of life in order to be able to work as a translator (Greve 2013d). After the programme had aired, Thorburn (2013, translation mine) wrote a response where she elaborated on her conflicted feelings following the radio show:

It took someone pointing a microphone in my direction and asking me to describe my situation for me to be able to see it. It wasn’t pleasant. Because it’s much more pleasant to just be satisfied. It’s more pleasant to be happy and grateful for what you have and not question, not negotiate higher pay or demand being paid. I have felt privileged to get to work with what I’m the most interested in. It outweighs everything. Or does it?

This example demonstrates the rarity of public discussion on translators and translators’ working conditions, while simultaneously pointing towards a well-known image within translation sociological research: that translators’ status is low to middling, that they are poorly paid, but that there is also an awareness of how these damaging working conditions affect individual translators and the translation profession as a whole (see 2.2 and 4.2). Despite these paradoxical circumstances, Rakefet Sela-Sheffy and Miriam Shlesinger’s (2008:82) claim that translators constitute an “extreme example of an understudied occupational group” seems also to hold true for the Swedish case. Swedish translators as agents from a translation sociological perspective have not received scholarly attention to any great extent, with the exceptions of Lindqvist (2002), Bendegard (2014), and Axelsson (2016).

Regarding the educational context, it is noticeable that translator education has existed for a shorter period of time in Sweden than in other Nordic countries such as Finland and Denmark. In Finland, translation education emerged in the 1960s and was later integrated in universities in the 1980s (Ruokonen 2019:108). In Denmark, translation education has also existed since the late 1960’s as a result of the translator’s act passed in 1966 “which put in place a system of authorization, rights and obligations and a code of translation ethics” (Dam and Zethsen 2010:196). In Sweden, different language departments did organise shorter courses in translation as early as the 1960s and 1970s, but it was not until the late 1980s, following the founding of the Institute for Translation and Interpreting Studies at Stockholm University in 1986, that translator education became formalised (Englund Dimitrova 2013:66). Most translation programmes in Sweden today, including programmes at Stockholm University, Lund University, and University of Göteborg, are two-year
MA programmes, or as in the case of the Linneaus University a one-year MA programme. Stockholm University is an exception also offering also a BA programme in Language and Translation Studies. The MA programme in Translation Studies at the University of Uppsala has been dormant for several years. The Valand Academy, the artistic faculty of the University of Göteborg, offers a one-year MFA in literary translation.

In addition to considering the overall conditions of translation in the Swedish context discussed above, it is important to assess more closely the different translation specialisations and their different characteristics. These are to a large extent organised by different translator associations. In the next section, different translation specialisations are therefore presented through the lens of translator associations.

1.5.1 Translator associations in Sweden

There are five translator associations in Sweden: Föreningen auktoriserade translatorer i Sverige (FAT; The Federation of Authorised Translators in Sweden), Sveriges Facköversättarförening (SFÖ; The Swedish Association of Professional Translators), Översättarsektion (ÖS; The Translator Section) within the Swedish Writers’ Union, Översättarcentrum (ÖC; The Translator Centre), and a union club called the Medietextarna (MT; The Audiovisual Translators) which is a part of the Swedish Union of Journalists. These associations and their different characteristics are presented in Table 2.

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2 For ease of expression, I will use the term translation profession when referring to the work of translators collectively, and refer to different sorts of translation work as different specialisations.

3 The abbreviations are the Swedish abbreviations or, in the case of the Översättarsektionen (Translator Section) and Medietextarna (Audiovisual Translators), follow the Swedish names.
Table 2. Overview of translator associations in Sweden, their members, function, membership criteria, and student category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Membership criteria</th>
<th>Student category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federation of Authorised Translators in Sweden (FAT)</td>
<td>State-authorised translators</td>
<td>Association representing the interest of state-authorised translators</td>
<td>Being a state-authorised translator</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Swedish Association of Professional Translators (SFÖ)</td>
<td>Business translators as well as translation companies</td>
<td>Association representing the interests of business translators and translation companies</td>
<td>A minimum of six months of work experience and references from two–three clients per language combination⁴</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Translator Section in the Swedish Writers’ Union (ÖS)</td>
<td>Literary translators</td>
<td>Interest group working with trade issues for literary translators</td>
<td>Two published translations (fiction or non-fiction)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator Centre (ÖC)</td>
<td>Literary Translators of fiction and non-fiction</td>
<td>Non-profit association and translation mediation</td>
<td>One published translation (fiction or non-fiction)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Audiovisual Translators (MT)</td>
<td>Audiovisual translators</td>
<td>Union club</td>
<td>Paying membership</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 2, the translator associations have different functions and cover partly different, partly overlapping areas of the translation profession. The two associations that work with union issues are MT and ÖS. FAT and SFÖ are similar in the respect that they both cover business translation, although FAT is restricted to financial translation and legal translation.⁵ Both FAT and SFÖ also have their own codes of conducts. On the literary side, ÖS and ÖC both cover literary translation, and are the only associations with employed staff.

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⁴ The different membership categories are: Full member, Associate member, Corporate member, Student member, Subscriber member, and Honorary member.

⁵ Various terms have been used to designate different translational specialisations. In this thesis I will use the term business translation and business translators (sv. facköversättning and facköversättare), instead of, e.g. professional translators or specialised translators, since using these terms indicates that other specialisations are not professional or specialised.
FAT was founded in 1932 and is the oldest translator association in Sweden. Only authorised translators (sv. auktoriserad translator) are eligible to become members of FAT. This means that they have to successfully complete the translation examination administered by the Swedish Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency. Note, however, that FAT is independent from the Swedish Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency and that membership is voluntary; not all authorised translators in Sweden are members of FAT. Being a protected professional title, an authorised translator is “bound by professional rules of confidentiality prescribed by law and performs advanced translation in a variety of areas” (FAT 2019). An authorised translator must therefore adhere to God translatorssed (‘Excellent Translation Practices’), a set of guidelines issued by the Swedish Legal, Financial and Administrative Agency.

With respect to business translation, there is also SFÖ, a professional organisation for technical and specialised translators as well as translation companies. Full membership to the association requires five years of experience as a professional translator with three references from clients per language combination. To be an associate member, one is required to either 1) have less than five years’ experience but more than six months’, and have two references per language combination, 2) be a state-authorised translator (for the language combination of the authorisation), or 3) have a degree in Translation (for the language combination of the programme). Student membership is eligible to students studying a translation-related or language-related subject at university. Full members and associate members are offered a personal page on the SFÖ website, where potential clients can search for specific language combinations or specialised areas in order to find translators.

The association’s objective is “to raise the profile of the profession of translation in society and to enhance the dialogue between translation companies and individual translators” (SFÖ 2019). They organise seminars, workshops and an annual conference, and their member journal Facköversättaren (‘The Business Translator’) appears four times per year. The association further offers guidance to freelance translators, for example when it comes to insurance.

ÖS is one of four sections of the Swedish Writers’ Union, together with the fiction section, the non-fiction section Minerva, and BULT (Children’s and youth literature). The union took on its present form in the 1970s, but the predecessor of the Translator section, The Swedish Association of Literary Translators, was founded in 1954. The Swedish Writers’ Union covers in total around 3,100 members and strives to “safeguard the economic and moral interests of its members” (Swedish Writers’ Union n.d.a). The member journal Författaren (“The Writer”) is published four times per year. Despite its English name, the Swedish Writers’ Union is not a union in the strictest sense of the word, but works with union issues for its members, who are most often freelance writers or translators. The Swedish Writers’ Union’s (n.d.b) stated aims are to:
• promote the right of its members to a reasonable return on their work by constantly monitoring copyright and legislation pertaining to it
• through agreements with counterparties create economic and social security for its members as individuals and as a professional body
• oversee members’ moral rights so that their works are not misrepresented or made public in ways not intended by them as authors
• constantly defend freedom of expression and thereby ensure the right to free debate
• protect and assist members who in the practice of their profession find themselves in conflict with counterparties or authorities or encounter other difficulties.

The Union further offers free legal advice to its members and also to debutant writers and translators. Moreover, it also either grants or administers a large number of scholarships for writers and translators, some of which are open to non-members. The union further has representatives in different committees, foundations and related associations. One example is the Swedish Authors’ Fund, which “calculates and disburses remuneration based on lending frequency to individual authors and translators for loans of library books to the public” (Swedish Authors’ Fund 2019a). For translators, this remuneration is set to 0.53 SEK per loan of a book they have translated. The remuneration is distributed once a translator’s total amount of loans exceeds 4,000 loans during one year. Furthermore, the Swedish Authors’ Fund distributes working grants of different sizes (one-year, three-year, five-year, and ten-year) and what is called individually-awarded remuneration. The latter is awarded to “an originator who is solely or mainly professionally active as an author, translator or illustrator and who has convincingly, with consideration to literary quality and quantity, proved his/her professional activity” (Swedish Authors’ Fund 2019b). It is distributed yearly until the age of 70. Another example of an association substantiated by the Swedish Writers’ Union is ALIS (the Administration of Literary Rights in Sweden), which is tasked with managing the economic rights of copyright owners, e.g. translators and writers, when their material is being re-used.

ÖC is a non-profit association for literary translators of fiction and non-fiction, founded in 1978. It serves as a mediator between publishers and other clients, e.g. museums or other cultural institutions, both through a coordinator as well as via the membership database where translators can list their language combinations and areas of expertise (e.g. poetry, children’s literature). They also organise seminars, readings and other events related to translation of fiction and non-fiction. The Translator Centre is also in charge of the journal Med andra ord. Tidskrift om litterär översättning (‘In Other Words. Journal on Literary Translation’), which is published four times per year.

6 I will use the term non-fiction literary translator to designate the Swedish term facklitterär översättare, i.e. a translator who works with non-fiction (sv. facklitteratur or sakprosa).
Audiovisual translators used to be organised within the Swedish Union for Performing Arts, but they became a part of the Swedish Union of Journalists in 2013, forming the union club MT, i.e. a smaller unit within the greater union. The Swedish Union of Journalists has, for their part, worked with issues for freelancers since the 1970s. On their website (Medietextarna n.d.a), MT states a number of aims:

We want to improve the working conditions for subtitlers.
We want to be a hub for collegial co-operation and knowledge exchange.
We want to have a constructive dialogue with our commissioners about rates, conditions and the development possibilities of the market.
We want fair conditions. We perform qualified and important work and we want to be able to continue doing that. As the market looks today the conditions are more and more pressured and our possibilities of doing a good job smaller and smaller. That is a development we aim to reverse.

In line with these aims, they write that “maybe the most important thing you get as a member of MT is a sense of community” (n.d.b). The union club (n.d.b) furthermore encourage members to become active:

Today we are not even sure how many subtitlers are out there and are not organized. But we know that if only half of us working with subtitling would become members in the same club, we would have completely different possibilities to negotiate with our commissions about fair conditions.

MT also offer council, insurance and organise courses and events for members.

Different specialisations adhere to different remuneration principles. Business translation is most often remunerated per word in relation to the source text and the VAT is 25%. Literary translation, on the other hand, is remunerated per 1,000 characters in the target text including blank spaces. The Swedish Writers’ Union and the Swedish Publishers’ Association have negotiated a model contract for memorandum of agreement between a publisher and a translator. During a period following 2017, there was a so-called “agreement-less” situation, where the old agreement had expired and the two parties failed to make a new agreement. The issue leading up to this situation partly concerned the remuneration levels for other literary forms of dissemination, e.g. audiobooks. To date, the ÖS advises against accepting agreements where all rights are negotiated together since it argues that it will lead to lower rates generally (Översättarsektionen n.d.). However, the Swedish Writers’ Union still recommends a minimum payment; at the time of writing it is 155 SEK per 1,000 characters (including social insurance deductions and vacation pay; the net amounts to 107.32 SEK). Being a literary product, the VAT is 6% and is not included in the minimum payment recommendation.

Table 3 shows the approximate number of members in the different translator associations in 2019.
Table 3. Translator association and number of members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Members 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Ca 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ÖC</td>
<td>Ca 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAT</td>
<td>Ca 215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ÖS</td>
<td>Ca 530</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| SFÖ         | Ca 1,000 individuals

In terms of membership numbers, the different associations are clearly of different sizes. As we will see in Study 1, the respondents in the questionnaire study were often members in more than one translator association (see Table 9), which makes it difficult to measure the total number of translators in Sweden. In the case of Swedish Writers’ Union, the members in the other sections can also become members of the Translator Section without having to account for a translation.

The brief overview of the different translation specialisations and the organisations that represent them presented above, provides important background information on the translation profession. Like the other sections in this chapter, it has aimed to contextualise the empirical studies that make up the remainder of this thesis.

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7 The association also includes translation agencies.
2 Mapping translatorships: Study 1

2.1 Introduction
The first study in this thesis approaches translatorship from a quantitative macro level: I am here interested in a sort of general translatorship in the Swedish context, with a focus on perceptions of and opinions about the profession among translators. For this means, a questionnaire study, repeating the questionnaire studies conducted by Dam and Zethsen in Denmark and by Ruokonen in Finland, has been conducted with 373 respondents.

The aim of this study is thus to investigate the perceptions related to translatorship and translator status through the research questions:

1a. What are the respondents’ perceptions on items related to translatorship in contemporary Sweden?

1b. In what ways do the findings relate to corresponding research on translator status carried out by Dam and Zethsen in Denmark and Ruokonen in Finland?

The first research question is investigated through a number of items, i.e. questions in the questionnaire, related to the respondents’ professional profile, their perceptions of the translation profession and their own work, and their perceptions of the profession’s value in society. The analysis is conducted with descriptive statistics and two non-parametric statistical tests, the Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis H test.

The second research question aims to situate the findings into a wider context on research about translator status in the Nordic countries conducted by Dam and Zethsen (2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013) and Ruokonen (2018, 2019; Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018). The results will be discussed and compared in relation to the four status parameters used by Dam and Zethsen (2008): income/salary, education/expertise, visibility/fame, and power/influence. In this way, I deploy a comparative perspective of translator status (see Ruokonen 2013).

The rationale for exploring the translation profession from a general, macro perspective is at this point to chart and lay bare the perceptions associated with translatorship in the Swedish context. Furthermore, Dam and Zethsen (2011:995) state that the similarities between the different translator groups in Sweden
their study outweigh the differences, which justifies the choice to investigate the translation profession as a whole in this study. This means that the respondents will be treated as a part of the translation profession in Sweden on a general level, and the analysis will thus only seldomly look into different translation specialisations separately.

In what follows, the translation profession as an area of research from a translation sociological viewpoint is presented in 2.2. Thereafter, the method and material are introduced in 2.3. The results are presented in the subsequent chapter 2.4, and thereafter discussed 2.5.

2.2 Macro studies on translators

The low status and peripheral nature of the translation profession were long taken for granted within Translation Studies. Dam and Zethsen (2008:73) paint a picture of how the profession has been described within Translation Studies literature: as peripheral (Hermans and Lambert 1998:113); insignificant (Ortega y Grasset 2000:315); and as having low status (Basnett 2002:12). The translator, in turn, has been described as invisible, seldom recognised (Venuti 1995:1, 17), unappreciated (Vinay and Darbelnet 2000:92) and powerless (Snell-Hornby 2006:172) (for more examples, see Dam and Zethsen 2008:73).

The translation profession emerged as an object of empirical study in the early 2000s. Dam and Koskinen (2016:3) describe a shift of emphasis on the translation profession of choice from a scholarly perspective: from literary translators being the professional group under scrutiny to the last years’ focus on business translators. In the last ten years, there has been five special issues of Translation Studies journals issued which further emphasise the focus on the profession and on professionals within the research field of translation sociology (see Dam and Zethsen 2009b; Sela-Sheffy and Shlesinger 2009, 2010; Dam and Koskinen 2016; Ruokonen et al. 2018).

One long-lasting debate regards whether translation can be referred to as an occupation or a profession. Dam and Koskinen (2016:2) assert that translation constitutes an entity of practice that is sufficiently stable to be identified, defined and delimited from other entities of practice; this entity may be, and indeed is, variously referred to as an ‘occupation,’ a ‘semi-occupation’ or a(n) ‘(emerging) profession’, but here we choose to label it the translation profession following current usage in translation (studies) while acknowledging that translation does not (yet) possess all the traits necessary to qualify formally as a profession.

In the same vein, this is how it will be referred to in this study – as a profession. The scholarly attention invested in the translation profession has often made use of the sociology of professions and its two approaches: the trait theory, and the power/process theory. The former includes criteria for a full-fledged
profession which distinguishes it from occupations (Weiss-Gal and Welbourne 2008:282). Originally based on classic professions such as medicine and law, different criteria needing to be fulfilled in order for an occupation to be regarded as a profession have changed over the years. Greenwood (1957) lists five traits: a systematic body of knowledge, professional authority recognised by its clientele, community sanction, a regulatory code of ethics, and a professional culture with professional associations. Applying these five traits to the translational professions have given rise to translation being called a “semi-profession” or an “emerging profession”, as in the quote above (see also Sela-Sheffy 2006; Katan 2009b).

The power/process approach developed from the 1970s and onwards (for a description of this development, see Gentile 2016a:33–68), and highlights the dynamic process taking place between agents who are continuously negotiating and re-negotiating their place in society. In Idit Weiss-Gal and Penelope Welbourne’s (2008:282) words, the power/process approach focuses on how occupations establish and maintain dominance in areas of practice when confronted with threats to their status from competing interests, whether these are threats from other occupational groups, government, the bureaucracies that employ them or their clients [...].

With its roots in the symbolic-interactionist tradition, the power/process approach has shed light on competing interest within the profession, not least with the recent years’ focus on boundary work (see Grbić 2010; Koskinen and Dam 2016; Tuominen 2018).

To date, the sociologically induced research on the translation profession has largely consisted of macro-level quantitative studies, positioning themselves at the sociological end of translator status continuum (see Svahn, Ruokonen, and Salmi 2018). These studies tend to draw on either trait theory (Katan 2009a; Dam and Zethsen 2011; Gentile 2016a, 2018; Yılmaz Gümüş 2018; Ruokonen 2018) or the power/process approach (Sela-Sheffy and Shlesinger 2009; Grbić 2010; Tuominen 2018). Studies have focused on status perceptions in national contexts (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014; Yılmaz Gümüş 2018; Djovčoš 2014), translators’ occupational sense (Sela-Sheffy 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012), or Bourdieusian-inspired investigations on symbolic capital (Heino 2017; Georgiou 2018).

Quantitative macro studies have also been conducted on a global scale, such as the research carried out by David Katan (2009a, 2009b) on interpreters and translators (n = 890) and Paola Gentile (2014, 2016a, 2018) on conference interpreters (n = 888). In Katan’s case (2009a:188) the aim was to map “translator and interpreter perception of their working world” and their mind-set through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised 23 questions and yielded 996 respondents. Although the procedure of distributing the questionnaire, mainly via personal contacts and, in some countries, via national
translation agencies, makes the result somewhat unbalanced, the respondents amount to 890 from 25 countries. None of the respondents came from Sweden. The respondents included professional translators as well as translation teachers and translation students. It is clear that the majority of the respondents had several overlapping roles, be it first hand translator, interpreter, teacher or student (Katan 2009a). Regarding the perception of the occupation in general and its relation to professionalism, the tendency is to focus on the individual translator and his or her specific skills, as Katan (2009a:194) notes “[i]t is the ‘professionalism’ of the individual practitioners which, according to the respondents, renders the activity a profession”.

Gentile (2014, 2016a, 2018) studies the occupational status of interpreters worldwide. Targeting conference interpreters and public service interpreters, she has studied public service interpreters’ perceptions of their occupational status from a global perspective (Gentile 2014:65), the occupational status of public service interpreters as opposed to the occupational status of nurses (Gentile 2016b), as well as differences between female and male conference interpreters’ self-perceived status (Gentile 2018). In her study, 75.7% of the respondents were female (Gentile 2018:28).

To date, there are two large-scale research projects investigating the translation profession in two different national contexts: Sela-Sheffy’s project on Israeli translators’ occupational sense, and Dam and Zethsen’s project on translator status in Denmark. Because of their relevance for the present study, these projects will be presented in greater detail below.

Sela-Sheffy’s research project (2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016; Sela-Sheffy and Shlesinger 2008) on the professionalisation processes among Israeli translators draws on a Bourdieusian approach to cultural production. A plethora of different methods (e.g. media texts, written reports and questionnaires) has been used in different stages during the project, but the focus lies on in-depth interviews. Sela-Sheffy (2006, 2008, 2010) distinguishes two groups of translators: elite literary translators versus technical translators, subtitlers and non-elite literary translators (referred to as non-elite translators). The two groups’ self-fashioning are in stark opposition. The elite literary translators – also called star translators – consist of a small group of 20–25 literary translators, who are regarded as translators’ spokespersons in Israel (2006:247), and it is their view of translation that is presented in the media. Their self-presentational discourse includes a vocation discourse and follows two main elements: a pre-destined story of becoming, and a mystified expert knowledge paired with personal qualifications. In their discourse, these translators highlight their personal aptness to be translators:

Most of these highly ranked translators tend to glorify their trade as a ‘vocation’ rather than just a skilful means for earning a living. They make efforts to portray translatorial competence as consisting of a unique disposition, an unexplainable gift that one either does have or does not have, which defies any systematic
knowledge and method of learning. This ‘magic spell’, so we learn, distinguishes ‘genuine’ translators from mere ‘technicians of words’. (Sela-Sheffy 2005:12)

This small group of literary translators have no desire to be recognised as professional translators; instead, they value their artistic integrity. Consequently, they are seldom members of translator associations such as The Israeli Translator Association (Sela-Sheffy 2005:10). Several of them also have additional careers within the literary field as either critics, editors or scholars. In terms of how they came to be translators, it is presented “not as a rational decision, fitting their education and social status, but rather as a destiny that has somehow been realized by chance” (Sela-Sheffy 2006:251).

In contrast, the group of non-elite translators portrays an evasive use of vocational discourse. In contrast to the top literary translators who reject being called and seen as professionals, the non-literary translators express no objection on this matter. They depend on the income from translation jobs for a living, and the reason to become as translator is based on rational decisions and a contingent career story in a traditional sense. Moreover, the two groups have different strategies when it comes to claiming status as translators. Whereas the top literary translators’ claim for status is connected to their personal stardom and prestige, the non-elite translators “consent to, rather than renounce, the status hierarchy imposed by the discourse of elite translators and accept this underlying value-scale, albeit with ambivalence” (Sela-Sheffy 2010:142).

In a later article, Sela-Sheffy (2016) investigates how an anti-professionalisation ethos affects the self-perceptions of the non-elite translators. The elite literary translators’ resistance towards professionalisation is used as a “counter-professionalization ethos” to secure their own position in the field (Sela-Sheffy 2016:54). In general, the elite translators construct their identity discourse on “uncompromised artisation tendency and their strong sense of personal agency as individuals” (Sela-Sheffy 2016:59, original emphasis). They defy formalised standards; instead their discourse is centred on creativity and intuition, which stand out as their only evaluation measures (Sela-Sheffy 2016:57). This, Sela-Sheffy argues, undermines the view of the translation occupation as a rationally organised field of practice. It also implies a distance between elite translators and the vast majority of the translators in Israel, to the extent that the field of elite translators bears more resemblances to other fields of literature than those of other translational professions (Sela-Sheffy 2016:59).

The other large-scale project on the translation profession was carried out by Dam and Zethsen at Aarhus University. Unlike Sela-Sheffy, their main focus is on business translators (however, see Sela-Sheffy 2016). Dam and Zethsen (2011:979) investigate translator status as a “complex, subjective, and context-dependent construct” in various settings. In a series of articles, they
have targeted different groups of business translators and their approaches to translator status: the status of company translators in Denmark (2008); the factors affecting the perception of translator status (2009); the identification of facilitators and barriers to translator status (2010); the occupational status of Danish company, agency and freelance translators (2011); the occupational status of EU translators (2012); and the occupational status of EU interpreters in relief with that of EU translators (2013). The company translators in the first study were selected precisely because of their strong professional profile: “translators with an MA in specialised translation who are employed full-time on permanent contracts in major Danish companies, with a visible translation function and a clear translation profile” (Dam and Zethsen 2008:76). In later studies, the agency and freelance translators were recruited according to the same standards regarding education, i.e. all their respondents, except the EU translators or EU interpreters (cf. Dam and Zethsen 2012, 2013), have an MA degree in Translation. The respondents to the Danish questionnaires seem to be mainly female: 87% of the company translators (Dam and Zethsen 2008:80, 2009:8), and 56% of the EU translators (Dam and Zethsen 2013:239). The percentage of gender for the other sorts of translators (agency and freelance translators, and the Danish national-market translators more generally) is not mentioned in those articles.

Dam and Zethsen’s (e.g. 2008) research on translator status is based on four status parameters: income/salary, education/expertise, visibility/fame, and power/influence. These parameters come from a, at the time, recent study on occupational prestige in Denmark presented in 2006 (Nyrup Madsen 2006). Dam and Zethsen (2013:213) state that they “assume that these parameters apply throughout the (Western) world, but in various combinations, with different weights, in different contexts, at different times”. It should be noted that one of the parameters originally mentioned in the Danish study on occupational prestige in Denmark, the parameter called “competition of work/education”, is not mentioned in the studies by Dam and Zethsen. Instead, in the study on EU translators and EU interpreters (2013), they added the parameter importance/value to society in order to investigate occupational worthiness.

The Danish questionnaire has been repeated in Finland by the Finnish translation scholar Minna Ruokonen together with Leena Salmi, Tiina Tuominen, and Taru Virtanen. Ruokonen (2014, 2016) first made a pilot study where the questionnaire was adopted for translation students which yielded 277 student responses (for more information about the questionnaire for students, see 3.2). The questionnaire was then aimed at business translators, literary translators, and audiovisual translators, with 450 respondents. Unlike Dam and Zethsen’s studies, there was no restriction on participation regarding

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8 Taru Virtanen’s (2019) PhD thesis on Finnish government translators was published at the final stages of this thesis’ completion, and I have unfortunately not had the opportunity to include her findings.
educational background. Eighty percent of the respondents were female translators (Ruokonen 2019:111). So far, Ruokonen and Mäkisalo (2018) have investigated the paradox between the translation profession’s middling status and the individual translator’s perceived appreciation of his or her work (cf. Dam and Zethsen 2016). One of their findings concern to what extent the respondents are considering leaving the profession: out of a total of 397 respondents, 47.5% (n = 188) replied ‘not at all’ which indicates that the remaining 52.5% (n = 209) are considering changing career at least to some degree (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018:13). As a comparison, 50% of Anu Heino’s (2017:60) participants in a study of Finnish literary translators are considering leaving the profession.

Ruokonen (2018) has also investigated the connection between status perceptions and authorisation. Interestingly, authorisation did not yield any statistically significant differences regarding the respondents’ status perceptions. In Ruokonen (2019), the different status perceptions among translation students and professional translators are scrutinised regarding the four status parameters of status, visibility, power/influence, and expertise. On the whole, the translation students and the translators display similar perceptions of the status, although the students’ ranking are often slightly lower than the translators’ rankings.

As Ruokonen and Mäkisalo (2018:2–3) accurately point out, the concept of status has in Translation Studies been used to refer to various notions: the status of a profession, the socio-economic status of an occupation, occupational prestige, status as market value, or the status of an individual. Another concept of interest is prestige. While sometimes used synonymously with status (e.g. Dam and Zethsen 2013), Gentile (2016a:49), points towards the diverse origins of two concepts:

Although the two terms are often used interchangeably, in sociology status and prestige fall into two completely different domains: status is determined by objective institutional and economic parameters, whereas prestige is influenced by social and symbolically functional codes.

The concept of status can thus be an indicator of the desirability of an occupation based on the material rewards connected with it. Prestige, on the other hand, refers to moral qualities and in a sense ‘softer’ values.

To conclude this section, it now seems safe to say that the translation profession has become a rich and multifaceted object of study that has successfully been researched empirically in many diverse settings. The studies presented here employ different sets of methods (most commonly quantitative macro-level studies) and focus on different translational specialisations (busi-

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9 The percentages mentioned here are based on my calculations of the numbers given in Ruokonen and Mäkisalo (2018:13).
ness translators, literary translators, audiovisual translators, and poetry translators, among others). The settings are either national (e.g. Israel, Denmark, Finland) or global (Katan 2009a, 2009b; Gentile 2016a, 2018). Despite these diverse contexts, some findings from these studies coincide. For one, findings clearly indicate that the translation profession is a largely female-dominated profession (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 2009, 2013; Ruokonen 2019; Gentile 2018; Georgiou 2018); the only exception in the studies discussed here is the 23 elite literary translators in Sela-Sheffy’s (2010), of which the majority (n = 13) were men.

Furthermore, education seems to be one parameter whose importance varies in different contexts: from Denmark where an MA in Translation was the prerequisite for participation in the Dam and Zethsen’s study, to Israel where the elite literary translators defy education. From the questionnaire studies by Katan (2009a, 2009b), Gentile (2016a), Heino (2017) and Ruokonen (2018, 2019; Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018), we can draw the conclusion that translators tend to be highly educated, although not always in a translation-related subject.

Several scholars also point towards the multipositionality of translators: translators tend to have additional careers either outside of the translation profession (see Sela-Sheffy 2005; Meylaerts 2008, 2013; Katan 2009b) or do a multitude of translation jobs within the translational professions (see Sela-Sheffy 2016). Moreover, both Katan and Sela-Sheffy point out the personal abilities as being a pertinent link between the practitioner and the profession: Katan (2009a: 194) notes that “it is the ‘professionalism’ of the individual practitioners which, according to the respondents, renders the activity a profession”, and Sela-Sheffy (2006:246) phrases it as “the status of the profession is maintained through promoting the personal reputation of select individuals”. Findings from both Dam and Zethsen (2008) and Ruokonen and Mäkisalo (2018) further highlight that translators deem their own work as highly appreciated by their clients, while the status of the profession as a whole is middling to low.

Regarding the empirical and systematic study of translator and interpreter status, the results highlight certain findings (for summaries of the results, see Dam 2013, 18; Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018:3–4). For example, different groups of translators or interpreters may have different status perceptions (Dam and Zethsen 2011:984). A certain income level seems to be a prerequisite but is not in itself a sufficient condition for high status perceptions (Dam and Zethsen 2009a:15, 2011:986, 2012:221–222). However, Ruokonen and Mäkisalo (2018:10–11) find a stronger correlation. Translators and interpreters also tend to think that laymen, i.e. people outside of the profession, do not appreciate either the education or the expertise required to translate to the same extent as translators (Dam and Zethsen 2008:86–88, 2011:988, 2013:245–246; Gentile 2016a:124, 204). Feeling invisible or far removed from decision-making is also likely to contribute to lower status perceptions.
There is also increasing evidence that translators and interpreters self-perceived status is not determined by hard-core, objective parameters such as income, but on ‘softer’ indicators, such as being appreciated (Dam and Zethsen 2011:995).

In relation to Ruokonen’s (2016:329) different models of translator status, the present study could be framed as a comparative study, since the findings will be discussed in relation to the findings from the Danish and Finnish study in the discussion. In the next sections, the Danish and Finnish questionnaires, which formed the base for the Swedish questionnaire, are presented in more detail, as well as the Swedish material.

2.3 Method and material

2.3.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires are described by Christopher Mellinger and Thomas Hanson (2017:52) as “a convenient method for collecting quantitative data about perceptions and opinions of participants. They can also be used to collect descriptive and demographic data as part of a larger study”. As shown in the previous section, questionnaires have indeed served as a method for gaining rich and complex material for investigating exactly the perceptions and opinions of participants as Melling and Hanson state in the quote above.

The questionnaire used in this study is based on the questionnaires used by Dam and Zethsen in Denmark and Ruokonen in Finland. There are, however, some notable differences between the Danish and the Finnish questionnaires. In Denmark, questionnaires were distributed several times, targeting different sorts of business translators, i.e. freelance translators, company translators, and agency translators (e.g. Dam and Zethsen 2008, 2009, 2011), as well as EU translators (Dam and Zethsen 2012, 2013). The focus was explicitly on business translators and no literary translators nor audiovisual translators participated. The participants in the Danish questionnaire were furthermore selected with the criteria that they had an MA degree in Translation. The Finnish questionnaire, on the other hand, allowed for different educational backgrounds and targeted three groups of translators: literary translators, business translators, and audiovisual translators. In the Finnish questionnaire, the different questionnaires used in Denmark were merged into one questionnaire form and adapted with some supplementary questions.

The Swedish questionnaire followed the applied, merged style of the Finnish questionnaire. As with the Finnish questionnaire, there was no education-related restriction for participation since this would probably have led to a highly misleading representation. The questionnaire was translated into Swe-
dish by a translation agency. After the translation was completed the questionnaire was adopted to Swedish conditions. This mostly meant minor changes, such as changing the currency to SEK, and also some formatting issues. I also decided to make more room to write individual comments, thereby giving space for the respondents to introduce new topics and comment on their previous answers. Following the structure of the Finnish questionnaire, the Swedish questionnaire in this study consisted of the following 13 sections:

1. Introduction
2. Freelancer in any form (questions aimed for freelance translators)
3. Employee in any form (questions aimed for employed translators)
4. Working hours
5. Premises and professional community
6. Possibilities to influence
7. Job satisfaction
8. Unemployed/Student/Work in another field
9. Translators’ self-perceptions
10. The view on translators by laypeople
11. The status of the translation profession
12. Protection of the profession
13. Background information

Depending on whether the respondent was a freelance translator, an in-house translator, or currently not working as a translator, the questionnaire comprehended around 50–80 items, mainly close-ended questions, excluding 15 comment sections.

The questionnaire was inserted into Google Forms. A group of doctoral students tested the questionnaire in order to see how the different sections, aimed for either freelance translators or employed translators, in the questionnaire corresponded with each other, but also to ensure that the questions were correctly understood. For this reason, I developed a type of role play, where the doctoral students were given fictive translator personae with some characteristics and were supposed to answer the questionnaire in accordance with the translator persona (for instance “Female EU translator, 58 years old. Overall happy with the occupation”).

In order to reach as many translators as possible, different strategies were used depending on the different translation specialisations, and the questionnaire was distributed as an online questionnaire through different channels. The Swedish translator associations played a major role in reaching freelance translators: audiovisual translators, literary translators, literary non-fiction translators, and business translators.
Regarding the audiovisual translators, I contacted the, at the time, newly started union club MT and was promised that they would send out the questionnaire to their members. However, it was confirmed at a later stage that they did not send it out (Linus Kollberg, pers. comm.). I also contacted the four largest subtitling companies operating in Sweden (BTI Studios, SDI Media, Medietext, and Nordisk Undertext) as well as the AVT unit at the Swedish state channel, SVT Undertext.

I also wanted to reach three other groups of translators: EU translators, translators working in translation agencies, and translators working in companies which are not specialised in translation. The EU institutions and organs approached for the questionnaire are the Swedish units at the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the Court of Auditors, the Committee of Regions and the European Committee of the Regions, and the European Economic and Social Committee. As far as agency translators were concerned, the procedure was to contact all the major translation agencies operating in Sweden as well as all the translation agencies that were company members of SFÖ.

The most problematic group of translators to find from my vantage point are what Dam and Zethsen call ‘company translators’, i.e. translators employed in companies with other core activities other than translation. Whereas Dam and Zethsen (2008:76) describe this group of translators as “[o]ne of the most visible and strong groups of Danish translators”, this cannot be said to be the case for Swedish company translators. On the contrary, this group of translators are in the Swedish context very invisible, especially since they may not be members of any translator association and are more freelance-oriented.

To find company translators I emailed and/or called companies that I knew had or expected to have staff translators. During this inquiry, I became aware of an informal network of employed translators working in different Swedish authorities and banks and was invited to use an internal list of 25 names and email addresses for distributing the questionnaire.

In practical terms, the distribution process had three stages: in a first email, I introduced myself and the research project and asked for permission to send the link to the online questionnaire together with a letter of information (see Appendix 1). This was done two to three weeks before the questionnaire was made available online. The day the questionnaire was made available online, I emailed the link to the online questionnaire together with an information letter. After around one week I sent a follow-up email with a reminder.

The questionnaire was available online for three weeks and five days in May 2016 and yielded answers from 373 respondents. Despite the precautions described above, it is hard to estimate how many translators I actually managed to reach. In relation to Table 2, it is clear that the respondents only represent a small number of the total amount of translators in the Swedish translator associations. However, indications point towards the possibility that translators are often members of several translator associations (see Table 9),

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which implies that the total number of translators working in Sweden remains hard to estimate. There was also a misunderstanding on SFÖ’s part, with the result that the questionnaire was not sent out to their members in time. To compensate for the probable loss of respondents, I extended the time the questionnaire was available online by five days. Since SFÖ is the association with the most members, this misunderstanding probably influenced the number of respondents negatively. Yet another factor which might have influenced the willingness to respond to the questionnaire was the fact that several of the associations had recently sent out questionnaires to their members, either for internal use, which was the case for MT, or by other translation scholars as in the case of FAT (Englund Dimitrova 2015) and ÖS (Jansen 2017). The timing of the questionnaire, in May, is also likely to have had a negative impact. However, considering that the Danish questionnaires yielded a total number of 307 respondents (Dam and Zethsen 2016:267) and the Finnish questionnaire 450 respondents (Ruokonen 2016), the number of 373 Swedish respondents seems appropriate.

2.3.1.1 Ethical review
Participant-based studies demand a high level of ethical awareness, and all participants in this study have signed informed consent. The original questionnaire included a question on membership of translator associations, which was also deemed an important item in the Swedish context. As previously discussed, two translator associations are either a part of a union (MT) or deal with union issues (ÖS). Union membership is considered as sensitive personal data as defined in the Personal Data Act (SFS 198:204), which required that the study undergo an ethical review. Study 1 was approved by the Regional Ethical Review Board in Stockholm (currently known as the Swedish Ethical Review Authority) in 2016 (SU 154-5.1.2-0061-16).

2.3.2 Quantitative analysis
In order to examine features of translatorship and translator status, a number of items have been chosen to be included in the study out of the total number of items in the questionnaire. The items studied are grouped under three sub-sections, presented in Table 4. The corresponding questions can be found in Appendix 2.
Table 4. Sub-sections and items investigated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-section</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The respondents’ professional profile</td>
<td>Gender, working situation, country of residence, age, educational level, language combinations, authorisation, working settings for employed translators, years of experience in the translational field, translational output the last five years, main professional identity, membership in translator associations, working hours, income level, satisfaction with income level, preferred working situation, and thoughts on leaving the profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The respondents’ perceptions of the profession and their own work</td>
<td>Expertise, special skills, creativity, responsibility, prestige, trust in quality, and appreciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The respondents’ perceptions of the profession’s value in society</td>
<td>Status, visibility, influence, and value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This three-way distinction aims at providing different perspectives on translatorship. The first sub-section of the results chapter draws a picture of the respondents and, in large, the field of Swedish translators by analysing demographic and profession-related data from 17 items from the questionnaire. This section aims at presenting the respondents’ professional profile and aims at bringing the characteristics of the data to the fore and drawing conclusions about the respondents. Since Swedish translators are still largely unstudied, I will go in-depth into these items as compared to Dam and Zethsen and Ruokonen.

The 11 items in the second and third sub-section are selected since they relate to some aspect of translatorship. They have been grouped under the heading of the two sub-sections concerning the translation profession the respondents’ own work, and the profession’s value in society, respectively. This division aims to provide insights into how the respondents perceive translation in relation to internal (sub-section 2) and external (sub-section 3) issues. The items in these two sub-sections are Likert-type items, which offered the verbal options corresponding to the numbers 1–5:

1 = To a very low degree or not at all.
2 = To a low degree.
3 = To a certain degree.
4 = To a high degree.
5 = To a very high degree.

Following Dam and Zethsen (2008:78) and Ruokonen (2018:6), the five options were presented in reverse order, i.e. starting with 5 (= to a very high
degree), in order to avoid the respondents automatically choosing a low-degree category. Carey Azzara (2010:100) points out that respondents may hesitate to reply a high- or low-end answer, i.e. 1 or 5. The “neutral” middle option in Likert scale items has been known to attract more answers when offered (Moors 2008:783), and Azzara (2010:100) also voiced a concern that the middle option may lead to a non-committing response. One possible way to avoid this scenario is to remove the middle option (see Nowlis et al. 2002), but for this study it was considered more important to follow the same procedure as Dam and Zethsen and Ruokonen.

None of the questions were obligatory, and the respondents could move forward in the questionnaire without answering all of the questions. This is the reason why some of the questions have not received answers from all 373 respondents. In some cases, the respondents could enter multiple answers, which means that the total amount of answers sometimes exceeds 373.

As a first step, the items are analysed with descriptive statistics. Three measures of central tendency will be provided when applicable: mean, median and mode. The use of mean has been criticised when used for Likert-type items (e.g. Jamieson 2004). Likert scale items, and Likert-type items alike, are traditionally considered ordinal data: the five positions are ordered but cannot be given a numerical value with an equal distance between the positions, such as with interval or ratio data. Furthermore, different respondents are likely to comprehend answers differently. However, since the previous questionnaire studies conducted in Denmark and Finland rely on measuring the mean for different items, this will be the approach in this study as it enables comparisons between the three studies in the Nordic countries. The mean is presented together with standard deviation, which measures the distance away from the mean. A low standard deviation thus indicates that the data are clustered around the mean, while a higher number indicates that the data are more evenly spread out over the five options (Mellinger and Hanson 2017:50). Median, i.e. the middle number of a sample, is often pointed out as being a more accurate measure of a data sample than the mean, since it captures the centrality of the data. This is especially true in the cases where there are outliers in the data, which affect the mean (Mellinger and Hanson 2017:46). The mode accounts for the most occurring answer in the data, and Mellinger and Hanson (2017:47–48) point out that mode can provide insight into the respondents’ opinions and “be informative regarding the strength of the respondents’ preferences”.

To gain greater insight from the data, two statistical tests were used: the Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis H test, which are both non-parametric tests that do not assume normal distribution in a population. Mellinger and Hanson (2017:101) stress that non-normality is likely to be common in

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10 In recent years, however, efforts have been taken to consider Likert-scale items as interval data (see Carifo and Perla 2007, 2008).
certain variables within Translation and Interpreting Studies because of the specific nature of the phenomenon. The two statistical tests consist of a deductive testing of the null hypothesis, i.e. that the distribution of one dependent variable is the same across categories of the independent variable. The null hypothesis is either then retained, i.e. the distribution is the same across the independent variable, or rejected, i.e. the distribution is not the same across categories of the independent variable. In the latter case, the results are statistically significant. The statistical tests were conducted in the statistical software SPSS IBM.

The dependent variables tested are the 11 Likert-type questions in sub-section 2 and 3: expertise, special skills, creativity, prestige, responsibility, appreciation, trust in quality, status, visibility, influence, and value (see Table 4). The independent variables tested through the Mann-Whitney U test are: gender, working situation, translator education, and five different specialisations (literary translator, non-fiction translator, business translator, audiovisual translator, and EU translator). The Mann-Whitney U test is the non-parametric equivalent of the Student’s t-test and allows for testing whether the responses from two groups, i.e. nominal data, are statistically significant (Mellinger and Hanson 2017:106). The participants were thus divided into two groups depending on the independent variable being tested. When testing the different specialisations, the respondents have first been categorised as either a member of that specialisation or not, e.g. as either a literary translator or a non-literary translator, depending on their answers of the item main professional identity (see Figure 10). Statistically significant results are reflected in the p-value, which is set at the 0.05 level (confidence interval 95%). The few missing answers from the questionnaire have not been included in the analysed data. Only statistically significant results will be discussed in the results section. The U-value and the mean ranks of the two groups are provided to enable comparison.

The Kruskal-Wallis H test offers the possibility of testing several groups, i.e. not binary nominal data, with ordinal data. The independent variables tested for the Kruskal-Wallis H test are: years of experience, educational background, and age. The data for the items years of experience and age were given by the respondents in exact years in the questionnaire. The data has been converted into intervals of ten years (see Figure 2 and Figure 6), which makes it possible to treat them as ordinal data. The p-value is set at 0.05 level (confidence interval 95%). The results are presented via the H-value, the degree of freedom, and the p-value. The mean ranks are presented to enable comparison when the results have been found to be statistically significant. All p-values presented have been adjusted with the Bonferroni correction (Mellinger and Hanson 2017:138, 149), which is a correction method used when making multiple comparisons of the same data simultaneously.
2.4 Results

2.4.1 The respondents’ professional profile

We will start with some general characteristics, such as gender, working situation, country of residence, and age. Table 5 provides information on the respondents regarding gender, working situation and country of residence.

Table 5. Gender, working situation, and country of residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Working situation*

| Freelancer                          | 284| 76 |
| Employed                            | 75 | 20 |
| Not working as translators at the moment | 14 | 4  |

| Country of residence                |   |    |
| Sweden                              | 284| 87 |
| Abroad                              | 50 | 13 |

Out of 372 respondents, 63% (n = 234) of the respondents were women and 34% (n = 127) men; 0.5% (n = 2) reported “Other” and 2.5% (n = 9) preferred not to answer.

The question regarding working situation is of course of paramount importance for an occupation which to a large extent is characterised by freelancing. This turned out to be characteristic also for this sample; out of 373 respondents, a majority of 76% (n = 284) work as freelancers, while 20% (n = 75) works as employed translators. Four percent (n = 14) state that they are not working as translators at the moment (due to, for example, parental leave). If nothing else is indicated, the items discussed here refer to the total number of the respondents.

Another question of interest is where the respondents are located. Freelancing translators can, at least theoretically, be located anywhere in the world. The total amount of 372 respondents was distributed as follows: 87% (n = 345) of the respondents live in Sweden (n = 345) and 13% (n = 50) live abroad.
A total number of 347 respondents answered the item concerning age. The answers reflect a great age span: the youngest respondent is 25 years old and the oldest is 100 years old.

![Age Distribution Chart]

**Figure 2. Age of the respondents**

As can be seen in Figure 2, the answers to this item were distributed with a concentration in the ages 31–70, which in itself is a generous age span. These four columns alone account for 83% (n = 288) of the data. The highest concentration of answers is found in the category 51–60 years with 26% (n = 92) of the respondents. Only 4% (n = 14) of the respondents are under the age of 30. Furthermore, 31% (n = 107) of the respondents are near or past the retirement age (currently set to 65 in Sweden). The average respondent is 53 years old. The median is 54 and so is the mode.

The next items concern the respondents’ educational background and language combinations. As previously mentioned, a full-population study of graduated translators with an MA in Translation Studies was thought to present a highly misleading picture of the Swedish context, as compared to Denmark (see 2.3). A total number of 372 respondents answered this item. The distribution of answers is shown in Figure 3.
The respondents answered the questions regarding educational background as follows: 2.5% (n = 9) went to upper secondary school, and 2% (n = 7) to a vocational school. A majority have attended studies at university level: 23% (n = 86) have attended university (but not taken a degree), 19% (n = 70) hold a lower university degree, such as a Bachelor’s degree, and 45% (n = 168) hold a higher university degree, such as a one-year or two-year Masters’ degree. As many as 6.5% (n = 24) of the respondents are either PhLic or PhD. Only 2% (n = 8) marked “Other”. From Figure 3, one can draw the conclusion that the translators who answered this question are in general well-educated: 93.5% (n = 348) of the respondents have studied at university level, and 51.5% (n = 188) have either an MA degree or a Licentiate (PhLic) or Doctorate (PhD) degree.

The previous item only accounts for the educational level, not for the different subjects studied. A follow-up question where the respondents were asked to specify their major was answered by 343 respondents. The answers included a large variety of subjects, ranging from Translation Studies to journalism, architecture, and civil engineering, to name a few. Out of the 343 answers for this item, 30.5% (n = 104) of the respondents indicated some sort of translation-related subject, either an MA in Translation Studies, a BA in Translation Studies, courses in literary translation, or translation programmes from abroad.

In response to the item concerning language combinations, 373 respondents filled in a total number of 995 language combinations (SL–TL). At most, two respondents filled in 12 language combinations. The distribution of language combinations is shown in Figure 4.
In total, 93 respondents answered that they had one language combination, while 102 respondents reported two language combinations. Eighty-six respondents reported three language combinations, after which there was a decrease in numbers to 55 respondents, who reported four language combinations. Moreover, 18 respondents answered five language combinations, and six, two and four of the respondents reported six, seven and eight language combinations, respectively. One respondent reported nine and 20 language combinations, respectively; two respondents reported 12 language combinations.

The average translator among the respondents has 2.6 language combinations. The median for language combinations is two and the mode is also two. Of course, this item does not account for how often the language combinations are actually in use in the respondents’ translation practice.

Another interesting perspective is which languages the combinations include. A compilation of the 20 most common language combinations and number of respondents is presented in Table 6.
Table 6. The 20 most common language combinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr</th>
<th>Language combination</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English-Swedish</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Danish-Swedish</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Norwegian-Swedish</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>German-Swedish</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Swedish-English</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>French-Swedish</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Spanish-Swedish</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Italian-Swedish</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Russian-Swedish</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dutch-Swedish</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Portuguese-Swedish</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Finnish-Swedish</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Swedish-German</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Swedish-French</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Danish-English</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Norwegian-English</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>English-German</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Polish-Swedish</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Swedish-Arabic</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Arabic-Swedish</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, there is a heavy English dominance in the first position with 240 respondents, followed by Danish-Swedish with 102 respondents and Norwegian-Swedish and German-Swedish with 77 respondents. The list contains predominantly European languages, the only exceptions being Swedish-Arabic and Arabic-Swedish at positions 19 and 20. In terms of directionality, one can note that their general tendency is to translate into Swedish, although there are four cases were Swedish is the SL (Swedish-English, Swedish-German, Swedish-French, and Swedish-Arabic). There are also three cases that do not involve Swedish at all (Danish-English, Norwegian-English, and English-German).

In the following, I will turn to some more profession-oriented items, such as authorisation, professional experience, their translational output over the last five years, their professional identity as translators, and their membership of translator associations.

Out of a total number of 372 respondents, 22.5% (n = 84) are authorised translators.

The employed translators work in different settings, as presented in Figure 5.
The majority of the 74 respondents who answered this item work in an international organisation/institution; this is the case for 27% (n = 20) of the respondents. Yet another 25.5% (n = 19) work in a Swedish translation company, whereas 20.5% (n = 15) work within the Swedish state. Seventeen and a half percent (n = 13) work in an international translation company. A smaller number of people work within other sorts of companies: 4% (n = 3) in a large-sized Swedish translation company with more than 250 employees, 2.5% (n = 2) in a large-sized international non-translation company, i.e. which does not have translation as their main activity, with more than 250 employees, 1.5% (n = 1) in a small or medium sized non-translation company with less than 250 employees, and 1.5% (n = 1) in a close cooperation (sv. fåmansbolag).

The question on how many years of experience the respondents have within the translation profession was answered by 364 respondents. Their answers were divided into intervals of ten years and are presented in Figure 6.
The answers on time spent in the translation profession reflect the whole range of experience: the respondent with the least experience answered six months and the respondent with the most experience answered 56 years. Between these two poles, the figures are distributed as follows: 30.5% (n = 112) have 1–10 years of experience, 31.5% (n = 114) have 11–20 years, and 24% (n = 87) have 21–30 years. After that the numbers drop and the percentage for the three remaining decades are 8% (n = 30) for 31–40 years of experience, 5% (n = 18) for 41–50 years of experience, and 1% (n = 3) for 51–60 years of experience.

The average respondent has worked as a translator for 19 years. The median is 18 and the mode is 20. Overall, it is clear that the respondents altogether have considerable experience in the translation field. However, the relatively high percentage of 0–10 years of experience also deserves some attention. A closer examination of the data reveals that 10% (n = 36) of the respondents have less than five years’ experience in the translation profession, which implies that there is also, alongside the more experienced translators, a non-negligible group of translators who recently entered the profession. It should be noted however that this item only accounts for time spent in the profession, not whether the time spent was as a full-time translator or not.

To further investigate the respondents’ involvement with different translation specialisations, the respondents were asked to list the different types of translation they had engaged with over the last five years out of the following activities: business translation, literary translation, literary non-fiction translation, audiovisual translation, interpreting, proofreading, language revision, and project managing. The item was answered by 370 respondents and included 1,222 activities in total. The distribution of the total number of different translation activities is presented in Figure 7.
As is shown in Figure 7, literary non-fiction translations had been performed by 8% (n = 95) of the respondents in last five years, as compared to 24.5% (n = 297) for business translation, 11% (n = 133) for literary translation, 8% (n = 96) for audiovisual translation, and 4% (n = 46) for interpreting. The percentage for proofreading and language revision are the same, 20.5% (n = 249), whereas the percentage for project managing is 4.5% (n = 57).

One clarification might be needed at this point. Figure 7 shows the distribution of the different translation activities (n = 1222). If we instead look at the data from the respondents’ perspective (n = 370), it is possible to detect other patterns. For instance, 67.5% (n = 249) of the respondents answered that they had done proofreading the last five years, and the percentage for language revision was just as high. One can deduce that the majority of the respondents have proofread and/or revised during these last five years. At the same time, no respondent indicated proofreading, language revision, project managing or interpreting as their only translational output the last five years. Therefore, I will label these four activities ‘complementary translation activities’. The four remaining translation activities, i.e. literary non-fiction translation, business translation, literary translation, and audiovisual translation, will be called ‘core translation activities’. The core translation activities in relation to the respondents (n = 370) are presented in Figure 8.
When looking at the data from this angle, as many as 80.5% (n = 297) of the respondents have indicated that they had worked with business translation in the last five years. The number for literary non-fiction translation is 25.5% (n = 95) and for audiovisual translation 26% (n = 96). The percentage for literary translation is slightly higher at 36% (n = 133). The activities are to a high degree overlapping; the majority of translators tend to work with more than only one type of translation. This calls for an investigation of the relation between what I call exclusive translational output, i.e. that respondents have done only this kind of translation activity in the last five years, and multiple translational outputs, i.e. that respondents have done several types of translation in the last five years.

Table 7. Translational output, exclusive translational output, and multiple translational output over the last five years in relation to translation activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translation activity</th>
<th>Translational output (n)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Exclusive translational output (n)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Multiple translational outputs (n)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literary non-fiction translation</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary translation</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiovisual translation</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business translation</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading Table 7 line by line, it is clear that the relation between exclusive and multiple output is highly dependable on the translation activity. As few as 4% (n = 4) of the respondents who have stated that they did literary non-fiction translation in the last five years have only done literary non-fiction translation, in contrast to 96% (n = 91) who have indicated multiple translational outputs. This means that only four of the respondents have translated only literary non-fiction in the last five years, but 91 respondents have translated literary non-fiction at some point during the last five years. The exclusive translational output is in minority also for literary translation and for audiovisual translation, with 28% (n = 37) and 10.5% (n = 10) of the respondents, respectively. The most even relation between exclusive translational output and multiple translational outputs is the case of business translation; 47.5% (n = 141) of the respondents indicated it as their exclusive translation output whereas 52.5% (n = 156) indicated that they had multiple translation outputs of which business translation was but one.

That the respondents have been involved with a variety of different translation activities might also affect how they perceive their professional identity. The question “What is your main professional identity?” was answered by 367 respondents. The choices were business translator, literary translator, literary non-fiction translator, audiovisual translator, EU translator and language reviewer. It was possible to add other specialisation as well as indicating more than one main professional identity. After having the complementary translation activities and various other professions (such as academic, journalist, publisher, psychologist, and biologist, to name but a few) singled out, six core translation professions received in total 422 mentions: authorised translator, audiovisual translator, literary non-fiction translator, EU translator, literary translator, and business translator. The distribution of these main professional identities, in relation to the core identities, is presented in Figure 9.
Only 1% (n = 3) of the respondents reported that authorised translator was their main professional translator identity. Since this option was not in the preset list of activities, these respondents had added it themselves, which may explain the low number of respondents who reported this item. For audiovisual translators the percentage was 8% (n = 32), while literary non-fiction translators and EU translators both received 9% (n = 39) of the answers. As many as 21% (n = 90) stated that their main professional identity was literary translator. A majority of 54% (n = 228) of the respondents indicated their main professional identity to be business translator.

The data from the respondents’ perspective (n = 367) is presented in Figure 10.
The distribution of professional identities in relation to respondents overall follows the distribution of professional identities in relation to identities presented in Figure 9: 1% (n = 3) of the respondents (n = 367) stated authorised translator as their main professional identity, 8.5% (n = 32) stated audiovisual translator, and 10.5% (n = 39) stated non-fiction translator and EU translator, respectively. For literary translators, the percentage amounts to 24.5% (n = 90) whereas it was 62% (n = 228) for business translators.

Out of the 367 respondents answering this question, 30% (n = 110) had marked that they had more than one main professional identity. When looking at the dataset from this angle, another pattern emerges. The relation between exclusive professional identities, i.e. when the respondents have only one professional identity, and multiple professional identities, i.e. when the respondents have several professional identities, is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Professional identity, exclusive professional identity, and multiple professional identities in relation to specialisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialisations</th>
<th>Professional identity (n)</th>
<th>Exclusive professional identity (n)</th>
<th>Multiple professional identities (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audiovisual translator</td>
<td>32 (100)</td>
<td>14 (44)</td>
<td>18 (56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary non-fiction translator</td>
<td>39 (100)</td>
<td>8 (20)</td>
<td>31 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU translator</td>
<td>39 (100)</td>
<td>13 (33)</td>
<td>26 (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary translator</td>
<td>90 (100)</td>
<td>57 (63)</td>
<td>33 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business translator</td>
<td>228 (100)</td>
<td>155 (67)</td>
<td>73 (33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 8, we can see that out of the 32 respondents who answered that audiovisual translator was their main professional identity, 44% (n = 14) marked it as their only professional identity, whereas 56% (n = 18) have multiple main professional identities, i.e. have marked other multiple main professional identities alongside that of audiovisual translator. For literary non-fiction translators, the ratio between the exclusive and the multiple identity is the highest of all: 20% (n = 8) of the respondents marked it as their only main professional identity, to be contrasted to the 80% (n = 31) who have multiple main professional identities. For EU translators, the relationship was one-third: two-third; for 33% (n = 13) EU translator was their exclusive professional identity and for 67% (n = 26) it was one of multiple professional identities. The majority of literary translators, 63% (n = 57) stated that it was their exclusive professional identity, whereas 37% (n = 33) had multiple professional identities. The group of business translators showed the highest percentage of exclusive professional identity with 67% (n = 155), compared to 33% (n = 73) who indicated multiple professional identities.

The next item investigates membership in translator associations. The 317 respondents who answered this question are members of, in total, 43 different associations. Together, these 317 respondents have a total number of 541 memberships. The responses included the five translator associations presented in 1.5 as well as non-translator associations such as different unions, chambers of commerce, and geographic-specific or subject-specific associations. The five translator associations hold 427 memberships in total. Figure 11 presents the respondents’ memberships (n = 317).
Out of the 317 respondents, only 1.5% (n = 5) are members of MT. Twenty-one percent (n = 66) are members of FAT; 28.5% (n = 90) of the respondents are members of ÖS, and the same number of ÖC, 30.5% (n = 97). Fifty-three and a half percent (n = 169) of the respondents are members of SFÖ.

The respondents are often members of several associations. For instance, the average translator in this study who has indicated membership in an association (n = 317) is a member of 1.5 associations. When examining memberships in the four well-established translator associations more closely, with regard to what I call exclusive memberships, i.e. cases where the respondent is a member of only one association, versus multiple memberships, i.e. the respondent is a member in several associations, a new pattern emerges. The distribution of membership of the four translator associations, as well as the number and percentage of exclusive memberships and multiple memberships, are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Membership, exclusive membership, and multiple memberships in relation to translator associations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator association</th>
<th>Membership (n)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Exclusive membership (n)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Multiple memberships (n)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ÖC</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ÖS</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAT</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFÖ</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading Table 9 line by line, we can see that only 18.5% (n = 18) of members of ÖC are in fact exclusive members of ÖC; 81.5% (n = 79) are also members in other associations. The same number for ÖS amounts to 29% (n = 26) of exclusive memberships, while the percentage for multiple memberships is 71%. SFÖ and FAT shows the most even distribution of exclusive and multiple memberships with 56% (n = 95) exclusive memberships and 44% (n = 74) multiple memberships for SFÖ, and 41% (n = 27) exclusive memberships and 59% (n = 39) multiple memberships for FAT.

The next item investigates the time spent working in order to get an indication of the proportion of half-time, part-time and full-time spent in the profession. This question was posed to both freelance translators (n = 281) and employed translators (n = 75). The result is presented in Figure 12.

![Figure 12. Respondents’ working hours](image)

The two groups reflect different response patterns. The freelance translators’ responses are more evenly spread out, and 16% (n = 45) work less than 16 h/weeks, which corresponds to half-time in Sweden where 40 h/week is standard full-time. Thereafter, 27% (n = 75) work 16–31 h/week, corresponding to part-time. The majority of the respondents, 33% (n = 93), works full-time or less, 32–40 h/weeks.\textsuperscript{11} There are, though, also freelance respondents who work more than full-time: 17% (n = 47) work 41–50 h/week and 7.5% (n = 21) more than 50 h/week.

For the employed translators, a small group of 2.5% (n = 2) works 16–31 h/week, but the overwhelming majority of 68% (n = 51) works 32–40 h/week.

\textsuperscript{11} A more logical phrasing of this item would have been to formulate the options as ‘16–30 h/week’ and ‘31–40 h/week’.
A little less than 30% of the employed respondents further replied that they work more than full-time: 26% (n = 20) work 41–50 h/week and 2.5% (n = 2) work more than 50 h/week.

To conclude this section, we will also look at some indications of job-satisfaction: income level, satisfaction with income level, preferred work situation, reasons for working as a freelance translator, and thoughts on leaving the profession.

Concerning income, 251 freelance translators, i.e. 88.5% of the total number of 284 freelance translators, and 73 employed translators, i.e. 97.5% of the total number of employed translators, replied to the item concerning income. For the freelance translators, the question was phrased to ask for annual gross salary/income. This item turned out to be hard to evaluate for several reasons. Firstly, a number of respondents also indicated that they were either retired or had another income (such as scholarships or another job) on the side. Several respondents also indicated a span of incomes and wrote that it was difficult to estimate an exact number since it could change from one year to another. In these cases, I have used the middle point. For the employed translators, the question was phrased so that the respondents ticked a monthly salary indicated as an interval (‘15,000–19,999 SEK’; ‘20,000–25,000’ etc.; the highest option being ‘50,000 SEK or more’). It should be noted here that freelance translators’ gross income can hardly be compared directly with employed translators’ salary, since the freelance translators pays for their social security (e.g. healthcare, pension etc). This means that although both an employed translator and a freelance translator report earning, e.g. 240,000–299,999 SEK/year (see Figure 13), the amount that they can actually dispose differ substantially. However, it is still interesting to see the numbers in comparison to each other to be able to chart income/salary for the profession. Therefore, in order to compare the numbers given by freelance translators and employed translators, the intervals of monthly salary reported by the employed translators have been converted to intervals of annual salary/income. The results for the freelance translators (n = 251) and the employed translators (n = 73) are presented jointly in Figure 13.
From Figure 13, we can deduce that the freelancers’ salary is more evenly spread out across the whole span of options, and also considerably lower than the employed translators. However, Figure 12 revealed that the freelance translators among the respondents more often work less than full-time, which likely results in a lower income. These numbers are also likely due to the fact that audiovisual translators and literary translators are most often freelance translators, whereas EU translators are employed. The employed translators’ annual income is found in the higher salary options. Perhaps even more striking is the mode for the two groups. The mode for freelance translators is found in the lowest category with less than 120,000 SEK/year, corresponding to a monthly income of less than 10,000 SEK. The mode for employed translators is found in the highest category with an annual income level that exceeds 600,000 SEK/year, corresponding to a monthly salary of 50,000 SEK or more.

Out of the freelance translators who responded to this item, 58.5% (n = 148) earn less than 300,000 SEK/year; however, 11% (n = 28) of the respondents answered a number exceeding 600,000 SEK/year. For the freelance translators, the mean income is 291,072 SEK/year, which corresponds to 31,535 EUR/year, or 24,256 SEK/month (2,612 EUR/month). The median is 240,000 SEK/year (25,852 EUR/year).

\[\text{\textsuperscript{12} Converted to monthly salary/income: \textquoteleft less than 10,000 SEK/month\textquoteright, \textquoteleft 10,000–14,999 SEK/month\textquoteright, \textquoteleft 15,000–19,999 SEK/month\textquoteright, \textquoteleft 20,000–24,999 SEK/month\textquoteright, \textquoteleft 25,000–29,999 SEK/month\textquoteright, \textquoteleft 30,000–34,999 SEK/month\textquoteright, \textquoteleft 35,000–39,999 SEK/month\textquoteright, \textquoteleft 40,000–44,999 SEK/month\textquoteright, \textquoteleft 45,000–49,999 SEK/month\textquoteright, and \textquoteleft 50,000 SEK/month or more\textquoteright.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{13} All conversions into EURO made here and in the following have been calculated with https://www1.oanda.com/currency/converter/ and set to 1 June 2016, when the questionnaire was conducted.}\]
The income level is generally higher for the employed translators than for the freelance translators. The lowest options offered to employed translators was ‘15,000–19,999 SEK/month’, corresponding to a yearly income of 180,000–239,999 SEK, and only 1.5% (n = 1) of the respondents ticked this option. Eleven percent (n = 8) earn 240,000–299,999 SEK/year, corresponding to 20 000–24 999 SEK/month, and 23.5% (n = 17) earn 300,000–359,999 SEK/year, corresponding to 25,000–29,999 SEK/month. The mean and median income for the employed translators are the same: 360,000–419,999 SEK/year, corresponding to a monthly salary of 30,000–34,999 SEK. In Euros, this corresponds to an annual income of 38,778–45,421 EUR/year, or to a monthly salary of 3,231–3,770 EUR/month.

A follow-up question to the previous item asked about whether the respondents were satisfied with their income level. The replies by the freelance translators (n = 283) and employed translators (n = 74) are presented in Figure 14.

![Figure 14. Satisfaction with income level](image)

As seen in Figure 14, the two groups’ response patterns differ substantially. The freelance translators’ answers are more evenly spread out over the four lowest options: 14.5% (n = 41) answered ‘very dissatisfied’, 22.5% (n = 64) ‘dissatisfied’, 29.5 % (n = 84) ‘neither’, and 28.5% (n = 80) ‘satisfied’. Only 5% (n = 14) reported being ‘very satisfied’ with their income level.

The majority of the employed respondents are satisfied with their income: 39% (n = 29) answered ‘very satisfied’ and 31% (n = 23) ‘satisfied’; 15% was collected. At that time, 1 SEK corresponded to 0.10772 EUR. At the time of writing (8 November 2019), 1 SEK corresponds to 0.0939 EUR.
answered that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, whereas 8% (n = 6) and 7% (n = 5) answered ‘dissatisfied’ and ‘very dissatisfied’, respectively.

Another perspective on job satisfaction consists of the respondents’ preferred working situation, i.e. whether they would like to work as freelance translators or employed translators. Figure 15 presents the respondents’ current working situation (n = 359) and their preferred working situation (n = 357).

![Figure 15: Currently working situation and preferred working situation](image)

As can be drawn from Figure 15, the relationship between the current working situation and the preferred working situation is rather even in terms of percentages. However, there is a tendency towards preferring being employed: 73% (n = 261) of the respondents would prefer to work as freelance translators, to be contrasted with 79% (n = 284) of the respondents who are currently working as freelance translators. In turn, 21% (n = 75) currently work as employed translators, but 27% (n = 96) would prefer to be employed.

Another item targeted at the freelance translators concerned what made them work as freelance translators. The options were: ‘unable to find employment’, ‘requirements from clients’, and ‘wanted to work independently’; 277 respondents answered this question.
As seen in Figure 16, 67% (n = 185) ticked ‘wanted to work independently’. ‘Requirements from clients’ was the option ticked by 20.5% (n = 57) of the respondents; 12.5% (n = 35) gave the reason ‘unable to find employment’.

The last question concerns to what extent the respondents are considering leaving the profession.

From Figure 17, we can see that the majority of the 359 respondents are not considering leaving the profession: 60% (n = 216) replied ‘not at all’. The remaining 40% (n = 143) who are considering leaving the profession do this to various extent: 15.5% (n = 56) answered ‘1–2 times/year’; 9.5% (n = 34) answered ‘3–4 times/year’; 8% (n = 29) answered ‘every month’; 3.5% (n = 13) answered ‘every week’, and 3% (n = 11) answered ‘every day’.
2.4.1.1 Summary: The respondents’ professional profile

As a first analytical step, I have examined the respondents with regard to 17 items in order to map their respondents’ professional profile. Regarding the gender of the respondents, almost two-thirds self-identify as women and one third as men. The majority (87%) of the respondents live in Sweden, whereas 13% live abroad. A large majority of the respondents are freelancers: 74% in relation to 20% who have indicated that they are employed. Another 4% state that they are either students, unemployed or a working in another field at the moment. Because of the difficulties involved in finding employed translators, it is difficult to determine whether these imbalanced figures reflect the positions on the translation market.

When looking at the age of the respondents some factors stand out. One is the high mean of the sample data; the average translator in the study is 53 years old, and median and mode are both 54. Moreover, 31% of the respondents are over 60 years old, whereas 4% of the respondents are under 30 years old.

The respondents are generally well-educated: 93.5% have studied at university and 55.5% have either a higher university degree such as an MA degree or a PhLic or PhD. Around one-third of the respondents have studied a translation-related subject, but there is also a wide variety of other subjects represented in the study. The respondents also have knowledge of languages and the language combinations range from one to twelve. The average translator commands 2.6 language combinations. When examining the 20 most common language combinations, ranging from English-Swedish with 240 mentions to Arabic-Swedish with six mentions, it is clear that the majority are European languages, with English, Norwegian, Danish, German, and French at the top of the list. In terms of directionality the majority of the language combinations involve Swedish as TL, although there are also examples of Swedish as SL, as well as language combinations which do not include Swedish at all.

Out of 272 respondents, 22.5% are state-authorised translators. Regarding the employed translators, the majority of them work in international institutions, such as the EU (27%), Swedish translation companies (25.5%), the Swedish state (20.5%), or international translation companies (17.5%). A small number of translators, in total 8%, works in companies whose main activity is not translation.

The item investigating years of experience in the translation field also covers the whole range of experience: from 0.5 years to 56 years. The average translator in the study has worked in the field for 19 years. At the same time, 10% of the respondents have less than five years of experience, which would enable a characterisation of them as ‘new translators’. In relation to the age parameter discussed above, it would also indicate that the new translators are over 30 years old when they enter the market. Moreover, the combination of
the age item and the experience item further strengthen the image that the respondents consist of one large, solid group of translators with long experience, as well as a smaller group of younger newcomers.

For the item translational output during the last five years, it was worthwhile to distinguish between ‘complementary translation activities’ and ‘core translation activities’, where the former included project managing, proofreading, language revision, and interpreting, and the latter business translation, non-fiction translation, literary translation, and audiovisual translation. While a majority of the respondents had done both proofreading and language revision, none of them had only done any of the complementary translation activities the last five years. From the respondents’ perspectives, as many as 80.5% of them had done business translation in the last five years. A relatively high figure, 25.5%, had done literary non-fiction translation in the last five years. The relationship between exclusive and multiple translation output varied heavily. Only 4% of the respondents who had done non-fiction translation, i.e. 25.5% of the respondents, had done only that. For business translation, the relationship was rather even. For literary translation, around one-third of the respondents who had marked it as their translation output in the last five years had it as their exclusive output.

The main identities of the respondents portray a high number of different professions. The translation-related professions examined in-depth were authorised translators, literary non-fiction translators, literary translators, EU translators, audiovisual translators, and business translators. Here one can note that as many of 62% of the respondents identified as business translators, while 24.5% identified as literary translators. However, also here the respondents’ answers reflect that 30% (n = 110) of the respondents have more than one main professional identity.

For the membership item, one can see that a wealth of associations, not only translation-specific, was reported for this item. Around half of the respondents are members of SFÖ. When looking at the respondents in each translator association (MT being disregarded because of the low number of members) it is clear that the majority of the respondents have multiple memberships; the only exception being SFÖ where the relation is even between exclusive and multiple memberships. The numbers for the non-fiction and literary translators can be explained by the respondents being members of these two groups, since they differ in function. ÖC is the association with the lowest percentage of exclusive memberships.

The working hours differ between the group of freelance translators and the group of employed translators. The freelancers’ answers are more evenly spread out, which indicates that a higher proportion are not working full-time. The employed translators are contrarily clustered around the options corresponding to full-time or more.

The income level also differs between these two groups, as seen in the modes. The mode for freelance translators is the lowest option (‘less than
120,000 SEK/year’) and the mode for employed translators is the highest option (‘600,000 SEK/year or more’). However, 11% of the freelance translators also reported the highest option. The mean for the freelance translators’ annual income is 291,072 SEK/year, corresponding to a monthly salary of 24,256 SEK/month. In Euros, this equals 31,353 EUR/year, or 2,612 EUR/month. For the employed translators, the mean annual income is the interval 360,000–419,999 SEK/year, equal to 30,000–34,999 SEK/month. Converted to Euros, this amounts to 38,778–45,241 EUR/year, or 3,231–3,770 EUR/month.

On the question of satisfaction with their income, the mode for the employed translators is the option ‘very satisfied’ with their income level, whereas the mode of the freelance translators is ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’. Regarding the respondents’ preferred working situation in comparison with their current working situation, there is a tendency towards preferring to work as employed translators: 27% of the respondents would prefer to be employed, to be contrasted with 21% (n = 75) who currently work as employed translators. When investigating the reasons for freelance translators being freelancers, 67% stated that they wanted to work independently, whereas 20.5% connected it with the requirement from clients, and 12.5% of not finding employment.

To conclude this section, an item measuring to what extent the respondents are considering leaving the profession revealed that 60% state that they never consider leaving the profession, whereas 40% are considering leaving the profession to various degrees.

2.4.2 Perceptions of the translation profession

This section shifts focus to the translators’ perceptions of the translation profession and the appreciation of their own work. The items analysed in this subsection include: expert knowledge, special knowledge, creativity, responsibility, prestige, trust in quality, and appreciation.

The first three items – expertise, special skills, and creativity – concern the respondents’ perceptions of the profession’s characteristics. The nature of the translation profession and, in the long run, the practice of translation, are likely to influence the way practitioners perceive themselves. The two following parameters deal with responsibility and prestige, and to what degree the work as a translator is attached to responsibility and prestige, respectively. The two last parameters concern the relation between the respondents and their immediate professional surroundings and investigate to what degree the respondents deem their commissioners/workplace to trust the quality of their translations, and to what degree they feel appreciated by their commissioners/workplace.

One important item in the characterisation of the respondents’ views of the profession is to what extent they perceive translation to be attached with **expertise**; 373 respondents replied to this item.
The answers to this item demonstrated a clear tendency towards the high-end categories. The lowest rating, ‘to a very low degree or not at all’, only attracts 0.5% (n = 2) of the answers. The option ‘to a low degree’ attracts 1.5% (n = 5) and ‘to a certain degree’ 8% (n = 29). The high-end answers received 34.5% (n = 128), and 56% (n = 209), respectively. This amounts to a mean of 4.43, with a standard deviation of 0.74. Both median and mode are 5.

The statistical tests yield more insight into these numbers. A Mann-Whitney U test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference (U = 9,153, p = .035) between the respondents according to their employment status: freelance translators consider expertise to be required to a higher degree (mean rank 185.27) than employed translators (mean rank 160.04).

The Kruskal-Wallis U test revealed statistically significant results concerning the relation between the degree of expertise required to translate and the respondents’ age (H (6) = 16,377, p = .012). The statistically significant differences (p = .012, adjusted using the Bonferroni correction) were found between the respondents in the age group 31–40 (mean rank 141.33) and the respondents in the age group 61–70 (mean rank 195.42).

Furthermore, the length of the respondents’ professional experience yielded highly statistically significant results in the Kruskal-Wallis U test (H (6) = 23,616, p = .001). The statistically significant differences were found between the respondents with less than ten years of experience (mean rank 148.96) and three other groups. There was evidence (p = .014, adjusted using the Bonferroni correction) of a difference on this matter between this group and those respondents with 11–20 years of experience (mean rank 191.13). There was also evidence (p = .003, adjusted using the Bonferroni correction)
of a difference between the respondents with less than ten years of experience and the respondents with 21–30 years of experience (mean rank 200.54). Finally, there was evidence ($p = .016$, adjusted using the Bonferroni correction) of a difference between the group with less than ten years of experience and the respondents with 31–40 years of experience (mean rank 210.41).

The next item investigates the degree of special skills required to translate. Just like the expertise item, this item reveals the relationship between the profession and the practitioners.

![Figure 19. Degree of special skills required to translate](image)

As is shown in Figure 19, the answers in relation to the item special skills were generally rated high by the 373 respondents who answered this item. Apart from the 0.25% ($n = 1$) of the respondents who esteemed special skills to be required ‘to a very low degree or not at all’ or ‘to a low degree’, respectively, the respondents’ answers are found at the higher end of the scale; 12.5% ($n = 46$) of the answers are placed in the middle category ‘to a certain degree’, whereas 35.5% ($n = 133$) answered ‘to a high degree’ and 51.5% ($n = 192$) ‘to a very high degree’. The mean is 4.37 with a standard deviation of 0.72. The median and mode are both 5.

The Mann-Whitney $U$ test revealed only one statistically significant difference regarding the degree of special skills required to translate: the translators who had marked their main professional identity as business translators considered special skills to be required to a higher degree ($U = 16,711.5, p = .034$) than the respondents who were not business translators. The mean rank for the business translators amounted to 188.34, whereas it was 166.45 for the other respondents.

The next item investigates the relationship between creativity and translation.
The item of creativity was answered by 373 respondents. It follows the pattern from the two previous figures with a concentration on the higher ratings; 1% (n = 4) perceives translation to be attached to creativity only ‘to a very low degree or not at all’, whereas 2% (n = 8) perceive it to be attached to creativity ‘to a low degree’. The middle category (‘to a certain degree’) attracted 18% (n = 68) of the respondents. The majority of the answers are found in the two high-degree categories: 40.5% (n = 151) find translation to be attached to creativity ‘to a high degree’, and 38% (n = 141) ‘to a very high degree’. The result reveals that translators clearly regard translating as associated with creativity; the mean is 4.11, equalling ‘to a high degree’, with a standard deviation of 0.74. The median is 4 and so is the mode.

Applying the Mann-Whitney U test on the creativity item revealed highly significant differences connected to both literary translators vs. non-literary translators, as well as to business translators vs. non-business translators. The mean rank of the literary translators is 236.14 whereas the non-literary translators’ rank was 161.68, which shows that the literary translators consider translation to be creative to a higher degree than the non-literary translators ($U = 17,303, p = .001$). Conversely, the business translators think that translation is creative to a lower degree than non-business translators ($U = 11,247, p = .001$). The business translators’ mean rank was 164.69, to be compared to the higher mean rank of non-business translators: 208.81.

In the next two items, the focus shifts to the respondents’ view of the implications of the translation profession. First, the degree of responsibility associated with working as a translator was investigated.
The distribution of answers follows the pattern from the previous items with a high concentration on the higher ratings. The lowest rating did not receive any answers, and the second lowest, ‘to a low degree’, only attracted 0.5% (n = 2) of the total 372 answers. The middle category was chosen by 4.5% (n = 17), whereas 32% (n = 119) answered ‘to a high degree’, and 63% (n = 234) ‘to a very high degree’. The high mean for this item, 4.57 with a standard deviation of 0.60 reflecting the high concentration of answers, demonstrates that the respondents themselves perceive a great deal of responsibility. In fact, the mean is the highest reported in this sub-section. Accordingly, both the median and mode are 5.

Also, the Mann-Whitney U test showed three statistically significant differences. Firstly, the respondents’ working status revealed a statistically significant result (U = 9,199, p = .037): the freelance translators consider the responsibility attached to the work as a translator to a higher degree (mean rank = 184.49) than the employed translators (mean rank: 160.65). Secondly, there were statistically significant differences between the literary translators vs. the non-literary translators (U = 14,967, p = .001). Whereas the literary translators mean rank reached 210.47, the non-literary translators’ mean rank amounted to 169.65, which shows that literary translators deem the responsibility attached to translation to a greater extent than non-literary translators. Thirdly, the business translators’ perception of responsibility compared to that of non-business translators also produced statistically significant differences (U = 12,066, p = .001). The business translators deemed the responsibility attached to the work of a translator to a lesser extent (mean rank 167.96) than the non-business translators among the respondents (mean rank 201.47).

The next item concerns the degree of prestige associated with the respondents’ work as translators. The result is presented in Figure 22.
Compared to the previous items examined, the almost bell-shaped distribution of the answers in Figure 22 reveals a more even dissemination of the 372 respondents’ perceptions. The lowest rating ‘to a very low degree or not at all’ attracts 12.5% (n = 47) and the second-lowest ‘to a low degree’ 24% (n = 89). The highest concentration of answers is found in the middle category, ‘to a certain degree’, with 44% (n = 163) of the respondents. The second highest category was chosen by 15.5% (n = 58), whereas only 4% (n = 15) answered ‘to a very high degree’.

Unlike the previous items, the result regarding prestige is more nuanced. The mean is 2.74, which is noticeably lower than the mean of the previous parameters investigated. The standard deviation of 0.99 is higher than in the previous parameters, which reflects the fact that the answers are more evenly distributed over the five possible answers. The median is 3, as is the mode.

Using the Mann-Whitney U test, three variables produced statistically significant results: gender (U = 17,822, p = .024), the specialisation literary translator (U = 14,743.5, p = .002), and the specialisation business translators (U = 13,048, p = .046). The female translators (mean rank 177.24) attached prestige to translation to a lesser extent than male translators (mean rank 202.05). The literary translators (mean rank 207.91) further considered the prestige attached to work as a translator to a higher extent than non-literary translators (mean rank 170.52). Conversely, business translators thought prestige to be attached to a lesser extent (mean rank 172.23) than non-business translators (mean rank 193.85).

The last two items of this sub-section investigate the relationship between the respondents and their immediate surroundings. For the freelance transla-
tors, this means the respondents’ commissioners, and for the employed translators their workplace. The item of trust was investigated through the extent to which the respondents deem their commissioners or workplaces to trust the quality of their translations. This parameter was investigated in one section aimed at freelance translators, answered by 284 freelance translators, and in another section aimed at employed translators, answered by 75 employed translators. The results presented in Figure 23 are the joint result for the 359 respondents.

![Figure 23. Degree of trust in the quality of the respondents’ work by their commissioners/workplaces](image)

Only 1% (n = 3) of the respondents answered that the quality of their translations is trusted ‘to a very low degree or not at all’, whereas the option ‘to a low degree’ did not receive any answers for either group. The middle category received 4% (n = 14) answers. The high-end answer ‘to a high degree’ received 36% (n = 129) of the answers. The highest option received 59% (n = 213) by the respondents. The mean is 4.52, with a standard deviation of 0.72, and the median and mode are both 5.

The Mann-Whitney U test showed several statistically significant results regarding this item. Firstly, respondents who had studied a translation-related subject were more prone to think that their commissioners and workplaces trusted the quality of their translations ($U = 13,309, p = .003$). The difference is seen in the mean ranks: the mean rank of the translation-educated translators reached 186.21, whereas the mean rank of the other respondents amounted to 156.88. Also the respondents who had marked their main professional identity to be literary translators distinguished themselves as more confident in how their commissioners valued the quality of their translations ($U = 12,680, p = .030$). Their mean rank was 190.94, whereas the mean rank of non-literary
translators was 167.73. Finally, the respondents who have marked audiovisual translator as their main professional identity also distinguished themselves from the rest of the respondents ($U = 2,627$, $p = .002$). As opposed to the non-audiovisual translators (mean rank 177.34), the audiovisual translators (mean rank 121.96) were less sure of how their commissioners and workplaces deemed the quality of their translations.

Furthermore, the Kruskal-Wallis U test also showed statistical significance ($H (6) = 18,722$, $p = .005$) regarding the trust in quality perceived by the translators and the length of the respondents’ professional experience. Also here, the statistically significant difference ($p = .010$, adjusted using the Bonferroni correction) is only found between two groups: between the respondents with less than ten years of experience (mean rank 152.12) and the respondents with 20–30 years of experience (mean rank 198.05): the group with less than 10 years’ experience feels less sure of how their translations are evaluated than the respondents with 20–30 years of experience.

Alongside the item trust in the translator’s quality, there is also the question of the degree of appreciation by the commissioners (for freelancers) and workplaces (for employees). A total number of 284 freelance translators and 75 employed translators, in total 359 respondents, answered this item. The result is presented jointly in Figure 24.

Figure 24. Degree of appreciation from the respondents’ commissioners/workplaces

The two lowest options attract 1.5% ($n = 6$) each, whereas 12.5% ($n = 44$) responded ‘to a certain degree’. Again, the concentration of answers is found in the high-end categories; 39.5% ($n = 141$) answered that they feel appreciated ‘to a high degree’ and 45% ($n = 162$) ‘to a very high degree’. This
amounts to a mean of 4.24 with a standard deviation of 0.85. The median is 4 and the mode is 5.

The Mann-Whitney U test showed statistically significant results concerning the audiovisual translators ($U = 2,609.5, p = .004$). As in the previous item, the audiovisual translators felt less appreciated by their commissioners and workplaces (mean rank 121.23) compared to non-audiovisual translators (mean rank 177.4).

The Kruskal-Wallis U test further revealed a statistically significant ($H (6) = 13,591, p = .035$) between appreciation and the respondents’ age. The only statistically significant difference is found between the respondents in the age groups 31–40 and 61–70 ($p = .020$, adjusted using the Bonferroni correction): the respondents aged 31–40 felt less appreciated (mean rank 137.14) than the respondents in the age group 61–70 (mean rank 189.89).

### 2.4.2.1 Summary: Perceptions of the translation profession

This sub-section investigated the respondents’ perception of the profession’s characterisation through the items expertise, special knowledge, creativity, responsibility, prestige, degree of trust for the quality of translations from commissioners or workplace, and appreciation from commissioners or workplace. The result from the seven items reflect a strong tendency towards viewing translation as a highly specialised and creative profession requiring a high degree of expertise: the expertise item receives a mean of 4.43, the special skills item 4.37, and the creativity item 4.11. The respondents deem the responsibility associated with working as a translator as very high: the mean of the responsibility item is 4.57. The prestige associated with working as a translator is middling with a mean of 2.74, which is the lowest mean in this section. The respondents feel that the quality of their translations is trusted by their commissioners and workplace to a high degree: the mean is 4.52. Similarly, the appreciation perceived by their commissioners and workplaces is high with a mean of 4.20.

The median and mode in this section also reflect the high consensus among the respondents: the mode were 5 for all items except for the creativity item, which received 4 as both median and mode, and prestige, which received 3 for both median and mode.

Statistical analyses of these data provide a more detailed account. The Mann-Whitney U test showed that freelance translators were more prone to think that translation requires expertise than employed translators. The Kruskal-Wallis test also uncovered statistically significant results regarding age and professional experience. Regarding age, the respondents aged 31–40 thought translation to require expertise to a lower degree than both the age groups 51–60 and 61–70, respectively. Furthermore, the respondents with less than ten years of experience perceived translation to require expertise to a lesser extent than those with 10–20, 21–30, and 31–40 years of experience, respectively.
Regarding the item special skills, the only statistically significant finding revealed that business translators thought special skills to be associated with translation to a higher degree than non-business translators. When it came to the item creativity, literary translators perceived that translation was creative to a higher degree than non-literary translators, whereas the relationship was the opposite for business translators: business translators perceived translation to be creative to a lesser extent than non-business translators. The same situation was valid for the responsibility item. In addition, freelance translators were more prone to think that responsibility was attached to translation compared to employed translators. The statistically significant findings regarding prestige further consolidated this view: literary translators think that prestige is attached to translation to a greater extent than non-literary translators, whereas business translators think it is attached with prestige to a lesser extent than non-business translators. Male translators also perceive translation to be more prestigious than female translators.

Regarding the question as to whether the respondents perceive their commissioners and workplaces to trust the quality of their translations, there are three statistically significant results. Firstly, the respondents who have studied a translation-related subject believe their commissioners and workplaces to trust the quality of their translation to a higher degree than those who had not. Secondly, the literary translators believed this to be the case to a higher degree than non-literary translators, whereas the audiovisual translators believed it to a lower degree than non-audiovisual translators.

The final question, to what degree the respondents feel appreciated by their commissioners and workplaces, received two statistically significant results. Audiovisual translators perceived themselves to be appreciated to a lesser extent than non-audiovisual translators. The Kruskal-Wallis U tests further showed that the group of translators with less than ten years of experience felt appreciated to a lower degree than the respondents who had 40–50 years of experience. Also, the respondents aged 31–40 felt appreciated to a lower degree than those in the age group 61–70.

2.4.3 Perceptions of the translation profession’s value in society
This sub-section aims at detecting how Swedish translators perceive the value of the translation profession in society. To meet this aim, four items are investigated: the respondents’ perception of the translation profession’s status in Sweden; the visibility of the translation profession in society; the profession’s influence on economic, political, societal or other matters; and to what degree the translation profession is valued in comparison with similar professions. These items have in common that they are concerned with societal, in a sense external, issues; the aim is to discern how the respondents see the translation profession and its value in Swedish society. Each item is presented together with mean and standard deviation, median, mode.
The first item concerns the respondents’ view of the status of the translation profession in Sweden. The status item was answered by 371 respondents.

Figure 25. Degree of the status of the translation profession in Sweden

As opposed to the response patterns in the previous section, Figure 25 leans to the left side of the graph: 21% (n = 79) stated that translators enjoy status in Swedish society ‘to a very low degree or not at all’. The highest ratings are found in the second and third category: 36% (n = 135) answered ‘to a low degree’ while 37% (n = 136) answered ‘to a certain degree’. The fourth position attracted as few as 5% (n = 17) of the respondents and only 1% (n = 4) answered the highest possible option, ‘to a very high degree’. For the status item, the mean is 2.27, i.e. below the middle point. The standard deviation is 0.77. The median is 2 and the mode is 3.

The Mann-Whitney U tests showed three statistically significant results concerning the status of the translation profession in Sweden. The gender variable ($U = 18,433.5, p = .003$) showed that male translators perceive the status of the profession to be higher than female translators: the male translators’ mean rank reached 206.15, to be compared with the female translators’ mean rank of 174.05. Also the literary translators perceive the status of the profession to be higher than non-literary translators ($U = 14,336, p = .005$). The literary translators’ mean rank amounted to 204.79, while the non-literary translators mean rank was 171.01. This perception is not shared by the business translators ($U = 12,180.5, p = .005$), who recognise the status of the profession to be lower (mean rank 168.73) than non-business translators (mean rank 199.09).

The next item concerned to what degree the translation profession is visible on a societal level. The result is presented in Figure 26.
Figure 26. Degree of translators’ visibility in society

The pattern for the visibility item follows the pattern from the previous item in this subsection with a concentration on the lower ratings. Out of 370 respondents, 25% (n = 93) answered that translators are visible in society ‘to a very low degree or not at all’ and 50% (n = 185) answered ‘to a very low degree’. The third position, ‘to a certain degree’, received 22.5% (n = 84) of the respondents’ answers. The two highest categories only received 1.5% (n = 6) and 0.5% (n = 2) of the answers. The mean for this item is 2.02 and the standard deviation is 0.77; median and mode are both 2.

The Mann-Whitney U test revealed statistically significant (U = 17,906, p = .010) regarding the gender of the respondents. Male translators deem translators’ visibility in society to be higher (mean rank 202.69) than female translators (mean rank 175.26). Another statistically significant result concerned the EU translators (U = 4,289, p = .042), who perceived translators to be less visible (mean rank 146.97) than did the non-EU translators (mean rank 182.26).

The next item deals with the perceived influence of the translation profession in society. The respondents were asked to what degree working as a translator has economic, political, societal or other influence.
Of the 371 respondents who answered this item, close to half, 49% (n = 181), find translators to have influence ‘to a low degree or not at all’, whereas 29.5% (n = 110) answered ‘to a low degree’. The middle position attracted 18.5% (n = 69) of the respondents. Again, the high-end positions received the least answers; 2% (n = 8) for ‘to a high degree’ and 1% (n = 3) for ‘to a very high degree’. The mean for this item is as low as 1.76, with a standard deviation of 0.88; median is 2 and mode 1. Neither the Mann-Whitney U test nor the Kruskal-Wallis H test yielded any statistically significant results for this item.

Lastly, an item interrogating to what degree the translation profession is valued in Sweden in comparison with other occupations with a comparable educational level.
For the question regarding translators’ value in comparison to professions with the same educational level, the low-end trend from previous items continued. The lowest position was answered by 23.5% (n = 87) of the 367 respondents. The second category, ‘to a low degree’ received the majority of the answers with 55.5% (n = 203). The middle position received 17.5% (n = 64), whereas the two high-end categories only attracted 2.5% (n = 10) and 1% (n = 3) of the answers, respectively. This gives a mean of 2.01 and a standard deviation of 0.77. The median is 2, as is the mode.

The Mann-Whitney U tests revealed three statistically significant results regarding the variables gender, working status and literary translators. Firstly, the gender variable (U = 18,118, p = .001) showed that male translators, with the mean rank 205.45, thought that translators are valued to a greater extent than did the female translators, whose mean rank was 171.55. The working status of the respondents (U = 8,668, p = .027) also revealed insights on this matter: the freelance translators (mean rank 182.54) think translators are valued to a greater extent compared to employed translators (mean rank 155.74). Finally, the literary translators (U = 14,202, p = .003) also perceive translators to be valued to a greater extent (mean rank 202.07) compared to non-literary translators (mean rank 169).

Furthermore, the Kruskal-Wallis U test revealed a statistical significance (H (6) = 17,327, p = .008) between the respondents’ age and to what degree translators are valued in comparison with occupations of comparable educational level. The statistically significant differences were found between the respondents aged 31–40 and two other groups: the respondents in the age group 61–70 (p = .045, adjusted using the Bonferroni correction), on the one hand, and the respondents in the age group 71–80 (p = .013, adjusted using
the Bonferroni correction), on the other. The statistically significant results show that the respondents in the younger age group perceived translators to be valued to a lesser extent (mean rank 144.72) than the respondents in the age groups 61–70 (mean rank 192.98) and 71–80 (mean rank 208.94).

2.4.3.1 Summary: Perceptions of the translation profession’s value in society

In this sub-section I have examined the respondents’ views of the profession’s social value through the items of status, visibility, influence, and value. The mean values in this sub-section are considerably lower than in the previous sub-section, and all are below the mid-scale position 3. Overall, they reflect that the social status of translation, as perceived by the respondents, is indeed low: the status item received a mean of 2.27, and the visibility item a mean of 2.02. The influence item, which investigated the degree to which the translation profession is associated with influence on a societal level, received the lowest mean in this study, 1.76. In terms of to what degree the translation profession is valued in society, as compared with professions of the same educational standards, the respondents’ answers amounted to a mean of 2.01. The median of these items reflects the same tendency: all medians in this sub-section are 2, equalling ‘to a low degree’. The mode is 3 for the status item, 1 for the influence item, and 2 for the visibility item as well as for the value item.

The statistical Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis H test further uncover the details of these data. Regarding the status item, male translators were found to think that the profession enjoyed higher status in Sweden than female translators did. Moreover, literary translators also answered that the translation profession enjoyed status to a higher degree than those who were not literary translators, whereas business translators believed it to enjoy status to a lower degree than non-business translators. Regarding the visibility item, male translators thought translation to be visible in society to a greater extent than did female translators. EU translators found that translators are visible in society to a lesser extent than did translators who are not EU translators. The influence item yielded no statistically significant differences. As to what degree translators are valued in comparison with occupations of comparable educational level, male translators thought translators to be valued to a higher degree than did female translators. Also freelance translators thought translators to be valued to a higher degree than did employed translators, as did literary translators as opposed to non-literary translators. The Kruskal-Wallis H test further showed that respondents aged 31–40 thought translators to be valued to a lower degree than did respondents aged 61–70 and 71–80, respectively.
2.5 Discussion

This study has aimed to investigate perceptions associated with translatorship on a national level in Sweden. The findings add to existing sociological translation research on translators as a professional group in various contexts, and more closely to the previous research projects carried out in the Nordic countries by Dam and Zethsen in Denmark (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016) and Ruokonen in Finland (Ruokonen 2016, 2018, 2019; Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018). A questionnaire, based on Dam and Zethsen’s and Ruokonen’s questionnaires, was sent out and received responses from 373 respondents. In this study, 24 items from the questionnaire have been investigated under three sub-sections: the respondents’ professional profile; the respondents’ perceptions of the profession and their own work, and the respondents’ perceptions of the profession’s social value.

2.5.1 Investigating translators

The first part of this study aims to investigate perceptions of translatorship on a macro level, operationalised as the respondents’ perceptions of the profession and their work, and the respondents’ perceptions of the profession’s value in society, which was approached with the research question:

1a. What are the respondents’ perceptions on items related to translatorship in contemporary Sweden?

The overall picture that emerges from the results is a profession which is marked by blurred boundaries; apart from the different translational specialisations within it, the respondents reflect a variety of different educational backgrounds and different age groups. In the following, I will discuss some of the main findings.

The results point out interesting patterns in relation to the respondents’ entry to and exit from the profession. First of all, it is clear that the questionnaire did not reach the youngest group of translators: only 4% of the respondents are under 30 years old. This could, at first glance, be seen as a sign of there not being many young translators, which is however unlikely given that translation students tend to be under 30 years old (see, for example, the respondents in Study 2; see 3.4.2). It could also be an indication that young translators might not see the reasons for joining a translator association and hence did not receive the questionnaire, or simply that the questionnaire did reach these translators but that they for some reasons chose not to answer it. The lack of younger translators among the respondents probably suggests that the study fails to detect whether the translation profession is experiencing a generational shift. Consequently, this leads to a high concentration of older respondents: the mean age is 53 years old, and 31% of the respondents are close to or above
retirement age; 13% are between 70 and 100 years old. This situation of course risks tilting the results towards the views of the older respondents. At any rate, it seems safe to conclude that a non-negligible group of translators continue to work beyond retirement age. In relation to the income level and the working hours reported, it is likely that this group mainly consists of freelance translators, but this remains to be investigated in greater detail. There is then a somewhat strong tendency to continue working beyond retirement age. At the same time, there is an even stronger tendency concerning those considering leaving the profession: 40% of the respondents reported considering leaving the profession to some extent. This item was seen as an indication of professional well-being and gives an indication of how satisfied the respondents are with their choice of profession. The fact that as many as 40% of the respondents are considering leaving the profession raises questions on the attractiveness of the profession in the longer term, although the number is lower than those reported on the same item in Finland (Heino 2017:60; Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018:13).

The items on translational output during the last five years and main professional identity turned out to be the most complex items to analyse. In order to look at the data from different angles these parameters have been analysed in three ways: from the perspective of the different activities (for the items membership in translator associations and professional identities); from the respondents’ perspectives; and the relation between exclusive and multiple involvement in the items. I argue that this way of handling the data has allowed for a deeper understanding of each item and of the characterisation of the respondents. One finding that emerged concerned the prevalence of multiple professional identities among the respondents. Around one-third of the respondents have multiple main professional identities, sometimes as many as up to four. This result is further strengthened when examining the respondents’ translational output, which shows that the majority of the translators are doing a multitude of different sorts of translation jobs. While previous studies (Katan 2009b; Meylaerts 2008) have pointed towards translators having additional careers outside of the translation profession, the findings in this study lend support to Sela-Sheffy’s (2016:60) observation of the intersections of translational job types within the translation profession. Sela-Sheffy points out that this “confirms our assumption concerning the structural flexibility and mobility within the translation professions (as well as between these and related ones)” (Sela-Sheffy 2016:60–61). The multipositionality within the translation profession raises questions of whether translators choosing to work with different specialisations is due to a shortage of work in their preferred specialisation, or if there are other influential factors. From a methodological viewpoint, this finding reinforces the necessity to study agents from a broad, holistic perspective, in order to grasp the complete picture.

Despite the differences in the respondents’ professional profiles, they reflect a remarkably strong consensus regarding the profession’s characteristics
(see 2.4.2) and how the profession is valued in society (see 2.4.3). In relation to the profession itself, the respondents show a strong sense of professional pride. They deem their profession to be marked by expertise and requiring a high level of special skills and creativity. Furthermore, the profession is associated, at least to some extent, with prestige and, to a very large extent, with responsibility. They also feel trusted and appreciated by their commissioners and colleagues. In this regard, the findings certainly present a paradox; the respondents find translators to have responsibility – but not influence; the profession is associated, albeit weakly, with prestige – but it does not enjoy high status, as will be discussed below.

As can be seen in Table 10, the findings regarding the profile of the profession and its social value are demonstrated clearly: the respondents have high esteem towards the items related to the translation profession in general (second subsection), but not towards how it is valued in society (third sub-section). The respondents’ unanimous perceptions of these two subjects further motivates the division of items into the different sub-sections.

Table 10. Overview of the investigated items and corresponding mean (M1), median (M2), and mode (M3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>M1</th>
<th>M2</th>
<th>M3</th>
<th>Social value</th>
<th>M1</th>
<th>M2</th>
<th>M3</th>
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<td>Status</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Visibility</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Influence</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The answers in the second sub-section on the profession’s characteristics were predominantly found in the high-end categories, favouring the answers ‘to a high degree’ (4) or ‘to very high degree’ (5). The percentage for these two high-end categories range from 78.5% (creativity) to 98% (responsibility). The exception to this tendency is the item prestige, where the two high-end categories only received 19.5% of the answers. The three first parameters – expertise, special skills, and creativity – were concerned with the respondents’ perception of the profession’s characteristic. The analysis shows that the respondents value the profession in terms of the, according to the respondents, the inherent qualities of the profession: the means for these three items range between 4.11 (creativity) and 4.43 (expertise). These high means clearly indicate that the respondents in this questionnaire perceive the translation profession to be marked by expertise, special skills and creativity. The following two parameters – responsibility and prestige – are concerned with “softer” values (Dam and Zethsen 2011:995). Dam and Zethsen (2011) found these
two parameters to be more important than hard-core parameters, such as income, and it is therefore particularly intriguing that they represent both the highest mean (responsibility, 4.57) as well as the lowest mean (prestige, 2.74) found in this sub-section. The analysis further reveals that an overwhelming majority of the respondents perceive their commissioners/workplaces to trust the quality of their translations (4.53). The respondents also perceive their commissioners/workplaces to appreciate their work to a high or very high degree (4.2).

Whereas the second sub-section revealed a concentration at the high-end categories, the answers in the third sub-section targeting the profession’s value in society are predominantly found at the low-end categories. In fact, the responses for the two lowest categories range from 57% (status) to 79% (value). The status item received a mean of 2.27, and the visibility item 2.02, which are both well below the mid-scale value 3. The means of the respondents’ perceptions of the more abstract items of societal influence and societal value in comparison to other professions are the lowest in the entire study: 1.76 and 2.01, respectively. The opinions and beliefs regarding the social role of translators investigated here indicate that the further away from the translators’ daily life and work one looks, the more the belief in the value of their work declines. The result further indicates that the paradox investigated by Ruokonen and Mäkisalo (2018) – the profession’s middling status in society as opposed to the individual translators’ perceptions of his or her work – is also present in Sweden.

It is intriguing that the two high-end options (4 and 5) and the two low-end options (1 and 2) attract such a high concentration of answers. The third, middle category (corresponding to ‘to a certain degree’) is never, with the exception of the prestige item, the most answered category. Given previous research where the middle position is associated with giving a “non-commmitting answer” (Azzara 2010:100), the absence of this response pattern exposes the respondents’ engagement in this topic. The concentration of answers revealed by the mode further shows that the respondents, though fractionalised in different kinds of specialisations with different characteristics, have unanimous perceptions of the profession, at least concerning the parameters discussed here. As Mellinger and Hanson (2017:48) point out, mode can be used to measure the strength of opinions. In this study, the strength of the respondents’ opinions is clearly demonstrated since the majority of modes are either high (5) or low (2). In general, there are no signs of a clear-cut division of the translation profession such as the one Sela-Sheffy paints in Israel, where elite literary translators stand against non-elite translators of different kinds. There is, however, evidence that different specialisations perceive and value items differently, and that the most noticeable divergent opinions occur between literary translators and business translators, as will be discussed below.

Although the descriptive statistics reveal a unanimous picture of the respondents’ perception of the profession, the statistical analyses of these data
uncover more nuanced results. The Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis H test were used to test the correlation between the Likert-type items and a number of background variables: gender, working status, translator education, five different specialisations (literary translator, non-fiction literary translator, business translator, audiovisual translator, and EU translator), years of experience, educational background, and age.

Gender revealed statistically significant differences on four items: prestige, status, visibility, and value. It is noticeable that these items concern how translation is perceived and valued in society at large, and that in all cases where the gender variable resulted in statistically significant results, male translators had higher rankings than female translators. Male and female translators thus perceive the profession as such in similar manners, but differ regarding how it is perceived in society. Previous research on interpreters (e.g. Gentile 2018) has shown that female respondents do not score lower on the status item than their male colleagues, but that they think that the interpreting profession is valued lower by others than male interpreters do (2018:39). In this study, the female respondents do score lower than their male colleagues on both the prestige and the status of the translation profession, and they also think that the profession is valued less highly and is less visible than the male respondents think. Given that the translation profession is a largely female-dominated profession and area of research (see Schäffner 2013), this requires further inquiry.

A number of statistically significant differences are also distinguishable between the different professional identities: literary translator, business translator, audiovisual translator, and EU translator. Some of these differences highlight the characteristics of the different specialisations. For example, business translators tend to think that translation requires special skills to a higher degree than do non-business translators, which is the only variable that produced statistically significant differences within the special skills item. There are also statistically significant differences regarding divergent perceptions between business translators vs. non-business translators, and literary translators vs. non-literary translators. Literary translators tend to think that translation is associated with more creativity, responsibility and prestige than non-literary translators, thereby following the assumption that the prestige of the client reflects back on the translator (see Sela-Shelfy and Shlesinger 2008:86), such as the prestige of authors and publishing houses. They also deem the status of the profession to be higher than non-literary translators do. Conversely, business translators deem translation to be associated with creativity, responsibility and prestige to a lesser extent than non-business translators do, and they also deem the status of the profession to be lower than do non-business translators. In this material, literary translators and business translators are the only specialisations that have divergent opinions on the same items, but it is important to remember that these two groups were not compared directly with each other, but with the groups that were not literary or business translators, respectively (see 2.3.3).
Another specialisation that produced two statistically significant differences is that of audiovisual translators, who deem the quality of their translations to be less entrusted by their commissioners and feel appreciated to a lesser extent than non-audiovisual translators do. The fact that it is precisely the two items that investigate the respondents’ connection with their most immediate surrounding that yield statistically significant results for this specific sort of translators is perhaps not surprising given the recent discussion on the specialisation (see 1.5), as well as previous research (e.g. Tuominen 2018; see 4.2). We can, for example, recall MT:s call for “a constructive dialogue with our commissioners about rates, conditions and the development possibilities of the market”, where they also pointed out that “the conditions are more and more pressured and our possibilities of doing a good job smaller and smaller”. Nevertheless, this finding positions audiovisual translators apart from the other translation specialisations, since, in general, both these two items received high means (4.52 and 4.20). Given the specific circumstances of audiovisual translation in terms of different sorts of constraints and the technological environment in which the subtitling is carried out, it is somewhat surprising that the audiovisual translators in the questionnaire do not emphasise their expertise, special skills or creativity.

The EU translators in this study perceive translation to be societally visible to a lesser extent than do non-EU translators, which is in line with previous research. In their investigation on Danish EU translators, Dam and Zethsen (2012) showed that it is precisely in the visibility parameter that the statistically significant differences between the Danish EU translators and the Danish national-market translators are found. Both the items physical visibility and professional visibility produced statistically significant differences (Dam and Zethsen 2012:226). The Danish EU translators also ranked status, expertise, and influence lower than the Danish national-market translators, but these differences were not statistically significant (2012:220, 223–224). In Koskinen’s (2008) study on Finnish EU translators, the respondents also expressed a sense of institutionalised visibility within the EU Commission.

The working status, i.e. whether the respondents are working as freelance translators or as employed translators, also revealed statistically significant differences. The freelance translators thought that translating requires expertise and responsibility to higher degrees than employed translators thought. Additionally, freelance translators are more inclined to believe, in comparison with employed translators, that the translation profession is valued more closely with other occupations requiring educational backgrounds of similar length. That freelance translators have a more positive perception of their expertise and responsibility might be a reflection of the fact that they, in their freelance capacity, are in one sense responsible for their own success as translators: they need to emphasise their individual expertise as responsible translators in order to make a living from translation. Previous research by Dam and Zethsen (2011:987) has noticed a similar tendency regarding expertise,
where company translators had lower scores on expertise than agency translators and freelance translators. On a more general level, freelance translators’ higher estimation of their competencies is somewhat surprising since employment is often portrayed as the more positive and favourable option. On the other hand, 73% of the respondents stated that they want to work as freelance translators, in relation to the 79% of the respondents who do work as freelance translators, and 67% of the freelance translators also stated their main reason for freelancing was their wish to “work independently”.

Moreover, the fact that the statistically significant differences pertaining to working status do not overlap with the statistically significant differences pertaining to specialisations indicates that the employment status might be more indicative than the different specialisations per se regarding certain questions. For example, there might be more relevant similarities on certain matters between a freelance literary translator and a freelance business translator, than between an employed business translator and a freelance business translator. Of course, some specialisations are traditionally organised around freelance work, which is the case for both literary translators and audiovisual translators. Yet, the items that produced statistically significant differences can be related to a form of self-promotion of individual freelance translators, which, given that 76% of the respondents in this study work as freelancers, can be said to have significant influence on the general translatorship in Sweden. These findings, taken as whole, suggest that further endeavours should be made to discern the effect of freelancing on translatorship.

The Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed insights pertaining to the respondents’ age and professional experience. Age had an influence on how they valued the items expertise, appreciation, and value in comparison with other professions. For the items expertise and appreciation, the differences are found between the age group 31–40 years old and 61–70 years old. For the item value, the difference was found between the age group 31–40 years old, on the one hand, and the age groups 61–70 and 71–80 years old, on the other. In all these three cases, the younger translators have lower mean ranks than the older translators. Concerning professional experience, the differences were found between the respondents with less than 10 years of experience and the respondents with either 11–40 years of experience (expertise) or 20–30 years of experience (trust in quality). The respondents with less than 10 years of experience have lower mean ranks than the respondents with longer professional experience. Given the nature of the data discussed here, one can assume the that respondents in the age group 31–40 years old to a large extent overlap with having less than 10 years of professional experience (although having 11–20 years of experience is also a possibility). Of course, there is not a clear-cut division since the variables age and professional experience did not yield statistically significant differences in the same items, the only exception being the item of expertise, where both the age group 31–40 years old and the respondents with less than 10 years of experience ranked lower. In general terms, however, it
seems like a more recent entry to the profession is associated with more negative perceptions regarding both the items expertise and trust in quality. It is of course possible and even plausible that, with time, translators develop their expertise and with that, a feeling of being entrusted – either because their quality does increase or because their commissioners and clients come to trust them more. Another possible interpretation of these results is connected with the relatively recent – in relation to having 20–40 years of professional experience, that is – introduction of technological tools. It is possible that older translators who have been in the field longer, do not rely on technical tools, such as CAT tools, and therefore perceive their own individual expertise as higher.

It is also interesting to consider which variables yielded no statistically significant differences: the professional identity as a non-fiction literary translator, and the length of educational background. Regarding the professional identity as a non-fiction literary translator, it can be hypothesised that it does not have as firm a core as the other specialisations. As could be seen in Figure 10, the number of respondents who marked this choice is rather low: 10.5%.

Additionally, educational background did not produce any statistically significant differences. This is particularly intriguing given the result that translation-related training did yield statistically significant differences on the item trust in quality. What seems to be the most important educational aspect is thus not how advanced the education is, such as whether the respondents have studied at BA or MA level, but whether the respondents have studied a translation-related subject or not. Additionally, the item trust in quality also yielded statistically significant differences regarding professional experiences. Respondents who have studied a translation-related subject perceive their translations to be entrusted by their commissioners and workplaces in a similar way as translators with long professional experience, although the only significant result concerned the translators with less than ten years of experience as opposed to those with 20–30 years of experience as translators. In the light of the debate on professional experience vs. translation education (see Katan 2009a; see 2.2) the results are indeed thought-provoking, since they suggest that translation-related training and long professional translation experience lead to similar viewpoints concerning to what extent translators perceive the quality of their translations to be entrusted. At the same time, it should be noted that neither having studied a translation-related subject nor having a certain professional experience as a translator gave rise to statistically significant results regarding the characteristics of the profession nor how translation is valued on a societal level.

In the next section, I will discuss the findings in relation to the status parameters used by Dam and Zethsen and compare the results with the results from Denmark and Finland.
2.5.2 Translator status: the Swedish case

The previous section discussed the findings from the perspective of extratextual translatorship in the Swedish context. One of the aims of this study is to contribute to the existing research on translator status, not least from the Nordic countries, adding empirical evidence from Sweden. In this sense, this study is also a comparative study (see Ruokonen 2013) of translator status in a Nordic context. I will now turn to discuss and compare the findings of this study with pre-existing research on translator status from Denmark and Finland, in order to answer the second research question:

1b. In what ways do the findings relate to corresponding research on translator status carried out by Dam and Zethsen in Denmark and Ruokonen in Finland?

The discussion is grouped under the four parameters of occupational prestige used by Dam and Zethsen (e.g. 2008): income/salary, education/expertise, visibility/fame, and power/influence. The items investigated for each parameter are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Status parameters and investigated items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameters</th>
<th>Items investigated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income/salary</td>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/expertise</td>
<td>Educational level, Expertise, Special skills, Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility/fame</td>
<td>Visibility, Prestige, Status, Trust in quality, Appreciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power/influence</td>
<td>Influence, Responsibility, Value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned previously, status is understood as a “complex, subjective, and context-dependent construct” following Dam and Zethsen (2011:979), and it is therefore interesting to compare Swedish translators’ status perceptions with those of Danish and Finnish translators. The three Nordic countries can be assumed to be similar in certain matters. At the same time, the different selection criteria for the Danish and the Swedish questionnaire make it impossible to do a clear-cut comparison between the three countries (see 2.3.1). Moreover, since the Danish questionnaire was distributed to various sorts of translators at different times, and with a slightly different focus, the items investigated do not correspond exactly. One example is the question regarding visibility in the 2011 article by Dam and Zethsen, which concerned the company translators’ physical position in the company. In this study, the visibility item is instead concerned with societal visibility. In the following discussion, means (and in some cases medians) from the Danish and Finnish studies are presented with the Swedish results as a means of comparison, but the discussion should be seen as tentative.
As stated in the previous sub-section, the result from this study surely presents a paradox: the respondents perceive themselves to have responsibility but not influence, they put great value on their own individual work, but do not see it as recognised as such on a societal level. This paradox has been observed before, and the findings are to a large degree comparable with the findings from Dam and Zethsen’s studies. The “interesting contrast” between the higher ratings on items of special skills and expertise, in relation to the lower rating on the items of status and prestige, was observed already by Dam and Zethsen (2008:86) in their first study on Danish translators. It has later been supported by Ruokonen and Mäkisalo’s (2018) research on Finnish translators.

Concerning the parameter income/salary, the results from the questionnaire study differed depending on whether the translators were employed or freelance. The rather low income reported from the freelance translators should also be seen in the light of the fact that the freelance translators more often worked half- or part-time.

The median for the Swedish freelancing translators’ annual income is 240,000 SEK (25,852 EUR/year). For employed translators, the median is 360,000–419,999 SEK/year (38,778–45,241 EUR/year). In the Danish study (Dam and Zethsen 2012:221), the median of the respondents’ monthly income is 30,000–34,000 DKK, which corresponds to an annual income of 48,215–54,640 EUR/year. This number covers responses by company translators, agency translators, and freelance translators, i.e. by both employed and freelance translators. However, neither literary translators nor audiovisual translators, who are likely to contribute to a lower median, are included in this calculation. Also, these data were collected in 2007 and 2008 (Dam and Zethsen 2012:221–222), almost ten years before the Swedish data were collected, which makes a clear-cut comparison difficult. In Finland, the median income was 32,000 EUR/year for employed translators and 31,800 EUR/year for freelancers (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018:10). The medians for the Swedish respondents’ income level are then closer to the Finnish medians than the Danish. For the employed translators, the interval for the Swedish income level is even slightly higher than the Finnish number, but the median for the Swedish freelance translators’ income is considerably lower than the Finnish one. It should also be noted that the gap between Swedish freelance translators and employed translators is more pronounced than the gap between Finnish freelance translators and Finnish employed translators.

Some scholars (e.g. Koskinen 2009) have pointed out that the translation profession may be a low status profession despite a high-income level, as is the case with Finnish EU translators. The connection between income level and status is explained by Dam and Zethsen (2011:986, original emphasis): “a certain level of remuneration may be a necessary condition for translators not to view the status of their profession as low, but it may not by itself be sufficient to ensure a high-status perception”. Given that the Swedish medians are
low in comparison to most of the Danish and Finnish medians, this prompts further investigation of the limits of this “certain level of remuneration”, which is likely to affect status perceptions.

The parameter education/expertise was investigated through the items educational level, and the degree of expertise, special skills and creativity required to translate. To recapitulate, the educational level of the Swedish respondents was high: 93.5% had studied at university, and 45% hold a higher university degree, such as an MA degree. Twenty-seven percent had studied a translation-related subject (e.g. a translation programme, literary translation, or a translation programme outside of Sweden). Of course, here the situation differs from the Danish questionnaire, since one prerequisite for participating in the Danish questionnaire was to hold an MA degree in Translation. For the respondents in the Finnish questionnaire, 94.5% had studied at university and 75% hold a MA degree (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018:8). Fifty-five percent of the Finnish respondents had studied translation, 36% languages and 14% “other”. A comparison of the respondents’ educational level is presented in Table 12.

**Table 12. Comparison between the educational level among the Swedish, Finnish, and Danish respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>University education</th>
<th>Higher degree (e.g. MA degree)</th>
<th>Studied translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SV</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From these numbers, it can be deduced that the Swedish respondents have the lowest educational level of the respondents in the three questionnaires. Although the percentage of respondents who have studied at university is just slightly lower in the Swedish questionnaire than in the Finnish questionnaire, the percentage with a higher degree, such as a one-year or two-year MA degree, differs substantially between 45% and 75%. The Swedish questionnaire also has the lowest number of respondents who have studied a translation-related subject in comparison with the Finnish and Danish respondents. This is even more pronounced since I have chosen to include different kinds of translation-related subjects regardless of educational level, whereas the Danish and Finnish only included degree programmes in Translation. This result strengthens the choice governing the selection criteria for this study, i.e. to not delimit the respondents according to educational background, since this would most likely have led to a restricted response rate. The national contexts and their different circumstances are likely to have affected this situation, which may be a reflection of Sweden having formalised translator training almost 20 years after Denmark (see 1.5).
The means for expertise (4.43), special skills (4.37), and creativity (4.11) suggest that the Swedish respondents see themselves as highly skilled experts who are performing demanding work. Comparisons the Finnish and Danish means are presented in Figure 29.

![Figure 29. Means of the items expertise, special skills, and creativity in Sweden, Finland, and Denmark](image)

In sum, these three items received similar results in the three countries regarding what is characteristic for translation. It can be noted that the Finnish means are generally higher than the Swedish and Danish means, which might...
be a reflection of Finland being bilingual and that the translators have firmer perceptions of what their core competencies are.

The parameter **visibility/fame** was investigated through the items visibility, prestige, status, appreciation, and trust in quality. The three former items are deemed to correspond to the respondents’ sense of the profession’s value in society, whereas the two latter items investigate the respondents’ sense of being seen by their immediate surroundings. Comparisons of the first three items with are presented in Figure 30.

**Figure 30. Means of the items visibility, prestige, and status in Sweden, Finland, and Denmark**

As previously noted, the item societal visibility does not have an exact correspondence in the Danish studies. The closest equivalent is the freelance translators in Denmark who were asked about their “general visibility as a professional group” (Dam and Zethsen 2011:991), which received a mean of 2.05, just slightly higher than the Swedish mean 2.02. The Finnish mean was the highest with 2.21 (Ruokonen 2019:114).

As far as the item prestige is concerned, the Swedish mean value 2.74 is higher than the mean value for Danish company translators, which amounts to 2.57 (Dam and Zethsen 2008:82). However, as was discussed in the previous section, literary translators tend give higher ratings in the prestige item, so including literary translators among the Danish respondents would probably lead to a higher mean value. Again, the Finnish mean ranking is the highest with 2.84 (Ruokonen 2019:114). For the status item, the situation is reversed: both the Danish national-market translators’ reported mean value 2.68 (Dam and Zethsen 2012:220) and the Finnish translators’ reported mean 2.55 (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018:9) are higher than the mean for the status item.
reported by the Swedish respondents, which amounts to 2.27. The Danish national market translators, including freelance business translators, company translators and agency translators, correspond most closely to this study’s respondents, but again, neither literary translators nor audiovisual translators are included. As discussed in the previous section, the Swedish literary translators considered the status of the translation profession to be higher than non-literary translators. If the same tendency had been found in Denmark, this would yield an even higher Danish mean for the status item.

When looking at the visibility/fame of the respondents’ position in relation to their commissioners and workplaces, the situation is slightly different, as can be seen in Figure 31.

![Figure 31. Means of the items trust in quality and appreciation in Sweden, Finland, and Denmark](image)

The Swedish mean value for the respondents’ perceived trust their commissioners and workplaces place in the quality of their translations amounts to 4.53. This item has not yet been investigated in neither the Danish nor the Finnish study.

The Swedish mean for the perceived appreciation of the respondents in relation to their commissioners and workplaces, is the highest, 4.20, of the three. In Finland, the item appreciation has been investigated under the name of “status of one’s own work”, i.e. “the notion of how highly one’s work is appreciated in one’s working environment by one’s employers or commissioners” (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018:3). The Finnish mean is 3.94, slightly lower than the Swedish mean. In Denmark, this item has only been investigated in the context of Danish EU translators (Dam and Zethsen 2013:248), where the mean value was 3.02. Although the difference is small, and, in the case of the
Danish means not comparable, these two items stand out in comparison with the other items investigated where the Swedish means are often lower than the Danish and Finnish means.

To conclude the visibility/fame parameter, the first three items reflect similar views in the three Nordic countries regarding the societal fame and visibility of translators through the items visibility, prestige, and status. While these three mean values are all well below the mid-scale value 3, it is noticeable that the Swedish means are the lowest for both visibility and status. There is also an interesting tendency in the Danish results, where respondents ranked the lowest for prestige, but the highest for status. The latter two items give insight into how the respondents perceive the visibility and fame in relation to their immediate surrounding. The item trust in quality has not been investigated in the other two studies, but the Swedish respondents apparently feel fairly appreciated by their commissioners and workplaces. The only translation group where appreciation has been investigated is for the Danish EU translators, which makes it hard to compare with the Swedish and Finnish respondents. The Swedish respondents, however, report higher rankings than the Finnish respondents on this matter. In conclusion, it is noticeable that the Swedish respondents rank the items concerning their societal visibility and fame as low compared to the Finnish respondents, but that their individual visibility and fame in relation to their commissioners seem to be higher than for the Finnish respondents. That a profession dealing with languages enjoys societal visibility in a bilingual country such as Finland is to be somewhat expected, but there is no clear correlation to why Swedish respondents would rank their individual visibility as higher than the Finnish respondents; if anything, one could expect the Finnish respondents to feel more appreciated. On the other hand, explaining this only in terms of Finland’s bilingual status may be an oversimplification, since neither Ruokonen nor Heino discusses their findings in relation to it.

The parameter power/influence was investigated through the items influence, responsibility, and value in comparison with other occupations of similar educational length. The comparisons are presented in Figure 32.
Figure 32. Means of the items influence, responsibility, and value in Sweden, Finland, and Denmark

Regarding the influence item, the Swedish questionnaire yielded the extremely low mean 1.76. The Finnish mean, on the other hand, was the relatively high 3.35 (Ruokonen 2019:115). Translators’ societal influence is well-researched by Dam and Zethsen. When the same question was asked to Danish EU translators and Danish national-market translators, the means amounted to 2.06 for EU translators and 2.12 for national-market translators (Dam and Zethsen 2012:224), which is considerably higher than the Swedish mean but still lower than the Finnish mean. However, in the study on company, agency and freelance translators, the means for agency and freelance translators came closer to the Swedish mean: 1.80 for agency translators and 1.87 for freelance translators, while the mean for company translators was as high as 2.57 (Dam and Zethsen 2011:992). The mean given in Figure 32 refers to the national-market translators since they bear the most resemblance to the respondents in the Swedish and Finnish studies. The influence item differs radically in comparison with the other items discussed previously, where the means had been at around the same level.

For the responsibility item, the percentages reported in Dam and Zethsen (2009a:27) on the similar question for company translators would have yielded a mean of 3.96, which is considerably lower than the Swedish mean 4.57. The Finnish mean 4.46 (Ruokonen 2019:115) is slightly lower than the Swedish mean. To what degree the translation profession is valued in society in comparison to other professions of similar educational standards has not

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14 The Danish study does not report the mean; the mean provided in the text is my own calculation based on the numbers reported in Dam and Zethsen (2009a:27).
been studied in Denmark. This item has been studied by Ruokonen (2019:113) but did not yield statistically significant results, and the mean was therefore not mentioned. The Swedish mean was 2.01.

The last three items reveal the most profound difference in this comparison: that the perceived influence on society by translators differs fundamentally between at least Sweden and Finland, and potentially also between Denmark and Finland. Again, that Finnish respondents rank the influence item high may be an effect of Finland’s bilingual status, where the influence of translators is directly observable in daily life in a more pronounced manner than in monolingual countries, but again, there may be other circumstances that have had a more profound impact on how the Finnish respondents perceive translatorship. However, considering the Finnish high mean in the influence item, it is surprising that this is not reflected in the responsibility item, which instead the Swedish respondents ranked more highly. In light of the results regarding the influence item discussed in the previous section, which was the only item that did not yield any statistically significant differences, further research should be conducted on this matter.

To conclude, the findings from this study show overall similar tendencies as the research on translator status in Denmark and Finland. Some items have had different selection criteria and have been difficult to measure against Danish means, as the studies have a slightly different focus. Overall, however, the Swedish means are often slightly below at least the Finnish means, and often also the Danish ones. The exception is partly found in the item concerning the translators’ immediate surroundings: the mean value for appreciation was slightly higher than the Finnish mean. Also the item on responsibility, pertaining to the status parameter power/influence, was found to be slightly higher than the Finnish value. Yet the third item in the power/influence parameter, the item of influence, portrays highly different outcomes: 1.76 to be compared with the Finnish mean value 3.35. This might indicate that the power/influence parameter, and how these factors affect translators in the two countries, are worth investigating in more detail. The intriguing item influence, which received the lowest mean value and did not yield any statistically significant results in the Swedish study, further motivates such an undertaking. It would also be worthwhile to further explore the discrepancy between the Swedish respondents’ rather high self-esteem, according to the items investigating appreciation and trust, and societal low self-esteem as a professional group. Another interesting perspective for further research could be to include the parameter importance/value in society, which Dam and Zethsen (2013) added in a later article on EU interpreters and EU translators. It included items on how important the translation profession is to the greater society. The Swedish questionnaire did not include that kind of question, but in the light of the unbalanced findings in the power/influence parameter, these kind of questions are worth looking into in greater detail.
2.5.3 Concluding remarks

Questionnaire studies can yield extensive evidence concerning large populations and their attitudes and beliefs on a macro level. This study has been conducted by means of descriptive statistics as well as the Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis H test. Although one of the main findings from this study is the strength of the respondents’ opinions and perceptions as to both the characteristics of the profession and the profession’s value in society, the statistical tests also provided a more nuanced picture of different factors affecting these perceptions, not least when it comes to different translation specialisations.

Several questions arise concerning the respondents’ individual reasoning and situation regarding certain items. For example, that as many as 30% have multiple main professional identities raises questions on whether this is due to what we could call unfavourable circumstances, i.e. that there is a shortage of jobs in the preferred specialisation, or whether this is a self-inflicted way of working in order to, e.g. stay alert and to be continuously challenged. The latter has been indicated as a reason for working with translation in a qualitative study by Dam and Zethsen (2016). Another interesting finding is that as many as 40% of the respondents think of leaving the profession from time to time (some a couple of times a year and some every day).

The results from the Swedish respondents are generally similar to previous research on translator status from Finland and Denmark. The Swedish respondents generally ranked the investigated items lower than the Finnish and Danish respondents. The uneven findings regarding the parameter power/influence, in which both the highest mean and the lowest mean were found, further reflect uncertainty regarding the profession’s position in society and point towards the parameter importance/value to society that was later added by Dam and Zethsen (2013).

The questions mentioned above are some of the topics that will be addressed in the qualitative, interview-based third study where translatorship will be investigated from the perspective of five individual translators. First, however, we will look into how translatorship is formed over time in a longitudinal focus group study focusing on how two groups of translation students socialise into the profession during training. Some of the findings from this study point towards the need to look into translator education more closely. For example, translator-trained translators perceived that the quality of their translations was trusted by their commissioners and workplaces to a higher degree than translators who had not studied translation, in a similar manner of having 20–30 years of experience of professional translation, which suggests that having studied translation can also affect the students’ self-confidence in a positive way after graduation. That translator education gave rise to a statistically significant difference, whereas general educational background did not,
further points to translator education as relevant for translatorship. In the next part of this thesis, these are questions that are explored further.
3 Translatorships in the making: Study 2

3.1 Introduction

The previous study presented a snapshot of the translation profession in the Swedish context: fixed in time and place, at the time when the questionnaire was distributed. It provided a fractionalised picture of the participating translators, yet a unified picture of their perceptions of the profession and its value in society. In this study, the perspective is different; instead of the motionless state of questionnaires, the present study aims to investigate the dynamic socialisation process during which translation students acquire a translatorship during formal training. This perspective calls for a new method and a new set of data, and is why I have chosen to conduct a longitudinal focus group study. In this study, where qualitative data form the core of the empirical body, four focus group conversations with two groups of translation students are analysed qualitatively according to the socialisation model developed by Weidman et al. (2001) and its core elements of knowledge acquisition, investment and involvement. The research questions under investigation are:

2a. How can translation students’ socialisation process during formal training be characterised using Weidman et al.’s (2001) core elements?

2b. How do structural factors affect the socialisation process of the two groups?

The rationale for studying translation students in a thesis on translators is manifold. Firstly, exploring the acquisition of translatorship from the point of view of translation students will provide insights into how translatorship develops and changes over time. I argue that the translation student constitutes an example of an under-researched agent of translation, which is worthwhile studying from a translation sociological perspective. Furthermore, the previous study yielded interesting results that showed that respondents who had studied a translation-related subject perceived their commissioners and workplaces to trust the quality of their translation to a greater extent than those who had not studied translation. This suggests that having studied translation does impact translation students’ self-confidence, and their conceptions of themselves, which is worth investigating further.
Secondly, I argue that translation education as such would benefit from being regarded as a site of social practice. Following Silvia Bernardini (2004), I will use the term translator education instead of translator training, since it more accurately captures the features of how training in translation is organised in Sweden with a blend of theoretical and practical components (see Table 14). Considering the longstanding debate about whether the translation profession can be described as a profession according to the trait theory (see Weiss-Gal and Welbourne 2008; see 2.2), it is intriguing that translator education, on the other hand, does share many characteristics with other professional educations. This imbalance regarding translation education and the profession as a whole is likely to affect the students graduating from the programme as well as the profession they will become members of. This leads us to the third rationale, since focusing on agents who strive to enter a profession may also prove to be revealing for the constitution and dynamics of that profession. Veerle Duflou (2016:10, original emphasis) approaches conference interpreting in a similar manner:

Finally, it is hoped that investigating what newcomers need to learn in order to get become (sic) fully-skilled professionals would eventually help me to shed light on the way competence as a conference interpreter is constructed, i.e. on what it takes to be an interpreter.

The transformation from laymen to students and thereafter to professionals might force certain well-established truths that are taken for granted within the profession to be pronounced openly and discussed. Moreover, the boundaries of the profession, often discussed within the translation scholar community as of late (e.g. Grbić 2010, 2014; Dam and Koskinen 2016; Ruokonen et al. 2018), may appear different from the perspective of the ones who try to break them.

In the following chapter, the translation student as an area of research from a translation sociological viewpoint is presented in 3.2, after which I present the socialisation model by Weidman et al. in 3.3. The method and material are then introduced in 3.4. Thereafter, the results are presented in 3.5. The chapter ends with a discussion of the findings in 3.6.

3.2 The translation student – an under-researched agent of translation

The question ‘How does one become a translator?’ has lately begun to attract scholarly attention within translation sociology (e.g. Sela-Sheffy 2008, 2014; Sapiro 2013; Duflou 2016 for interpreting). While largely being answered by way of either paratextual and historical studies (Meylaerts 2013; Voinova and
Shlesinger 2013) or via (retrospective) in-depth interviews once the practitioners have already become established (Sela-Sheffy 2010; Sapiro 2013; Abdallah 2012; Duflou 2016), few studies focusing on translation students as agents in the making have been conducted during the time when they ‘are made’. From a translation sociological point of view, the translation student – explicitly in the capacity of being a translator in the making – is thus an example of an under-researched ‘agent of translation’ (cf. Buzelin 2011). In this section, I discuss research that situates translation students within a translation sociological framework, qualitative longitudinal studies involving translation students, and socialisation of translators.

One of the first scholars who uses something which could be described as a translation sociological framework is Toury (1986), whose early writings focused on ‘natural translation’ among bilinguals and how they gradually developed into translators. Toury called for longitudinal studies into the making of individual translators (1986:87, original emphasis): “What we still lack is longitudinal studies into the making of individual translators, under varying circumstances, carried out in comparable methods and within the discipline of translation studies itself.” In his seminal work from 1995, he raises the question of the becoming of a translator on several occasions. Regarding translatorship, he writes that it “amounts first and foremost to being able to play a social role” (Toury 1995:53, original emphasis; see 1.1 for the full quote), thus pointing towards the social dimensions of the translator’s role. On this note, Toury (2012:277, original emphasis) later elaborates on the prerequisites of becoming a translator:

A prerequisite for becoming a socio-culturally significant translator is gaining recognition in this capacity. Thus, the identity of a person as a translator is granted rather than taken, which also means that it should first be earned. The implication is clear: a central part of the process of becoming recognized as a translator consists in the acquisition of the norms favoured by the culture that would be granting that status.

Highlighting the importance of gaining social recognition, Toury connects the translator with the specific contexts he or she operates in and what is valued in it. Although he is not specifically writing about translators in formal training, these insights may also prove to be meaningful for translation students.

There are a few translation sociologists who have incorporated translation students in their studies of professional translators, such as Sela-Sheffy (2008) and Katan (2009b). As a part of Sela-Sheffy’s (2008) project on Israeli translators (presented at length in 2.2), she focuses the collective self-images among Israeli literary translators. Apart from the bulk of the material coming from written media (interviews, profile articles, critical reviews, surveys of translators etc.), she includes a questionnaire answered by 117 students, of which some were translation students, in order to “get an impression of the
common knowledge and evaluation of translators held by relatively educated people such as graduate students” (Sela-Sheffy 2008:610). Taking translation students’ perception of the profession as a face value for how the profession is considered in Israel is arguably risky, since the translation students can be expected to have an insider perspective of the profession. The results from the questionnaire show that students associate the translation profession with inferior status; 43.4% answer that the profession lacks prestige. When they are asked to name individual translators, 30.4% could neither name an individual translator nor see the point in doing so.

Katan (2009b; see also 2.2) also includes translation students in his global questionnaire study on the translation profession. One of the parameters concerned theory and practice in translation education. Among other things, the results revealed a strong favour for the practical components (2009b:144). Another finding was that the translator’s personal experience is valued over formal qualifications: “University training, it would seem, pales in comparison with the individual, life-long learning, training and specialization gained through on-the-job experience” (Katan 2009b:124). The results from Study 1, where only around one-third of the respondents had studied a translation-related subject, also seems to support such an attitude towards translator education in Sweden. Furthermore, a great deal of the components found by Katan revealed “the unpreparedness of the graduates for the profession, and spoke of the need to learn about tariffs, invoicing and so on” (Katan 2009b:145). Regarding theoretical components, however, a recent study conducted by Pilar Ordóñez-Lopez and Rosa Agost (2015) in the Spanish field of translation education challenges that conception. In stark contrast to Katan’s global study, they find that there is a general approval and demand of theoretical components in translator education.

As previously discussed in 2.2, Ruokonen (2019) compares the results from a questionnaire from professional Finnish translators with a questionnaire from Finnish translation students (n = 277). To recapitulate, she found that the translation students’ status perceptions did not depart substantially from the translators’ status perceptions. On the contrary, the students’ ranking was generally found to be only slightly lower than that of the professional translators. Indeed, Ruokonen (2019:117) concludes that her findings hardly supports the notion of idealistic students, particularly as it is the translator respondents who have the more positive views on translator status and on items concerning expertise, creativity, responsibility, influence on the quality of the final translation and (in the case of the business freelancer translators) influence on deadlines, income and which commissioners to work for.

Translation sociological studies that exclusively focus on translator and interpreter students, or on newcomers to the profession in a wider sense, are few. In her earlier study focusing on only translation students, Ruokonen’ (2016)
investigates the Finnish translation students’ perception of the status of the translation profession and compares it with previous findings from studies on translation status among Danish professional translators. Ruokonen (2016:189) argues that students will take part in the profession in their capacity of future translators and that it is therefore worthwhile to investigate their status perceptions during training. Using the Dam and Zethsen questionnaire, applied to suit the educational context in Finland, she finds that the students’ perceptions are similar to those of professional translators regarding the main status perceptions (Ruokonen 2016:198), just as was also later confirmed in relation also to Finnish translators (see Ruokonen 2019). Interestingly, Ruokonen’s two studies find that the translation students seem to have internalised a mind-set which resonates in studies of professional translators: “[the students] show strong awareness of the expertise required to translate but, at the same time, believe that outsiders do not acknowledge it” (Ruokonen 2016:206). The perceptions of the students in Ruokonen’s study appear realistic and she concludes that the students are “fairly committed to a field that promises neither high status nor high income” (Ruokonen 2016:207).

Kristiina Abdallah (2011) explores the ethical dimension of translator education through an MA course called Translators’ and Interpreters’ Professional Business Skills, where professional translators were invited to class to talk openly about ethical dilemmas encountered in their work. The course was set up to prepare the students for entering the professional market better prepared for the challenges it may pose. Abdallah (2011:132) argues that “ethical issues need to be situated, and their complex and collective nature must be revealed” in order for professional translators, and arguably also for translation students, to make sense and use of ethical approaches.

Tanya Voinova (2013) investigates the self-representation of interpreting students during one vocational course in community interpreting at the Bar-Ilan University in Tel Aviv, Israel. The material consisted of over 3,000 written reports submitted by students over a five-year period (2005–2012) and approximately 400 end-of-year assignments. Although Voinova’s study is not longitudinal, the results reveal a movement in the data, where the students report having a “taken-for-granted” perception of the interpreting profession by the beginning of the course towards developing a view of interpreting as an “important professional domain with its own body of knowledge” by the end of it (2013:12).

One example of a longitudinal study which has successfully accounted for the interplay of agents and context is Abdallah (2010, 2012), although she is following professional translators and not students. In her 2010 article she examines translators’ agency in production networks, using in-depth interviews with the same translators between 2005 and 2011. Regarding the longitudinal nature of the study, Abdallah (2012:14, original emphasis) states:
The longitudinal process proved valuable, as it showed how the interviewees perceive their working environments, how they construct their agency, and how they negotiate their way in the various production networks over the course of several years. In this way, it was possible to gather in-depth information on work-related phenomena and to discover change and movement in the data.

Change and movement have also been investigated by Svahn (2016) in a longitudinal study with partly the same material as in the present study. Focusing only on Group 1 in this material, I investigated the translation students’ self-concept, broadly defined as the way we think about ourselves, and their epistemological development during the three first focus group sessions, i.e. from the first semester in the MA programme in Translation Studies to graduation. The students’ evolving self-concept was investigated from a translation sociological perspective, where the relationship between the self and society can be described as follows: “[Self-concept] is based on our observations of ourselves, our inferences about who we are, based on how others act towards us, our wishes and desires, and our evaluation of ourselves” (Stets and Burke 2003:129). Contrasting how the students’ self-concepts developed over the course of the programme, their epistemological development was measured using the Perry scheme (Perry 1970) and its four simplified positions: Dualism, Multiplicity, Contextual Relativism, and Commitment within Relativism (Moore 2002). The results suggest that there are signs of highly developed self-concepts in relation to the students as professional translators, and that using the Perry scheme proved to be a useful tool to measure their epistemological development, specifically regarding their views on translation, learning, and feedback. Some factors, such as a perceived lack of feedback received on translation assignments, seemed to have slowed down the students’ development.

The benefits pointed out by Abdallah above are in line with the benefits of the emerging field of Qualitative Longitudinal Research (QLR), which is used in the social sciences for labelling qualitative studies which develops over time. Although neither Abdallah (2010, 2012) nor Svahn (2016) explicitly label their studies this way, the emphasis on the interplay of time, process and change in these studies is aligned with the focus of QLR. The field of QLR emerged in the beginning of this century and is nowadays “increasingly understood as a sensibility and orientation rather than a specific research design” (Thomson and McLeod 2015:245). In comparison with quantitative longitudinal studies, Holland et al. (2006:32) state the main benefits of QLR:

Qualitative longitudinal research can reach the areas that quantitative research cannot reach, producing high-quality, in-depth data, and providing great explanatory value. It can offer realistic understanding of causality, how and why things happen as they do, how aspects of social, cultural and contextual processes interact to produce different individual outcomes […].
Furthermore, QLR can be particularly useful in inquiring developmental processes, such as career (Farrall 2006:2).

Most longitudinal studies on translation students within Translation Studies differ from QLR since they are either mainly or completely quantitative (e.g. Azbel Schmidt 2005; Göpferich 2009; Kumpulainen 2016). In these studies, the emphasis is often on translation as linguistic and cognitive skills, and translation students’ development of these skills. Focusing on the translation act and cognitive processes connected with it, the agents and their context thus stand in the background, though Kumpulainen and especially Göpferich’s project TransComp take certain social factors into account. On an overall level, however, these differences in scope make these studies depart substantially from the present one, where the agents and the interplay of agents and context over time take the centre stage.

As shown above, the becoming of a translator has yielded some attention from translation sociologists on an empirical level. Socialisation, on the other hand, has as of yet attracted scarce empirical attention, although it has been put forward as a key process on a theoretical level, both in terms of translation education (e.g. Kiraly 2000), and in the preparation of a professional working life as a translator in a workplace (Koskinen 2008; Duflou 2016). In Kiraly’s view, socialisation is described as follows: “[students’] goal is to learn how to act, think and work like expert translators, gradually moving as a group and as individuals into the professional community of professional translators” (Kiraly 2000:65), which resonates closely with Weidman et al.’s (2001:70) view on socialisation as a process which includes “learning how to think and what to believe as well as how to act [...]”, to which I will turn shortly.

The theme of socialisation into a specific translation-related workplace has attracted some scholarly attention, notably from Koskinen (2008) and Duflou (2016). Interestingly, these two studies have both taken the European Union as the scene and deployed ethnographic methods. Koskinen (2008) studies the Finnish unit at the Directorate-General of Translation (DGT) in the European Commission in Luxembourg and discusses “socialisation to the organisation” as a specific form of socialisation. This becomes apparent in the case of EU translation, as a special form of institutional translation. For instance, the translators in Koskinen’s study have moved to Luxembourg, often with their families. Although the workplace at large is multilingual and multicultural, the translation units provide examples of a closely knit mainly monolingual social milieu. As Koskinen notes, it is “in the interest of the organization to socialize its members so that the goals of the organization are internalised”. Furthermore, she points towards the novelty and primary effects, where the former, according to Liesbet Hooghe (2005), consists of newcomers to the organisation being eager to learn, and the latter consisting of the relevance of age and previous experience, where younger and less experienced individuals are likely to socialise more easily into the profession. Koskinen finds that the
socialisation to the European Union as a whole seems rather limited. The Finnish unit, on the other hand, comes across as a “tight social entity” (Koskinen 2008:98). Koskinen (2008:98) also briefly discusses the question of socialisation to the translation profession in a wider sense, where the issue of educational background plays a crucial role.

Duflou’s (2016) ethnographic study is also carried out within the European Union, in this case on novice interpreters entering the interpreting services of the European Commission (DG SCIC) and the European Parliament (DG INTE). She investigates conference interpreting as ‘lived work’, embedded in the social context of the European institutions’ interpreting services, and more specifically what ‘beginnerdom’ entails for the novice interpreters on an individual and an institutionalised level. She discusses a ‘learning by doing’ approach prevalent among professional interpreters, where interpreters “become an interpreter only in the booth” (Duflou 2016:9). Regarding research on novice interpreters, she argues that it tends to focus on the students’ or novices’ cognitive abilities, and that it has largely neglected the social context in which the interpreting occurs and what it entails for the novice interpreter (Duflou 2016:18). Furthermore, Duflou (2016:16) criticises Toury’s view on socialisation as the acquisition of a set of mental guidelines, which she finds to be a one-sided way of conceptualising group membership. Instead, she argues that it is more worthwhile to distinguish EU interpreting as a community of practice in Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger’s (1991) sense, which is characterised by a mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire. In line with this view, group membership as an interpreter is conceptualised as a more encompassing notion that goes beyond the mere task of interpreting. Duflou (2016:20) states that it “is obvious that gaining competence and a membership identity in a community of practice encompasses much more than learning how to perform a task according to the expectations of other, more established community members.” In conclusion, Duflou finds that the emerging membership identity of newcomers is deeply embedded in the social context of EU interpreting.

Socialisation into a specific organisation is, to at least some degree, dependent on the actions taken by the organisation in order to facilitate the newcomers’ entry into the organisation, as in the cases of Koskinen and Duflou. However, socialisation into a profession during formal training within an educational institution does not, in this sense, “take responsibility” of the outcome of the socialisation process, as the students are about to leave the educational institution. There is also the question of time in relation to the education. Duflou’s study is situated in the space between joining the new institution and becoming a full-fledged member in a workplace, whereas the present study ends with the students taking their first steps as professionals.

To conclude this chapter, I argue that it is worthwhile to investigate the translation student from a translation sociological perspective as an agent per-
tinent to the translation field. Previous research has already pointed to different directions, such as how the students perceive their forthcoming profession and its status (Ruokonen 2016) or how they develop ethical awareness during training (Abdallah 2011). The present study is an attempt to contribute to this line of research, as well as to longitudinal research on translation students and translator education more generally. In order to investigate how and to which extent translation students socialise into the profession, I now turn to research on socialisation during formal training, which will be further discussed in the next section.

3.3 Socialisation: role identity and commitment

Investigating the socialisation process under inquiry in this study, where the participants are students during formal training, requires another sort of framework than those employed by Koskinen (2008) and Duflou (2016). For this reason, I have turned to the socialisation model proposed by Weidman et al. (2001). Building on Weidman’s (1989) socialisation model for undergraduate students, the socialisation model is intended for MA and PhD levels as well as professional education into the fields of, e.g. medicine, law and theology (Weidman et al. 2001:3). As discussed in the first study, there has been a long debate about whether translation can be viewed as a profession (see Koskinen and Dam 2016, among others). Translation education, on the other hand, in the form of an MA degree with practical as well as theoretical components such as in Sweden (see 1.5), is to a large degree comparable with professional education in fields more traditionally labelled as professions. Not only does this imply a tension between the programme and the profession, it may also point towards a tension between professional translators in the field and newcomers with a degree in Translation Studies.

Weidman et al. (2001:4) broadly define socialisation as “the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make them more or less effective members of their society.” The outcome of the socialisation model, in turn, is described as “not the transfer of a social role but identification with and commitment to a role that has been both normatively and individually defined.” (Weidman et al. 2001:36). A central aspect in their model is that socialisation is understood as a developmental process, which leads to the development of a role identity and commitment (Weidman et al. 2001:11), and that the model can be applied to both individual and group level. As mentioned before, the level of analysis for this study is that of the group (see Figure 1). The initial idea of the socialisation model was to present “a ‘general’ model that would be applicable across a wide range of institutions, academic majors, and student populations” (Twale et al. 2016:80). Weidman et al. voice a concern about the lack of the feedback inherent in the traditional, linear conceptions of socialisation. However, drawing on Thornton and Nardi
(1975) and their theory on role acquisition, the proposed model consists of four stages: anticipatory stage, formal stage, informal stage, and personal stage (Weidman et al. 2001:12–15). Unlike a linear approach that would link one component to each stage of socialisation, these stages are here seen as “overlapping instead of being mutually exclusive” (Weidman et al. 2001:11). Within this model, individuals will, with time, move from accepting a role in the early stages, towards being active in shaping the role in the latter stages (Thornton and Nardi 1975:872). This entails that each stage comprehends a complex interaction between students and external expectations, both in the sense that students will try to influence other agents’ expectations as well as other agents’ influencing of the students. Russell Thornton and Peter Nardi (1975:187) define successful role acquisition as follows:

A role is not fully acquired until an individual has anticipated it, learned anticipatory, formal, and informal expectations comprised in it, formulated his own expectations, reacted to and reconciled these various expectations, and accepted the final outcome.

These four stages are related to a growing sense of role commitment. As such, the stages are overlapping and extend beyond formal training, as socialisation continues after graduation. In what follows, I will discuss the different stages and their usefulness to the present study.

The anticipatory stage largely takes place before and in the early phases of the educational programme and involves familiarisation with the role in question. The preconceived ideas often stem from mass media and the characterisation of the role is often stereotyped and superficial (Weidman et al. 2001:12). In the anticipatory stage, the students “exude uncertainty in terms of professional jargon, vocabulary, knowledge of subject content, normative behaviours, and acceptable emotions” (Weidman et al. 2001:12). The formal stage includes formal training into the basis of the profession. The students’ role exceptions are still idealised; the students observe faculty and older students and learn about normative role expectations and how they are performed. The formal stage is to a large extent dependent on the programme and how it is organised, whether students prepare for their future role, and to what degree standards and expectations are declared openly (Weidman et al. 2001:15). As the students continue the programme, they move into the informal stage, characterised by informal role expectations. As Thornton and Nardi (1975:878) note, informal knowledge is most often learned through interaction with other professional agents. Weidman et al. (2001:14) describe that students “receive behavioural clues, observe acceptable behaviour, and, it is hoped, respond and react accordingly”. It is also in this stage where students start to conceive themselves more as professionals and less like students, which presupposes some kind of contact with the profession. Lastly, the role
is internalised in the personal stage, where “individuals and social roles, personalities and social structures become fused” (Thornton and Nardi 1975:880). At this point in the students’ transformation, the students form a professional identity, and in turn, realise that the education is only one step in their professional journey and not the end point.

For the present study which only focuses only on the actual formal training and a short time thereafter, there is a risk that only two stages – the formal and informal stage – would actually occur in the data, which would make the characterisation into different stages rather blunt and superfluous. Moreover, to characterise the data only into the different stages further risks downplaying the socialisation mechanisms and how they develop over time. Instead, the focus will be on the three core elements in the model, with the hope that such an analysis will lay bare how the core elements interact with each other and, more importantly, how these core elements can be understood within the context of translator education.

Before turning to the core elements of the models, the socialisation model put forward by Weidman et al. is presented in Figure 33.
Interactive Stages of Socialization: Anticipatory, Formal, Informal, Personal

Figure 33. Socialisation model (Weidman et al. 2001:37)

As a model of non-linear socialisation, it is conceived as “dynamic and ongoing, without a definite beginning or end” (Weidman et al. 2001:40). Weidman et al. (2001:34) describe it as follows:

Socialization is conceived as reflecting the interaction between and among the various constituent elements rather than being a strictly linear, causal phenomenon, and as illustrating that socialization is also a developmental process.
The centre of the figure demonstrates “the core socialization experience”, which is constituted of the institutional culture and the socialisation processes, as well as the three core elements: knowledge acquisition, investment, and involvement. The institutional culture reflects the department, and the centre of the figure is conceived as an area controlled by the university and the department in question. Surrounding “the core socialization experience” are four components which all play a crucial part in socialisation: prospective students (the students’ backgrounds); professional communities (practitioners and associations related to the field); personal communities (family and friends); and novice professional practitioners.

The relationship between these different components is nonlinear and interactive (Weidman et al. 2001:38); they interact with the core socialisation experience at the heart of the model throughout the students’ educational journey. At the heart of the socialisation model lie the three core elements: knowledge acquisition, investment, and involvement. The core elements account for different aspects of the socialisation process and, as will be discussed shortly, are interrelated on different levels.

The core element of knowledge acquisition reflects knowledge that can be acquired by both formal and informal means. For Weidman et al. (2001:16), knowledge acquisition is important in relation to socialisation from two perspectives. Firstly, the students need to acquire knowledge and skills in order to perform their professional roles. Secondly, the knowledge acquisition must also be effective, i.e. the students need to acquire an awareness of normative expectations associated with the professional role being sought, a realistic assessment of personal ability to perform the demands of professional roles successfully, and awareness of the confidence others have in the novice’s capacity to practice professional roles successfully. (Weidman et al. 2001:16)

Thus knowledge acquisition includes knowledge that could be characterised as both external – how to perform as a professional – and internal – how to adopt the mind-set of a professional. The knowledge acquired usually develops from general to specialised and complex. A central aspect is the accuracy of the knowledge acquired, which, in turn, defines its impact. In other words, the knowledge acquired is granted legitimisation in the capacity of its accuracy. Besides, knowledge acquisition also involves acquisition of the “language, heritage, and etiquette” of the profession (Weidman et al. 2001:16). In the later stages of the socialisation process, the students begin to act and feel like members of the professional community, which in turn leads to identification with the role.

The core element of investment is described by Weidman et al. (2001:17) as committing “something of personal value such as time, alternate career
choices, self-esteem, social status or reputation to some aspect of a professional role or preparation for it”. The nature of the investment is dependent on the students and their context. For instance, the age of the respondent can have a significant influence on what is deemed an investment, such as changing career in a later stage of life (Weidman et al. 2001:64). In the same vein, the students’ previous studies may affect their sense of investment for the students, as well as whether the programme in question has an entrance exam (Weidman et al. 2001:65). From this perspective, undertaking an MA programme is in itself an investment, and moreover a long-term investment. The core element knowledge acquisition may also be interpreted as a form of investment, especially if the specialised knowledge and skills promoted by the occupation or in the programme are not typically transferable to other occupations (Weidman et al. 2001:17). To acquire highly specialised knowledge is thus an even greater investment.

The core element of involvement can be interpreted as an aspect of investment in the sense that it involves social participation; it may be described as “participation in some aspect of the professional role or in preparation for it” (Weidman et al. 2001:18). This could for instance be the case for internship, but it is not necessarily restricted to the educational context. This kind of involvement provides a space for the student to display knowledge acquired in the programme in a real world setting (Weidman et al. 2001:80). The level of involvement varies among professionals and professions, and depending on the stage of the studies. Involvement is not exclusively restricted to the professional community as such, but can also be channelled through involvement with teachers or older students – the main goal is that students acquire “insights into professional ideology, motives, and attitudes” (Weidman et al. 2001:18).

It has already been made apparent that the core elements are often interrelated. Weidman et al. (2001:19) describe their relationship as follows:

For example, it is acquisition of specialized knowledge and skills (knowledge acquisition) coupled with participation in formal preparation for a professional role (investment) that promotes identification with and commitment to a professional role. Similarly, it is the student’s interaction with role incumbents (involvement) that provides opportunities to become aware of appropriate attitudes (knowledge) and to be sponsored for membership in a profession (an investment) […].

While the interrelatedness of the core elements can make them appear as fuzzy, they can also shed light on the complexity and the nuances of socialisation mechanisms. In the next section, the focus group material is presented. The core elements are further operationalised, and the method of analysis presented and discussed.
3.4 Method and material

3.4.1 Focus groups

The method for this study is focus groups, which can be described as groups discussing a designated topic with a moderator. In our case, the designated topic is translation students’ emerging journeys into becoming professional translators, or, in other words, their socialisation process understood as a developmental process over time. Together with other participatory-based methods such as questionnaires and interviews, focus groups are commonly seen as a method for exploring collective beliefs and group processes of a group (Saldanha and O’Brien 2014:150; Bloor et al. 2001:5–6; Koskinen 2008:83). Richard Krueger and Mary Anne Casey (2009:5) describe focus groups as “[c]arefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment”. On the informal character of focus groups, I agree with Koskinen (2008:85) who states:

A focus group is not an interview session but a conversation on a given topic: during a good conversation people laugh, tell stories, make funny remarks, agree and disagree, contradict themselves, and interrupt one another.

Koskinen (2008:85) furthermore puts forward that focus group discussions can prove to be an opportunity for the participants to verbalise opinions and experiences that they often keep to themselves.

Focus groups can either be structured, semi-structured or un-structured, depending on the level of involvement from the moderator (Wibeck 2008). In this study, the focus groups were semi-structured, meaning that the moderator had a set of questions or topics that appeared during the focus group in no fixed order. This approach also provides an opportunity for follow-up questions to be posed and to pick up new subjects that appear as the focus group discussion unfolds. Gabriela Saldanha and Sharon O’Brien (2014:173) note that “[s]emi- and unstructured interviews (and 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”. The moderator of a focus group can be more or less active, depending on the group’s need. For quieter groups, the moderator might need to intervene and actively introduce new topics (Wibeck 2010:58), which was the case for Group 1. Whereas a strength with the focus group method is precisely the collaborative nature and co-construction of knowledge discussed above, a limitation can be that individual respondents fail to express their viewpoints. Regarding the first research question, which focuses on the socialisation processes of the two groups, individual interviews might have provided a more complete picture of the respondents’ journeys. However, another reason for choosing focus groups is that they
allow for a high number of participants. Following the same number of students with individual interviews would have led to a too large amount of data. Another strength of this specific research project is that focus groups can more easily account for the structural factors surrounding the students’ educational context, which responds to the second research question.

The material for this study consists of four focus group sessions for each of the two separate groups, comprising the same students throughout the study: four in Group 1 and five (later reducing to three) in Group 2. Each group of translation students was followed for two years and some months. The material was collected in 2013–2017 and consists of eight focus group sessions with nine students in total. The focus group sessions were conducted in Swedish with me as a moderator (marked as “M.” in the results section). They were recorded with a dictaphone and were later transcribed by me. As can be drawn from Table 13, the total amount of the material consisted of 9:08 hours of recorded material, which equates to 505 transcribed pages (see 3.4.1.4 for transcriptions principles).

Table 13. Focus group material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1 FG sessions</th>
<th>Length (h:m)</th>
<th>Transcription (pages)</th>
<th>Group 2 FG sessions</th>
<th>Length (h:m)</th>
<th>Transcription (pages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FG1</td>
<td>1:13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>FG1</td>
<td>1:10</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FG2</td>
<td>1:28</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>FG2</td>
<td>1:09</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FG3</td>
<td>1:02</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>FG3</td>
<td>1:05</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FG4</td>
<td>0:45</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>FG4</td>
<td>1:14</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4:30</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4:38</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The procedure for finding the students was as follows: in the first week of the MA programmes, I came to a seminar to present myself, my background as a translation student and translator, and my doctoral project. A sheet of paper was passed around during the seminar and the students were invited to leave their names and email addresses if they were interested in participating in the project. After a couple of weeks, I emailed all the collected email addresses with more information about the project and information about the first focus group sessions, which were to be held by the end of the first semester. The students in the project were the students that responded to this email. For Group 1, this meant four students from a class of nine students. For Group 2, five students from a class of seven students originally participated; however, only three students participated in all the four focus groups (see 3.4.1.1). Focus groups are most often constituted of 6–10 participants (Saldanha and O’Brien 2014:173; Saldanha and O’Brien 2014:150; Bloor et al. 2001:26), but because of the longitudinal nature of the study, four and five participants in each group was deemed sufficient. The two groups differ above all in the SL:
the SL of Group 1 is Japanese, an uncommon SL for a programme in Translation Studies in Sweden, whereas the SL of Group 2 is English, the most common SL in Sweden (for a discussion on the implications of this, see 3.4.1.2).

The focus group sessions were held at the department where I worked. I had asked the students to schedule two hours but we rarely spent more than around one hour (see Table 13). In order to create a “permissive, non-threatening environment” (Krueger and Casey 2009:5) crucial for focus groups, I served coffee and tea and something to nibble on. The students were quite shy in the early focus group sessions, in particular Group 1. For this reason, I drew on my personal experience as a former translation student to conduct the focus groups (see Koskinen 2008; Abdallah 2012; Duflou 2016).

Before each focus group session, the students signed a letter of consent (see Appendix 3). They also filled in a short questionnaire regarding some general background information such as name, age, email address, educational background, languages, and whether they had worked with something translation-related before.

3.4.1.1 Presentation of the groups

Group 1 consists of Emma, Eva, Edvin, and Erik. Group 1 is a homogenous group where all the participants were aged 23–29 at the time of the first focus group session: Eva was 23 years old, Edvin 29, Erik 25, and Emma 26. All students participated in all four focus group sessions.

All the students in Group 1 have a Bachelor’s degree in Japanese and have lived for one to two years in Japan. Three of the students have studied either Swedish or Applied Linguistics for one or two semesters. Erik has previously worked in a book shop, but apart from that the students have not worked within a translation-related field.

Group 2 originally consisted of Julia, Jessica, Johanna, Jana and Jill. It is a more diversified group than Group 1, both in terms of the participants’ age as well as their backgrounds. The students’ ages span from 24–40 at the time of the first focus group: Johanna was 24 years old, Jessica 38, Julia 34, Jana 25, and Jill 40. All participants in Group 2 hold a BA degree in English, except from Jana who holds a BA degree in Translation Studies. Jessica and Jill have previously worked in language-related fields.

Jill only participated in the first focus group session, as she graduated after the first year of the programme. Jana did not participate in the second focus group, and came late for the third focus group, consequently only participating for 20 minutes of it. Since I could not follow Jana’s progression over time, she was not invited to the fourth and final focus group session. This explains why Jill and Jana are quite absent in the results section. Jill’s and Jana’s viewpoints will also be accounted for, but the main focus will be on Johanna, Jessica and

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15 The students’ names in Group 1 and 2 are fictitious.
Julia, since their participation in all four focus group sessions enables me to investigate change over time.

3.4.1.2 SL discussion
The main difference between Group 1 and Group 2 worth mentioning at this point regards the two groups’ SLs. Whereas Japanese has to be considered as a minor SL within a Swedish context, English is by far the most common; as we saw in Study 1, English was the most common SL among the participants in the questionnaire study (see Table 6). As a means of comparison, we can consider the number of authorised translators working from the two languages. According to the website of the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency, there is only one authorised translator in the language combination Japanese-Swedish, in comparison to 63 authorised translators in the language combination English-Swedish (Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency 2019).

Not only is the population of professional translators in this language combination small, it is also the first time an MA programme with this language combination has been given in Sweden. This has implications for how I refer to the students in this study. In order to guarantee the students’ anonymity, for both groups, I will not go into detail about their theses or internship or anything else that can be used to identify them.

Yet another parameter that needs to be taken into account consists of the teachers’ profiles. The MA programme is offered by a unit with a rather small faculty with competence in different, mainly European, languages. When other SLs are offered at the department, different language experts – from either the professional field or from academia – are contracted. For this study, this means that the majority of Group 2’s teachers in the practical translation courses either came from faculty of the unit, out of which some had a background as professional translators in different fields, or were professional translators. Group 1’s teachers in the practical translation courses came from academia and were academics, but lacked as far as I know experience of professional translation. The teachers are not the main focus in this study, but they are sometimes mentioned by the students.

The fact that the two groups’ SLs differed in such a drastic way, and the different contexts this led to for the students, was not planned on my part but came to be an important parameter, as we will see in the results section.

3.4.1.3 Interview guide
The interview guide consisted of four overarching themes, which I call content-related topics. These content-related topics include: the students’ background; the translation programme; the translation market; translationship; and the students’ future. These sometimes interrelated topics were deemed to cover different aspects of the translation students’ context and provide a more
encompassing picture of translator education. These five content-related topics functioned as a means for me to organise my questions when preparing for the focus group discussions, but the different topics were probably not distinguishable for the students. In practical terms, the second focus group of Group 1 built on the first focus group of Group 1, etc., allowing for a co-construction of knowledge from the participants’ part. As Stephen Farrall (2006:7) notes, this is one of the main advantages of QLR as the moderator can “tailor-make follow-up questions for each respondent and plan to ask specific questions of them based on their previous answers and experiences”.

The first set of questions fall under the heading of the **students’ background** and include questions such as: What was their educational background? What kind of studies had they pursued before starting the programme? How come they started in translation? At what point in their lives? The second set of questions dealt with **translation education** and questions included: What courses did they study the semester in question? How did they reason when they chose different courses (for the elective courses)? What is a good translation? How do they perceive getting feedback on translation assignments? What is their perception of the translation programme? What has been the best part of it? Has something been negative? Is it important to have a degree in translation? The third set of questions dealt with the **translation market**, and included questions such as: What are their perceptions of the translation market? What kind of translation would they like to specialise in? How would they like to work – as in-house translators or freelancers? The fourth set of questions dealt with issues regarding **translatorship**, including: What are the characteristics of a good translator? Do they call themselves translators? Could they point out one specific point in their career when they started calling themselves translators? When does one have the right to call oneself a translator? The fifth and final set of questions dealt with the **students’ future**: How do they see their transition into the profession? Do they see any career paths? How does one pursue a career in translation?

In addition to the content-related topics, there were also topics that I would like to call progression-related topics. These kinds of topics followed the progression of the programme. An overview of the focus groups, the courses studied in the different semesters and progression-related topics are presented in Table 14.
Table 14. Focus group sessions, courses, ECTS credits, and progression-related topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group</th>
<th>Recorded (semester)</th>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Credits (ECTS)</th>
<th>Progression-related topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FG 1</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Translation I:</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>After the first semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Translation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Text Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Their way to starting the programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Business Skills</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Translation Studies: Theory and Research Methods</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FG 2</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Translation II:</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Half-way in the programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Translation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Terminology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Looking backwards and forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Specialised Language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elective courses</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FG 3</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>3rd semester:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Close to graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty-obligatory courses</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Summing up the programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elective courses</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Looking forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4th semester:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MA thesis</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>The first steps as professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FG 4</td>
<td>7–8 months after graduation</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Swedish universities have a two-semester system, each semester equalling 30 ECTS credits. The autumn semester begins in late August and ends in mid-January; the spring semester begins in late January and ends in the beginning of June. The three first focus groups were recorded by the end of the first, second, and fourth semester and the discussions in these focus groups naturally followed what the students had experienced during the semester. This became especially apparent from the second focus group and onwards when the students could choose elective courses and hence did not necessarily study the same courses within the group.

3.4.1.4 Transcription and translation

The recorded material was transcribed in Swedish using a content-oriented transcription level. This means that I have kept hesitations, false starts and silences in order to respect the nature of spontaneous spoken speech (cf. Koskinen 2008:88). The transcriptions principles are introduced in Table 15.
Although the transcription and analysis are focused on the content of the utterances, it is noteworthy that the students in general often use a depersonalised language. Instead of talking in first person (Swedish “jag”, English “I”), they often use the depersonalised third person “man” (English equivalent of “one” or “you”). In translating the quotes, my aim has been to keep these constructions which may appear clumsy in English, as well as other constructions pertaining to spoken speech (see Koskinen 2008:88).

3.4.2 Thematic analysis: longitudinal focus groups

The transcribed material was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006), which is described as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun and Clarke 2006:79). As a method of analysis not rooted in any specific research traditions, one of its main benefits is its flexibility (Braun and Clarke 2006:81).

On an epistemological level, Braun and Clarke (2006:5) distinguish between a constructionist perspective and an essentialist/realist perspective when performing a thematic analysis. In line with the overall epistemological outlook of the thesis (see 1.4), a constructionist perspective is therefore employed in the thematic analysis conducted on the focus group material. Braun and Clarke (2006:85) describe a constructionist perspective as follows:

[F]rom a constructionist perspective, meaning and experience are socially produced and reproduced, rather than inhering within individuals (Burr 1995). Therefore, thematic analysis conducted within a constructionist framework cannot and does not seek to focus on motivation or individual psychologies, but instead seeks to theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural accounts that are provided.

The meaning analysed in this study is thus seen as socially produced and reproduced within each group, within each focus group session, as well as across the four focus group sessions. The sociocultural context investigated is that of
the translator education, which as we have seen differ for the two groups in terms of their respective SLs, although the structure of the programme is the same. The unit of analysis is not the individual level but the group level (see 1.2). However, the programme is individualised to a certain degree in the sense that students freely choose elective courses for one-quarter of the programme’s total credits during the second and the third semester (see Table 14). This affects their perception of the programme, and the analysis will therefore account for the students individually. Following this line of thought, the focus is restricted to the students’ present roles as students and as members of one of the two groups, but not as individuals in the sense that their lives outside of the programme will be taken into account, except if it relates to the programme. A study that also explored the students’ socioeconomic backgrounds, their family backgrounds, how and where they grew up and similar questions, would most likely provide a more encompassing picture of translation students and their socialisation processes, but such an approach is beyond the scope of the present study, nor does it comply with the chosen method. As an example, I do not know the majority of the students’ family situations (although three participants have mentioned certain details in passing), nor how they live their lives in general.

Braun and Clarke (2006:86) describe thematic analysis as an ongoing process, with a circular movement between the codes and the material as a whole. They identify six phases when conducting a thematic analysis, moving from familiarising the researcher with the material to producing the final report: familiarising yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, revising themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun and Clarke 2006:87). The ongoing, circular process of refining the analysis was also present with this material, but the analysis departs from Braun and Clarke’s six-phase model in that two major stages of coding can be distinguished: one deductive analysis in the first stage, and an inductive analysis in the second stage.

In the first stage, I coded the transcribed material deductively (Braun and Clarke 2006:84) with a point of departure in the core elements knowledge acquisition, investment, and involvement proposed by Weidman et al. (2001). The coding was conducted manually in the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 11. The length of the codes differed from one sentence uttered by one participant, to several turns involving several participants. One code can naturally be coded into several core element categories, in line with the interrelatedness of the core elements discussed previously.

I made the choice to perform a ‘latent’ thematic analysis as opposed to a ‘semantic’ thematic analysis. Latent themes, according to Braun and Clarke (2006:84), are themes found at a level that “goes beyond the semantic content of the data”. The focus on latent themes is in line with the deductive approach taken in the first stage of the analysis: the students did not explicitly describe something as a knowledge acquisition or an investment – however, at least
one of the core elements can be said to underpin the code in some way. For instance, the following example, when Edvin discusses why he chose to do an internship in a translation agency as an elective course, was coded as investment:

Example 1

**Edvin**

I guess I thought … With the internship I wanted to gain experience above all … I wanted some kind of contact with the market. So I really wanted that […].

In this example, Edvin motivates his decision to do an internship by wanting experience and a first contact with the market, thereby making an investment in doing an internship. However, when I started working practically with the data, it soon became clear that the core elements were in need of operationalisation. To code only the segments where, for example, a new knowledge had been acquired by the students would lead to a highly misbalanced picture of the material, especially in the early focus groups. In the following segment, I asked the students in Group 1, out of curiosity, how remuneration is calculated with a character-based language such as Japanese:

Example 2

**Emma**

Well … (laughs)

**Eva**

No idea. That’s really hard.

**Edvin**

Maybe you have to look at the source text instead, count words in Swedish …

**Emma**

I think it’s the number of characters, but I don’t know.

In this example from the first focus group session, it is clear that the students have not yet acquired the knowledge of how translation is remunerated in their specific language combination. Hence, coding only utterances when one of the core elements had been achieved, this segment would not have been coded. In order not to “lose” these kinds of codes, each of the three core elements has been operationalised into two versions: one that describes a core element where the action has already been achieved (+), and one that describes a core element where the action has not yet been achieved (–). The operationalisation of core elements is further elaborated in Table 16.
Table 16. Operationalisation of core elements (CE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Element</th>
<th>Description CE (+)</th>
<th>Description CE (–)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Acquisition</td>
<td>Students describe that they have acquired knowledge in relation to their professional role.</td>
<td>Students in some way describe an area of knowledge that they have not (yet) acquired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>Students describe that they have made some kind of investment in relation to their professional role.</td>
<td>Students in some way describe a possible investment that they have not (yet) made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>Students describe that they have participated in involvement in relation to their professional role.</td>
<td>Students describe a possible involvement in relation to their professional role.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I argue that the minus versions of the core elements tell us something important about the students’ socialisation process, as they present signs of self-awareness. In turn, this procedure allows for a more complete picture of the students’ socialisation process as well as a sign of their proximity to the profession.

In the second stage, after having identified all the codes within each core element, an inductive analysis of these codes resulted in four themes:

- Practice
- Profession
- Agents
- Education

According to Braun and Clarke, a theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (2006:82, original emphasis). Similarly, the four themes relate to some aspect of the students’ socialisation process and sociocultural context; either to the practice of translation, the translation profession, the agents involved in the translation profession, or the students’ educational context. This implies that these four themes can be found, to various degrees, within each core element. Depending on the core element, these themes represent different aspects of the core elements. Table 17 provides an overview of the four themes in each core element, and what they entail.
Table 17. Operationalised core elements and the four themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core element</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Agents</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition</td>
<td>Knowledge related to the practice of translation</td>
<td>Knowledge related to the translation profession</td>
<td>Knowledge related to the agents of translation</td>
<td>Knowledge related to the educational context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition</td>
<td>Knowledge not acquired related to the practice of translation</td>
<td>Knowledge not acquired related to the translation profession</td>
<td>Knowledge not acquired related to the agents of translation</td>
<td>Knowledge not acquired related to the educational context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>Investments related to the practice of translation</td>
<td>Investments related to the translation profession</td>
<td>Investment related to the agents of translation</td>
<td>Investment related to the educational context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>Non-investments related to the practice of translation</td>
<td>Non-investments related to the translation profession</td>
<td>Non-investments related to the agents of translation</td>
<td>Non-investments related to the educational context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>Involvement related to the practice of translation</td>
<td>Involvement related to the translation profession</td>
<td>Involvement related to the agents of translation</td>
<td>Involvement related to the educational context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>Non-involvement related to the practice of translation</td>
<td>Non-involvement related to the translation profession</td>
<td>Non-involvement related to the agents of translation</td>
<td>Non-involvement related to the educational context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practice theme is associated with segments concerning the micro level of translation in a practical sense: the skills and knowledge required to perform as a translator. Subjects of interest in this theme include how the students translate, their relationship with their SLs, and tools. The profession theme operates on a macro level, and segments in this theme deal with questions such as general knowledge related to profession, different specialisations within translation, and working conditions within the profession, etc. The agent theme revolves around agents involved in the translation profession. The theme includes self-reflexive codes where the students discuss their own personal approach to their role as translators, how they would like to work as translators, as well as how they would like to perform as translators more generally. Within this theme are also included segments that deal with other professional agents, such as translators, project managers and editors,
and teachers. The **education** theme reflects the students’ situation in a learning environment. Codes in this theme deal with the educational context and its institutional constraints.

### 3.4.2.1 Frequencies of sub-themes

Within every theme, a number of sub-themes have been constructed inductively. Due to the themes’ different characteristics, the codes in the different sub-themes are not necessarily the same within every theme. For example, the **practice** theme within the core element Knowledge Acquisition does not necessarily have the same sub-themes as the **practice** theme within the core element Investment, although some sub-themes do in fact appear in both themes. For instance, both the **practice** theme within Knowledge Acquisition and the **practice** theme within Investment include the sub-theme *Tools*. This is a result of the inductive phase of the thematic analysis.

The different sub-themes in each theme and core element are presented in Table 18. The quantitative overview is provided as a form of support for the following qualitative analysis. Although thematic analysis is a strictly qualitative method, the quantitative support is here presented to complement the thematic and longitudinal aspects that will be explored in the results section. The first number provided for each theme and sub-theme shows the total number of occurrences, while the second number shows the number of focus groups the theme or sub-theme occurred in. The theme **practice** (Knowledge Acquisition), for instance, includes 171 codes within all eight focus groups. For the sub-theme *How to translate* (Knowledge Acquisition, **practice**), the total number of codes is 90, found in all eight focus groups. This indicates that *How to translate* – perhaps not surprisingly – has been a theme discussed at many instances across the four focus groups for both groups. The sub-theme *Joining associations* (Investment, **profession**), however, has only been coded twice in one focus group session. Note, however, that the numbers in the table only account for the occasions of segments in each theme and sub-theme, not for the length of the segments or in which group they were discussed.

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16 In the following discussion, core elements will be capitalised (Knowledge Acquisition, Investment, Involvement), themes bolded (**Practice, Profession, Agents, Education**), and sub-themes italicised (*Tools, Personal role as translators, Value of education, and so on*).
Table 18. Sub-themes according to core elements and themes (+)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Acquisition (+)</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Agents</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>171/8</td>
<td>99/8</td>
<td>205/8</td>
<td>89/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to translate (90/8); Multiplicity of translation (36/8); Experience of translating (31/5); SLs and TL (26/7); Feedback (23/6); Tools (22/6)</td>
<td>Specialisation (36/7); General knowledge of the profession (35/8); Entering the profession (30/8); What is valued in/by the profession (24/6); Working conditions (21/7)</td>
<td>Personal role as translators (140/8); The translator’s role (50/7); Agentship (30/8); Professional translators (22/6); Professional agents (7/3); Teachers (7/3)</td>
<td>Context of the master's programme (37/7); Theory-practice (32/7); Value of the master’s programme (22/7); Possibility to specialise (19/5); Previous studies (5/3)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment (+)</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Agents</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>115/8</td>
<td>86/8</td>
<td>105/8</td>
<td>83/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of translating (44/8); Multiplicity of translating (32/7); SLs and TL (26/8); Tools (25/7); How to translate (23/7); Feedback (13/6); Reading translations (10/4)</td>
<td>Experience of the profession (34/8); Choosing the profession (15/4); Investing in a future career (13/4); General knowledge of the market (13/6); Specialisation (12/6); Entering the profession (11/5); Starting a company (4/2); Creating a portfolio (3/3); Joining associations (2/1)</td>
<td>Personal role as translators (88/8); The translator’s role (28/7); Professional translators (9/6); The public (4/3); Professional agents (1/1)</td>
<td>Investing in the programme (40/8); Possibility to specialise (32/8); Value of education (23/8); Previous studies (9/4); Entrance exam (2/1)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement (+)</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Agents</th>
<th>Education</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38/7</td>
<td>70/8</td>
<td>54/8</td>
<td>15/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating in a professional setting (28/7); Reading translations (7/3); Feedback in</td>
<td>Working as a translator (40/6); Internships (16/3); Contacting the profession (11/4);</td>
<td>Professional translators and agents (direct) (22/8); Professional translators and agents (indirect) (13/6);</td>
<td>Teachers (7/2); Specialisation courses (3/2); Other TS students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some preliminary conclusions can be drawn from this table. Firstly, it is clear that the presence of themes differs in the core elements: the most frequent theme in Knowledge Acquisition is *agents*, whereas it is *practice* in Investment and *profession* in Involvement. This highlights the different characteristics of the core elements, and it might point towards some patterns in the socialisation process.

For example, Table 18 shows that *education* is the least frequent theme: one can conclude that the educational context is not often verbalised by the students. Regarding the *agent* theme being the most reported theme in Knowledge Acquisition, one can conclude that the students have acquired knowledge of the *agents* of translation to a higher degree, quantitatively speaking, than, for instance, the *practice* of translation, where the codes focusing on how to translate hands-on are found. If we look to the most frequent sub-themes across the core elements, we see that these are *personal role as translators* in both Knowledge Acquisition and Investment. This further shows that *agent*-related discussions are present in the material, for one thing, and that the sub-theme *personal role as translators* is discussed at length in terms of both Knowledge Acquisition and Investment. Thirdly, *practice* and *profession* are the most frequent themes in Knowledge Acquisition, which seems logical in relation to the micro and macro level of the profession discussed before. Fourthly, the most present sub-theme in Involvement is *working as a translator* within the *profession*, which, though it is only present in six focus groups, make sense in relation to the aim of the programme. However, one can note that these 40 codes are high in comparison to the other sub-themes found in Involvement, but rather low in comparison to the sub-themes found in other core elements. Already here, we can see that Involvement is the theme the least present in the focus group sessions.

In the same vein, it is possible to see patterns for the minus codes, i.e. for the core elements which have not been achieved. An overview is presented in Table 19.
Table 19. Sub-themes according to core elements and themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Acquisition (–)</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Agents</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38/8</td>
<td>19/6</td>
<td>21/6</td>
<td>23/6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools (14/6); Feedback (10/3); How to translate (10/5); Translation experience (10/5); Multiplicity of translation (4/4)</td>
<td>General knowledge of the translation profession (13/6); Specialisation (8/4); Entering the profession (4/3); What is valued in/by the profession (3/2)</td>
<td>Professional translators (10/4); personal role as translators (9/4); the translator's role (3/2)</td>
<td>Educational procedures (12/5); Possibilities to specialise (7/4); Theory-practice (4/3); Value of education (4/2)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment (–)</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Agents</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40/7</td>
<td>29/7</td>
<td>26/6</td>
<td>20/6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools (17/6); How to translate (15/4); Translation experience (10/6); Reading translations (6/5); Feedback (5/2); SLs (4/4)</td>
<td>Specialisation (10/4); Experience of the profession (8/6); Internships (7/5); Choosing the profession (5/3); Joining associations (4/3); Starting a company (3/3)</td>
<td>Personal role as translator (16/4); Professional translators (12/5)</td>
<td>Possibility to specialise (13/6); Desired outcome (7/3)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement (–)</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Agents</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15/6</td>
<td>24/8</td>
<td>38/8</td>
<td>5/4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading translations (10/6); Translation in a professional setting (4/3);</td>
<td>Contact with the profession (13/6); Associations (7/5); Contacting the profession (3/2); Internships (3/3)</td>
<td>Professional translators (27/8); Translation students (12/8)</td>
<td>Non-involvement with programme (4/3); Extra-curriculum activities (1/1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this table, we can see that the highest number of Non-Acquisition is found in the practice theme. This indicates that there are 38 codes found in eight focus group sessions where the students discuss something that they do not know or have not (yet) learnt. The most recurrent sub-theme is tools. Also in
the core element Non-Investment, the most coded theme is **practice**, and, for sub-themes, **tools**. For Non-Involvement, however, the most recurrent theme is **agents**, which points towards a low degree of involvement with professional translators and other agents.

When comparing Tables 18 and 19, the lower numbers in Table 19 stand out. In effect, the operationalisation of the minus versions of the core element aligns with what Braun and Clarke (2006:82) call the themes’ ‘keyness’, which implies that a theme is “not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures, but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question”. The minus versions of the core elements, I argue, capture something important in relation to the students’ socialisation process, which would not have been easily discerned without them.

The discussion above deals with the themes and sub-themes for the two groups, jointly and in the entirety of the material. In order to account for the longitudinal aspect of the two groups separately, Appendix 4 (Table 21) presents an overview of core elements, themes, and sub-themes as they appeared in the four focus group sessions for each group. As one can expect, different sub-themes are spread out unevenly over the four focus group sessions and the two groups; not exactly the same topics are covered in each and every focus group, neither in the same quantity nor in the two groups. This is a result of the choice to conduct semi-structured focus groups. While I as a moderator had five overarching content-related topics (the students’ background, their education, the translation market, translatorship, and the students’ future, see 3.4.1.3), the discussions played out differently in the two groups. Although the five topics served as a tool for me to navigate the discussion, my main interest was to get a bottom-up perspective of the students’ views. In the light of the two groups’ different characteristics and circumstances, of which some have already been discussed, it comes as no surprise that the two groups discussed partly different topics. In other words, the two groups had different concerns, and hence different questions to discuss. Secondly, as the programme evolved, the students and their plans with the programme evolved too. Here, the longitudinal aspect of the study plays an important role, since the choices the students made during the course of the programme, e.g. their elective courses, came to influence our discussions. As Holland et al. (2006:32) put forward, one of the main benefits of QLR is that it can shed light on “how and why things happen as they do, how aspects of social, cultural and contextual processes interact to produce different individual outcomes”. The choices made by the students during the programme also had practical consequences for me as a moderator of the focus groups, as I did not always know exactly what they had done after our previous meeting when I met the groups. This was particularly striking with the two last focus group sessions, due to the elective courses and graduation. While this made it sometimes difficult for me to plan the focus groups in advance, it also gave our meetings an authentic ambiance.
The quantitative support provided in Tables 18, 19, and 21 offers an insight into which sub-themes have been discussed in the different focus group sessions. Braun and Clarke (2006:86, original emphasis) state that “thematic analysis involves the searching across a data set [...] to find repeated patterns of meaning”. For the present study, this meaning-making makes sense in relation to the longitudinal aspect of the material; after all, the main aim is to investigate translatorships in the making – how translation students socialise into the profession from the first term of a MA programme to six to seven months after their graduation. This has consequences for the way the results are presented. The “repeated patterns of meaning” will be linked to the core elements, themes and sub-themes constructed in the thematic analysis. Because of the large amount of data, the description of data will be restrained to the particular aspect that relates to the students’ socialisation process (see Braun and Clarke 2006:83). While this might lead to a fractionalised image of the focus groups as a whole, and hence also of the students’ socialisation process, the opposite approach risks downplaying the longitudinal aspect. Moreover, the aim of the analysis is to follow the students’ development – change over time – as it unfolds. As Braun and Clarke (2006:93) state, the results should provide “the story the data tell” – here with the help of core elements, themes and sub-themes. Therefore, the subsequent analysis is presented linearly, in spite of the non-linearity of the socialisation model (Weidman et al. 2001:39): one focus group session at a time, i.e. the two groups’ focus group sessions are presented jointly. Within each core element, the themes are presented in the following order: Practice, Profession, Agents, and Education. The themes are discussed in separate paragraphs separated by a blank line to facilitate reading. Because of the rich amount of data, a selection of the most important aspects in relation to the socialisation process, based on my interpretation of the thematic analysis, has been included in the subsequent analysis. This has the result that not every sub-theme is accounted for. In order to provide contextual information about the focus groups and the events surrounding them, each sub-section starts with a brief description of the focus group sessions, the semester in question, and courses included in the semester.
3.5 Results

3.5.1 First semester: Focus group session no. 1

The first focus group sessions for each group were both held in November, three months after the MA programme had started. The courses during this semester were the same for all the students: Translation I, Text Analysis, and Theory and Method in Translation Studies. In addition, there was also a course called Business Skills, aimed at introducing the translation market (mainly from a business translation perspective) to the students, including market-related aspects such as CAT tools, rates, translator associations, and so on.

The first focus group sessions were characterised by the beginning of the programme. The first three months in the programme seemed to have already changed the perception of the students on several aspects of translation and the translation profession. For instance, there are several examples of when they talk in the past tense, referring to when they started the programme. As an example, Eva refers to this period as “When you were new and didn’t know anything”. Also Julia gives voice for a similar view: “I didn’t know what a translation was and now I know better.”

3.5.1.1 First semester: Knowledge Acquisition

In terms of Knowledge Acquisition, it is clear that the students have already acquired substantial knowledge since the programme started three months ago, not least on the practice level. One sub-theme discussed at length by Group 2 but surprisingly absent from Group 1’s discussion, is how to translate, which includes segments where strategies and skills for translating practically underpin the statement. Of course, for an MA degree in Translation Studies, this is a key skill to acquire.

The discussion points backwards and revolves around how the students perceived their translation practice at the beginning of the semester. For instance, the students in Group 1 discuss that they did not know, on starting the program, that translators use CAT tools. At this point, to know that CAT tools exist at all seems to be the main knowledge; they have not yet come to the stage where they need to know how to actually use these tools. However, tools can also mean more abstract tools, such as the course in text analysis, which Edvin sees as something useful for practical translation.

Another sub-theme covers SLs and TL, i.e. discussions that relates to their working languages in some aspect. Julia, once again comparing her perspective on translation with opinion prior to starting the programme, says that she “didn’t have a thought [on the target language], I always had my mind set that I really needed to master English, I needed to learn more!”. Jill concludes: “You kind of thought that you’d translate both ways somehow and that’s actually very unusual.” Both groups clearly favour knowledge of the TL over
the SL for creating a good translation. Eva mentions that “there is no meaning in understanding the source language if you can’t convey it”. The same opinion also seems to be prevalent in Group 2 where the discussion goes as follows:

Example 3

| Julia | But I think, like my first translation was very source-oriented – |
| Johanna | Mm. |
| Jill | Yes. |
| Julia | – you kept the same structure and were completely lost when it came to terminology, I feel like I get better and better … |
| Jill | Yes. |
| Johanna | Absolutely, to be more daring. |
| Julia | Yes exactly, you dare to depart from the source … the source text. |
| Jill | Exactly, you get better and better self-confidence to really create a good Swedish text and really let go of the source text a bit more. |
| Julia | Absolutely. |

(silence)

Also here, it is noteworthy that this self-perceived change in approach has occurred only three months into the programme. The students also seem to agree that the aim is a more target-oriented translation, which indicates that they have learnt how to translate to achieve a desired outcome in the programme. A related sub-theme is multiplicity of translation: an awareness that there are different sorts of translations with different text types and different conditions which governs how the translation is fashioned. On a question on what constitutes a good translation, Jill replies: “Well … it depends so much on what kind of text it is.” The same awareness when it comes to contextual constraints is not as apparent in Group 1, where the same question does not evoke thoughts on how different text types affect the translation.

The students have also acquired knowledge about the profession on a macro level. Several students in both groups explicitly mention the course in business skills to have contributed to this. Emma describes that it was this course that made her feel “that it’s possible to earn a living from translation at all, because I didn’t have much hope of doing that before I started”. Such general utterances regarding the profession belong to the sub-theme general knowledge of the profession. This specific course is also mentioned in a segment coded as both general knowledge of the profession and entering the profession. The students in Group 1 discuss how they would like to work after graduation, and Eva says “After this course I’ve understood that you should have a company of your own. That sounds as the absolutely most flexible thing to do”. Emma and Edvin, on the other hand, both agree that they would prefer to work in an agency first – “if that’s an alternative”, Emma adds. They now know that most
translators are freelancers, but as a means to enter the profession they would rather work in-house, “to gain experience” in Emma’s words. In general, the transition into the professional life seems already to occupy a great deal of the students’ minds in both groups. Jill phrases it as follows: “Yeah it’s that transition where you just think ‘how? how?’”

One way the students relate to their future is in relation to specialisation, i.e. what kind of translation they want to work with in the future. Emma is the one who most clearly expresses that she wants to work with literary translation, whereas Edvin seems to have a more pragmatic approach: “You’ll have to see what there is in some way, what different specialisation there are out there, and then you find your niche out of that”, he says. In Group 2, Jessica has a quite clear plan of her future specialisation:

Example 4
Jessica  Yes I’m thinking that I’ll work with both literary translation and business translation –
Johanna  Mm.
M. Mm.
Jessica  – but still maybe a bit more within the general field of business translation or marketing text or … so.
Johanna  Mm.
(silence)
Jill  I guess I’ve been thinking in a similar way, but then if you would happen to specialise because you’d get a certain kind of text …
Johanna  Yes … It’s often like that I’ve heard, that once you’re out there you start getting some work and then all of a sudden you have a specialisation in some way …
Jill  Yes, yes …

The students’ specialisation is in turn connected to their personal role as translators within the agent theme, which was one major discussion point for both groups. This is a reflexive sub-theme where the students make statements about themselves in relation to translators; how they would like to be as a translator or plans for their future as translators. Many of these codes are personal, for instance when Julia says that she “is trying to find what [her] strength is, what kind of text suits [her] best”.

In Group 1, Emma at two instances mentions the expression “to make yourself a name”, both times when discussing literary translation. At the first occurrence, she says that “it feels like that once you’ve made yourself a name you can take more liberties than someone who has to earn a living out of it cannot”. The second time the expression comes up is in relation to specialisation:
Example 5  
Emma  
Most people I’ve talked to think that I’ll work with literary translation and then I try to convince them that it’s not very likely, and then they say ‘maybe you’ll start with technical manuals, but once you’ve made yourself a name, then you can get a novel to translate’. But that’s not really what I expect from the profession.

In both examples, the underlying assumption boils down to the conclusion that literary translators can grow a personal recognition which allows them to either take liberties regarding certain limitations that normally constrain translators, or get work by virtue of their name and the recognition attached to it. However, Emma sees this latter possibility as out of reach for her.

There are also some instances where agency is discussed. This sub-theme includes segments where the students discuss when they will “be” translators, or when they have the right to call themselves translators. This seems to be especially important for Group 1, given the fact that it is the first time their language combination has been offered at a Swedish university. Emma puts forward a sense of internal security connected to the degree:

Example 6  
Emma  
I feel that it gives me a security to have [the degree], for my part. You feel that you have the right to call yourself a translator and demand proper rates as well.

Eva  
Mm.

Edvin  
Mm.

Emma  
I feel that if I hadn’t taken the same degree I would still have been able to handle the craft, but I would still have felt a bit insecure I think.

Besides the internal security, the degree grants Emma the right to call herself a translator. Agency is also a topic for Group 2, but for the opposite reason: since knowledge of English is so widespread, the students in Group 2 have been questioned about the need to study translation at all. This is however not a viewpoint shared by the students, who think that the general knowledge of English makes it even more important to actually hold a degree. Jessica says “I almost think that it’s something you ought to have, rather than just start a company and like ‘I’m a translator now, I’ll start to translate now’”. Both groups thus find the degree to be important for them, albeit for different reasons.

This leads us to the theme education. One sub-theme related to the previous discussion is the value of education: codes where the students discuss what translator education is worth, either for them (as in example 6) or for how they perceive it to be valued by the profession or by the public. In accordance with earlier statements, the general tendency seems to be that they perceive education to be an asset:
There is, however, also a conflicting viewpoint coming from Jana who has a more pessimistic perception of the profession’s interest in education. In her view, the profession is sceptical towards “language nerds”, i.e. university-trained translators, and that there is a perception that it was “pretty practical with the old men who knew their subjects”. She concludes that “it might be a bit hard to be self-assertive, if that’s the attitude”. Since the other students in the group do not seem to share this view on the profession, one could ponder if this is a knowledge acquired during Jana’s previous studies. She is the only student with a BA in Translation Studies, which means that she is likely to already have more advanced knowledge of the profession, accurate or not, at the beginning of the programme.

In Group 2, there is a discussion on theory-practice, where the relationship between theory and practice in translator education is discussed. The students have ambiguous feelings towards the theoretical aspects of the programme:

Example 8

Julia I guess I think it’s both. It’s very useful the practical side because I had no experience at all before, I mean I have been groping in the dark quite a lot this semester and things have become clearer along the way, but to theorise … to give the translator’s role some kind of background or platform to stand on, that it’s not as easy as just sitting in your chamber and fiddle a bit on your own, that you actually have a ground to stand on, theoretically speaking, to lean against, that we actually know more.

Jill Yes and to get a shared language in some way –

Julia Yes.

Jill – like within the profession

Julia Yes and I feel that we get the foundation to, well to stand on and that we actually know what we’re talking about. Skopos and all that that, that we have more insights than other when it comes to translation. Which is important in order to take place on a market where the competition –

Jill Absolutely.

Julia – is pretty tight. So I’ve felt all the time that a master’s degree weighs heavily. Plus that we hopefully will be able to back it up in the future when we’re done. Like ‘not only does this look good on paper but I also know things’.

All Yes.
Jessica: Yes exactly I feel like that as well, and I almost think that that is something you ought to have, rather than just start a company and ‘I’m a translator now, I’ll start to translate now’ and just …

Julia: ‘Hire me!’

Jessica: Yeah, it’s probably a good thing to have that title …

On the one hand then, the students acknowledge that they now have “a base to build on, theoretically speaking”, and their characteristics as trained translators are resumed in that “we actually know more”. Jill puts forward the shared language within the profession, thus offering a more non-individualistic perspective. On the other hand, there are some more negative feelings towards the usefulness of theoretical aspects. Jessica especially questions the usefulness of translation theory:

Example 8

Jessica: Yes it [is], but at the same time I still feel that it’s almost … It’s absolutely something we need for the sake of the programme, we’re going all the way after all, but then, well, then it’s also, I mean there are a lot of these theories that are very … that are very abstract and where you just feel ‘well it’s not like this will be of any use’, there’s a lot of this that you won’t use practically, whereas maybe the kind of theory that you read in [the translation class] in relation to what we actually translate, different translation strategies in a more practical sense, that’s a bit more …

Although she admits that the theoretical aspects are needed for the sake of the programme, Jessica seems to distinguish between two sorts of theories: “translation strategies in a practical sense”, i.e. theories which can be used for translation and are hence useful to learn, and “very abstract” theories which will not be of practical use, which suggests that only theoretical aspects than can be used practically when translating are regarded as a desirable knowledge to acquire in relation to education. However, this view is partly nuanced by the other students in Group 2, as seen in example 8.

3.5.1.2 First semester: Investment

The sub-themes included in the practice theme are to a large extent the same as in the practice theme in Knowledge Acquisition: how to translate, tools, experience in translating, and SLs and TL. Although the names of the sub-themes are the same, the segments in the different sub-themes are not necessarily the same. In one sense, Knowledge Acquisition can be seen as an Investment in itself, and some segments do in fact overlap as both Knowledge Acquisition and Investment. This is for instance the case with examples 9 and 11. However, Investment differs from Knowledge Acquisition in the future-oriented aspect of Investment; an investment is allotted a value that is more or less likely to have a positive influence in a future stage. Ideally speaking, the ‘outcome’ should be higher than the investment itself.
The most primary way of investing in the practice of translation is to learn *how to translate* – after all, this is the basis of the programme. Julia describes the current stage like “[y]ou make beginners’ mistakes” and that there are “things you need to get into your system”. Some of these segments coincide with the *experience of translating*. The topic of internal security is present also here, as the *experience of translating* can be perceived as a personal investment in one’s self-esteem and confidence. The students in Group 2 discuss the effect of having translated during one semester (see example 3) and conclude that “one dares to depart from the [...] source text, as Julia says, and that “one gets better and better self-confidence to really create a good Swedish text and really let go of the source text a bit more”, as Jill puts it. The students’ view of “a good Swedish text” seems to equal a target-oriented translation (investment in *how to translate*), at the same time as it is an example of what makes them better as translators as a result of their experience of translating during classes (Investment in *experience of translating*).

*Experience of translating* can also be a more hypothetical construction of ways of investing in a future career. This is the case in Group 1, where several of the students would like to start working in an agency after their studies in order to gain experience. However, when I asked the students if they would consider to working as in-house translators in a translation agency where they would only translate from English and not from Japanese, the group as a whole seemed reluctant to this. For Eva, the answer is a direct “No”, whereas Erik puts it that “it would almost feel like a waste” – a waste of his knowledge of Japanese that is. Emma adds “Only for getting that kind of experience in that case, for a shorter period of time …”. The last quote shows that translation experience can be seen as an investment, although it is still not clear whether this investment is worth it in this specific case.

From Erik’s answer, it is clear that having learnt Japanese is an investment in itself. In this specific case, one could get the impression that having learnt Japanese has been a greater investment than it would be to translate in a professional setting. The same way of reasoning is not applicable for Group 2. Overall, the students in Group 2 do not show the same close bond to English as the students in Group 1 do to Japanese. The sub-theme *SLs and TL* can, however, take different shapes. During the upcoming semester, the students can choose elective courses for up to 15 ECTS. Several students in both groups are thinking of studying languages, with the more or less explicit aim of adding another SL to their repertoire in the future. The languages mentioned are Danish, Dutch, Chinese, French, German, and Korean. In terms of Investment, studying an Asian language would seem a greater investment in comparison to studying the European languages mentioned, since there is probably more effort required; however, from the perspective of the Swedish translation market, the European languages might be more required, and hence a greater investment. Overall, adding SLs are to be considered as investments in a future career.
The overarching investment for both groups is to invest in the **profession** and the programme altogether. As has been shown in the previous section, the investment *choosing the profession* is a common point of discussion for the two groups, albeit for different reasons. For Group 1, one opinion pronounced is that it gives “a security” to hold a degree (example 6), whereas Group 2 seems to have a more market-oriented perspective: they at several instances come back to the idea that “it’s probably a good thing to have that title”, and that it signals that they “have made an effort to enter the profession” (Example 8 and 7, respectively, session 1).

Both Jessica and Jill, who used to work in other language-related occupations and who are also the two oldest participants, describe that they hesitated for several years before deciding to apply to the programme, an act which was proceeded by a substantial search for information about the programme. In their cases, *choosing the profession* meant to changing career path altogether. Jessica was concerned about how to earn a living:

**Example 9**

Jessica  
… that thing about how to earn a living, how to get a job plus that I haven’t really felt ready to be a freelancer and well … everything that comes with it, like being able to … make … my everyday life work and all that. So I’ve more or less built up a lot of obstacles (laughs) about why it wouldn’t work and then I’ve also been thinking that I needed five [source] languages ready –

All (laughs)

Jessica – in order to get a job at all, but then it kind of grew on me the last couple of years, and I started looking into it more closely and started to see that it actually works, you CAN earn a living out of it, and then … (silence) well, that’s what happened.

For Jana and Johanna, on the other hand, the decision to study to become a translator, or in Jana’s case originally an interpreter, came during high school. In both cases, the idea to study translation and interpreting came from someone else who suggested that the occupation would suit them. For the students in Group 1, the language came before translation. All four students learnt Japanese first, and lived in Japan, and then started to get interested in translation.

There are also investments in the general knowledge of the profession, which overlap with the codes in the general knowledge of the profession in Knowledge Acquisition. Because of the profession-specific nature of the knowledge, in the sense that it may not be easily transferrable to other professions, the acquisition of it is in itself a form of investment, as can be seen in the following example:

**Example 10**

Eva  
I can say that I didn’t know at all to what extent translators use … well, technical tools, for example. So –

Edvin  
It’s the same for me. I –
The general knowledge acquired of the profession is interpreted as a prerequisite to entering the market; it would pose problems to try to gain access to the market without the knowledge of how the work and the profession are organised.

Jessica has started working extra as a translator during the autumn, which is a considerable investment at this early stage of the studies. She now works with a freelancing translator, who had put an ad on the programme’s intranet. Jessica applied for the position and got the job. At the time of the first focus group, she has worked with the freelance translator for approximately one month.

When it comes to agents, the majority of the segments are related to the students’ personal role as translators and their translatorships. There are different sorts of investments related to this sub-theme; in one aspect, everything they do during the studies amounts to this one thing: to become translators. As has already been mentioned, the students in Group 1 would prefer to work in an agency – under the condition of translating from Japanese – after graduation. For Group 2, the hopes and plans for the future are more varied. Jessica, who already works extra as a translator, has her mind set on freelancing directly after graduation. Johanna and Jill would prefer to work in an agency during an interim period, and then start working as freelancers. For Julia, the goal is to work in an agency. When discussing a possible future as a freelance translator, a recurrent topic is personal insecurity:

Example 11

Johanna  Mm, but I think it’s so hard to apply for jobs and to do things myself as well, I’m a bit of a coward, so maybe I have to pluck up some courage.

Julia    Yeah it’s the same here … I feel too much like a coward, it just feels too scary to be my own.

Johanna Yes.

Julia  Then you’re all alone –
Johanna What if everything falls apart?
Julia  – naked in reality.
Johanna Yes.

From this discussion, it is clear that becoming a freelance translator comes at a high personal risk to the students. Becoming a translator has in itself been connected with uncertainties (see example 6), but becoming a freelance translator comes at an even higher risk for the individual students and requires a certain level of mental strength.
**Education** can in itself be seen as an investment. Similarly to the sub-theme *choosing the profession* already discussed in the profession theme, *investing in the programme* is associated with a great investment. For Erik, investing in this specific programme had practical consequences: after finding out that the programme planned to introduce Japanese, he waited two years for it to start and then moved to another part of the country.

The students’ investment of the two years of their lives in this programme is further characterised as an investment due to their perception of the uncertain circumstances surrounding the programme and the profession. Again, the reasons for this differ between the two groups. The students in Group 1 will be the first MA-trained students with this specific language combination, which creates insecurities. On one hand, they will have a unique competence, but on the other hand, there is a concern within the group that there might not be a demand for this language combination on the market. They also report on former co-students in Japanese who “just start translating”. For Group 2, the situation is the complete opposite; English is the incomparably most common SL in Sweden and there are several Translation Studies programmes offering English-Swedish. There are, in other words, a higher number of MA-trained translators in their language combination. There is also a fear for a declining demand of translation from English in the future.

A negative concern for people who start translating without studying translation first is present in both groups. To enter the profession this way is not an alternative for either group, although Jill admits that she has tried without success earlier: “And then I’ve felt that because I don’t have any contacts, taking a degree is a way into the profession for me.” On the question of whether it was an alternative for them to start working as translators without the degree, Group 1 discusses as follows:

Example 12

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>Not now when the programme exists. Then you’d be a competitor with the students that took it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erik</td>
<td>It feels like it’s very hard to enter the market today, if you haven’t a degree or several years of experience of translation already, so to just start is probably very hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edvin</td>
<td>You have a great advantage with a degree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The discussion of whether to invest in the programme, and in education more generally, is in turn related to the *value of education*. From the comments above, we can see that the students themselves obviously place value in education, although it remains unclear for the students whether the value is acknowledged as such by the profession.

Furthermore, to this theme belongs the *possibility to specialise*. As has already been discussed, this possibility is mostly restricted to the courses the
students can choose during the second and third semesters. In relation to education, suffice to say at this point that the students seem to recognise this as an opportunity to specialise. It should be noted that it can also be seen as an opportunity to choose “fun” courses; this is the way Johanna explains her choice of courses for the upcoming semester – “to make the rest bearable”.

3.5.1.3 First semester: Involvement

The core element Involvement is the least frequent core element in the groups’ first sessions. As can be seen in Table 2, the numbers of codes coded in Involvement are significantly lower than the codes in the other two core elements for the first focus group sessions, and for the focus group sessions in general for that matter. This might not come as a surprise as it requires some sort of involvement in the field, and it is still early in the students’ studies. Most sub-themes found here can be regarded as either direct or indirect. For instance, reading translations is categorised as an involvement within the theme practice as it includes a kind of indirect involvement on the micro level. One example of direct involvement is Jessica, who has already started involving herself directly by working extra as a translator. From a practice viewpoint, Jessica has experience of translating in a professional setting. Unlike the investment experience of translating in the Investment section, this entails that she not only has experience of translating during the courses, she also has translated professionally ‘in the real world’.

Naturally, Jessica’s work experience is also reflected in the involvement with the profession. For the other students, this kind of contact is scarce. Group 1 discusses contact via programme, which comes from the course in business skills already mentioned. This kind of involvement with the profession is to be characterised as indirect, as the involvement is mediated through the teacher.

When it comes to agents, students in both groups report on having translator friends. Direct professional contact, however, seems rather limited for both groups. The exception – professional translators and agents (direct) – should above all be seen as Jessica’s contact with the professional translator she is working with. For Group 1, the limited contact with professionals is seen in the sub-theme professional translators (indirect) – here channelled to be able to, after some initial problems, mention a couple of literary translators’ names. One difference between the two groups is the involvement with teachers. In the case of Group 2, several of the teachers are former or active professionals and/or translation scholars, whereas the main teachers in Group 1 are academics.

The only code in the theme education concerns the Group 2 students’ discussion of other TS students.
3.5.1.4 First semester: Summary

The first focus group sessions marked the beginning of the programme and the students entry to the world of translation. Students in Group 2 especially report that a shift has occurred from when they started the programme as to how they perceive translation and what a translator does.

The main Knowledge Acquisition at this stage revolves around the practice-oriented elements: how to translate, SLs and TL, multiplicity of translation, and tools. It is noteworthy that feedback is not discussed much at this point. The students’ personal roles as translators are to a large extent linked to the programme and the degree, which indicates that the overarching Investment at this early stage of the programme consists of choosing the profession and investing in the programme. The Involvement with the professional community is to be characterised as scarce, with the exception of Jessica, who has already started to extra work as a translator.

3.5.2 Second semester: Focus group sessions no. 2

The second focus group sessions were held in May, just before the end of the second semester. This marked half-way towards graduation and proved to be an opportunity to look both backwards and forwards. Both the groups were now somewhat disappointed in the programme, mainly because of it being too theoretical and that there was not enough practical assignments and training in CAT tools. The courses during the second semester were Translation II (economical, business and EU translation), Terminology, Specialised language, and 15 ECTS credits of elective courses. For the elective courses, the most common choice was a language course, such as a course in the languages already mentioned, or a language-related course, such as a course specialising in writing, or an internship course (equalling 7.5 ECTS credits) in a translation agency or a language-related centre.

3.5.2.1 Second semester: Knowledge Acquisition

During the second semester, the translation assignments consist of more demanding texts and subjects. The segments in how to translate are now more specific, since they relate to the more specific translation courses (thereby overlapping multiplicity of translation). The students in both groups agree that the level is higher now than during the first semester, both in terms of subjects and of the complexity of the texts, but that it is “better that it’s too hard than too easy”, as Edvin puts it.

In Group 2, the students’ perception is that their translations are now more alike than during the previous semester, and they speculate that they have developed together in a certain direction. There are also more personal accounts on their individual translation practice. For instance, Jessica reports that she earlier often received comments that she was too close to the source text, and
that she needed to “liberate” the translation more from the source text. This semester, however, the comments have been the other way around: she should try to stay closer to the source text. Julia has had a somewhat unusual strategy this semester to disregard the source text. She explains: “I said to myself by the end of the last semester that now I’m just gonna forget about the source text all together and just go for it! […] When to take a swing, if not now?”

The students in Group 2 are furthermore very positive about their teachers’ diverse backgrounds as professional translators. Julia says that it has been one of the best aspects during the year “to get different sorts of feedback, […] then you see that the same text can be evaluated in completely different ways, and that there are a hundred different solutions”.

Whereas the students in Group 2 have an overall positive view of learning how to translate as well as the feedback they have received from their teachers, Group 1 is not as satisfied with the situation. Just like Group 2, the students in Group 1 express that their translations are now at a higher level in general, but they do not have the same impression that their translations are more alike than in the previous semester. On the contrary, they perceive their translation to be very different from one another:

Example 13
Erik That’s pretty clear in our seminars, the [translations] are often completely different.
Emma Yes. (laughs)
Edvin Yes it’s pretty clear each time actually, everyone’s got their own style in some way.

The students in Group 1 express discontent with not having, as they perceive it, received individual feedback on neither their translation assignments nor their translation comments, which they write at the same time as the translation and where they motivate their translatorial decisions. This appears as a major concern for the students and they are clearly dissatisfied with the situation:

Example 14
Eva We haven’t had that, we haven’t had any individual critique at all.
Emma No.
Edvin No.
Erik No.
Eva We’ve gone through some of it in class and talked about ‘this is a way of translating and that’s a way of translating’ and so on, but no comments.
Erik No comments on our comments.

This perceived lack of feedback also affects also the students’ perception of how to translate and the experience of translating, and the unclear situation
affects, in turn, their confidence. As Eva puts it, she finds that it is “[h]ard to know how to develop. Right now it’s like ‘this is good, this is good, this is good, there are several ways of translating’”, but that she has received “no comments on how to improve”. Emma adds that “it’s hard to know your own level in comparison to others”. Uncertainty seems to surround the whole translation practice. In comparison with the self-confident comments from Group 2, the students in Group 1 appear to be stuck in limbo, translation-wise.

When it comes to tools, and more specifically CAT tools, both groups are dissatisfied with the scarce training provided by the programme. The only exception is Edvin, who has done an internship in a translation agency as a part of his elective courses, where he has “been sitting with CAT tools for four weeks’ full-time”. The students with the most experience of translating at this point are Edvin and Jessica. In this illustrative example which bridges the practice and profession theme, Edvin concludes what he has learn after his internship:

Example 15

Edvin

Yes some things maybe … there are many … many freelancers that maybe have a very good connection with pretty few companies, or who do a lot of work for the same … the same client. And I mean that’s good, then you can establish that contact and then … then you have a pretty solid ground to stand on as a freelancer, if you manage to establish one good contact with an agency that gives you work. If they like what you do, you’ll … get a lot of work. And then … (silence) But apart from that it was also that … a translator in an agency is not only a translator, but there are many different roles. It is … often the project manager who translates sometimes and proofreads and reviews a lot. So it’s not … I guess there are a couple of people who are only sitting with translation all day long but … many people have many different roles. So … (silence) and I thought that was good, to get a bit of variation. If you think that’s good, that is (laughs). But I wouldn’t mind only working with translation either. (silence) Because it’s very easy, the way of working … You didn’t really have to think about anything, like the folder structure or anything in the computer or what to name the files or anything like that. All that was taken care of by the system and the project manager. As a translator you just receive a demand by email and there you find the project file and then you click on it and then you can translate it and afterwards, when you’re done, you just let the project manager know. Then the project manager takes care of the rest. So it’s really very easy …

Regarding the profession, Edvin now states that he “has kind of a conception of what the profession contains, what happens in a translation agency and how the work flow goes”, aspects of the profession that he did not know before the internship. In fact, the quote above shows that Edvin has acquired substantial
and detailed knowledge of the **practice**, the **profession** and the **agents** of translation. For example, that people working in a translation agency often have many different roles (agents) or the very practical way of working with a different file structure (practice). For the other students, this kind of specific knowledge is not available. Concerning another newly acquired knowledge, Edvin says that “now I know that it’s not a very big chance to work with Japanese in a translation agency”, which can be contrasted to the discussion in Group 1 in the previous focus group on working in a translation agency without translating from Japanese, which was not an option at the time.

In comparison with the first focus group sessions, the **general knowledge of the profession** is now better in both groups. Jessica says that her image of the profession has changed for the better and that she sees it as “a profession [she] believe[s] in”. She no longer worries about “only” having English as a SL. Jessica also seems to have a good perception of the **working conditions**: “you’re pretty controlled and that depends on what kind of clients you have, but especially agencies and some direct clients can be a bit … you get it and then it should be done two hours later.”

Erik did an internship in a language-related centre where he did some translation but mostly other language-related tasks. He says he now has a much better picture “of the language market at large”. Alongside this more complete perception of the profession in general, there is a request, especially from Group 2, for the kind of specific knowledge provided by Edvin in example 16. Even Jessica, who is by now the student in Group 2 with the most experience, has blank spots in this regard, which can be seen in her frustrating questions about what kind of knowledge the programme should provide:

**Example 16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jessica</th>
<th>How does the market work? How do translation agencies work? How does it work? How does one become a translator in an agency?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>Yeah like some kind of connection to reality …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johanna</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Like ‘What happens?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>Exactly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>There’s not a lot …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>What happens after our master’s?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Yes! What happens after our master’s thesis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>There’s nothing …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>How should we do? What should we do?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This leads us to the sub-theme **entering the profession**. As seen in the quote, the passage from the programme to the profession is a major concern for Group 2. Despite their unanswered questions, they do seem to have a clear picture of how to enter in more practical terms. Julia says: “Yes well that’s what feels a bit scary, that you have to go out in the field later to get contacts,
get a network, like get assignments, get established”. “Scary” is the word that characterises the transition phase from student to translator.

How to enter the profession also depends on specialisation, i.e. among other things whether to concentrate on literary translation or business translation. Jessica notes that “business translation has a clearer pattern: you do a translation test for agencies, and if you pass you have the chance of getting assignments”, whereas for publishing houses the procedure is not as clear: “there it’s trickier to get in completely from the outside and just … I don’t know, start emailing publishing houses and say ‘Hey I want to translate’, I don’t know, that’s pretty … that’s worse”. Though the students report on not knowing how to enter the profession, there are apparently some perceptions on how to proceed – the question is rather if these perceptions are correct.

When it comes to what is valued by the profession, Edvin reports on what kind of translation on a textual level is sought by an agency. Julia, who was thinking of doing an internship but then in the end decided to postpone it to the last semester, also reports that her impression is that the programme seems to be well-known and appreciated by the profession.

On the agent level, one topic discussed is the translator’s role in general. There are various perceptions associated with the translator’s role and translatorship. Julia says that a translator is someone who “has learnt technique, and then you have a certain way of working. A person without that technique will translate a text in a completely different way maybe […]”. In Group 1, Emma has a similar perception: “There are higher demands on translators all the time, I mean machine translation is more and more available for example, so if the aim is to make use of the content then that’s possible without contacting a professional translator”. Both statements show an awareness of the shifting boundaries surrounding the translator’s role.

Another point of discussion regards the freelance translator as an entrepreneur. On a question about whether the translator has power over his or her time, Jessica says that in general, and especially in the beginning of your career, one is “very controlled by others” and that you may need to “let everything go when you get work and in that respect, you do not control your own time.” Group 2 also discuss how certain literary translators are seen as a warrant for quality. However, this account appears as a hypothetical construction since the students at the same time say that they do not have any favourite translators nor that they read translations.

Regarding agentship, Edvin states that he now feels like he belongs to the group of translators:

Example 17
Edvin But I feel like I belong to that group at least.
M. Mm.
Emma Absolutely.
Edvin I feel like a translator. But maybe not yet complete. But maybe you will never be that.

(silence)

To feel like one belongs to the group of translators is an important knowledge acquired in relation to themselves as translators, which also indicates commitment to the profession. Edvin has already started to identify as a translator after just one year of studies, while at the same time acknowledging that learning is an ongoing process.

Several of the segments regarding the students’ personal role as translators and their agency in the agent theme overlap with segments in the sub-theme value of the master’s programme in the education theme. This indicates that the students’ translatorship is closely related to the education and the fact that they will be university-trained translators. Emma says at one point: “If I compete about a job with someone without a degree [in translation], I’ll feel entitled to get it”. However, she immediately adds that it is hard to know “one’s level in comparison to others’, which again indicates a lack of confidence, translation-wise.

Students in both groups at several instances disregard the idea of starting to work as a translator without any translator training. On the question of whether it is still not an alternative for them, like in the first focus group, Julia replies that she’s even more convinced of it now. She continues that she does not want to even imagine the translations she would have made without the programme and that it is the difference between “night and day from day one to now”. In a similar discussion in Group 1, Emma says that “there are higher requirements for translators all the time […] so I think it’s important for us to have a formal education in order to claim a position on the market”. Edvin adds that it is also important for the status of the profession that translators have a degree in translation “and also … like the world changes, the society changes. There needs to be some kind of development, I think. And I think there is development in a positive direction with the programme”. In Group 2, Julia puts forward the good reputation of the programme:

Example 18

Julia Yes and eh … I think that the unit seems to have a good network, I got a list full of different places I could contact … so I think that most of the internships, most places are very positive toward receiving someone from [the programme], because we have a very good reputation.

Although education in general is viewed as an asset, and the programme seems to have a good reputation, the students are not unconditionally satisfied with the design of the programme. Both groups are, as shown, dissatisfied with the low degree of practice- and profession-related aspects, which can be seen in
example 16 above. For Group 1, the main issue is the lack of feedback discussed previously. For Group 2, it is the relation between theory-practice. While the students in Group 1 request more practical assignments just like the students in Group 2, they do not openly question the relevance of translation theory the way Group 2 does. On the one hand, the students in Group 2 state that the theoretical knowledge will probably be useful for writing their master’s thesis, but on the other hand, they also state that some content in the courses is just “academic nerdery […] that I can’t see the practical use of in the profession at all”, as Julia puts it. Jessica says that she would have chosen a more practice-oriented programme if that existed, and the other students seem to agree. When I then asked why they did not choose a BA programme, which does not have the same content nor requirements regarding translation theory, Julia replies: “Well I mean I still want a master’s, but maybe not as much theory”. The discussion suggests that there is an imbalance regarding the high recognition the students place on the MA programme as such, and what an MA programme can entail in order to remain an MA programme.

Within an education context, the possibility to specialise basically amounts to whether the students use the elective courses strategically or not. All students study a language-related course one way or another, be it a language course (Edvin, Eva, Emma, Julia, Jessica, and Johanna), a writing course (Erik and Emma) or an internship course (Edvin and Erik). When looking forward to the second year of the programme, Group 1 is disappointed with the lack of language-specific translation courses, when they will not be working with Japanese. For Group 2, this change does not seem to affect them in the same way since the elective courses offered by the unit all include English. In this sense, the context of the master’s programme differs between the two groups.

3.5.2.2 Second semester: Investments
The investments made related to practice during the second focus groups are often related to the possibility to specialise (education) in some area. Erik has taken a writing-oriented course in business communication, which he justifies in this way: “I thought it could be useful to take a course that was completely focused on producing texts […].” By investing in learning to produce text, he invests in how to translate. Emma’s choice to take a course in creative writing could be interpreted the same way within the literary translation context, although this is not explicitly articulated by her.

An important aspect of Investments lies in the fact that investments are not necessarily chosen purposefully by the students, although this can be the case. Some investments are instead due to circumstances that go beyond the students’ impact. This is the case with the sub-theme feedback. To receive feedback on translation assignments can be seen as a fundamental part of translator education, and it is likely to affect the development of how a student translates. In this sense, it is undeniably an investment in the practice of translation: the students learn to translate, which is the key skill in their future professional
life. However, the extent of this investment is determined by the programme, and is only partially within the power of the students to affect. As was described in 3.4.1.2, the circumstances for the two groups are highly imbalanced in this regard. The SL of the respective groups determines, in fact, the availability of investments. In Group 2, feedback is discussed as an investment in preparation for the students’ future career as translators:

Example 19

Julia But I feel like it’s a part of the job in some way, that someone else will review my texts, someone else will think that my terms might be completely lost, then you’ll have to justify your choices. I mean it feels like it’s a part of it, and in a way I think that the feedback we’ve received prepares you for that, that you’ll have to sit and debate, like ‘I have chosen this because of this and that, don’t you think I haven’t thought about it!’.

Johanna You really get more and more aware about the choices in a translation, ‘Why do I call this … silivox and not filifjonk’ …

Julia Yes exactly. And the more aware you become, the more you have to sit and think ‘Why do I choose this term or this word now?’

The discussion and argumentation surrounding feedback are perceived both as a preparation for future work on a micro level and as awareness-raising during the translation, i.e. _how to translate_. For Group 1, however, the situation is quite different. In fact, in their case, feedback could be seen as a failed investment; the students would like to invest in feedback, but the opportunities for this within the programme are limited. At several instances during the second focus group, the students, especially Eva, comes back to the fact that they do not know how to develop, translation-wise, or that they do not know their level of translation skills in comparison to others. It appears that they have not developed as much as they would have liked, which affects both the sub-theme _how to translate_, as well as the sub-theme _experience of translating_. After Edvin’s internship, he comments on the feedback he received there: “It felt great. It was great. I really appreciated it. Then I could see directly … like the norms a bit, how they work a bit and what kind of things, small things, you should think about when translating”. He later specifies that he learnt “really all kinds of things, from punctuation to how to formulate certain expressions […]” and also “what was good and what was bad”. We can of course only speculate if this strong impression is a result of not having received feedback in earlier stages of the training, but it is clear that Edvin perceives having learnt something important in relation to his translation practice. In this sense, the internship and the feedback he received there are without doubt investments for him personally.

Also tools, and especially CAT tools, could be seen as an area of failed investment at this stage. This is a topic in both groups, and both groups perceive the training in CAT tools to be insufficient. The only exception is again
Edvin, who explains his choice of doing an internship for exactly this reason: “With the internship I wanted experience above all. I wanted some kind of contact with the market”. After having learnt how to use a CAT tool, he encourages his fellow students that it only takes a little bit more training than what they have already done to master it.

During the past semester, all students except Erik studied a language course, either a course in their TL or a new SL. The languages studied are Danish, Dutch, Chinese, French, Korean, and Swedish. Group 2 especially had expressed concern about having only English as a SL, and studying an extra language is seen as a way of strengthening their translator profile – not least when discussing a possible career as EU translators where two EU languages are required. The situation is similar in Group 1, although for the opposite reason: they fear that only having Japanese as a SL will not be enough, thereby strengthening their translator profile with other source languages. The students in Group 1 already had prior knowledge of the languages they are studying, whereas the languages studied by the students in Group 2 were completely new for the students.

As far as investments in relation to the profession go, we have already seen that the greatest investments are related to the experience of the profession: Jessica’s extra work as well as Edvin’s and Erik’s internships. As could be seen in the previous sub-section, these investments resulted in a large leap forward regarding the knowledge acquired of the profession. Experience of the profession naturally results in a higher level of awareness regarding general knowledge of the profession; however, the other students have also invested in knowledge of the profession, which, in turn, makes them surer of the profession. On a question of how their views of the profession has changed during the past year, the students in Group 2 reply:

Example 20
Jessica  To the better, yes. (laughs) I see it as a profession I believe in, I – M. Yes because that was something that you – Jessica  – now I know that there’s work – M. Mm. Julia  Yes. Jessica  – there’s – M. – something a couple of you were a bit worried about. Jessica  Yes! Yeah but there IS work and it’s … yes … it’s not declining … and it’s enough to have English as source language – Julia  Yes. Jessica  – as well. M. Yes. Does it feel safer? Jessica  It feels much safer, absolutely, it does. Julia  Yes. Exactly, that was the big concern – Jessica  Yes!
In this example, we can see that their previous concerns regarding the profession have now changed due to better knowledge, which in turn has strengthened their commitment to the profession. This shows the interrelatedness of the core elements; again, knowledge acquisition is itself an investment. The commitment to the profession is also mirrored in how the students see themselves entering the profession as trained translators. Julia, on the topic of entering the market without a degree, says: “Sure, you would maybe have learnt with experience but it would have been a much longer road to take and maybe you wouldn’t get any jobs anyway”. She continues: “[t]his is a good merit and it will look good on my CV and it’s kind of a quality stamp, although we’ll be very green when we walk away from here.”

Another possible investment in the life of the profession is to join a translator association, but none of the students have joined any translator association so far. The same goes for starting a translator company, although both Edvin and Jessica mention that they plan to do so within the coming year. “I want it to be ready when I graduate”, Jessica says, thereby planning for an Investment.

An interesting occurrence regarding agents, and more precisely the students’ personal roles as translators, is that both groups mention two related expressions. During the first focus group, Emma already mentions twice that one needs to “make oneself a name”, and during the second focus group, Julia states that one has to “get oneself a reputation” as a translator. When I ask Group 1 what it means for them, “to make yourself a name”, Emma answers:

Example 21
Emma I guess it means the same thing as in other professions, that you’re trying to have a professional approach, that I know that I’ve done a good job that I’m delivering to the client … and if that means that I might have to explain my choice of a specific term or question something that the client specifically has asked for, then
maybe I want to do that because I know that I have acted in the right way or something. But like we said, you have to adhere to the client’s wishes as well, since the client is the one who’s paying.

(silence) But I would like at least always to have that awareness, what is right in this specific situation, and not just try to produce as much text as possible as fast as possible.

Her answer revolves around “a professional approach”, which is partly associated with the textual level of translation, partly with the translator’s ethical awareness. In Group 2, the discussion goes a bit differently. Here, Julia puts forward that “after you’ve created yourself a reputation” of being a trustworthy translator, one can feel that it is acceptable to turn down translation proposals. The reputation is here more related to the customers and the working conditions in an extratextual sense than in Emma’s example. Both accounts show an awareness that the translator’s career is based on recognition from others, and that the reputation or name is something that can be “managed”.

As has been shown throughout the section, the students have used the possibility to specialise as investments, either in language-related courses or in experience-related courses, such as Erik and Emma’s writing courses and Erik and Edvin’s internship courses. This reflects investments in education.

Investment via previous studies is particularly present in Group 1 with their investment in learning Japanese. Each of the students in Group 1 has had a specific interest related to the Japanese culture, which has been their way of involving themselves with the language. Emma explains their connection to the Japanese language and culture:

Example 22

Emma

Yes exactly, I mean when you learn about a new language you also learn a lot about the culture and so, and I mean when you learn a new language you need to have things that you want to utilise in that language, and I think that we have all chosen different aspects of the Japanese culture and then one’s pretty specialised already after having studied only a couple of years. So it would be very hard to imagine to just swap Japanese to any another language. And I mean in the knowledge about the language there’s a lot of cultural knowledge as well, so … (silence)

The connection to the Japanese culture and language is in fact an important motivator to their personal role as translators. This personal connection to the SL as such is not as present in Group 2’s accounts on English, although both Jessica and Johanna have lived in Anglophone countries. The reason why they came to be interested in English in the first place revolves around accounts that they both had a natural feeling for English but also that they did not master any other language, as Johanna says: “I didn’t know any other languages but I’m pretty good at English, so I went with that.”
Investing in the programme appears as important for the students in the two groups, which, in turn, implies the value of education. Julia describes the translation programme as “the natural step after studying languages for so long”. When confronted with the idea that translation cannot be taught, Emma first replies that she does not understand that opinion, and then specifies: “Obvi­ously there are many different strategies one can use when translating, and I at least think it’s very precious to look at many different solutions and discuss what’s appropriate in each specific case”. As earlier shown, the students view the translation programme as a prerequisite for entering the profession, thereby granting it value and legitimisation. In spite of the students’ high consideration regarding education and the programme at large, there is a sense of failed investment in the desired outcome of the programme. Here again, the students in Group 2 express a complaint that the programme has not lived up to their expectations:

Example 23
Julia [...] And I don’t know, this year has been … positive, partly because I’ve gained insight into what a translator actually does and how a translator actually works, which I didn’t have a clue about before. Uhm. And then … well … I can have some objections regarding that … the programme –

Jessica Mm.
Johanna Mm.
Julia – that it hasn’t really lived up to my expectations … and what I thought it would be.

On the one hand, they recognise the knowledge acquired during this past year, but on the other hand they seem to agree that there is considerable room for improvement. As shown earlier, these improvements are mostly related to more practical assignments as well as a greater focus on the profession and the students’ transition into it.

3.5.2.3 Second semester: Involvement

On a practice level, the most central involvement is translating in a professional setting. This is, however, only available for Edvin, Jessica and, to a certain degree, Erik, who mostly worked with terminology during his internship:

Example 24
Erik Yes, I didn’t translate that much but everything, everything I did I discussed with the other. For example a term question, in a larger investigation, then we discussed for two days more or less me and my colleague, because … well, to be able to send a proper answer. There was a lot of discussion with all colleagues.
This quote does not concern translation in itself but reflects Erik’s involvement with a translation-related activity in a professional setting, as well as the fact that there are more ways of being involved practically than translating. Correspondingly, it shows his involvement with his colleagues at the internship.

The situation is similar for feedback in a professional setting; again, the three students with professional experience stand out. Edvin describes that he could “see directly, what … well […] what was good and what was bad” when he received feedback on translations in the translation agency. In Jessica’s case, she works in close cooperation with one translator, and the deal is that Jessica translates and the translator reviews. They have in close cooperation written a translation test in order to work with a new translation agency.

Jessica’s work also reflects involvement with the profession, although this involvement comes across as more indirect in comparison with Erik and Edvin’s internships, in the sense that it is restricted to one specific translator. Jessica does not mention how often they meet, but it seems like the collaboration mainly takes place via email. Edvin’s internship, where he “felt like one in the team”, is a more direct way of involving with the profession, though it was only for a limited period of time. Erik’s internship showed one particular side of the profession, which, potentially counterintuitively, gave him a better view “of the language profession at large”.

These different experiences have enabled these three students to meet directly with agents, most often translators. For Erik, his internship also allowed him to meet with language professionals in a wider sense: as well as translators, mainly terminologists and language consultants. Edvin mentions the coffee breaks which gave him the opportunity to talk to the project managers of the agency about how they started their career.

For the students who did not do an internship, the involvement with professional translators and agents (direct) remains scarce. For these students, this involvement is still more or less restricted to their teachers (overlapping with education), who, in the case of Group 2, are mostly former professionals or professionals who are still active in the field. According to Group 2, the teachers’ diverse backgrounds affect their selection of source texts, as well as how they assessed the target texts. The diverse backgrounds of the teachers is perceived as an advantage: “Almost the best thing”, as Julia says. This shows that also indirect involvement with the profession, via practicing teachers, is also a valuable asset for students when the overall contact with the profession and professional agents is limited. However, this aspect of involvement with teachers is not mentioned by Group 1, probably since their teachers lacked this experience, which means that their involvement with agents is indeed very limited.
Yet another way of engaging with agents is to engage with the students in the same group. Both groups report that, because of the elective courses, they have rarely seen each other during the semester. Edvin says that “sometimes you’ve almost felt a bit, I don’t know, disconnected from one another in some way […]” and Jessica says that “it’s been a scattered semester […] because it’s been more like I’ve been studying [the language course] than translation”.

The specialisation courses are a way of involving with education. Apart from the specialisation courses which resulted in the internships previously discussed, the courses chosen by Emma and Erik are worth mentioning here: Emma’s course in creative writing and Erik’s course in business communication. Although not directly related to translation, both courses are oriented towards writing in one way or another, and, more importantly for this theme, the training is centred on peer-review and discussion of the students’ assignments. This means that Erik and Emma are involved in education that does not belong to the programme and that, while it is not directly relevant for translation in the sense that it does not include translation, the experience of discussing texts within the programme can be seen as an involvement with other students.

### 3.5.2.4 Second semester: Summary

To conclude the second focus group sessions, one can note that the main difference in relation to the first focus group sessions is the 15 ECTS credits of elective courses that the students can choose freely. The implication is that the students no longer study exactly the same courses, which affects all three core elements and, in turn, makes the students develop in different directions. This possibility to specialise provided by the programme is in itself a possible Investment. For the students, this investment – more or less explicitly described as such – is either channelled into a language-related course, a writing-related course, or an internship course; with one exception exclusively courses which in one way or another can be of use in a future professional life as a translator.

Regarding Knowledge Acquisition, the general knowledge of the profession is greater and more encompassing than in the first focus group sessions, leading to commitment with the profession and better self-confidence, especially for the students who have already entered the market either through extra work (Jessica) or internship (Edvin). However, certain more specific knowledge is still lacking, especially for the students without experience from the market. Feedback is a new topic brought up in Group 1, who reports on a perceived lack of feedback on their translation assignments, which makes it hard for them to develop, translation-wise. In stark contrast, Group 2 perceives feedback as an Investment in preparation for the professional life. Regarding their personal role as translators as well as agentship, the students’ identities are, just like in the first focus group sessions, closely related to education and
the fact that they will be university-trained translators. As a result of his involvement with the profession, Edvin has already at this point started to self-identify as a translator.

The involvement with the profession remains limited, with the exception of the students who either already work as translators or who did internships as part of their elective courses. For Group 2, teachers who also are professional translators turned out to be a valuable asset for the students and provided an indirect contact with the profession.

3.5.3 Fourth semester: Focus group sessions no. 3

The third focus group sessions were held at the very end of the MA programme, i.e. one year after the second focus group sessions. During the autumn semester, the students could once again choose 15 ECTS credits of elective courses, whereas the remaining 15 ECTS credits were faculty-specific courses. The spring semester was completely dedicated to the master’s thesis. In each group there was one student who had not finished the master’s thesis and planned to complete it by the autumn instead. The focus group sessions were naturally marked by the students’ graduation and their plans for the future. There were also discussions about the programme, which they still, as in the second focus group sessions, perceived as too theoretical.

3.5.3.1 Fourth semester: Knowledge Acquisition

On a practice level, the students’ experience of translating this time differs substantially depending on what courses were chosen for the autumn semester. For example, Emma says that: “The past year we haven’t had any courses in translation so that’s been pretty different.” This is an accurate description of Emma’s situation during the past year, but not of the other students’ situation; all the other students, in both groups, have chosen different translation courses or internships as their elective courses, which means that Emma is indeed the student with the least experience of translating during the second year. She seems very dissatisfied with the fact that the only translation she had over the past year was the translation done for her master’s thesis. Edvin did another internship, thereby adding to his already substantial experience of translating. Erik, who did a literary translation for the master’s thesis and also took two courses in translation during the autumn, says “I chose to do a translation with comments so I have had quite a lot of translation”. The same goes for Eva, who did a scholarly thesis.17 The new translation courses provided a first opportunity for Erik and Eva to translate with a new SL: English. In comparison with translating from Japanese, Erik describes it as “another way of translating

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17 For the master’s thesis, the students can choose to do either a commented translation or a scholarly thesis with an empirical investigation.
and in a way also another way of thinking” and that “it’s possible to translate more directly, that’s not possible with Japanese”. All students in Group 2, seemingly without hesitation, chose the two elective courses with English as SL.

Regarding the feedback situation, Group 1’s approach to it seems to have changed somewhat. When looking back at the feedback they received during the translation courses, the students are not as negative as before:

Example 25
Edvin I think we had kind of good discussions on those seminars.
Erik Mm.
Emma Yes.
Eva Mm.
Erik But not very personal, more on a general level.
Eva Mm.
Edvin More general.

Edvin adds that the topics brought up were “things that occurred in the text that we translated at the time”, which Emma agrees with. She also speciﬁes that “we didn’t really go that deep into … what to say, syntax or anything like that … or did we?” Erik and Eva were both very happy with the feedback in the elective English into Swedish courses, and can compare the two different sorts of courses. “Deﬁnitely more feedback in these courses”, Erik adds.

While the students in Group 1 do not seem as dissatisﬁed with the feedback as in the previous focus groups, the previous uncertainties related to feedback and how to translate have given rise to doubts regarding the accuracy of the knowledge they have acquired during the programme. This can be seen in the following example when they discuss what they learnt during the ﬁrst year of the programme when translating from Japanese:

Example 26
Eva One question is whether one had been able to develop more, because I …. already when I started the course I had a way, my language, my way of translating Japanese and it didn’t really, it didn’t really change that much at all –
Erik No …
Eva – during that year.
Emma Mm. Yes, I feel the same.
Erik Mm.
Emma What I do, I do … out of some kind of intuition –
Eva Mm.
Emma – rather than something I have learned in the course (laughter). Of course it’s possible that you’ve picked up knowledge that you’re not aware of but I don’t feel like I have a completely new way of looking at translation and how it should be performed (silence).
This shows a radically different picture of the students’ perception of their progress and how to translate in comparison with Group 2, where the students at several times in the previous focus groups have revealed that a major shift had occurred in their view on translation, and their translation skills, since they started the programme (see examples 3 and 8, session 1). In this focus group, though, Johanna now states that she has learnt a lot but that she at the same time feels as though she knows nothing: “it sounds super contradictory when you say it out loud but in one way it feels like ‘ok, I’ve learnt a bit more and I know more’ but at the same time it feels like ‘ok I don’t know this, there are a lot of things that I don’t know’.” Julia agrees and describes the knowledge they now possess as “the tip of the iceberg”.

Johanna also mentions a new aspect of knowledge in how to translate: the need to know how one’s own translation process works. Therefore, she argues, it is good to have practiced and learnt in class, “to get some routine”. In effect, during the past year since the last focus group, Johanna has started working as a freelance translator and has thus acquired some knowledge in the experience of translating. In another discussion related to how to translate and experience of translating, she highlights the need to acquire self-confidence when translating:

Example 27

Johanna  Yes. To be a bit perceptive towards … well, the aim [of the translation] and what the client wants but at the same time not be too anxious but to have some confidence and feeling for it … like ‘this sounds better than this’ because otherwise you’ll be sitting with a small text on a shampoo bottle for a thousand years more or less …

All (laugh)

Johanna  Yes but there won’t be any development if you don’t dare!

Jessica  No …

M. One’s own personal development … one’s translator development?

Jessica  Mm.

Johanna  Yes exactly! That you feel that you are … worth something as a translator.

Jessica  Mm.

The feeling of worthiness described by Johanna, which in the example above is connected to the translation practice, can also be tested on the profession level. This topic has been brought up before in how to make oneself a name or how to get a reputation as a translator. This might be of extra importance when entering the profession. Julia, taking Jessica as an example of success, says that the key is to keep working and keep translating: the more one translates, the better reputation one gets. However, the translations must of course be of good quality, “otherwise you destroy for yourself”, as Jessica puts it.
There are different opinions on whether one’s reputation is fragile in the beginning of one’s career:

Example 28
M. Is it fragile then? Is one’s reputation fragile then, you’d say?
Johanna At least in the beginning …
Julia Not in the beginning, in the beginning I feel like … we’re all green and I think the clients who’ll give us work know we’re green –
All Mm.
Julia – and we won’t get those big twenty million words –
Johanna No exactly.
Julia – in some obscure subject. Er … I believe in … well, to try different things and to work and gain experience.
Jessica Mm.
Johanna Mm.
Julia Learning by doing.
Jessica Mm.

Entering the profession here consists of working continuously and persistently in order to gain more and more experience and learning along the way: learning by doing. Julia further elaborates on this idea: “I think that the more texts you do within obscure machines, the more you’ll know. Then you can nail these texts directly.” This of course only applies to business translation, and Group 2 describes that there is an easier way of entry into business translation than into literary translation: “you contact [a translation agency], you get to write a translation test and then maybe you’re accepted and then you can get assignments,” Jessica summarises.

Regarding general knowledge of the profession, one question for Group 1 has been which language to work with in the future. At this point, they seem to have come to terms with the fact that if they want to pursue a career in business translation, English is the only option – “whether you want it or not”, as Erik phrases it. In this sense, knowledge of English falls into the sub-theme what is valued in the profession.

Another aspect of what is valued in the profession is education, which has previously been perceived as an asset in the students’ discussion. The exception has been Jana, who here again, just as in the first focus group, voices her concern about how the programme is perceived by the profession:

Example 29
Jana … just the academic part, because everyone is so used to those who’ve been sitting for a long time with this specific professional experience and they are used to this –
Johanna Mm.
Jana – and then they don’t really know what they will get with us academics and that’s a bit –
M. Who are not engineers more or less?
Johanna Yes.
Jana: Yes, more or less.
M.: Mm.
Jana: But I think that’s a bit, it’s a bit strange to be expected to have two separate degrees to do ONE job.
M.: Yes, yes.
Johanna: Mm.
Jana: Because that’s not, that’s not how we get in, we don’t get in as subject experts but as language experts …

Close to graduation, what is valued in the profession is again a concern, possibly because its true value will soon be tested when the students start to apply for jobs.

The sub-theme specialisation has become more important close to graduation, and often borders the students’ personal role as translators in the agent theme. At this point, it is clear that the students have diverse experiences of the profession and also diverse profiles with regard to their specialisation. In Group 1, Edvin is by far the student with the most experience from the profession. He outrightly states that his aim from the very beginning was to become a business translator and, as he says, “it has worked out pretty well … for me”. He continues by saying that if he wants to do something with Japanese in the future, it will be on the side of his ordinary business, be that in an in-house position or as a freelancer. After graduation, he will work over summer as an in-house translator in the agency where he did his second internship. Erik and Emma are the students who seem the most interested in literary translation, but it is perceived as being “even more on the side, almost like a hobby”, in Erik’s words.

A new aspect in this focus group is that two students in Group 1 express uncertainties regarding their future as translators. The concern in the previous focus groups has always been how, not if. Now both Emma and Eva seem to see translation as one of their specialisations in a future career. Emma describes it as follows:

Example 30
Emma: Yes … I rather feel like I want to try out different professions to see what you can specialise in in the future. This translation thing will rather be some kind of … companion. Rather than a full-time occupation, I think.

Eva also has doubts about her future as a translator and says that “[I] guess I think a bit like Emma, that this might not be a … full-time work. I guess I see it more as a part of my profession, or like a part-time work”. On the question of whether the students still felt like translators, as in the second focus group (example 18, session 2), Edvin responds “absolutely” and adds that he translates daily. Emma’s answer is more ambivalent; she states that she definitely
thinks that she has sufficient knowledge of what it takes to be a translator, but she is not sure if it is the profession she wants.

In Group 2, Jessica has by now worked extra as a translator for 1.5 years. As reported before, Johanna has also started a company and has done a couple of translations for an agency. She is still unsure of whether she sees herself as a translator:

Example 31
Johanna  Mm. Well I … maybe when it flies for a while and I have more assignments, now I’ve only done like ten … Then maybe I’ll start to feel like a translator, right now it’s like such a fraud –
All  (laugh)
Johanna  – but [the translations] do pass and I get a small small payment every month. But so far it doesn’t feel like it’s for real.

In the example above, the discussion touches on the question of *agentship*; when can the students say that they *are* translators. Johanna mentions the perceived ‘realness’ of the situation; while she obviously translates for agencies and gets paid for the translation, she still does not feel like she translates “for real”, and hence that she *is* a translator for real. Also Group 1 discusses realness in connection to their translatorship. The different opinions on this topic can be seen in the following example:

Example 32
Eva  But at least that you have actually done [a translation], like for real, done it for real once or a couple of times.
Erik  It feels kind of fake in school.
Emma  I agree.
Edvin  But I still think that you should, you should qualify as a translator if you have all this … knowledge, all these courses.
Erik  Mm.
Eva  But you have done a couple of internships, like … two internships, I think that makes a difference.
Edvin  Yes …
Eva  To actually have experienced it and so on.
Edvin  Yeah maybe … Yeah. But still, I think that you should be able to, even if you haven’t done an internship, you should be able to –
Emma  Yeah … but …
Edvin  – say it, like ‘I have, I know all this, there’s a lot of theory that I know’ … you know.

In this example, Eva, backed up by Emma and Erik, advocates experience and realness over formal qualification, whereas Edvin, the student with the most experience of the profession, defends the formal qualifications and the students’ right to call themselves translators without practical experience. In the discussion following example 32, Emma adds another perspective by stating that if they had studied medicine for so long, they would have been nurses by
now and concludes: “One wouldn’t have doubted that.” The other students agree. The discussion ends with Edvin saying “[I] still think that you should be able to say [that you are a translator], but then in practice … maybe it’s individual”. It is noticeable that the agentship in this discussion is linked more to individual experience as opposed to the degree as in the previous focus groups (see examples 6 and 12, session 1).

In effect, many of the segments return to the question of the students’ individual responsibility. For instance, Eva is self-critical when discussing the need for more practical assignments: “I would have liked to see more practical components but that can also … Like I haven’t done an internship, if I’d done that I’d have more … practical experience from there.”

Regarding the translator’s role on a textual level, the two groups mention that a sense of sensitivity (Group 1) and flexibility (Group 2) is required to be able to translate. When Group 1 is then asked by me if these are things that are learnt at the programme, the discussion goes as follows:

Example 33
Erik It’s something that you get more aware of during the programme, I’d say, that you think ‘ah I need to think this through once more’ and so on.
Eva Mm. It’s more that you gain an awareness than that you learn like –
Edvin Yes.
Eva – ‘this is how it’s done’ (laughs) More like –
Edvin That’s right.
Eva – ‘you need to think about this’.

Several of the students in Group 1 have also got to know one professional translator as she had served as a linguistic advisor for the students who did a commented translation from Japanese as their MA theses. She is a rather well-known literary translator who, apart working from Japanese also works from other source languages. The students express admiration for her work on several occasions. On the question of whether they have any translator role models, Emma mentions her and elaborates:

Example 34
Emma [B]ut with [her] translations, I think she has very strong work ethics, that she’s got some kind of ethical, or maybe not ethical but well, like how to handle the material and that she doesn’t just … do it intuitively and choose what … she thought appropriate at the time, but rather has some kind of … thorough plan of how to work with a piece and sticks to it. I think that’s good, I can admire that.
The admiration seems to amount to admiration of her work on a textual level. As has been seen before, the students’ knowledge of other professional translators has been rather limited, and they have not had any first-hand involvement with a literary translator within the programme.

Regarding education, the main sub-theme in these focus group sessions is the possibility to specialise. Here again, the students’ own responsibility is brought up by Edvin when discussing internships: “But it’s up to the students in the end, if you want to do an internship and so on, then you have to apply yourself.” Also in Group 2, the students discuss the possibility to specialise through the 30 ECTS credits that could be chosen freely during the programme. On the question of whether the elective courses provided an opportunity to specialise, the answer by Johanna is “One COULD have done that”, and Julia fills in “In hindsight”, though it seems that this possibility did not really occur to them at the time.

For Group 2, which has discussed the relationship theory-practice throughout the programme, have now after writing their master’s theses a slightly more positive perception of translation theory and the use of it, although there is still some scepticism regarding the practical use of it once they have graduated. Jana says that the theoretical courses do not provide the skills required by the market, but at the same time acknowledges that “[the translation theory course] does teach you reflection in a way that purely practical courses cannot”. Julia goes as far as saying that if she had wanted to pursue doctoral studies, she would have thought that there was too little translation theory in the programme. This seems to be a prevalent opinion in the group: the programme is too theoretical for a practical programme, but too practical for a theoretical programme. Jana agrees. Also when it comes to the value of the master’s programme, the theoretical side of the programme is perceived as a negative aspect (see example 29). The value of the master’s programme is downplayed because of the market’s perceived scepticism towards translation theory.

3.5.3.2 Fourth semester: Investment

As in the previous focus group sessions, one of the investments on the practice level is experience of translating. By the end of the programme, one can conclude that the students differ in this respect. Jessica, after having worked for 1.5 years as a translator, is ready for graduation and working life. This is also the case for Edvin, and Johanna has also started working during the last year. Both Edvin and Jessica will work in-house in a translation agency over summer. For some of the students in Group 1, experience of translating appears as an area of failed investment – especially Eva and Emma’s desire to “actually have experienced it” (example 32), which they have not. Also Group
2 discusses experience of translating (overlapping with multiplicity of translating). Julia means that it all boils down to “learning by doing”: both by investing in experience, and by investing experience of having translated different kinds of texts. Investing in this sense amounts to building one’s own bank of experience.

Regarding investments in feedback, both Eva and Erik mention that the course in English they took the previous autumn was an “eye opener” regarding feedback, and state that what they learnt there will be of use. Another kind of feedback appeared for the students who chose to do translation with a comment for their thesis.

One kind of investment discussed in previous focus groups is tools, and mainly CAT tools. The students in Group 1, except Edvin, do not feel comfortable with CAT tools. Edvin encourages the other students by saying that most CAT tools work more or less the same, so once you have understood how it works it is easier to work with the other ones. Johanna has by now started to translate using a CAT tool, but she seems to have some trouble figuring out how it works. As in the previous focus groups, actually reading translations seems to be a limited activity among the students.

On the profession level, there are now students in both groups who have invested in the experience of the profession. These investments often correspond with the students’ specialisation on the general side of business translation. There are also investments into general knowledge of the profession. Starting a company, now achieved by both Edvin and Jessica, is clearly a sign of investments in the profession and a future career as a translator.

As has been mentioned before, both Emma and Eva are hesitant regarding choosing the profession. This sub-theme mainly appeared in the first focus group sessions when discussing how the students came to get interested in the profession all together but has now re-appeared as graduation grows closer. However, they do not dismiss the profession altogether; rather they ponder if translation will be their main profession.

One way of investing in agents consists of investing in one’s personal role as translators. Edvin evokes the student’s individual responsibility of becoming a freelancer, which has apparently played out well for him. He describes it as “you have to take your own initiatives and get it into your everyday life”. He continues:

Example 35

Edvin [...] You kind of build your own … repertoire and your own reputation.

M. Ah.

Emma Mm.

M. Is that good or bad, or is it … something that just needs to be done or is there a potential in it?
Edvin I think there is a … good potential in it. So you have the chance to show what you can do, to do well, so that maybe you’ll get more work. So that’s positive, I think. (silence)

Edvin’s discussion about the investment in one’s own repertoire is in a certain way mirrored in the previous discussions about “making yourself a name” (Group 1) and “getting a reputation” (Group 2) and boiled down to the perception that one’s reputation can be “managed”. Julia’s discussion on ‘learning by doing’ also resonates in the example: the more one translates, the more work one will get – on the condition that it is done well. The idea that one can “show what you can do”, in Edvin’s words, again evokes the investment nature of entering the profession. On a general level, it is also an example of the high level of investment that comes with starting to work as a freelance translator and the personal prestige that is put into it. As has been discussed by Group 2 (see example 28), the fragility of one’s reputation seems to be inherent in it, although there are different opinions whether it is more fragile in the beginning of the career or in later stages.

Most of the conversation revolves around business translation. The students have at several points mentioned that the road into working with literary translation is not as easily distinguished as the road into business translation. Regarding investment in personal contacts, in this case with a professional translator, Edvin mentions Group 2’s new linguistic advisor who works with literary translation:

Example 36
Edvin So that would be if you can keep that contact and build that relationship and maybe get more insight into how it works if you want to get [a translation] published or … get some tips, you could try … to build on that if you wanted to go in for literary … literary translation.

The greatest investment in education above all other is investing in the programme altogether and is again brought to the fore close to graduation. The question is whether this investment will pay off or not, which, in turn, evokes the question of the value of education. As has been shown earlier in the discussion, there are different opinions on this in Group 2, where Jana stands out as the more pessimistic one. The other students are more optimistic:

Example 37
Julia Er … (silence) But I’ve at least had the impression that a master carries weight. Er … and I personally feel that … in comparison with people without a master … it is considered a bit finer to actually have it, it gives you cred, and I definitely think it is an advantage to say that you have a master’s degree in Translation Studies …
Johanna: Yes.
Jessica: Mm.
Johanna: Like a receipt for your … your competence.
Julia: ‘I know something’.
Johanna: Yes.
Julia: Er … Or I mean I guess it’s like that in general with higher education, whatever subject the master’s is in you’re expected to know something apart from the basic … but like I said, it remains to be seen how important it is in the real world …

This discussion is interrelated with the sub-theme value of education, and as Julia accurately points out it will soon be put to the test. When I ask them if it is not enough to hold a master’s degree in Translation Studies in order to be a translator, the discussion goes as follows after a long silence:

Example 38
Julia: No.
Johanna: No, then you’re just a person who knows a lot about it –
Jessica: (laughs)
Julia: – theoretically.

The other students agree. This discussion further strengthens the discussion above where realness and experience are valued over formal qualifications.

When discussing the desired outcome of the programme, which also borders to the possibility to specialise, Julia comes back to how the student’s own interest affects what they want to see in the programme regarding theory-practice. The conclusion is that the programme now is rather divided between theory and practice.

3.5.3.3 Fourth semester: Involvement
The practice-related involvement this close to graduation has increased in relation to the previous focus groups. One kind of indirect involvement previously discussed is reading translations: throughout the programme, students in both groups have revealed that they only seldom read literature in translation. Emma explains that she thinks that there is a conception that it is always better to read the original, and that is also what she is doing herself. Group 2 is used to reading in English since they studied it a BA level, but there is also a discussion about wanting to read more translations:

Example 39
Julia: But I think that, I would definitely like to read translations that are considered good translations, to get some overview –
Johanna: Mm.
Julia: – of translators out there, I have no clue at all, but also … mm, well to …
Johanna: Yes. It would be interesting to see what is considered good, try to see what it is …
The quote above both relates to the agent theme – to be able to recognise well-known literary translators’ names – as well as an investment in practice: to be able to see what the profession considers good.

Regarding translating in a professional setting, Edvin and Jessica still translate regularly as freelance translators. Since the last focus group Johanna also had this experience, although still to a lesser extent than Edvin and Jessica. Johanna also expressed the need for a kind of involvement on the practice level that is directed inwards: the need to be familiar with one’s own process and to have your own routine on how to handle a translation assignment.

Johanna’s comment above borders the profession in general, and the sub-theme working as a translator in particular: by translating in a professional setting, the students also engage with the profession. For Edvin, his new internship also revealed a new kind of experience of the profession. While his first internship was in a mid-sized agency, the second one was “more of a big company, with a lot of things going on”. He summarises the experience as “very rewarding”.

Some of the other students have made attempts at contacting the profession, or have been contacted by it. Erik has contacted translation agencies in order to work as a freelance translator, and Emma was once contacted by someone who wanted a play translated into Swedish.

When it comes to involvement with agents, Emma, Edvin and Erik now have direct contact with professional translators and agents through their linguistic advisor, the well-known literary translator. As has already been shown, they admire her work and she can also be seen as a link to the literary translation world which the students do not have much insight into. For Group 2, the involvement seems scarcer. One can deduce that the students who have already begun translating are in contact with project managers at the translation agencies, but they do not seem to be in contact with other translators as colleagues. Also indirect contact with professional translators and agents (indirect) remains rather limited. When looking back at the programme, the students once again come back to their former teachers and their positive influence on the courses.

Apart from the teachers’ influence already discussed, the education level is here restricted to different extra-curriculum activities – either in the form of meetings with professional translators organised by the programme or in the form of a language lab where students can practice their skills in CAT tools at campus. However, neither of these activities were scheduled, and the students only seldom attended (Jana attended one or several meetings with translators). For the language lab, they would have had to go there and book time on their own. Johanna’s quite negative comment on why she had not participated was “well … could have, should have, would have”.
3.5.3.4 Fourth semester: Summary

During the year since the second focus group sessions, the students have either studied English-Swedish translation courses or chosen something else, such as a new internship course (Edvin) or another language (Emma) during the autumn semester. The spring semester was marked by the students writing their MA theses, either in the form of a commented translation or a scholarly thesis. Depending on their choices within the educational context, the students have either had a substantial amount of translation or a very low degree of translation during this past year. There are already three students who are working as freelance translators: as well as Edvin and Jessica who have already worked for quite some time, Johanna has also started working as a freelance translator, albeit still on a small scale.

Regarding Knowledge Acquisition, the main novelty is that both Emma and Eva are uncertain of their future as translators. As to Group 1’s feedback, which they were dissatisfied with in the second focus group, the students now have a much more positive picture, though they agree that the comments were held on a general level. The students in Group 1 also express doubts about their development as translators, in stark contrast with the students in Group 2, who according to themselves have developed translation-wise throughout the programme. Another novelty in comparison with the previous focus groups revolves around *agentship*; in the students’ own discussion, realness and experience have primacy over their formal qualification, in contrast with previous focus groups where the degree in itself was deemed sufficient. The question of whether the degree is valued by the profession will soon be put to the test, as the students officially enter the market as university-trained translators. In close connection to graduation, the programme and the education were again brought up and discussed in terms of an Investment, especially the value of education and choosing the profession.

The degree of Involvement in the field differs depending on whether the students are working or not; for students who are not working, the involvement with the profession remains scarce. One exception is the linguistic advisor for some students in Group 1.

3.5.4 After graduation: Focus group sessions no. 4

The fourth and final focus group sessions were held in January–February the year following the graduation, i.e. seven to eight months after the third focus groups sessions were held. At this point, I did not know what the now former students had been doing since graduation, and some constellations of the students had not seen each other during this time either.18

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18 For ease of expression the participants will still be called students in the following sections, although they are no longer students.
In Group 1, Edvin pursues his career as a freelance business translator. Erik works in a bookshop and has started contacting translation agencies in order to start working as a freelance translator, but without having started to translate yet. He is discussing a potential literary translation from Japanese with a publishing house, which he hopes will lead to publication. Eva works within the university system as well as within the administration of an authority where she also translates shorter texts. Emma works in an administrative role within the cultural field.

In Group 2, Jessica now works full-time as a freelance translator, specialising in both business translation as well as literary translation. Johanna has continued to work half-time as a freelance business translator. When the fourth focus group is recorded, Julia has worked a couple of weeks as a project manager in a large translation agency.

Naturally, the discussions in the two groups differed depending on whether the participants are working as translators or not. For those who had started their professional lives as translators, the subjects centred around that topic: how they had started working as translators and in what kind of translational field, which texts and languages, and how they handled different professional dilemmas. For the students who had not yet started working as translators, or who doubted that translation was the occupation they wanted to pursue, the topics brought up were more diverse.

3.5.4.1 After graduation: Knowledge Acquisition

On the practice level, the sub-theme how to translate continues to be the most prominent one when it comes to Knowledge Acquisition. For Group 1, where the majority of the students have not entered the translation market, the discussion mostly revolves around the practical training in translation during the programme, which, as in the previous focus group discussions, came across as more of a linguistic exercise:

Example 40

Eva: Because the practical Japanese parts we had, they were very interesting but I don’t think they gave me as much [as the English-Swedish course] … for me. That you can really use afterwards in some way. I don’t know.

Emma: For me it felt like a continuation of studying Japanese.

Eva: Yes! Yes! Exactly.

Edvin: Mm …

Emma: Also that … it didn’t feel like … practical translation assignments …

Eva: More like learning Japanese than learning translation.

Emma: Yeah …

When the students in Group 2 look back at the practical translation assignments, they report being satisfied with the teaching and the assignments. As
reported before, Julia had a strategy to translate by more or less disregarding the source text altogether, as a result of the feedback she got during the first semester:

Example 41
Julia I think I was very source-oriented the first semester, at that time I didn’t dare to –
(silence)
Jessica I think we all were.
Johanna Yes.
Julia – depart even the slightest you know, but then I let go of that because I thought that it doesn’t really matter anyway. It’s … it’s only a programme …
Johanna (laughs) Yes.
Jessica Yes.
Julia It’s not like someone will give me a lower rate or something. And then, or I don’t know, but it felt like I found my … my way of working, to kind of disregard the [source] text. But I’ve made some pretty big mistakes as well of course.
M. Mm. Mm.
Julia But the texts that I thought were my best, that was when I just ‘OK I’m just gonna write what I think is right’.

In stark contrast to this viewpoint of “daring to be free”, several participants in Group 1 report still struggling with producing texts that are not too source-oriented. These difficulties are often ascribed to either the participants’ personal translation style or to Japanese as a source language, as in the following example:

Example 42
Eva I try to … or it’s very easy for me to … get too close to Japanese, so the text gets pretty … the syntax becomes kind of complicated in Swedish.
M. Like literal or how to say?
Eva Yes, I try to work against it but often when I read it afterwards I feel like ‘this doesn’t sound …’ not wrong but kind of …
Edvin Mm, you wouldn’t say it like this –
Eva The text doesn’t really flow …
Edvin – in Swedish.
Eva No …
M. Mm.
Eva I think it’s pretty easy … to end up too close.
Edvin Mm.
M. End up too close.
Edvin Mm, I think so too, I feel the same way. At least with Japanese. It’s easy to end up too close with Japanese.
Erik Mm.
Edvin You kind of need to rewrite it. Completely …
M. Mm.
Eva is the only participant in Group 1 who regularly translates from Japanese. She says that she would like to be freer but that she, because of the formal content of the texts she translates, also often feels like she needs to stick as closely to the source text as possible, which leads to complicated texts in Swedish. However, her colleagues have at some points encouraged her to be bolder when it comes to making changes. Whereas Eva has the perception of still struggling with translation, both Erik and Edvin have the perception that they have evolved as translators over the last year.

In Group 2, both Jessica and Johanna now work as freelance translators. They both agree that it is easier to translate for the same end client, and that after some time one learns how to phrase certain expressions and what kinds of superfluous expressions can be erased in Swedish. On a more general level, Julia states that the most important thing for her is to be satisfied with her translation, “to feel that I have done everything, even if it’s not 100%, I have investigated everything, checked everything, […] done everything I can”. Jessica partly describes another side of the everyday life of a translator when she has been given a subject that she is not familiar with. She describes it as follows:

Example 43

Jessica I’m not really competent but I received this text and then you just have to do it and hope that the project manager who’ll do the review can spot these things but it’s … well … it is what it is, you want to do it well but … then there’s always a rush and the pay is what it is and you don’t really want to [make a fuss about it] …

Many of the how to translate segments naturally coincide with the sub-theme experience of translating; at this point these two sub-themes seem to be blurred. Nevertheless, for the students who have not translated much outside of the educational context, even the actual experience of translating can turn out rather pointless, such as when Emma describes her experience of translating as a “continuation of studying Japanese”, which does not advance her translation skills. Eva continues by saying that it does not provide the students with “[something] that you can really use afterwards in some way” (example 40). This leads us to the topic of feedback, which has been a topic of concern throughout the programme for Group 1. In this focus group, it is again brought up as a component in the high esteem Emma, Edvin and Erik hold for their linguistic advisor, where the feedback she provided was perceived as particularly useful:
Example 44

Emma: Well she was my linguistic advisor.

M.: That’s right.

Emma: And she … had very hands-on comments. ‘This doesn’t work because of this, and here you might want to try this instead because of that …’

M.: Mm.

Erik: Mm.

Emma: Er. I thought that she was really good.

Edvin: Mm.

Erik: I thought she was really great –

Emma: Mm.

Erik: – in giving feedback, really.

Edvin: Yes, the same here. Good feeling.

Regarding the students’ SLs and TL, Group 1’s strong connection to the Japanese language and culture still stands out, especially for Eva and Emma who do not see translation as their future profession. As Eva puts it herself, Japanese is “absolutely the most important”, i.e. more important than translation, and she would rather continue working with Japanese in a non-translation related area than to work as an English-Swedish translator full-time. The same is true for Emma, who does not exclude working in Japan in the future. For Erik, it is now more important to work with translation rather than specifically with Japanese, although he admits that Japanese is still the source language that he is the most comfortable with. Edvin, having worked as a translator from English for almost two years by now, seems to have come to terms with not working mainly from Japanese, which is in stark contrast to the group’s opinion on this matter in the first semester.

As for tools, the question for Group 1 is rather whether the students are comfortable working with their CAT tool. Though Eva translates on a regular basis, she points out that she would need to learn a CAT tool “if I would like to continue and become a translator full-time”. Jessica has mastered it well by now, having worked professionally for almost two years, but Johanna has some difficulties due to her working on a Macintosh computer. For Julia, the text she works with in the translation agency does not require CAT tools, but she does work with the agency’s own administrative tools.

As has already been revealed by now, the degree of Knowledge Acquisition regarding the profession differs between the two groups in several ways. For Group 2, entering the profession has been a very positive experience. The students describe the transition into working life as “easier than expected”, and, in hindsight, they can see that they worried too much about it during the studies. For Group 1, the students’ experiences are more diverse and there is not a unified picture of the transition within the group, as shown in the following example:
In this example, Edvin puts forward the training as a good preparation for being able to translate professionally and states that without it, he does not think he could have worked as a translator the way he does now. Edvin’s positive view is contested by Eva, and later also by Emma, who both explain his positive experience by his two internships. Unlike him, they do not feel confident to work with CAT tools in a translation agency. Edvin seems to be aware of the fact that the training has had rather different outcomes for the former classmates, and he concludes the discussion by saying that the same education has resulted in “very different […] experiences in that way”.

The various degrees of involvement in the field also leads to various degrees of general knowledge of the profession as well as the knowledge of
working conditions. Regarding what is valued in the profession, Julia’s, the only one who has been to an interview for a position, overall impression was that a degree from the programme was recognised as an asset. For the students who have already entered the profession, such as Jessica and Johanna, other aspects are valued: to keep producing high quality translations, to keep the deadlines – in short, to perform as is expected of a professional translator.

The above-mentioned examples also reflect the Knowledge Acquisition regarding agents. First and foremost, the majority of the former students’ personal role[s] as translators have been consolidated, especially in Group 2 where all participants are working as either translators or project managers. Edvin explains that “business translation has become a means for me to earn money”. Emma and Eva both express doubts as to whether they want to work as translators in the future. Emma was offered to translate a play during the autumn. In the end, the deal did not go through, but she describes a development since the first semester, which during the course of the programme has developed into a sense of professional awareness:

Example 46
Emma No but then I thought ‘okay, if I can be considered to do this translation, then maybe I can … call myself a translator’.
M. Ah.
Emma And I felt that I … was comfortable with the material and … I thought that the test translation I did was pretty good …
M. Mm.
Emma So … Yes … Because in the beginning of the programme it was more like we had … assignments and it felt like we were … well, students –
Eva Mm.
Emma – much more. Then with time I have felt that I have certain guidelines for how I want to do things and I feel like I have some kind of … er … feeling for how I want to approach the profession.

This question also touches upon agentship. In the example above, Emma’s agentship as a translator seems to stem from being approached in the capacity of a translator; together with a sense of how she wants to handle the material and a professional approach towards the profession, she ponders if she may call herself a translator. To be recognised as a translator by others, is seen as crucial also for Eva: “[y]ou kind of get it acknowledged when someone else is looking for a translator and turns to you […] and then it feels like ‘OK I have a degree and I can do this’.” Erik had a similar experience when he came in contact with a publishing house regarding the translation of a novel:

Example 47
Erik Mm. Well, I don’t really call myself a translator yet either. But … sure, it feels kind of nice when you get contacted by a publishing house and get to do a test translation and that they liked it, that
feels kind of confirming in some way (laughs). Er, but … I won’t be able to earn a living from it, so it’s, I don’t think I have … For me it’s more that I … that I myself start … to work, well to translate, and kind of … er, how to put it? I don’t feel that I need to earn a living of it just to be able to call myself a translator, so …

On a general level, the students in both groups seem to agree that one should not have to earn a living solely from translation in order to call oneself a translator. Jessica argues that one milestone occurs when translation is “the main occupation”, in comparison to working extra during the studies. In the previous focus groups’ conversations, experience of having actually translated something came across as an essential prerequisite in the students’ conversation (see examples 31 and 32, session 3). For Julia, given her position as a project manager and the fact that she does not translate on a regular basis, the question of agentship is not as pertinent as for the other students. In one way, her approach is more unproblematic: “I’m still [a translator]. But the position is … project manager.”

On the educational level, the students have some insights regarding the context of the master’s programme. One of them is that the programme, in hindsight, does not come across as a “cohesive period of study”, because of the different courses taken in different departments. Emma puts it that “it doesn’t feel like I’ve done a programme but [something] much more scattered in some way” and adds it is probably because of the different elective courses, and the fact that they did not study all courses together.

Regarding the value of the master’s programme, Julia has had a positive experience when she applied for her current position as a project manager in a major translation agency. She describes that there are many former students working as both translators and project managers “so I think it was thanks to my degree that I got an interview at all …”. In this case, Julia has the impression that the degree “opened doors” for her on a personal level. On a more general degree, however, the former students in Group 2 still, as they have done throughout the four focus groups, doubt the value of the “studies” in Translation Studies:

Example 48
Julia  Mm. Well it sounds very nice, looks very nice on paper but I had –
Jessica  Yes the question is how sought after that “studies” word really is.
Julia  Right.
M.  In the long run, don’t you think it can be … a status enhancer or so?
Jessica  Yes.
Johanna  Yes!
Jessica  For the academic part yes, but the question is when you apply for a job as a translator, then the question is … if it’s really …
In Jessica’s last comment she seems to make a division between what is valued on the academic side on the one hand, and the profession on the other hand. As in previous focus groups, there is scepticism towards to what extent the profession actually cares about the theoretical aspects. Furthermore, the students see a risk that the profession misinterprets Translation Studies as being purely theoretical, thereby not realising that the graduates have done translation assignments for two years upon graduation. This question again boils down to the students’ perceived scepticism towards theory-practice within the profession.

In hindsight, as during the whole programme, the students in Group 2 all call for more practical assignments, more connection with the translation market, and more CAT tools. Regarding the theoretical parts which the students seemed to appreciate more by the end of the programme, Jessica now says: “It was kind of useful for writing the thesis but it’s not something that I feel that I use in my writing apart from that.”

3.5.4.2 After graduation: Investment

The investments related to practice discussed during the fourth focus group session could roughly be divided into two categories: investments already made during the studies, and investments made since graduation. As in the previous focus group sessions, the failed investment during the studies that was brought up mainly consists a lack of practical assignments and training in CAT tools (for both groups), and a lack of feedback (for Group 1). As in the third focus group, the EN–SV course was given as an example of a course where Eva and Erik particularly learnt a lot, and where the knowledge was of the kind that can be used afterwards.

For the participants who now work as translators, these examples interrelate with their experience of translating. Also the sub-theme multiplicity of translation is evoked, as the now professional translators learn more about the different sub-genres in business translation when they are “already in”.

For the students who do not work as translators, investments can take another shape. For example, tools remain an area of failed investment for parts of both groups (see example 46). In Group 2, Julia says that the first question on a job interview is “What CAT tool do you use?”

Another example of an investment comes from Erik who, working in a bookshop, makes investments by reading translations, and more generally reading literature in original Swedish:

Example 49

Erik Er … (silence) So I’ve read quite a lot … of translated literature, but at the moment I’m reading a lot of fiction and (laughs) try to think of a literary language in Swedish … I really try to –

M. Mm. How Swedish … ah okay …

Erik – I really try to … I try to get it into my system … so that I –

M. Yes!
Erik – get a feeling for it … in some way.

This is an example of how an investment that does not entail translation in a practical sense can still function as an investment for a specific kind of translation, in this case literary translation. Erik has in fact reasoned in the same way before, when he chose a course in business communication in order to learn to “produce texts”. Emma’s previous course in creative writing can be viewed in the same way. In general, however, *reading translation* as a means of investment in literary translation is scarce in both groups.

The main *profession*-related investment at this point is the *experience of the profession*, which the working students now experience from the inside as either full-time or half-time translators. Other possible investments such as *joining associations* and *starting a company* have already been made by now. Both Edvin and Jessica are now members of SFÖ, and Jessica also of ÖC. Yet another sub-theme is *investing in a future career*. For Johanna and Jessica, who are already *in* the profession, this continuing to produce translations at a high level. They also mention two behaviours that in their eyes are unacceptable: not meeting deadlines and accepting work that one cannot handle.

For the students who have not entered the profession, investments are naturally scarcer. In Group 1, the sub-theme *choosing the profession*, which was particularly present in the first focus group session, is brought up again by Emma and Eva since they are debating whether they want to proceed with translation as their profession. In this regard, also *choosing the profession* can be considered as a failed investment.

When it comes to investments in *agents*, the most recurrent sub-theme remains the participants’ *personal role as translators*. As has been clearly shown, the nature of this role differs between the students. Edvin describes translation as a mean for him to earn a living:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 50</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edvin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edvin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Johanna and Jessica also see translation as their profession, even in the long run. Johanna describes it as: “Maybe not always full-time, but … for a long time.” Julia already wanted to work as an in-house translator from the time of the first focus group. On a question from Jessica whether she has searched for freelance work, Julia answers:
Example 51
Julia  No I haven’t, no, I abandoned that idea completely. I had my mind set: full-time, in-house, a permanent position. I haven’t … well.
Jessica  No.
Julia  Now in hindsight I think ‘maybe I should have started as freelance like you and …’ It’s easy to be afterwise.
Jessica  (laughs)
M.  Why, do you mean? To …?
Julia  Well I always had my mind set that I wouldn’t sit at home as a freelancer, I would sit in an agency, so because of that I …
M.  Like colleagues, fruit basket …
Julia  Yes colleagues, so I haven’t even thought about starting my own company, getting a corporate tax card, not thought about looking for freelance work. Er, yes.

When the students look back on their investment in meeting professional translators during the programme, it can be characterised as a failed investment:

Example 52
M.  But would you have liked to meet more teachers working as professionals during the programme?
Johanna  Yes.
Julia  Yes. Actually.
Jessica  Yes. I would have liked much more of that.
Julia  Like tips and …
Jessica  Yes exactly … to get the chance to go to a subtitler agency, go to a [translation] agency …
Julia  Right.
Johanna  Yes.
Julia  Study visits!
Jessica  Yes!
Johanna  I was just about to say that.
Julia  Study visits.

Even in hindsight, the lack of meeting professional translators stands out as a failed investment. However, the students in Group 2 do acknowledge that there was a sort of one-day job fair organised by the programme, where professionals were invited, but according to the students these were difficult to attend since they were not scheduled.

From an educational perspective, the sub-themes investing in the programme and the value of education coincide in these last focus groups sessions. Edvin expresses the view that the programme has helped him a great deal and “without it I wouldn’t have been able to do it” (see example 45). As already mentioned, Julia also has the impression that the programme opened doors for her.
One point of discussion has also been the students’ possibility to specialise. None of the students in Group 2 did an internship. In Jessica’s case, she already acquired a similar kind of experience from her work as a translator. Julia says that she “really wanted to do an internship but there was never really time for that it seemed”, referring to the 30 ECTS credits of elective courses. Johanna comments that “there were courses that seemed more interesting to take, I thought”.

3.5.4.3 After graduation: Involvement

One way of involvement on a practice level is by translating in a professional setting. At this stage, several of the former students have this kind of experience. Both Jessica and Edvin worked in-house in a translation agency over the summer after their graduation. The project manager Julia works in a translation agency of the same size. For the freelancing translators – Jessica, Johanna, Edvin – they undeniably translate in a professional setting, using CAT tools and other tools used in the profession, although this setting is mostly distant and virtual; they all translate from home. Moreover, they are involved with their commissioners (project managers and editors) by email. Eva translates as part of her work at the authority, but not within a professional context specialising in translation.

For Erik working in a bookshop, one way of indirect involvement is by reading translations. For the other students, in both groups, actually reading translations continues to be scarce.

Regarding the involvement with the profession, several of the participants have a natural involvement with it since they are working as a translator. By now, both Edvin and Jessica have joined some professional associations. When Edvin looks back at his internships during his studies, as his first encounter with the professional world, he describes them as the place where he “got more insight into that world, how it works, on site”.

For the students who do not work as translators there are also two examples of contacting the profession, one provided by Erik and one by Emma. Erik has applied for many translation jobs as a freelancer prior to his contact with the publishing house. The contact with the publishing house originally came from Eva, who forwarded it to Erik. Emma was approached for the translation of a play. In the end, the project did not become a reality due to insufficient funding, but she had a good impression of the test translation (see example 46). Apart from that, neither Emma nor Eva state having actively applied for translation jobs.

The participants’ involvement with agents differs depending on their working situation. Jessica had already started working already during the first semester and hence was involved with professional translators and agents (direct) already from an early stage. It should be noted that this almost daily involvement
with project managers takes place almost exclusively via emails. The exceptions are Jessica and Edvin, who both worked in-house as translators in a major translation agency over summer. Jessica describes a kind of informal knowledge due to involvement with translators at the agency:

Example 53
Jessica There are a lot of people who change between [freelancing and working in-house] is my impression, when you talk with people ‘Yes I was freelance for 15 years but then I got tired of working from home and now I’m here’, there’re a lot of people who seem to have changed between freelance and employee … because well, both have advantages …

Julia also has the impression that there is flexibility regarding working in-house or freelance. For Group 1, where the participants’ direct involvements with translators are more limited, Erik, Edvin and Emma’s linguistic advisor is again brought up as someone whom the students admire.

Lastly, the involvement education is limited in this focus group, probably due to the fact that the students are no longer within the educational context.

3.5.4.4 After graduation: Summary
In the fourth and final focus group sessions, it is clear that the programme has resulted in different outcomes for the students. Edvin, Jessica, Julia and Johanna now work full-time or half-time as either freelance translators or project managers. Erik is trying to enter the market, whereas Emma and Eva are more reluctant about working as translators, though Eva actually has a job that involves translation.

As to Knowledge Acquisition, there is a divide between the students in Group 1, who in hindsight perceives their practical courses as a “continuation of studying Japanese”, and the students in Group 2, who report being satisfied with the assignments as well as their own development as translators. Group 2 has had a smooth transition into the profession. In Group 1, there is, as in the third focus group, a discussion about the perceived realness and experience, which according to the students carry more weight than formal qualifications. This is above all channelled via Emma and Eva who do not feel confident as translators, and who ascribe Edvin’s easy transition into the profession to his two internships.

Regarding Investment, the main investments for the students who want to pursue a career in translation have already been made at this point, such as the experience of translation, starting a company or joining associations. Other investments that are again brought up in the last focus group sessions are the value of education and investing in the programme; for the students who now work as translators or project managers, the impression is that the degree was indeed an investment.
Since a majority of the students are members of the professional community in one way or another, their involvement with the profession is characterised as natural and direct. For the freelancing translators, the involvement takes place mainly via email. Furthermore, it seems like the involvement is mostly directed towards clients and project managers in translation agencies and not so much towards translator colleagues, with the exception of Julia who has colleagues in her workplace.

3.6 Discussion

This study has aimed to investigate translation students’ socialisation into the profession and the acquisition of a translatorship through two groups of MA students in Translation Studies. The aim is an attempt to conceptualise and contextualise the translation student as an agent comparable to other agents of translation (Buzelin 2011). As such, translation students need to be seen as agents in their own right, which includes contextualising them with regard to the translator education in question. A qualitative longitudinal study can account for the developmental process in which socialisation into the profession gradually unfolds. Consequently, the overall aim of this study is to contribute to the sociologically induced research on translation students and translator education. Traditionally, translator education has not been regarded as a site of social practice. In this study, the structural factors influencing the students’ different educational journeys, and hence, their individual outcomes, into the professional community of translators, have been brought to the fore. The explanatory quality of longitudinal studies – “how and why things happen as they do”, as Holland et al. (2006:32) put it – has helped shed light on the gradual process of acquiring a translatorship. In order to investigate translator education as a site of social practice, a number of different aspects need to be taken into account. Focus groups can give insight to the depth and context necessary to investigate the changing “group meanings, shared attitudes, beliefs and life experiences” (Koskinen 2008:83), and a qualitative longitudinal study can account for the intersection of the macro structure of the programme and the micro level agency of the students.

In the following section, findings from this study are discussed using the two research questions as points of departure.

3.6.1 Translation students’ socialisation processes

The first research question concerned how translation students socialise into the translation profession, and was phrased as follows:
2a. How can translation students’ socialisation process during formal training be characterised using Weidman et al.’s (2001) core elements?

After this study, it is clear that the socialisation model proposed by Weidman et al. (2001), and in particular its three core elements of Knowledge Acquisition, Investment, and Involvement, has proved to be a fruitful way of operationalising translation students’ socialisation process. By conducting a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006), four themes pertaining to the overall educational context were constructed: Practice, Profession, Agents, and Education. These four themes account for different aspects of the translation students’ context. While previous longitudinal studies into the translation students’ development into professionals have tended to focus solely on one of these themes, most often Practice, with different sorts of acquisition of translator competence as the centre of attention (e.g. PACTE 2014, Kumpulainen 2016), the present study suggests that such an approach risks downplaying the other themes and their importance for a successful transition into the professional world of translators (see also Kiraly 2000:64; Duflou 2016:20).

In the light of this study, it is clear that becoming a translator does not equal merely acquiring the skills to translate (Practice). It also entails acquiring a perception of the profession and its value system (Profession) as well as the agents involved in the field and their different functions, including a sense of one’s own role (Agents). At the same time, the macro structure of the programme, which determines the students’ possibility to exert agency on a micro level, also plays a crucial role (Education). Translatorship as a social practice from a student perspective would then entail more than the mere translation skills often associated with research on the translation student. In this sense, the four themes can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the contextual aspects that govern the students’ social context.

The results further highlight that socialisation, with the desired outcome described as “identification with and commitment to a professional role” (Weidman et al. 2001:16), can take different shapes for different students within the same class. It is important to point out that this study does not aim to label students as successful students or successful translators or not. The focus on students as students only permits a certain kind of insight, and there might be many personal reasons for the students to reason and choose as they have which do not appear in the focus groups (cf. Weidman et al. 2001:64).

The three core elements form the theoretical basis of the analysis. When scrutinising the core elements and their implications in the present study, it is possible to distinguish trends related to the progress of the programme. It is noticeable that the core element Knowledge Acquisition has a prominent position in the early focus groups. This is not in itself surprising; starting a new programme includes acquiring different sorts of new knowledge regarding the
expectations of what is expected of a professional, the skills and self-confidence to perform as a professional and the “language, heritage, and etiquette” of the profession (Weidman et al. 2001:16). In short, there are many different areas of knowledge that need to be covered for a newcomer to a new field. In a highly specialised programme such as an MA programme in Translation Studies, the necessary knowledge is likely to be new for the students, which was the case for both groups (with the exception of Jana, who already had a BA in Translation Studies). Identifying which investments are possible and desirable in the new context is, in turn, based on the knowledge acquired. However, if the students doubt the accuracy of the knowledge acquired or if the knowledge they would need to acquire is not available for some reason, such as the feedback the students in Group 1 would need to receive, the investments made might be displaced or not realised at all. For the latter category, I have used the term ‘failed investment’.

The last step towards the profession tends to be Involvement, to get personally involved in the field. This might be one explanation why Involvement comes at a rather late stage in the focus group sessions. However, as Involvement is often the result of previous investments, such as internships or extra work during the studies, involvements are to some extent dependable on previous investments. Structural constraints may affect the availability of involvements. For example, one important level of Involvement for Group 2 consisted of the teachers who had various experience as translators. For Group 1, this kind of Involvement was not within reach, since their teachers had an academic background. The idea of Involvement as the social participation in the life of the profession can also be partly challenged in the case of the translation profession where a large part of the profession’s life takes place online via email, which may form another barrier for the students.

I argue that the present study has also shed light on the dynamics of the translation profession as such, and revealed some of the tensions and boundaries surrounding it. One potential boundary concerns the entrepreneurial focus within the translation profession. The profession is organised in such a way that there are strong incentive for the students to become freelance translators, which is a characteristic of the profession that distinguishes it from many other more traditional professional educations, such as nurses and teachers. One can question what it means for a professional education that so many of its students will become freelancers. In the results found in this study, it is clear that students, especially in Group 2, express that “being on their own” is “scary”, that they need to be “brave” – and for Julia, who already from the beginning states that she does not want to be a freelancer, that she is “a coward”. Becoming a freelancer is associated with the students’ selves on a deeply personal level. With this follows a certain amount of fragility; the claim to be a freelancer, on the one hand, and the claim to be a translator, on the other, both come with a high level of prestige. Eva at one point says that she is “impressed with anyone who works with Japanese literary translation”, again highlighting
that just the mere appearance of someone being able to work in the niche is admirable, without going into how the work is actually performed.

It is clear that the students are aware of the fact that they are approaching and relating to partially different markets, notably business translation and literary translation. These markets have different value systems, different ways of working in terms of remuneration, and, more importantly for this study, different ways of entering it as a newcomer. Whereas business translation has a clearer path with translation tests and being ‘approved’ by a translation agency (session 2), the path into literary translation is less clear for the students. At one point, Edvin suggests (example 36, session 3) that one way into literary translation could be via the linguistic advisor, which shows an awareness that formal qualification in terms of a degree in Translation Studies weighs lightly in relation to personal contacts on in the specific field.

One question of paramount importance for the investigation of the acquisition of translatorship is when, and on what grounds, one can call oneself a translator. As a result, the sub-theme *agency* was created to capture negotiations between the participants related to this subject. In terms of socialisation, it is also a topic highly related to the “commitment with and identification to a professional role” (Weidman et al. 2001:16). *Agency* was a topic under negotiation throughout the programme, and the opinions shifted several times. From the beginning, the students’ *personal role as translator* already stand out as being closely related to the fact that they will be university-trained translators, albeit for different reasons: for Group 1 because they will be the first university-trained translators on this level in Sweden with their language combination, for Group 2 to differentiate themselves from either untrained translators or translators with lower academic degree with English as a SL. For both groups, the degree in itself is discussed in terms of being “a mark of quality” and that it shows “an effort to enter the profession” (example 7, session 1). In short, *choosing the programme* is perceived as an investment, both for the students themselves and in their hopes that the market will perceive the investment the same way, which is partly challenged by Jana (see example 29, session 3). When comparing the discussion above to one of the findings from Study 1, where respondents who had studied a translation-related subject had similar perceptions on the item of trust in quality as did professional translators with long professional experience, it is noticeable that the students in the first focus group sessions already related the programme and their studies in terms of self-worth. Emma at one point says that the programme “gives her a security”.

As the programme evolves, a gradual shift of perspective emerges: from formal qualification being self-sufficient in itself and granting, in Emma’s words, “the right to call [oneself] a translator” (example 6, session 1) in the early focus group sessions, towards a more differentiated perception within the two groups in the latter focus group sessions regarding what is the most...
valued: formal qualifications or perceived ‘realness’ and actual translation experience? This is especially discussed and negotiated between the participants in Group 1 (see example 32, session 3, and example 45, session 4), whereas Group 2 demonstrates a more unified view on this matter. In Group 1, the dividing line is interestingly drawn between Edvin, who advocates formal qualifications as being sufficient, and Emma and Eva, who both demonstrate insecurities regarding their role as translators, and who repeatedly state that there “is a difference of actually having experienced it”. An interesting aspect is brought up by Emma, who contributes with a comparison to another semi-profession: “If I would have studied medicine for this long, I would have been a nurse. One wouldn’t have doubted that” (session 3). Both groups agree that earning a living solely on translation is not in itself a sufficient condition for calling oneself a translator.

In the latter focus groups, another prerequisite makes an appearance: the need for recognition by someone in the field to grant the status of a translator. The discussion is brought up when Emma is doing a test translation for a play and Erik a test translation for a literary translation. They both discuss these experiences as significative for calling themselves translators. Emma says that “then I thought ‘okay, if I can be considered to do this translation, then maybe I can … call myself a translator’”, and Erik that “it feels kind of nice when you get contacted by a publishing house and get to do a test translation and that they liked it, that feels kind of confirming in some way”. Here it might be worth recalling what Toury (2012:277, original emphasis) writes on recognition:

A prerequisite for becoming a socio-culturally significant translator is gaining recognition in this capacity. Thus, the identity of a person as a translator is granted rather than taken, which also means that it should first be earned.

Also Paloposki’s (2016:20; see 1.1) writing on assumed translatorship comes to mind: that a translator is someone who is considered a translator. In the cases discussed here, the translatorship is “earned” on the basis of, in the first case, Emma’s test translation for a play, and in the second case, Erik’s test translation for a literary translation. The translatorship is thus granted by someone in the field who is in a position to grant that status. The question asked by Paloposki (2016:20, original emphasis), whether someone is a translator “not when he or she has/possesses certain characteristics or traits but when he or she is assumed to be one,” is here answered by the students themselves: it is not their formal qualifications that makes them translators but the social recognition granted by an external authority. One could ask why the social recognition has not been discussed by Edvin and Jessica, who already from an early stage work as translators and self-identify as translators. One possible explanation is that because of their early and gradual involvement in
the profession, the social recognition has developed tacitly and gradually over time, whereas for Erik and Emma, the encounters represent a decisive point in their involvement with the profession. At any rate, this shows that the notion of assumed translators proposed by Paloposki (2016) in the context of a historical study, can also be a relevant concept for contemporary studies on translators and translation students.

3.6.2 Structural factors affecting translator education

The second research question concerns how structural factors affect translator education. It was formulated as follows:

2b. How do structural factors affect the socialisation process of the two groups?

I will here discuss the two main factors: the two groups’ different SLs and the high degree of individualisation demanded by the program and the profession.

One of the most prominent results from this study concerns the impact of the two groups’ different SLs, which for a number of reasons transpired to have a major impact on several different aspects for the two groups throughout the programme. It is worth recalling at this point that the two groups’ different SLs was due to mere chance: it was not planned on my part. Quite early in the analysis, however, it became clear that the different SLs affected all four themes in the analysis. In sum, the findings point towards unequal opportunities regarding socialisation depending on whether the SL is a major language or a minor language. In this sense, the SL can be viewed as a structural factor.

In general, Group 1’s close and personal relationship to Japan and the Japanese culture and language does not have an equivalent in Group 2’s relationship to English-speaking countries or to English, though there are participants in Group 2 who have lived in English-speaking countries for a shorter or longer period of time. Throughout the programme, the students in Group 1 discuss the Japanese culture and the Japanese language and their affinity to it, whereas for the students in Group 2, the focus shifts to discussing translation in general instead of their specific language.

Another aspect concerns the teachers. Whereas the teachers of Group 2 were faculty members and/or professional translators, the teachers of Group 1 were academics and to my knowledge not professional translators. Group 2 put forward the different teachers and their diverse professional experience – both as to how they choose source texts and their view on the end product – as one main asset with the programme; “[t]o see that the same text can be evaluated in different ways and that there are a hundred different solutions”, as Julia phrases it in the second focus group session. This multiplicity in translation strategies does not come across as obvious for Group 1, who perceived
the practical translation courses as "a continuation of studying Japanese" (session 4). Even in the final focus groups, some of the students are uncertain of their own performance and development as translators. In Weidman et al.’s (2001:16) words, the students doubt the accuracy of the knowledge they have acquired during the programme.

Yet another aspect of the teachers’ diverse profile concerns the students’ indirect involvement in the field. Through their teachers, Group 2 has indirect access to various areas of the translation profession depending on the teachers’ specialisation. This kind of indirect involvement through the teachers is not available for Group 1. One turning point for the majority of the students in Group 1 came when they had a well-known literary translator as linguistic advisor when writing their thesis. One can draw the conclusion that even indirect involvement with the profession through teachers is meaningful for the students when the overall involvement with the profession is scarce.

The results further show how institutional constraints affect the Japanese group to a higher degree. Whereas Group 2 in the third semester seemingly without hesitation chose the English-Swedish translation courses provided by the programme, and hence overall had more practical translation classes, only Erik and Eva chose these courses in Group 1. For them, these courses were highly positive experiences, which they came back to several times during the remaining focus group sessions, most importantly because they perceived it to be a more practical course with hands-on feedback.

To sum up, one might go as far as stating that the SL indirectly affected the students’ transitioning into the profession. After graduation, Group 2 enjoys a seemingly effortless transition into the profession. The students themselves are surprised at how easy the transition turned out to be, which they had many concerns about during the course of the programme. It is obvious that Group 1 does not share this experience. Edvin had already worked as a translator during the programme and continues with this after graduation. Erik appears to be in limbo; he has searched for some freelance work in translation agencies but does not work as a translator. For Eva and Emma, the Japanese language stands out as the main reason for why they do not want to proceed as translators. At least, they do not see translation as their one and only profession. As Eva says, she would rather work with Japanese than translating professionally from English. In the first focus group, this was the common perception for all of the students, something which then gradually changed for Edvin and on a theoretical level also for Erik. One possible explanation for this is that the investment of learning Japanese in the first place is considered a greater investment than learning how to translate from Japanese.

The other main structural factor concerns the high degree of individualisation demanded by both the programme and the profession. It might seem counterintuitive to discuss individualisation as a structural factor, as the two are often viewed as binary opposites. In this case, I argue that individualisation
can be seen as the structure governing the translation profession and, in turn, the translation education.

The high degree of individualisation came to affect the design of the study. As clearly indicated numerous times, the level of analysis for this study was the group of students; the focus of this study does not lie on individual students, neither in the form of the individual students in the two groups, nor in the “whole person” but as students. However, despite these methodological choices, the result clearly shows that the students’ individual outcomes differ in fundamental ways, which partly made it difficult to keep the focus on the groups. This was especially apparent in the latter focus group sessions when the students were studying/working in different areas. Depending on a combination of individual choices during the programme, as well as institutional constraints affecting the two groups to various degrees, the students come out from the educational institution with highly imbalanced experiences and thus imbalanced opportunities to enter the profession as translators.

Throughout the results section, it is clear that the students themselves perceive this difference in outcomes within their respective groups. Both groups at various occasions put forward the student with most experience – Edvin in Group 1 and Jessica in Group 2 – either in an almost accusative tone (Group 1, example 45, session 4) or more positively as a success story (Group 2, session 3). Edvin himself comments on the students’ experience of the programme as “very different experiences in that way” (example 45, session 4).

Some of the results regarding this topic can be explained by the methodological choices which have governed this study, such as the aim to approach the students as students, i.e. that I have not been aware of nor taken into account other aspects of their lives which might have affected their studies. There might have been individual and personal reasons why the students have acted and chosen as they have within the programme (see Weidman et al. 2001:64), for example when choosing the elective courses, for example, but this lies out of the scope of this study. The students’ socio-economic backgrounds are also most likely to affect how the they perceive such an insecure position as a freelance translator, but this is not information that is accessible to me through the focus groups. In order to gain insight into this kind of information, individual interviews would have been preferable. On the other hand, the kind of structural factors affecting the groups discussed here often became apparent in the interaction of the participants in the focus groups, and it is likely that individual interviews would not have gained insight into these matters.

Another interrelated factor concerns the entrepreneurial focus of the profession and the education, which reinforces the individualistic trait. From the perspective of translation education, individualisation can be seen as a desired outcome of translator education, which reflects the reality of being a freelance translator. The entrepreneurial aspect of the profession is discussed at numerous occasions during the focus groups. Edvin describes being a translator with
the words “you kind of build your own repertoire”, which he perceives as something positive: “a good potential [...] to show what you can do, to do well” (example 35, session 2). Group 2 also discuss these themes, albeit more indirectly, such as when Johanna and Jessica discuss that in order to gain experience, one must continue to produce high-quality translations, and thus create – and later maintain – one’s reputation. The two groups’ discussions on “making oneself a name” versus “creating a reputation” are further indications of the students’ awareness, from an early stage, of how the profession is organised and what is valued within it.

These results raise questions in relation to translation sociological research on professional translators. As previously indicated, both Sela-Sheffy (2005) and Katan (2009b) have pointed towards professionalisation mainly residing within individual translators. Katan describes it that “translation is a profession when it is ‘earned’ individually as a result of having made a name for oneself individually” (Katan 2009b:123), which reflects both Toury’s (2012) claim that a translatorship must be earned, as well as the students’ awareness of the need to “make themselves a name” or “get a reputation” in order to be considered worthy members of the profession. In the light of the results from this study, this individualisation process seems to start during training, where they are in different ways prompted – both by the programme, by the profession, and in a sense also by themselves – to embark on their freelance journey. These findings can also be related to the findings from Study 1 in at least two ways. Firstly, the results showed that having studied a translation-related subject produced perceptions similar to that of translators with long professional experience concerning the perceived trust that translators’ commissioners and workplaces placed on their translations. It is interesting that this item seems to coincide with some of the more emotion-related topics from the focus group discussions, where emotional resources such as confidence and professional self-worth are precisely stressed. For example, Emma says already in the first focus group that the programme gives her a security, and Johanna talks about the importance of feeling that one is “worth something as a translator” (example 27, session 3). Secondly, the items that gave rise to statistically significant differences regarding freelance translators and employed translators concerned the items expertise and responsibility, where the freelance translators had higher rankings than employed translators. In the discussion following the first study, I put forward the idea that both the sense of expertise and responsibility might be of more importance for freelance translators, since the success of their freelance career depends on their own initiatives and ability to develop their own personal brand. This has also been mirrored in the focus group discussions, as previously discussed in the section on “making yourself a name” and “building your reputation”.

The individualistic aspect also has implications for the educational context on a more general level, and raises the question of where the training institution’s responsibility ends and the student’s responsibility begins. The students,
especially in Group 1, come back to their own responsibility on several occasions throughout the programme, such as when Edvin says that students need to apply for internship themselves (Knowledge Acquisition, session 3). Eva is also self-critical when discussing the lack of practical experience, which partly can be described as a consequence of lack of internship. The students in Group 2 do not discuss their own responsibility to the same extent. When I asked them why they had not been training on CAT tools in the university’s language lab – a possibility for Group 2 that was not available for Group 1 – the responses were mixed. On the one hand, they were reluctant to engage in this task outside of their scheduled classes, possibly because it would not be an integrated part of their training. On the other hand, they recognised that they could in fact have done that – in hindsight. A similar situation happened when they on the one hand lamented the lack of professional translators within the programme, but on the other hand did not attend the few non-compulsory meetings when professional translators were invited to the programme.

To conclude, the impact of the two groups’ SLs and the high degree of individualisation has affected their socialisation process. Both these two circumstances can be labelled as structural factors, as they in different ways and to different extents govern the students’ socialisation process and their overall experience of the programme. Arguably, they have also had a profound impact on the students’ socialisation outcome. Yet within research on translation students, this kind of contextual information on the translator education that the students engage in is rarely provided, let alone discussed or problematised.

3.6.3 Concluding remarks

This longitudinal focus group study has provided insight into how translation students acquire a professional identity that gradually unfolds over the course of an MA programme in Translation Studies and how translatorship is formed over time. The perspective of QLR, with its emphasis on the intersection of time, change and experience, has offered a valuable methodological framework. Furthermore, the socialisation model developed by Weidman et al. (2001) and its three core elements of knowledge acquisition, investment, and involvement, have transpired to be a fruitful analytic tool to capture the complex and non-linear process of the socialisation of translation students. The application of this model and the findings thereof invite further studies focusing on translator education from a translation sociological perspective. The students’ own conceptions of agentship mirror previous translation sociologically-induced research on translatorship, and indicate that it appears to be viewed as earned rather than granted (Toury 2012) but also sometimes assumed (Paloposki 2016).

Furthermore, structural factors have turned out to be influential in affecting the students’ socialisation outcomes to different degrees. For example, the students’ different SLs turned out to affect individual students’ motivation to
studying translation, as well as to what degree they could make use of the programme, e.g. that the Japanese group doubted the accuracy of the knowledge they had acquired during the practical classes, even in the later focus group sessions. The individualisation of both the translator education and the translation profession further highlights important issues in regard to the students’ perceptions towards both. For example, as has been shown in this study, the prospect of working as a *freelance* translator has in different ways influenced the students and their relationship to the profession throughout the programme.

In the next study, the perspective shifts to that of individual translators and how five translators perceive the function of their translatorship. We will meet two of the students again, now in their capacity as professional translators. This allows us to see how the now professional translators perceive their roles as translators outside the “relatively protected educational environment” (Flynn and Gambier 2011) that was explored in this study. The three other participating translators have different specialisations, which further emphasises the characteristics of the different specialisations as well as common points for the broader translation profession.
4 The different functions of translatorship: Study 3

4.1 Introduction

The general research question for this thesis concerns translatorship in the Swedish context. In the two previous studies, translatorship has been investigated from two different perspectives: from a quantitative macro perspective of the translation profession taken as a whole and perceptions associated with it in the first study, and from a qualitative, longitudinal socialisation perspective in the second study. The first study provided a picture of translators in Sweden based on how translators perceive the translation profession and its status and value in society. Overall, the result showed that despite the fragmented profession in terms of the respondents’ background, their specialisation and working conditions, the respondents displayed a high consensus regarding the characteristics of the profession, as well as its value in society. Furthermore, the result from Study 1 yielded thought-provoking insights into the status parameter power/importance, which included the study’s highest and lowest means, 4.57 for responsibility and 1.57 for influence. The translators in the study clearly assume a high amount of responsibility, yet they feel like they have no influence on economic, political, societal or other matters. This paradox calls for a closer examination of the softer indicators such as appreciation and trust (cf. Dam and Zethsen 2013), which can be achieved by way of a qualitative interview study. It also calls for looking more closely into the status parameter importance/value to society, discussed in Study 2.

In the second study, one of the main findings depicted a high degree of individualisation, partly institutionalised through the programme and partly, it would seem, inherent in the translation profession, which started at an early stage during the MA programme. The emphasis on individual aptness that has previously been perceived as a form of professionalism by professional translators (cf. Katan 2009a, 2009b; Sela-Sheffy 2006) seemed to have already started during formal training, which calls for further investigations.

In this third study, we will now turn to individual translators to explore how five translators, recruited from the participants in the two previous studies, perceive their social role as translators from an individual-centred perspective through in-depth interviews. The aim is to investigate how these five translators negotiate their social role as translators and make sense of their belonging.
in this group and to the group’s function in society, with a point of departure in the research question:

3. How do five translators perceive the functions of their translatorship on an individual, professional, and societal level?

As in the second study, this study is influenced by a constructionist perspective, which leads to the analysis seeking “to theorise the socio-cultural contexts, and structural accounts that are provided” (Braun and Clarke 2006:85), thus pointing towards the greater Swedish context as well as to the participants’ different translation-specific contexts (literary, business, audiovisual translation, etc.). We will meet Jessica and Edvin from the second study again, this time in their new roles as professional translators, as well as the translators Anders, Christina, and Sarah, who responded to the questionnaire in the first study. Through the use of in-depth interviews and a greater emphasis on the individual translators, I hope to answer the questions posed by Flynn and Gambier (2011:94) – “what ‘translatorship’ means in an even broader social sense” outside of educational institutions and “[w]hich form […] this social role then take”.

In the analysis, taking a cue from Terese Nymans (2009), translatorship is differentiated on three levels: personal satisfaction (individual level), sense of social community (professional level), and greater purpose (societal level). In the context of Swedish literary translators, Nymans (2009:37, translation mine) summarises:

It is possible to see the incentive for working as a translator today as resting on three levels. First, there is the personal satisfaction, the pleasure of working with language and literature, and the recognition one gets in connection to publication and reviews etc. The second level is the social community; to belong to a social context in the capacity of being a translator, which is partly inhabited by translators as an occupational group, but also by authors, publishers and other members of the cultural and literary sphere. On the third level lies the greater purpose that translators consider themselves involved with: they see themselves as members of a struggle to defend translated literature, without which the Swedish literary world would be considerably poorer and far too uniform. They fight continuously against the tendency in contemporary Swedish publishing that to a greater extent favours Swedish and Anglophone literature, disfavouring literature from minor, less common languages.

Unlike Nymans, who interviewed only literary translators, I make use of this distinction to study five translators with different specialisations and working conditions, and the content of these levels are therefore likely to differ from hers. Nymans (2009:38, translation mine) relates her findings to the function of translators’ wider social role in society: “To interview translators about their view of their professional roles has given an idea about how they perceive their function in Swedish literature, and thereby how they perceive their
function in Swedish society.” From this perspective, the function of translation on a personal level, according to Nymans’ finding as stated in the quote above, could reside in “the pleasure of working with language and literature”, whereas the function of translation on a professional level could be being a part of professional group. The function of translation on a societal level may then be associated with defending minor languages in the Swedish publishing industry. Discussing translation in terms of functions related to different levels of the translators’ lives highlights translators’ social role as a professional group on a societal level, which may help to answer Flynn and Gambier’s (2011:94) questions. Talking about functions related to a greater social context is furthermore aligned with the constructionist framework of this study, which “cannot and does not seek to focus on motivation or individual psychologies, but instead seeks to theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural accounts, that enable the individual accounts that are provided” (Braun and Clarke 2006:85). While this does not mean that translators cannot discuss their personal motivation, it emphasises that the utterances must be contextualised within a greater framework. In this way, I make use of individual-centred perspectives as a way to understand the wider social context. Focusing on function instead of incentives thus more fully captures the interplay between the self, the profession, and society, while still keeping the perspective of the individual translator.

In what follows, research on translators’ approaches to the translation profession is presented in 4.2. The material and method, as well as a more detailed presentation of the participants, is introduced in 4.3. The results are presented in the subsequent chapter in 4.4, and thereafter discussed in the final chapter in 4.5.

4.2 Individual translators’ local realities

As was shown in 2.2, many studies reveal that translators deem translation as a profession to have middling to low status (e.g. Dam and Zethsen 2008, 2009; Katan 2009a; Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018). The result is often presented in terms of a number of paradoxes. Some have already been presented, such as translators perceiving the status of their own work as highly appreciated, although the profession’s status is middling to low (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 2009; Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018). From the results in Study 1, one could also add that translators assume a high degree of responsibility, although they feel as though they have no influence on a societal level. These paradoxes have led researchers to ask: “what makes [translators] stay in a profession that seems to be offering sub-standard working conditions?” (Dam and Zethsen 2016:174) and, in Koskinen’s (2009:108) words, “what is it that makes people personally so attached to a profession that is so often felt to be invisible, misrecognized and misunderstood?”
In this section, we will take a closer look at how translators may perceive their motivation as well as their engagement with the profession and society, and how they negotiate their position within their “local realities” (Katan 2009a:206). On a personal level, it entails looking at different sorts of motivational factors and job satisfaction with a “view from the agent” (Simeoni 1995). Notwithstanding the paradoxes presented above, there is also compelling evidence of translators’ satisfaction with work. For example, around 70% of Katan’s respondents were either “pretty” or “extremely” satisfied with their work (2009b:148), and the translators in Dam and Zethsen’s (2016) study also bear witness to enjoying their work. Jansen’s (2018) study on literary translators in Scandinavia also confirms that literary translators are proud of being translators. From Study 1, we know that 60% of the respondents were not considering leaving the profession at all. According to Katan, some of these findings can be related to translators being “focused on their local realities, their immediate, and very individual, development paths […]” (2009a:206). The results in Study 1, with high means on the items trust and appreciation for the translators’ closest surroundings in terms of workplace and clients, reveal a similar pattern (see also Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018).

Motivation – the question “why do you translate?” – has been investigated in relation to government translators (Mossop 2014) and literary translators (de Jong 1999; Flynn 2007). Katan (2009b) concludes that translators’ satisfaction with their occupation seems to be associated with the joy of working with languages on a practical level: “the immense satisfaction, as linguists, looking for and finding le mot juste” (Katan 2009b:149, original emphasis). Other studies have also highlighted translators’ deep love of languages (and literature), such as Nadia Georgiou (2018) on Modern Greek to English poetry translators, Nymans (2009) on Swedish literary translators, Tanya Voinova and Miriam Shlesinger (2013) on Israeli Russian to Hebrew literary translators. These studies also highlight translators’ close affinity to their specific source languages, which adds another layer of personal motivation to their work with languages (see also Sapiro 2013).

Engelien de Jong (1999) investigates Dutch literary translators’ intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in relation to career commitment, defined as “the extent to which involvement in a career is central in one’s life and future” (de Jong 1999:426) by means of a questionnaire study (n = 136). Intrinsic motivation is here associated with creativity and the motivation to get involved with a task because it is interesting for its own sake, whereas the extrinsic motivation covers external factors such as recognition from peers, scholarships and awards (de Jong 1999:425). De Jong finds that while both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations receives high means, there is a correlation with both gender and professional experience. Female translators’ career commitment tends to be associated with intrinsic motivation, while male translators tend to be associated with both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (de Jong 1999:433).
The motivation of newcomers to the literary translation profession is correlated with intrinsic motivation, whereas well-established literary translators’ motivation is associated with extrinsic motivation (de Jong 1999:433). The correlation between experience and motivation seems to indicate that working with literary translation is in itself motivating for the first years of working as a professional translator, and that it takes several years – de Jong (1999:434) suggests up to ten – as a literary translator before extrinsic aspects become important for continuing a career as a literary translator. As de Jong (1999:434) points out, “[t]his finding indicates that literary translators are willing to invest a lot of time and energy in the profession, before they consider the appreciation of others important”. Although de Jong’s study is limited in its scope, it points towards a useful distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and how this is perceived by translators in different stages of their careers.

Intrinsic motivation has also been studied within the context of business translation. Dam and Zethsen’s (2016) study on experienced staff translators’ job satisfaction showed that the participants were generally satisfied with their jobs; some even called it “a wonderful job” (2016:181) or “a dream occupation” (2016:180). Through 15 written narratives, four themes were constructed to capture different aspects of job satisfaction: 1) Translation is exciting and satisfying; 2) Translation is varied, stimulating and never boring; 3) Translation is an intellectual and creative challenge; and 4) Translation is important and therefore meaningful. The three first themes are connected with the translators’ intrinsic motivation and individual satisfaction (the fourth theme is dealt with below). For example, the participating translators state that it is “interesting” and “exciting” to work as a translator and that the translation profession is “fascinating” (Dam and Zethsen 2016:180). One translator phrases it in the following way: “It is a privilege to be able to work with your ‘dream occupation’ and I wish I could do it forever” (Dam and Zethsen 2016:180). Some of the interest and excitement lie in the varied nature of translation (second theme) when it comes to text types, subject area, target groups, task sizes, and tools involved. The translators valued this partly because it kept their everyday work life varied and interesting, partly because of the subject area knowledge they learn (Dam and Zethsen 2016:181). One translator explains this as follows:

I gain knowledge within areas that I would never otherwise come into touch with, which give me a very broad reference framework in everyday debates in society. I think it is a wonderful job where every day you have the possibility to learn something new and get wiser. (Dam and Zethsen 2016:181)

The third theme is related to the intellectual and creative aspects of translation. The participants highlight a number of important skills – “analytical and cre-
ative abilities, a good memory, being good at decision-making, having attention to detail, being independent, fast, thorough, methodical and consistent” (Dam and Zethsen 2016:181) – but first and foremost that translation requires “a sense for language”. Dam and Zethsen (2016:183) conclude that these translators are “exceedingly pleased with, and proud of, the intellectual and creative challenge of translating and the insights the subject variation provides”. The majority of themes are thus linked to intrinsic motivation. For the staff translators in Dam and Zethsen’s study, this might be the reason why they stay within the profession for the majority of their working life and in this sense, as Dam and Zethsen (2016:175) argue, can be seen as the core of the Danish business translation market.

In Koskinen’s ethnographic study (2008) on Finnish EU translators working in the European Commission in Luxembourg, different de-motivational aspects were discussed, such as the lack of feedback and lack of appreciation paired with a feeling of being isolated. The translators were uncertain whether their translations were actually read and were not pleased with being forced to use a productivity tracking machine (Koskinen 2008:88, 94, 117–118; see also 2009:104). In a later article, Koskinen (2009) revisited three of the translators who now worked in the local representation of the European Commission in Helsinki as a part of the Plan D, the European Commission’s new communication strategy. In this new institutional setting, one part of the translators’ new work was to produce localised press releases. In comparison with the regular EU translators in Luxembourg, the three translators’ job satisfaction was now considerably higher. One of the reasons amounted to the continuous feedback they now received, both from a translator coordinator, the other EU representatives in the building where they worked, and from seeing their press releases in the newspapers. This was further enhanced by their increased visibility in relation to different stakeholders, such as Finnish newspapers and educational institutions organising translator training. In general, the translators felt more recognised in the new setting. The recognition was also closely connected to freedom. Koskinen (2009:105) summarises that the “key word, repeated over and again during the group interview, was ‘freedom’. They felt they had a great deal of freedom to use their own initiative at work”.

Another study on motivation and demotivation in an institutional translation setting has been conducted by Brian Mossop (2014), who has investigated what motivates and demotivates his own work as a staff translator in the Canadian Translation Bureau. By keeping a diary one week a month during a six-month period, he lists motivators, demotivators and non-motivators (i.e. potential motivators in general but not for him personally) for his work. His list was later compared with a colleague’s list of the same kind. Though this method has obvious pitfalls in terms of subjectivity and lack of validity, the result from the comparison of the two lists highlights certain findings which may function as motivators and de-motivators in an institutional translation setting. The motivators include: a sense of doing something meaningful; being
a part of a team; being stimulated intellectually; and enabling Francophone civil servants to work in their mother tongue (Mossop 2014:588). Among the demotivators, we find having to use a productivity tracking system, and not being sure whether the texts are actually read (Mossop 2014:587). Some of these findings coincide with Koskinen’s findings (2008, 2009; see above), such as the uncertainty of whether the texts are actually read and being forced to use a productivity tracking system. The motivators are also similar to Dam and Zethsen’s (2016) findings where meaningfulness and creativity were highlighted.

For freelance business translators, one motivation can be found in collaborating with agencies. Focusing on freelance business translators, Abdallah and Koskinen (2007) investigate how trust is managed in complex, asymmetrical production networks. They argue that trust and its ethical underpinnings are central to a freelance translation setting, since the translator is contracted when communicating partners cannot manage on their own. At the same time, the network economy, which characterises the freelance business translation industry, is in turn dependent on networks that are welded by trust relations (Abdallah and Koskinen 2007:674). Abdallah and Koskinen (2007:680) elaborate on the relationship between trust and loyalty, where trust is seen as a prerequisite for loyalty: “I am loyal to you because I trust you; if I am not able to trust you, I would have to be either irrational or desperate to be loyal to you.” In a traditional freelance translation setting, they write, “the translator often has direct, even long-term contact with the client and this relationship of affinity can enhance mutual loyalty and trust” (Abdallah and Koskinen 2007:680). However, today’s spread-out networks often complicate the management of trust by the geographic distance between the translator and the translation agency (Abdallah and Koskinen 2007:681). Consequently, it is not surprising that translation management requires extra effort in order to be developed and sustained by parties who are physically distant from each other. Abdallah and Koskinen refer to a study by Hanna Risku (2004:232) in which a translation agency’s policy is to develop the connections between the project manager and the translator by always adding “a few personal remarks besides the purely professional ones” (Abdallah and Koskinen 2007:681, their translation).

Some situations may not be beneficial for enhancing trust and co-operation between the translator and the production network. In a longitudinal study, Abdallah (2010) investigates the possibilities for eight individual translators (subcontractors, freelance translators, and in-house translators) to exercise their agency in the translation industry. By the second interview, half of the respondents had left the profession due to unfavourable working situations. Abdallah uses the coping strategies exit and voice, originally developed by Albert Hirschman (1975), to explain the translators’ behaviour. Voice refer to trying to change the conditions by expressing dissatisfaction, and exit refers to leaving the profession (Abdallah 2010:30). With regard to her participants,
Abdallah (2010:33) distinguishes four choices: to give tit for tat; to bite the bullet; to rationalise unethical behaviour; or to exit. Building on Alasuutari (2004:131–134), she concludes the need for coping strategies as follows:

not only do people have a need to make sense of the subject position they occupy in their work but they also need to create such an attitude toward their work so that they can tolerate the given conditions, retain their self-respect, and find their role somewhat meaningful. (Abdallah 2010:30)

To make an exit, i.e. to leave the profession, may thus be a way of exercising agency for the individual translator (Abdallah and Koskinen 2007:684). In the light of the results from Study 1, where 40% of the respondents stated that they were considering leaving the profession to various degrees, this also appears to be a pressing issue for the situation in Sweden. Regarding the coping strategy of voice in connection with freelance business translation, Abdallah and Koskinen (2007:684; see also Koskinen 2008:117) writes that one part of the problem is exactly that the circumstances deny the translator the possibility of voice.

The different forms of incentives discussed above deal with different aspects of what Nymans (2009:34–35) calls personal satisfaction and which forms the individual level. These kinds of motivation and incentives are related to the individual translator and take place on a micro level. The second level aims at a professional level in the form of the social community of professional translators. For example, the remedy Abdallah and Koskinen (2007:684) sees in relation to the lack of voice described above is by joining forces with other translators: “If translators could begin developing horizontal ties among themselves, however, their voices might gain in volume.”

Two examples when translators have joined forces in Scandinavia in recent years can be found in Norway and Finland, which we will be looking into next. In Norway, the two translator associations Norwegian Association of Literary Translators (NO) and the Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers and Translators Association (NFF) organised an initiative under the heading ‘Translator Campaign 2006’ on behalf of Norwegian literary translators (Oversettaraksjønen 2006a). Norwegian literary rates were linked to the consumer price index, which had recently seen a considerable decline. This had prompted a growing gap between the translators’ income and other Norwegian professionals, which made NO and NFF call for a 17.4% increase in the standard rates. After too low an offer from the Norwegian Publisher Association, the translator association left the negotiations and initiated the campaign. The campaign stipulated three conditions:

- We wish to be taken seriously! We are skilled professionals – not just an expense item on publishers’ budgets!
- Our rates of remuneration must be index-linked to wage development; we should not be treated as commodities.
We demand a standard rate of remuneration of no less than NOK 244 per page. (Oversettaraksjonen 2006a)

The two associations instructed their members to follow the literal meaning of the contract negotiated between NO and NFF and the Norwegian Publisher Association, which means that the translators delivered their translations on paper and by hand to the publishing house, leaving the publishing house to type manually or scan the translations in order to be able to work with them in a computer (Oversettaraksjonen 2006a). After five months, the campaign came to an end after an agreement had been met between the two translator associations and the Norwegian Publisher Association. The agreement included a number of improvements for the literary translators. For example, the rates of literary translators no longer follow the consumer price index but are “index-linked to the wage development of publishing house employees” (Oversettaraksjonen 2006b).

A similar sort of campaign took place in Finland in early 2010 within the Finnish subtitlers’ community. Anna-Maija Ihander (2012), herself a Finnish subtitler, describes a situation where the freelance subtitlers earned considerably less than those who worked for the Finnish public service YLE, who also offered a collective agreement. In the summer of 2009, a couple of freelance subtitlers, who had respectively made agreements with one of the subtitle agencies, started an online discussion forum to reach out to other subtitlers. Around the same time, an agency known to offer reasonable rates lost a bidding, and the winning agency answered by offering the freelance subtitlers around half of their previous rates. In the end, this led to 101 out of 110 subtitlers resigning in protest (Tuominen 2018:85). Tuominen (2018:85) suggests that the decision by the subtitling agency “brought a significant portion of Finnish subtitlers together around a shared cause, and it encouraged subtitlers to work together in an effort to improve and harmonise working conditions for all subtitlers”. During this period of time, a small group of subtitlers created a website (www.av-kaantajat.fi) with a blog and a discussion forum, which for some time served as a virtual meeting point for subtitlers to discuss the challenges of the subtitling profession. Tuominen (2016; 2018) identifies the website as an element of a “professional project” (see Tyulenev 2014:68–69), which sets out to institutionalise a profession and increase its social recognition. The blog posts and articles on the website were centred around various topics related to the subtitling practice and profession. Some of them were also calls for action, for example when Kaisa Vitikainen (cited in Tuominen 2018:91) calls for individual subtitlers to act collectively for better working conditions:

As long as subtitlers agree to work for peanuts, all they will be offered is peanuts. The only way to bring about change is if every subtitler – or at least a large enough group of them – refuses to work for rates which do not correspond to the demands of the work and to the education and experience of the subtitler.
A couple of years after the most active period of the website, Tuominen concludes that the quest for improving Finnish subtitlers’ working conditions is still ongoing, and that there are signs of both positive and negative developments, two of the more positive being “the signing of a collective agreement for subtitling agencies in 2015, and a renegotiation of the agreement in 2018” (2018:95).

Whereas the Norwegian campaign was led by the two leading translator associations, the Finnish campaign evolved through individual subtitlers (note that there are similarities with how the Swedish translator associations expressed themselves on their websites, presented in 1.5.1). When it comes to translator associations more generally, Pym (2014) has shown their historical development from gatekeeping associations to social communities. In the first case, membership in a translator association could signal being a trustworthy translator, in the same vein as having a degree or a certain kind of experience as a translator (Pym 2014:467). In the latter cases, associations have developed into having more diverse profiles and might be characterised as “discussion groups, news distributors, organizers of social events, political lobbyists, job markets, groups of former students of particular training institutions” (Pym 2014:468). Julie McDonough (2007) distinguishes between networks that are either profession-oriented, practice-oriented, education-oriented, or research-oriented. She asserts that these networks have bearing both for freelance translators, as a way to network with other translators, as well as for in-house translators, who “are linked with other colleagues working at the company and may also be part of larger networks of professionals […]” (McDonough 2007:793). The results from the first study showed that the respondents who were members of a translator association were often members of more than one association (see Table 9).

Sometimes, the boundaries of an association can be unclear. In France, the translator association Association des traducteurs littéraires de France (ATLF) organises literary translators and the translator association Société française des traducteurs (SFT) organises business translators. Kalinowski (2004:50) discuss the measures in 2000 to turn ATLF into a trade union, which later did not go through out of fear that the association would become “politicized”. Instead, the association was at that time seen as an “intellectual community” where “the essential of [the association’s] activity takes place on a symbolical level, in particular concerning the translator’s name on the cover of translated titles” (Kalinowski 2004:50, translation mine). In the Israeli case, as described by Sela-Sheffy (2005), the Israeli Translator Association is mentioned precisely because the elite translators are either not members of it or are not aware of its existence (Sela-Sheffy 2005:10, 2016:62). A group of non-literary translators have, however, tried to “grant power to the Israeli Translator Association by proposing means of self-regulation and control” (2016:62) and there are also other specialisation-specific initiatives such as association for subti-
ling and sign-language interpreting. However, these attempts remain uncharted from an academic viewpoint, and according to Sela-Sheffy (2016:62) they have not made an impact on the translator market in Israel.

Yet translator associations seem to hold a potential power to affect the profession and its status, as seen in the Norwegian example above. Moreover, in Ruokonen’s (2016:204) questionnaire study on Finnish translation students previously discussed in 3.2, the students granted translator associations the greatest influence on changing translator status – more than (in descending order) translators themselves, commissioners/clients, legislation/authorities, readers/consumers, translation agencies/companies, and teachers/researchers. In Dam and Zethsen’s studies on translator status, the Danish Association of Translators has occasionally been mentioned (e.g. 2011) but its importance for translator status in the Danish context has, as of yet, not been investigated.

Interestingly, in their article about the ‘helpers’ and ‘opponents’ translators themselves deem to be important for enhancing translator status (Dam and Zethsen 2010), translator associations were not mentioned as helpers (though they were mentioned in relation to another theme, see below). The study was based on freely written comments in open-ended questions in the Dam and Zethsen questionnaire, and was analysed qualitatively using Algirdas-Julien Greimas’ (1983) actantial model and its positions of ‘helpers’ and ‘opponents’. The results highlight a number of other factors which can be considered both as helping and an opposing simultaneously: translator training, authorisation, expertise, the importance of translation, level of professionalisation and status in society, income and the price of translation, employment or freelance situation, and translation as such. For example, the theme employment or freelance situation can be interpreted as a ‘helper’ for translator status, since it in a sense permits translators to choose only clients who appreciate their work. At the same time, it might be an ‘opponent’ for translator status since clients might try to lower their rates (Dam and Zethsen 2010:204). There were two themes that were seen only as ‘opponents’ to translator status: that translation is a female occupation, and the level of professionalisation and status in society. Regarding the latter theme, Dam and Zethsen (2010:203) summarise the comments in the following way:

[Translation] is invisible in society as such and only enjoys a low level of prestige. Respect and recognition of the importance of translation, and consequently status, are something you constantly have to fight for, it is not a given […] The training institutions, the trade organizations and associations, and translators in general have not been good enough at marketing the profession and the skills and job opportunities provided by an MA in translation. The profession suffers from long-term image problems which it seems impossible to change. […]

They summarise that, in general, the ‘opponents’ of high status are “a lack of awareness in society about what constitutes translation competence and its
complexity as well as lack of recognition of the importance of translation” (Dam and Zethsen 2010:205). Trade unions are mentioned negatively; they have not been good enough in marketing the profession. The potential of translator associations and what these marketing measures (which according to the respondents do not seem to have played out well) actually consist of are however not mentioned.

In today’s globalised world, there are beside the trade organisations, a wealth of other, often Internet-based, networks and communities. Hanna Risku and Angela Dickinson (2009) have explored ProZ.com as a virtual community. They show that translator communities now play a crucial role in the working life as well as the social life of their members. In France, the email list of ATLF (Kalinowski 2004:50) is another example of a virtual community where the translators engage in an “ongoing conversation” (translation mine). One of the interviewees explain the importance of the email list to the literary translators’ social life:

What really changed a great deal for us, it was the ATLF email list, which made us translators get together to discuss, and to understand that we are a sort of family, against the world, together; at any given time, day or night there is someone looking after the list, […] it has become an extraordinary support resource. (Kalinowski 2004:50, translation mine)

As Pym (2014:468) suggested, the multiple purposes of a translator association turned into a social community can be seen in the email list which functions both as a discussion group, a social event, and a help resource. The social character is further pronounced by Duygu Tekgül (2017:58), who suggests that informal networks may be a useful space for dealing with “professional anxiety”.

One way for translators to make themselves and the profession known to the public is to “blog for empowerment” (Dam 2013:19; see also McDonough Dolmaya 2011; Tuominen 2018 above). Dam (2013) analysed 20 freelancing translator weblogs qualitatively with a point of departure in the four status parameters income, education/expertise, visibility/fame, and power/influence (for a closer description of the four status parameters, see 2.2) in order to “identify what translators say to enhance their own and the profession’s status” (Dam 2013:22). The study was a measure to, firstly, bridge the study of the status of an individual with the status of the translation profession and, secondly, present counter-evidence of the “anyone-can-do-it” attitude towards translation, which has previously been pointed out as one of the opponents to the status of the profession (see Dam and Zethsen 2010). When it came to the parameter income, several of the bloggers reported having high income levels. From the results of Study 1, where 11% of the freelance respondents had an annual income in the highest annual income category (‘600,000 SEK or more’, corresponding to more than 50,000 SEK per month; see Figure 13), it is clear that there are also highly paid freelance translators in Sweden. Moreover, most
of the Swedish freelance translators were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their income level (see Figure 14). The blogging translators in Dam’s study further urged fellow translators to discuss rates more frequently, and to decline work from agencies who offer low rates. The parameter skills/expertise was approached in connection to the “anyone-can-do-it” attitude and mainly consisted of trying to educate stakeholders and the public by addressing common misconceptions about translation and the translation profession. In connection to the visibility/fame parameter, Dam (2013:26–28) finds that the translators in her study show an awareness that the profession is an invisible profession on a societal level, but that there are possibilities for translators to enhance their own visibility within the translation community. One way of doing this is precisely by starting a translation blog; by linking and referring to each other, the blogging translators can “construct and promote professional stars” (Dam 2013:28). In this way, they increase the visibility for translation as a phenomenon, the translation profession, and themselves as professional translators. In relation to the last parameter, power/influence, it is interesting to see that while the translation as such is not considered as powerful or influential, the translators present themselves as having a high degree of power and influence over their own working situation, where the autonomy connected with being a freelance translator is crucial. As Dam (2013:29) points out, professional autonomy is one of the main components in the power approach to professionalisation (Weiss-Gal and Welbourne 2008; see 2.2 for a presentation of the two approaches to professionalisation). Weiss-Gal and Welbourne (2008:284, quoted in Dam 2013:29) elaborate on professional autonomy as

the right of workers to make work-related decisions on the basis of their professional knowledge and values, without being subject to the directives of those outside the profession or to constraints that are inconsistent with that knowledge and those values.

In Dam’s (2013) study, the professional autonomy lies in the fact that these translators are freelancers, in stark comparison with Abdallah’s (2010; Abdallah and Koskinen 2007) study on freelance business translators, where the need for coping strategies seemed acute. The self-presentational discourse found in translation blogs can of course differ from how translators would express themselves in an interview situation. Also, blogging about the freelance translator’s situation is in itself a way of exercising agency. When Abdallah and Koskinen (2007:684) write that the context of freelance translation denies the translator the possibility of voice, blogging might be an opportunity for speaking out, such as in the case of the Finnish subtitlers and their online forum (see Tuominen 2018). Yet it is clear that how the freelance translator is portrayed differs substantially in the two studies. For Dam, a part of the freedom lies in the fact that the freelancers themselves can select work.
The autonomy lies also in the translators’ possibility to control their professional and personal lives: the blogging translators emphasise the freedom they have in organising their lives on a day-to-day basis, how much to work and when to work (Dam 2013:30). Here, it might be worth recalling the results from Study 1, where the majority (67%) of the freelancing respondents stated a desire to “work independently” as their reason to work as freelance translators. Also, the discrepancy between those who did work as freelance translators and those who would prefer to work as freelance translators (Figure 15) was not as distinct. In general, the results from Study 1 adds nuance to the perception that an employed position is the preferable option.

On a higher level, the translators in Dam’s study also blog and discuss “the influence they have through the importance of their work and its impact on others and society at large” (Dam 2013:31). In relation to Study 1, where the Swedish respondents to the questionnaire perceived their influence on a societal level to be extremely low (mean 1.57), it is intriguing that the Danish translation bloggers contrarily stress their influence on society. Dam (2013:31–32) concludes that the power of bloggers lies in their control of their own lives and the influence they perceive to hold in the wider society:

the blogging translators contribute to changing the low-influence and low-power image of the profession by foregrounding the importance of their work and presenting themselves as powerful professionals with a high degree of autonomy and control over their working conditions.

Overall, the translators build networks and raise awareness of translation as a phenomenon, the translation profession, and themselves as individual translators. They create ties between themselves and highlight translators as celebrities within the profession and in relation to the public. The latter posits fame and stardom to be an important aspect within business translation as well, after having traditionally been associated with literary translation. The Israeli literary elite translators in Sela-Sheffy’s (e.g. 2005, 2006) studies, and how they construct their stardom, is probably the most widely known example. In the same vein, Tekgül (2017:56) calls freelance literary translation a “reputation-based industry”, and Kalinowski (2002:49) refers to literary translators as “precarious intellectuals”. In Study 2, the translation students were, early on, aware that the success of working as a translator, and especially as a literary translator, was based on whether they could “make [themselves] a name” (Group 1) or “get [themselves] a reputation” (Group 2). Different forms of consecration mechanisms – i.e. to be granted value in the capacity of a translator by an authority in the field, be it by a fellow translator, a client or another professional agent such as critics – then appears as highly important in order for an individual translator to manifest his or her position in the field.

Yvonne Lindqvist (2006) has proposed a consecration model inspired by Bourdieu within the high-prestige field of literary translation in Sweden in the
By considering consecration as a process, she identifies four phases: the investment phase, the initiation phase, the recognition phase, and the confirmation phase, which reflect the process from low consecration to high consecration (Lindqvist 2006:64). Education and alliances with peers are examples of consecration mechanisms that are found in the initiation phase, while the recognition phase includes commissions by a positioned publisher and reviews of translations. The last phase, the confirmation phase, includes receiving awards and scholarships (Lindqvist 2006:64).

Tekgül (2017), in a study on paratextual materials surrounding a collaborative literary translation from Japanese into Turkish, investigates literary translators’ cooperation and competition for recognition and professional esteem. Similarly to previous research (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 2009; Katan 2009a, 2009b; Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018), Tekgül notices a difference between the individual translator’s reputation in the immediate surroundings, and the reputation of the profession on a general level; “between the individual reputation among peers in the literary translation industry […] and collective reputation in both publishing and society at large […]” (Tekgül 2017:57). Along this line, and in order to account for this paradox, Tekgül advances the idea that “co-opetition” might be a suitable term to coin the “simultaneous pursuit of co-operative and competitive strategies” (Tekgül 2017:59).

The collective reputation of the translation profession in the wider society is commonly connected with low esteem according to translators themselves, as discussed in 2.2. We are now entering the third level proposed by Nymans (2009), the one that deals with the greater purpose of translation on a societal level. Some studies indicate a high awareness of the important function of translation in society among translators. For example, in their studies on Danish translators, Dam and Zethsen (2010, 2016; see also Dam 2013) have repeatedly and increasingly evoked the importance of the “softer” aspects in relation to translation status, such as prestige and social worthiness, in order to account for how the profession and individual translators are perceived on a societal level. The importance of translation, and hence the “worthiness” of the translation profession, as well as the influence of translation in the wider society, has been investigated mainly through qualitative studies. In the qualitative analysis of open-ended question from the questionnaire (Dam and Zethsen 2010), “the importance of translation” was discerned as a helper in the battle of translator status, and in Dam’s (2013) study of freelance business translators’ weblogs, the importance of translation and the influence of translation on society were continuously highlighted. Also in Dam and Zethsen’s (2016) study on narratives written by staff translators in a translation agency, the societal importance and impact are expressed by the fourth theme “Translation is important and therefore meaningful”. One of the participants explains: “To be a translator is a crucial job as most people come into touch with translated texts on a daily basis” (Dam and Zethsen 2016:182), thus stressing the societal need for translations. As an indication, research shows that 33–
43% of what Finnish translation students read on a daily basis is translations (Mäkisalo 2006; Salmi 2010).

One way of seeing the translator’s impact is the translator’s importance for introducing literary titles in a target culture. Sela-Sheffy (2008, 2014) has constructed three role-images, partly overlapping, among the Israeli literary elite translators: the translator as a custodian of language culture (the cultural gatekeeper); the translator as an ambassador of foreign cultures and an innovator (the cultural mediator); and the translator as an artist in his/her own right (the artist). She calls the first one the cultural gatekeeper, which refers to translators of an older generation with a high command of Hebrew whose principle incentive is to protect Hebrew from influences from abroad (Sela-Sheffy 2014:50). The second type of role-image, the cultural mediator, is often associated with translators who translate a variety of different source languages. They often have a cosmopolitan and multilingual background, and see themselves as “ambassadors of foreign cultures” (Sela-Sheffy 2014:51). The third role-image is the translator-artist, to which the first two role-images belong. As reported on earlier (see 2.2), this image relies on a vocational discourse favouring personal aptness, a unique personality, and mystified expert knowledge. Voinova and Shlesinger (2013) also make use of this three-parted distinction in their study on Israeli Russian to Hebrew literary translators. They find that the majority of the translators in their study promote the view of the cultural mediator, where the translator is an importer and innovator for the benefit of the target culture.

In Nymans’ (2009) study of six literary translators in Sweden, most of her interviewees also identify as Sela-Sheffy’s cultural mediator with a primary aim: to introduce new voices in the Swedish target culture. One of her respondents phrases it as “we have a responsibility for the relatively limited linguistic region we do hold” (2009:28, translation mine). Neither the cultural gatekeeper nor the artist was present in Nymans’ material (2009:31–32). Nymans discusses her result in comparison with Sela-Sheffy’s studies and notes a number of interesting differences. For instance, Nymans cannot find support for the anti-professionalisation ethos, common among the Israeli elite translators (Sela-Sheffy 2016; see also 2.2), in her sample of Swedish literary translators. Conversely, the interviewed translators do not hesitate to discuss rates openly, and they are in favour of an increased professionalisation and express positive attitudes towards education (Nymans 2009:30). Nymans explains by stating that “there is a belief that the efforts taken for the good of the professional group do not only affect the group as such, but also strengthen the position of the individual translator” (2009:31, translation mine). One of the literary translators in Nymans’ study (2009:28, translation mine) phrases it in the following way:

[A]s a humanist I think I have an important role. And I think that it’s important that there are translators, and that we can occupy a space. And when I think like
that, then I see myself as one in a long line [of translators]. It’s important to occupy a space. So that people don’t think that there isn’t a need for translators or translations. There will be others after me. To occupy that space.

The literary translators in Sweden and Israel alike are searching for a group identity, but the measures taken to achieve this differ in fundamental ways. Where the Israeli elite translators build on a mystified expert knowledge and a specific sort of personality (see above and 2.2), Nymans (2009:31) sees the Swedish literary translators join associations for organising and finding a group identity.

Cultural mediatorship has traditionally been associated with literary translation. In the context of a translation agency there are, however, also examples of cultural mediators, albeit in a slightly different sense. For example, Dam and Zethsen’s (2016) theme “Translation is important and therefore meaningful” evokes similar topics. One of the in-house translators explains: “To be able to function as a ‘mediator’ between two cultures is in fact incredibly satisfying” (Dam and Zethsen 2016:182), which shows that the mediating function is not exclusively reserved for literary translators. In fact, Koskinen (2009) has shown how the new initiative from the European Commission, the so-called Plan D, paved the way for a new role for the EU translators who were re-located to the Representation of the European Commission in Helsinki. She refers to these translators as “localising translator-ambassadors” (Koskinen 2009:108) in virtue of their mediating force between the European Commission and the member state Finland and its citizens. Similarly, Mossop (2014:587–588) mentions language direction as a potential motivator for translators working from French into English in Canada’s Translation Bureau, since it enables Francophone Canadians to work in their mother tongue within the civil service.

To summarise this chapter, the “local realities” of translators (Katan 2009b:126) and translators’ different ways of engaging with the profession, have been investigated through different methods, viewpoints and frameworks. As pointed out before, several scholars have highlighted the diverse perception of how translators perceive their immediate surroundings versus the profession’s place in society (e.g. Dam and Zethsen 2009a; Katan 2009b; Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018); in effect, this was one of the main findings from Study 1. Tekgül (2017) draws the line between peers on the one hand, and “the wider industry/society” on the other. In the light of the studies presented here, there seems to be compelling reason to distinguish the industry or the profession from the wider society. For example, translator associations and different kinds of networks and communities can function as both a site for action, as evidenced in the different translator campaigns from Norway and Finland, and as a venue to deal with “professional anxieties” (Tekgül 2017:58; see also Pym 2014). A three-parted distinction such as the one proposed by Nymans (2009) would better capture the differentiating levels between the
functions on an individual level (personal satisfaction of working as a translator), a professional level (sense of community of translators), and a societal level (the greater purpose of working as a translator).

Next, I will introduce the method and material of this study.

4.3 Method and material

4.3.1 In-depth interviews

The five interviewees in this study have all in one way or another participated in the previous two studies: three participants were recruited from the questionnaire study and two from the focus group study.

As discussed in Study 1, the participants to the questionnaire displayed a diverse set of backgrounds in many ways, which is why I opted for a random sample instead of purposeful sampling based on certain criteria (e.g. gender, specialisation, educational background, etc.). A random sampling would most likely lead to a variety among the participants, and allows the interviewees to represent only themselves, instead of being representatives for, e.g. different specialisations. On a practical level, the selection procedure was as follows: on the first page of the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview. If so, they could leave their email addresses; 160 respondents (42.9%) out of 373 respondents wrote their email addresses, which in itself shows translators’ interest in discussing their situation. These email addresses were separated from the questionnaire at an early stage in order to ensure the respondents’ anonymity. To find the three interviewees for this study, I used the slump generator in Excel: I first copied all email addresses into one column in Excel, and in the second column used the slump generator to create 160 numbers. The two columns were then sorted in declining order and the emails addresses in positions 1–3 were selected. One of the first three translators contacted never replied, so I then wrote to the email address in position 4 on the list. These three interviewed translators will be referred to as Anders, Christina, and Sarah.

For the participants in the focus group study, the two – now former – students were selected by drawing lot within each group of students. From the lots, a numbered list was generated with the names within each group. I started contacting the first name on each list. In both groups, the people in the first position declined to participate for various reasons, and I then contacted the next two names on the list: Edvin and Jessica.

The choice to include students from the focus group study was informed by the results in the questionnaire study. The respondents in the questionnaire study were mainly experienced translators: the average age of the participants was 53 years and they had on average 19 years of experience (see Figure 2
and Figure 6). Only 10% of the respondents had less than five years of experience. Including former students from the focus group study as interviewees thus offered a way to ensure that translators with a more recent entry into the profession were also included, since the chances of having this perspective from the slump-generated interviewees from the questionnaire study was small. To interview two students as individuals also provides a more encompassing picture of these former students as translators on the one hand, and as individuals on the other, and can thus give insight into how their socialisation into the profession has proceeded – or not – since the last focus group sessions six to seven months after graduation. In this sense, the longitudinal nature of the focus group study continues in this study as it was four to five years since I met Edvin and Jessica for the first time when the interviews were conducted.

Another important point regarding this question is that I had not been in contact with the two student groups since the last focus group session, which meant that whether they worked as translators in any form or not was not known to me. However, the same could be said about the translators who participated in the questionnaire study, since they could have left the profession since the questionnaire was carried out two years earlier. I decided to take that risk, since interviewing translators who for some reason either never entered the profession or had recently left it could give another form of insight into the dynamics and functions of the profession, as in Abdallah’s (2010) case.

The interviews were conducted in the autumn of 2018. The material is presented in Table 2. All interviews were recorded with a dictaphone with me as the interviewer (marked with “I” in the results section), and later transcribed in Swedish. The analysis was conducted on the Swedish transcription. The same transcription principles as in Study 2 were used (see 3.4.1.4).

Table 20. Interview material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Time (hh:mm)</th>
<th>Transcribed pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anders</td>
<td>1:18</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>0:54</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edvin</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina</td>
<td>1:42</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>1:39&lt;sup&gt;19&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6:26</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviews with Anders, Jessica, and Christina were conducted at my workplace at Stockholm University. The interview with Edvin was conducted

<sup>19</sup> There was an interruption in the interview for around ten minutes when Sarah showed me around in her office and showed me the webpage and the CAT tool. Our conversation during this time was not transcribed.
in an office in the public library close to his home, whereas the interview with Sarah was conducted in her office at her workplace.

4.3.1.1 Amendment of the ethical review

Before the interviews took place, the ethical review for Study 1 (see 2.3.1.1) was amended in the autumn of 2018 to also include the interview study. The reason for the amendment was that it was not explicitly stated in the first ethical review that I would ask questions on membership of translator associations, and there was a possibility that these translators would be members of either ÖS or MT, i.e. the two associations who work with union issues. The amendment was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority in the autumn of 2018.

The Swedish translation market is limited, source language-wise, and as could be seen in Study 1, the majority of respondents work with English as their primary source language (see Table 6). In order to protect the participants’ privacy, all languages, either source or target language, apart from English and Swedish, will be referred to as their [SL1], i.e. first source language, or [SL2], i.e. second source language, etc. Similarly, countries in which the SLs are spoken are referred to as [SC1] etc. The only exception to this procedure is Edvin, whose SL Japanese has already been revealed in Study 2. Although this measure limits the analysis and the conclusion that can be drawn from it, some participants may be the only ones with this specific combination of source languages, which is why this sort of anonymisation is necessary. The order of the SL’s is based on my understanding of the SLs importance in the participants’ translation practice. Anders’ [SL1] is thus not the same SL as Jessica’s [SL1].

Moreover, since the first ethical review in 2016, the GDPR regulations had been implemented; this required a more detailed letter of consent which was developed in cooperation with a lawyer, the Data Protection Officer and Research Service at Stockholm University. Before the interviews, all participants signed a letter of consent (see Appendix 5).

4.3.2 Interview guide

The interview guide used for this study was partly informed by the inductively constructed themes from Study 2 (Profession, Practice, Agents, and Education), and partly inspired by the interview guide in Sapiro (2013) and Axelsson (2016). It resulted in four overarching themes: Background, Profession, Agents, and Practice. Instead of the theme Education, which is not of immediate interest in this study, the new theme Background was included as a broad category where educational aspects are incorporated. As seen from the result in the questionnaire study, translators working in Sweden have a diverse educational background (see Figure 3). The focus on the individual translator provides a ground for more personal-oriented follow-up questions.
Whereas both Sapiro’s and Axelsson’s works concerns only literary translators, and is also interested in specific language combinations (Hebrew to English for Sapiro, English and French into the Scandinavian languages for Axelsson) on both a linguistic and cultural level, this interview guide was adapted to suit different kinds of translators and was, in line with the overall purpose of this thesis, more focused on the extratextual level. The questions are a blend of more general and more specific questions in order to cover different areas and elicit depth in the answers about how the interviewees view the different functions of their translatorship.

The first set of questions were related to the participants’ background and served to paint an overall picture of their profile and professional background: How did they begin translating? At what point in their life? With what languages? How was their transition into the profession? The second set of questions dealt with the profession at large: Do they work full time as translators? Do they work at something else apart from what they consider their main professional identity, either another kind of translation or in another field? What was their first assignment? Who are their commissioners? The third set of questions dealt with agents, both translator colleagues and other professional agents – project managers, editors, publishers, reviewers, proof-readers – alike: Are they in contact with other translators? In real life or over Internet? Do they collaborate with other translators? Are they members of any translator association? If so, why? How do they experience their collaboration with project managers/editors/publishers? Have they experienced any difficulties? The last set of questions dealt with the practice and the participants’ relation to their translations, and their SL(s): What language combinations do they work with? How did they learn these languages? What is their relation to the source culture(s)? Are they specialised in any particular area? What are their working conditions? Do they work as freelance translators or are they employed? Do they work from home or in an office?

The interviews were semi-structured, which means that this interview guide was used as a point of departure but with the flexibility to change the order of the questions, ask for clarifications and pose follow-up questions. There was also room for the interviewees to introduce topics that are important for themselves, which in turn may make them feel involved in the process (see Saldanha and O’Brien 2014:173). Due to the participating translators’ diverse profiles, which could not have been predicted before-hand because of the sample technique, the semi-structured nature of the interviews proved to be an asset as it allowed for flexibility.

The participants are presented in greater detail in the order of the interviews.
4.3.3 Presentation of the interviewees

4.3.3.1 Anders – translator-author
Anders is mainly a literary translator and a writer, but he also works as a literary critic and introduces writers and literary titles. He has worked within the literary field in different functions since the late 1980s, when he translated his first novel from what now appears as his [SL4]. As a writer, Anders has written a number of books and is a well-known name. Raised in a cultural family, he has encountered family and friends who have worked with language and culture from an early age, but he points out that either of his siblings has become either writers nor translators. Anders, on the other hand, has dedicated his life to languages and literature; “It is everything”, he says at one point during the interview.

Anders has translated a number of titles, both poetry and novels, and is a member of both the Translator Section and the Literary Section of the Swedish Writers’ Union. Recently there has been a shift of emphasis in his career. Earlier, he translated literature in-between other jobs, such as his own novels, but in later years has started to translate more regularly. From being introduced as “Anders, writer” in the 1980s, to more recently “Anders, writer and translator”, it has now been transformed into “Anders, translator and writer”. He says, quite matter-of-factly, that it will soon probably be only “Anders, translator”.

Anders grew up abroad and was “almost bilingual” as a child. Since then he has acquired a number of languages, which now form his palette of source languages. Anders translates from more than four SLs. The majority of these languages are to be characterised as minor SLs from a Swedish translation perspective. The languages have entered his life in different ways and in different stages throughout his life. He has a close affinity with some of these languages and visits these countries regularly.

Anders calls himself established and privileged: as both a translator and a writer, he has been awarded a number of literary prizes and awards. He is also granted individually-rewarded remuneration, which means that he receives an annual grant from the Swedish Authors’ Fund’s public lending remuneration (see 1.5).

4.3.3.2 Jessica – business and literary translator
Jessica started working extra as a freelance translator during the first semester of the masters’ programme, and she was from an early point the student with the most experience in Group 2 in Study 2. By the fourth and final focus group session, she had levelled up her freelance career and worked full-time as a freelance translator, specialising in both business translation, literary translation (mainly children’s literature), and non-fiction translation in the form of
magazines. She has also translated easy-to-read books. She translates from three SLs into Swedish, but the majority of her work is from English.

Before studying translation, Jessica had a career in a language-related field. As reported in the focus group study (session 1), she hesitated for several years and did a substantial amount of research about the translation profession before applying to the programme. She is satisfied with her new career and states that “it has turned out much better than I thought”. She was particularly tired of working in an office, with the commuting and time constraints that it entails, and from the beginning of the programme had her mind set to work as a freelance translator.

Jessica works both with translation agencies and publishing houses. She enjoys having a mix of different jobs when it comes to different sorts of translation types, different text types, and different source languages. At several times during the interview she restates that she would not like to specialise in only one sort of translation – “not even only literary translation”, she points out. She goes on by saying that she appreciates the mix of different jobs with different conditions: “I think it’s very … pleasant that thing, that sometimes you have 2000 words and sometimes it’s a 400-page novel, that thing that it’s so diverse”.

4.3.3.3 Edvin – freelance business translator

Edvin, the former student in the Japanese group in Study 2, still works as a freelancer and has done so since the second year of the programme. He mainly works from English but has, since the last focus group, also started to translate professionally from Japanese. He specialises in different areas of business translation such as technical, vehicle technology, PR material, and IT translation, and works regularly with a small number of commissioners with whom he reports having a good collaboration. He has a specifically good relationship with the translation agency where he did his second internship and has at times worked in-house during certain work-intense periods. He has been offered an in-house position in this agency but declined it for various reasons.

As a freelance translator, Edvin has a home office and appreciates being able to work from home and to manage his own time. Edvin also has a good command of another language from which he does not yet translate, but he refers to Japanese as his “greatest love”. In the future, he would like to include that other language as one of his SLs, and he also plans to find direct clients with a demand for translation services from Japanese.

After successfully studying natural sciences in high school, Edvin’s first encounter at university level was with chemistry, which he studied with a Japanese specialisation. After some time, however, he realised that his interest lies in languages, and went on to study applied linguistics before pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Japanese.
4.3.3.4 Christina – patent and AVT translator

Christina works as a freelance translator from English to Swedish. She had a career in computer systems and worked within that field before venturing into a career as a freelance translator. She does not regret taking that step although she admits that “it’s been tough from time to time […] that’s what it’s like being a freelancer”.

Christina refers to herself as a “generalist”, though it is clear that she has specialised in two distinct forms of translation: patent translation and audio-visual translation. She describes these two areas as the endpoints of the translation continuum: at one end the highly formalised and specialised patent translation, and at the other end audiovisual translation and its constraints in time and space, often with jargon and vernacular language. Between these two pools, she also works with more “general” business translation, such as IT translation and manuals. Because of her background, she is specialised in the technical area. Having worked as a technician, Christina was often the link between the other technicians and the end users: “many technicians get caught up with the technical functions – yes but what about the users? Do they have any use of this? Do they understand what they should do? Isn’t it a little bit overly complicated? Maybe it’s possible to make it in another way?”

Christina is authorised by an international translator association. She is happy with having taken the authorisation and has the impression that it has resulted in more work for her. She has not done the Swedish authorisation test since she is not specialised either in economic or in law translation.

4.3.3.5 Sarah – authorised staff translator

Sarah is originally from the United Kingdom and studied Scandinavian languages at university. She began her translation career working as an in-house translator in embassies in the UK and Sweden. She moved to Sweden around 30 years ago and after a couple of years started working as an in-house translator in a translation agency. She now works as a staff translator in a Swedish authority and has done so for close to 20 years. A small number of translators, working exclusively from Swedish into English, form the translation unit, which in turn is a part of the larger communication department. As a civil servant employed by the Swedish state, Sarah at times translates confidential matters and has undergone a security clearing. The documents to be translated in the authority cover a wide range of subjects and text types, ranging from recurrent reports of different kinds and speeches, to material for the authority’s website and, in some cases, translation of PowerPoint presentations to be held by other civil servants working in the institution.

For a couple of years, Sarah has also been an authorised translator from Swedish to English, authorised by the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency in Sweden. She is also authorised in the same language com-
bination by an institution in the UK. She has her own firm and takes on additional freelance work in her capacity as an authorised translator. She states that she does not need the authorisation for her work at the authority, but explains that achieving authorisation was important for her on a personal level.

Sarah is a part of the informal network of staff translators reported on in Study 1 (see 2.3.1). The members of this network are staff translators working in either Swedish authorities or banks. Though the network’s activity seems to have declined since the questionnaire data were collected in 2016, it appears as if the members are still in contact through an email list. Earlier on, the network has had seminars on review processes, compared CAT tools, and organised more social activities such as pub evenings. Sarah reports that some of the authorities might be working with the same issues, so being in contact with other Swedish-to-English translators is a way to facilitate cooperation.

4.3.4 Thematic analysis: in-depth interviews

The interview material was analysed according to Braun and Clarke’s (2006) model for thematic analysis, as in the previous study (for a more detailed description of the analysis method, see 3.4.2). The material was coded in NVivo 11. The practical work with the analysis was in one sense more straightforward than in Study 2, since there were no longitudinal aspects of the material to consider.

When dealing with interview material, it is important to highlight some misunderstandings that are sometimes associated with qualitative research. Though this study in one sense aims at giving voice to the individual translators, as compared to the focus on the profession in Study 1, I agree with Braun and Clarke (2006:80) when they write:

We do not subscribe to a naïve realist view of qualitative research, where the researcher can simply ‘give voice’ (see Fine, 2002) to their participants. As Fine argues, even a ‘giving voice’ approach ‘involves’ carving out unacknowledged pieces of narrative evidence that we select, edit, and deploy to border our arguments.

In order to make my choices explicit I will discuss my stances regarding epistemology, inference, what counts as a theme, and at what ‘level’ the theme is constructed (cf. Braun and Clarke 2006:80–81). As discussed in the introduction, this study takes a constructionist approach and “seeks to theorise the socio-cultural contexts, and structural accounts that are provided” (Braun and Clarke 2006:85). The analysis was carried out deductively with Nyman's (2009) three levels as starting points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual level</th>
<th>Personal satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group level</td>
<td>Sense of social community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal level</td>
<td>Greater purpose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

211
As shown in the presentation of the participants, the translators are working in distinctly different contexts and different specialisations, and their different situations might at first sight appear as highly differentiated from one other. In order to construct themes that can be applied to utterances by these translators who work in diverse settings, the themes needed to be as broad as possible. In some cases, certain themes are linked to a special situation (e.g. freelancing), which only applies for some of the translators. Themes, in Braun and Clarke’s (2006:82, original emphasis) words, “represent[s] some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set”. In practice, this means that themes consist of a number of coded segments. A segment, in turn, can consist of anything from one utterance up to several utterances. The themes and sub-themes constructed on the basis of the analysis are presented in Figure 34.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal satisfaction</th>
<th>Social community</th>
<th>Greater purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Living with languages</td>
<td>• Finding a community</td>
<td>• Serving society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working with languages</td>
<td>• Joining formal associations</td>
<td>• Ensuring quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engaging with SLs</td>
<td>• Finding informal networks</td>
<td>• Being a cultural mediator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Negotiating freedom</td>
<td>• Striving for status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Functioning as a sole trader</td>
<td>• Improving economic conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Selecting work</td>
<td>• Working with union matters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing one’s time</td>
<td>• Taking part in consciousness-raising activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Moving freely</td>
<td>• Gaining autonomy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing collegial relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Having translator colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaborating with clients</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Becoming consecrated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Being awarded</td>
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<td>• Being entrusted</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Being authorised</td>
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Figure 34. Overview of themes and sub-themes

As in Study 2, I have chosen to focus on latent themes, as opposed to semantic themes. Latent themes aim to underpin assumptions governing an utterance and “go[es] beyond the semantic content of the data” (Braun and Clarke 2006:84). Also this reflects back to the translators’ different contexts. For ex-

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20 In the following, themes are bolded and sub-themes are italicized.
ample, being awarded a translation prize is for a literary translator one example of the theme *becoming consecrated*. For a business translator, on the other hand, a consecration mechanism can amount to passing the test to become an authorised translator. The two events differ, but the underpinning assumption – that these events lead to the consecration of a translator in a specific context – is the same. In the next stage of analysis, sub-themes were constructed inductively within each theme. Following the line of arguments above, *being awarded* and *being authorised* are sub-themes within the greater theme *becoming consecrated*.

4.4 Results

4.4.1 Personal satisfaction

4.4.1.1 Living with languages
As translators, all five participants can in one way or another be described as *living with languages*, in the sense that it is their main source of income as well as their main interest. A common feature is that their profound interest in languages – either on a general level or specific source languages – unite all the participants, and exerting their love for languages through translation is a fundamental function of working as a translator, and hence of their translatorship.

Several of the participants report having had an interest in languages since a young age and a desire for *working with languages* on a practical level, which constitutes one sub-theme. Anders has worked with languages, in one way or another, his whole life, and languages have a central part in his life: “I haven’t done anything other than languages, I haven’t studied literature and I haven’t studied engineering or anything else, it’s only been languages”, he says. He furthermore states that he finds it “very hard not to [translate]” and continues:

Example 54
Anders Well often I translate something that I find and that I think is extraordinary … even if I don’t get a penny for it, so in one way you can say that in general, you can see literature as a calling, that you feel ‘this is my life’.

In Anders’ case language and literature seem to be intimately intertwined, though this is not the case for all participants. Overall, the participants often use strong words when describing their relationship with languages on a more general level, such as when Anders explain that “this is my life” in the quote
above. Another example is when Christina started studying English: “I felt when I entered these linguistic circumstances that ‘ah this is me!’ (laughs).”

Working as a translator can thus be a means of working closely with languages on a practical level. Christina always had a keen eye for languages and, as a child, wanted to become a teacher – “language teacher, of course”, she adds. Her main reason for working as a translator is that she wanted to work “with the language itself, the mechanisms in the language”, she explains. When she worked as a technician, she was already often preoccupied with the language in relation to the end-users:

Example 55
Christina […] I felt like that also when I worked with IT that … many technicians get caught up with the technical functions – yes but what about the users? Do they have any use of this? Do they understand what they should do? Isn’t it a little bit overly complicated? Maybe it’s possible to make it in another way? So I often took that role, like some kind of link though I was a technician myself, between the technicians and the end-user and I thought that … I enjoyed that.

She particularly appreciates “the ability to write simple” and again refers to her former career: “And I was like that as a programmer as well, like ‘wait a minute, now it got all messed up, there must be a way to make this simpler’, that you dissolve it, kind of look at it from above, like ‘what are they REALLY saying?’” In specialising in technical translation, she has succeeded in keeping her two main interests: technology and language.

Another sub-theme deals with how working as a translator amounts to ways of engaging with specific SLs; engaging with SLs. The majority of participants have several SLs but work mainly with one or two, of which one is always English. The exception is Sarah who translates from Swedish to English.

Anders stands out as the participant with the closest relationship to his many source languages. He regularly visits several of his source countries, especially [SC1], and regularly spends longer periods of time there. He also speaks at least two of his source languages on a regular basis. He describes that he has learnt his source languages for different reasons during different periods of his life, but that the emphasis has shifted over the years: “at the moment [SL1] is the language that is the closest to me, the one that feels most natural to speak after Swedish.” Growing up bilingual abroad, he describes a feeling of rootlessness after returning to Sweden:

Example 56
Anders […] But if one were to psychologise it I felt rather rootless after returning to Sweden […] and in some way I think that since then I have searched for ways to feel at home in a language and … and then I have learnt one after the other.
He continues by saying that he has different parts of his identity locked up in different languages, and for them to be put into action he needs to switch languages: “So of course the big part of me, that’s the Swedish Anders, but then there is also a little [SL1] Anders and a little [SL2] Anders and …” In the case of [SL1], the low number of translators – two or three in Sweden is Anders’ approximation – also plays an important role for his attachment to, and sense of responsibility for, the language.

Jessica works mainly from English but also from two other SLs. She has lived for some time in the UK but does not go there regularly. With her [SL2], which she started studying during her MA course (see session 2), she has an active interest and continues to develop her knowledge regularly. The time and effort put into learning that language seem to have been rewarding now that she translates from it, but, as she says: “Then of course the conversations are a bit hobbling, I’m not on that level, I’m not on the same level as with English, of course.” The low number of [SL2] titles published annually in Sweden also contributes to Jessica feeling a sense of responsibility towards these titles, and she reports feeling more content when she is asked to translate from [SL2] than from English.

Edvin has started to also translate from Japanese, though his main source language is still English. He also speaks another language regularly, from which he does not (yet) translate. A couple of years after graduation, Edvin is pleased with having a degree in Translation Studies with a Japanese specialisation, although it is not his main professional focus:

Example 57
Edvin
I think it is special that I have a master’s with a Japanese specialisation, just since it was so special […] I think it’s worth it, worth having that. Instead of having studied another translator programme, like another masters but maybe with English into Swedish or so. Sure, it would have come in handy as well but to have studied it with Japanese, I think that it is worth something … I had a good foundation with Japanese from the BA programme and then … to be able to study that, that I took that chance I find very … I’m happy that I did that, so that, so that I have that.

Unlike a few of his fellow students, Edvin was willing to let go of Japanese in order to work as a translator. He still describes Japanese as his “greatest love in some way”, but also states that it is too hard to work only with Japanese and Swedish: “If you want to work full-time as a business translator, then … well, then you have to go for English and work with that and then develop new languages”. To focus on English thus seems to be a means to work as a translator – Edvin does not express warm feelings for the English language in particular, but he is not reluctant to work with it either.

Someone who does have warm feelings for the English language is Christina. A longer vacation trip to an Asian country showed her the importance of
English, which she now describes as a tipping point in her life: “that’s when I saw the importance of English, to be able to communicate with other people and other cultures and that’s when I decided that ‘no, now I will fulfil my youth dream and study English at university!’”.

Sarah has been living in Sweden for 30 years and is completely immersed in the Swedish language and Swedish society. She reports feeling more rooted in Sweden now than in the UK, and does not go back there very often. Her initial interest in the Swedish language appears almost haphazard:

Example 58
I. Mm. Did you have any connection to Sweden or why, or how did you learn Swedish then?
Sarah At university.
I. At university, ah okey! It was …
Sarah Scandinavian Studies, it was from scratch -
I. From scratch, okey! You kind of just ‘I’ll do this!”
Sarah Yes well I thought … ‘What do I want to do?’ I wanted to study languages, I had some idea that ‘ah it would be fun to learn Russian’ but they didn’t have beginner level at university and then I thought ‘yes, Scandinavian Studies’, it was … You could choose between Norwegian, Danish and Swedish as a main language, and then you were supposed to translate from the other two into English and then … and a lot of courses in literature […]

The translators working into Swedish all translate from English. They do not seem to work actively with English the same way as they do with their additional SLs. Christina is the one who talks most about English as a powerful influence in society. The translators who have acquired new, minor languages at later stages in their life – Anders, Jessica and Edvin – give them more attention, both because they have invested time and effort in learning them, and because keeping these languages active requires a more active engagement in comparison to English. Jessica, for instance, says that she does not need to work actively with English, because she will get a certain amount of English just by living in Sweden.

From these two sub-themes, we can deduce that languages – either on a more general level or in the form of one or a couple of specific SLs – play a major role in the translators’ lives and may be said to constitute the main reason why they are working as translators. Hence, one function of their individual translatorship consists of them being able to work with languages. For some of the translators, the love of languages has even led to a change of career. This is the case for Jessica, Christina and in one sense also for Edvin.

Jessica abandoned a long career and an employed position in order to start studying translation. In the previous study, she describes that she hesitated for several years before applying to the programme (see, for instance, example 9, session 1). Consequently, the translation profession is a “very carefully chosen profession” for Jessica and a profession that she feels warmly about:
Example 59
Jessica [...] it’s not just a profession to earn money … because then I could have worked with right about anything.
I. Yes and then you could have stayed at your former work?
Jessica Yes, that’s right.
I. Because you had a … You did leave something to do, to take the programme?
Jessica Yes absolutely, I did. So it was …
I. It was kind of a life style change for you in a way?
Jessica Yes it really was.

Christina resigned from an employed position in a tech company, leaving behind a career in system development. She describes that she “really wanted to take [the] step” to start studying English and, as previously shown, that she sensed a sort of self-recognition: “‘ah this is me!’ (laughs)”. Again, working with language stands out as the main rationale for taking that step and, after taking a BA degree in English, it was clear to her that she “couldn’t go back and continue working as before”. The choice to “step down” from her career is even greater given her concern for age-discrimination if she needed to return to the labour market:

Example 60
Christina And it did feel kind of scary [to decide to change career] because like I said, I was in my forties when I did this. And the labour market is … we have a very age discriminating labour market in Sweden in my opinion (laughs) and then I felt that ‘yes, if I step out now I will probably never get back in’.
I. Okay, yes.
Christina At least not to the IT sector, because it spins so fast. But I really wanted to do this because a lot of other things in life were right […] so then I thought ‘no, if I don’t do it now … I’ll just regret it’.
I. That’s right.
Christina And I don’t regret it today actually. It’s been rough from time to time of course, it’s like that, it’s like that being a freelancer.

In Edvin’s case, it might be an exaggeration to talk about a change in career but quitting a BA programme in chemistry was at least a change in career paths:

Example 61
Edvin […] But then … I guess it was a bit like my teacher in English and Swedish used to say to me ‘But you really are a humanist, Edvin’.
I. Yes (laughs)
Edvin – and she was actually right about that, because then … I was always interested in languages and so on and then I started to study applied linguistics … then I realised that Japanese was my biggest love in some way, so then I studied that. (silence) I guess I’ve always started with something I find funny, it has to be funny to
study and doing something … and then I’ll have to find solutions to what I want to work with from that and that’s also what has happened. Then it was nice that I could find this translation thing …

To conclude, the theme **living with languages** constitutes then both a means of **working with languages** on a general level as well as **engaging with SLs** more specifically, and seems to be a fundamental part of translatorship on the individual level. It is noticeable that the majority of the translators – the exception being Sarah – translate from English, at least to some extent. Several of the participants also translate from at least one minor language, and in these cases, they seem to have a more personal relationship with it, often connected with a sense of responsibility (such as for Anders and Jessica).

### 4.4.1.2 Negotiating freedom

Four of the five participants – Anders, Jessica, Edvin, and Christina – are working as freelance translators. For them, one function of being a translator entails being a **freelance** translator; the type of employment sets the boundaries within which the translatorship is performed, and in this way structures the translatorship. The question of what being a freelance translator entails is discussed in both positive and negative terms, where pros and cons are measured against each other; **negotiating freedom** seems to play a crucial role in the participants’ translatorship. Anders, Jessica and Edvin highly value the freedom that comes with freelancing, and are satisfied with being freelancers, whereas Christina has a slightly more negative perception. In general, being a freelancer does not come across as an obligation for the participants but as an informed and a preferred choice that they have made. However, the way the market is structured in Sweden clearly indicates that this is the preferred solution. In Christina and Jessica’s cases, they both knew beforehand that this change of career would involve shifting from an in-house position to freelancing.

To be a freelance translator is dependent on the ability of **functioning as a sole trader**, and the participants handle their freelance status in various ways. Anders has had the “holy principle” to always be a freelancer, with the result that he has turned down any permanent position he has been offered:

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Example 62
Anders […] then of course I don’t really apply for jobs, I’ve had as a kind of holy principle that I let the jobs come to me, and … it’s not a life philosophy that I recommend but it suits me for some reason and it comes with certain benefits, like if someone calls me and say ‘we’re panicking, we need to have this translated or written done … in three days, can you start right away?’ Then I say ‘Of course’, and there are not a lot of people who can do that. They say ‘Well it’s very tight at the moment but I can do it in week 47’, but they don’t have time to wait until week 47.
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However, it is important to keep in mind that he has individually-rewarded remuneration from the Swedish Writers’ Fund, which grants him a certain sense of economic stability.

Jessica already had her mind set to work as a freelancer during her studies. Now, a couple of years later, she is happy with her decision and claims that her 14 years as an employee has made her feel more confident: “I would probably have felt much more insecure if I’d been 25 and had not had that professional experience but had just gone straight into freelancing; I think it would have been much harder actually.”

Edvin also already had his mind set to be a freelancer at an early stage. He is satisfied with his current situation and claims that the benefits outweigh the more negative sides of freelancing. He has had a close cooperation with the translation agency of his second internship for several years now. When they offered him an in-house position, he declined for practical and economic reasons. Firstly, he appreciates working from home and wants to continue to do so, and secondly, the salaries at this translation agency are lower than what he earns as a freelance translator: “They actually have slightly lower salaries in the agencies so it wouldn’t have worked for us economically, because I was the only one who worked at that time.” Edvin does not exclude working in-house in the future, “but then it has to be economically viable for us”. He points out that there are many positive aspects that an in-house position entails, like retirement, the right to vacation etc, which he tries to make up for himself. For instance, Edvin has an ongoing discussion with his closest translation agency about his word rates: “Because that’s another benefit that you don’t get as a freelancer, to regularly get raises on your salary as you get as an employee, so I try to do that …”. By negotiating his rates now and then, arguing that he delivers high quality translations and that the basic cost of living is increasing constantly, he can make plans for business in the long perspective. So far, the dialogue has been successful:

Example 63
Edvin […]

I. And do they agree to do this?
Edvin Yes so far they’ve agreed, they are of course trying to argue, to say that ‘ah but then … it might lead to less work’ … like that, they are trying to argue to not raise too much because then you might not get as much work, but it’s … In the end you have to decide for yourself and kind of claim it if you want to do the raise or not. But yeah, it’s a fine line of course.

I. But have you noticed any difference, that you don’t get as much … work?
Edvin: No not really. Maybe I’m so popular or like … well-known by them that they send me jobs anyway, I haven’t noticed any difference.

I: No.

Edvin: There haven’t been any very big raises on the rates either.

Edvin has a long-term plan for his business with yearly goals, though he admits that it is not very well articulated. For the upcoming year, his plan is to find direct clients with whom he can work in Japanese.

Christina expresses the most negative feelings about working as a freelance translator and frankly states that “it has been rough sometimes”. However, working in an agency does not seem an ideal situation either. Christina recalls a translator day in a translation agency where the in-house translators did not have the time to participate because they were so busy: “you could feel it in the room […] the stress! I guess they have to take all the urgent urgent urgent work”.

Another aspect of freedom lies in the possibility of selecting work, which entails both accepting and declining work and, in turn, clients. In the best of worlds, the right to choose and decline work can be a means for translators to exert agency in order to affect their own situation and actively shape their specialisation and, in turn, their translatorship. However, the situation for freelance translators can be tough and the decreasing wages are discussed by all the four freelance translators as the main concern for the profession.

When discussing how they choose their work, several participants mention being in a privileged position: Anders says that the individually-rewarded remuneration gives him a security and that he is privileged; Jessica says that she “is in a position where [she] can say no [to bad offers]” and adds that she understands that this is not something that everyone can do; and Edvin states that he can decide more or less himself the amount of work he wants to take on.

Several of the participating translators explicitly state that they strive for a mix of different translation jobs and that they see this mix as one of the main advantages of being a freelance translator. Anders’s work rests on several components: other than translating – mainly literature or texts for cultural magazines or museum catalogues – his own literary writing and being an introducer of literature, a critic and an editor. He translates both poetry and prose, and he prefers to translate something that he considers good.

Jessica sees the possibility to work with a mix of different sorts of translations as one of the main benefits of being a freelance translator and would not like to be limited to specialise in only one sort of translation – “[not] even only novels”, as she puts it. She elaborates:

Example 64

Jessica: […] I think it’s very … pleasant that thing, that sometimes you’ve got 2,000 words and sometimes it’s a 400-page novel, that thing
that it’s so diverse. I think that I would have been very … or more bored if I just sat with the same type of text …

I. Day in and day out (laughs)

Jessica Yes, exactly, even ONLY novels I think would have been …

I. So you don’t feel that you want to move in that direction?

Jessica No. No, I don’t want to do that. I think it’s pretty pleasant to have that ‘Can you do this before 16:00? Yes, I can’.

I. That’s right.

Jessica Then you have that, I think it’s kind of a good situation.

(silence)

The mix of translation is partially seen as a way to stay alert intellectually, but it has also had economic implications: literary translations are paid after the deadline, which in the case of a 400-page novel might mean several months into the future, whereas shorter business translations are then a way to being able to send invoices also during that time.

Edvin is the one freelance translator who has the most defined specialisation in the sense that he only works with business translation. However, within the range of business translation he does several different sorts of translation: technical, vehicle technology, PR material, and IT translation, to name but a few. During the studies, Edvin had an interest in literary translation and has now, on the side, started to work on a literary translation from Japanese “to get a feeling for it and maybe create something I can send as a work sample”.

Christina says that she has managed to create an “incredibly good combination” with different sorts of translation jobs, including patent translation, audiovisual translation and general business translation, mainly technical translation. She explains that it fits with “how I am as a person, I’ve always preferred working more on the general side in all the jobs I’ve had”. Christina has also had the experience of declining work. At several occasions during our interview, she comes back to post-editing and her deep concern for how it affects the translation profession:

Example 65

Christina And that thing [post-editing] … I have to say that I have a hard time relating to that and there was actually a translation agency and I appreciate that they took the time to ask why I had declined so many jobs for a time. And there were several reasons, the deadlines were short and it was in the middle of the summer, but several of these jobs were post-editing … And then I wrote, I wrote to them exactly how I feel about that, that as a professional translator, I feel like I am contributing to dismantling myself and my profession … when I do this.

Christina’s sense of self-preservation, as well as her concern for the profession at large, affects what kind of assignments she wants to take on and denotes an ethical awareness both towards herself and the profession in general.
For Christina, the freedom to choose work has also resulted in choosing an extra job in a completely different sector. She had previously worked with administration in a small translation agency but eventually felt that having two “event-governed” jobs – her own translation work and the administration of translation work in the agency – was too unpredictable with their constant ebbs and flows. Instead, she started looking for an extra job and realised that the ideal situation would be to have an extra work on a schedule. She summarises: “when […] my colleague comes to replace me on my last shift for the day … the work is gone! I’ve never had a job like that before.”

Another of the main advantages of working as a freelancer is the possibility of structuring one’s time. Edvin, Jessica, and Christina mention that they particularly appreciate being able to exercise or go for a walk when they want during their working day. Edvin says that one of the main advantages is that you can “organise your day as you want and get time over for other things” and further elaborates:

Example 66
Edvin

So I can actually … I can get away for a weekend trip or … take Friday or Monday off when I want to. And so on. These are the benefits really, and then I can also exercise when I want to. I have … I’ve had some back problems sometimes when I’ve been working in-house for longer periods of time, so it’s been an advantage for me to be able to move when I want, so that you’re just not in the office chair for eight hours … or so.

From this example, it is clear that the freedom of structuring one’s time is closely related to the possibility of moving freely – to be able to bring work to different locations. Although all freelance translators in this study talk about it as one of the benefits of freelancing, only Anders has actually brought his work to another country. He spends longer periods in [SC1] and sees the geographically mobile aspects as a main difference in the profession from when he first started working as a translator:

Example 67
Anders

[…] I can actually sit in [SC1] for example and translate a [SL2] novel and be in contact with my Swedish publisher and I don’t need to … there’s no need to … everything is solvable, they don’t even need to send me the proofs, I can read the proofs online on the computer and mark every change and send it back electronically. The first books I translated, then I needed to go to the publisher, and it was much more … you went to the book printer and it … it was so much more …

I. Static or how to put it?
Anders Yes yes it was really, you needed to be there.
I. That’s right.
Anders Now you’re, now you can work from anywhere in the world.
I. A kind of freedom?
Anders    It really is a freedom, that I can bring the work with me. It’s not like ‘damn it, I need to go away for a month and then I can’t work and I’ll be late with everything’, I just bring it with me, it’s nothing.

To conclude, the freedom that working as freelance entails is negotiated, and positive and negative aspects are constantly weighed against each other. Several of the sub-themes – like the possibility to select work, to structure one’s time and to be able to move (at least in theory) – are presented as the benefits of working as a freelancer. There are, however, also concerns which are related to the more structural level of freelancing. Jessica talks openly about the disadvantages of working as a freelancer and the many regulations which, in her opinion, have not followed the societal developments where an increasing proportion of the population is working freelance. Christina also voices concerns about freelancing, to the point that she has turned outside of the profession in the search for another extra job, which at least partially was motivated by a need for more economic stability.

4.4.1.3 Developing collegial relationships

Another important feature is the significance of developing collegial relationships with other professional agents, such as having translator colleagues as well as collaborating with clients. Anders is, after a long career, well-established within literary translation circles and has quite a lot of contact with other translator colleagues, mostly “within the section”, i.e. within the translator section (ÖS) of the Swedish Writers’ Union. He used to subscribe to a translator email list by the section but later unsubscribed since he was “drowning in emails”. One important aspect of the personal relationships with colleagues is that they, in contrast to the public and literary critics, understand and can appreciate the time and effort it takes to translate certain books and authors. Anders describes a particularly challenging novel he has translated: “I managed to translate that and it would have been nice to get a professional evaluation […] but that’s impossible to get, there’s no such thing”, referring to the lack of informed translation criticism in Swedish newspapers. Instead, several years afterwards, a fellow literary translator expressed his appreciation of this book and that it existed in Swedish, which pleased Anders. Another option can be to turn to translator colleagues in the source country in question:

Example 68

Anders    […] it is a part of my … translator identity so to speak [to have translated this author], maybe not that so much in Sweden but I spend quite a lot of time in [SC1] and meet [SL1] translators and authors there and then I can say in passing that ‘yes and then I’ve translated [author]’… ‘ah wow’ –

I.    Ah, they understand …

Anders    They understand directly what it means, so yes, that does feel important.
The social recognition by peers is thus given greater value in lieu of societal recognition from the public. This is even more pronounced in the case of literary translations as, by nature, they are more publicly accessible than business translations by nature, in the sense that the translator's name is written on the title page of the translated novel and that literary translators are not normally constrained by confidentiality the same way that business translators are.

Christina is also in contact with many translators. Over several years, she cooperated closely with a small group of translators. They all had different backgrounds and specialisations and there was also one translator who translated into English. Together, they landed a major translation project which kept the whole group busy for one year. Christina looks back on this time with pride: "it was such an incredibly interesting experience actually, I am so proud of this group, it was really cool to experience that." Without the annual conferences organised by SFÖ, they would never have met. For several years, Christina went to the annual two-day SFÖ conferences for translators and translation agencies in Sweden. She has also been to an international translation conference in the US.

The two translators who differ in this regard are Jessica and Edvin. Neither of them is in contact with other translators on a regular basis. Both of them state being happy about working on their own – as do all freelancers in this material – and the lack of social interaction with colleagues does not seem to bother them. In Edvin's words: "I like being at home, it is … I guess I need social contact as well (laughs) but I guess I'm that kind of person who is pretty comfortable to be … to be on my own so to speak (laughs)." Jessica describes that she has not found a natural meeting point, but that it might change when she can join the ÖS which she deems has more social activities than ÖC, where she is currently a member. Both Edvin and Jessica have had temporarily interactions with translators, though, since both of them have worked in translation agencies as substitutes over summer. Edvin has also been to some freelance meetings organised by a translation agency:

Example 69
Edvin  Mm … Well … No I don’t see [translators] that often, you could say. I guess it’s sometime when they have these, like for example translation agencies usually have these … freelance days, that they invite freelancers for some courses and things and there are lots of freelancers attending and so on.

Edvin is also member of a Facebook group for translators and says that “there you can read about a lot of people asking questions and talk about stuff that might be a bit hard to talk about elsewhere and everything that concerns the translation profession”.

While the well-established translators report having good relationships with colleagues, there is also a tendency for rivalry. Anders says that “if you
scratch a bit on the surface there is surely a lot of rivalry and envy underneath, anything else would be strange”. Christina has experienced competition in connection to the authorisation test. She did the authorisation test at the same time as a colleague who failed the test. She laughs at the memories:

Example 70
Christina  [...] And she had much longer experience as a translator than I did, and she had been employed by some translation company I don’t remember the name of but it doesn’t matter, she did not pass. And that’s still an issue for her, I’ve come to realise (laughs).

For the freelance translator, the success of their work comes across as depending on collaborating with clients. Several of the participants on numerous occasions come back to the importance of maintaining good and personal relationships with clients, whether in the form of translation agencies, subtitling companies, or publishing houses. Edvin describes his closest cooperation partner, where he feels appreciated: “I have a very good relation to them, I mean I know them and have spent time with them in the office. So that feels great, it really is a good relationship.” He goes on by describing his relationship with different clients:

Example 71
Edvin  So I’m usually in contact with certain persons on a regular basis with whom I have a good contact, they are happy with my work and they often send me work. Then there are other ones who contacts me less often. And then there are some agencies who work in another way, they … they don’t have direct email contact with … well translators, but they send out more general inquiries to lots of people and then you can accept or decline. So some [agencies] are more, some agencies are more personal, like ‘hi, here’s some information about …’ and so …
I.  Do you prefer that?
Edvin  Yes, I think I do actually, it feels more like … you can talk to them.
I.  Ah that’s right. More personal.
Edvin  More personal … While some just send out inquiries with samples that are formatted (laughs) with information …

When I ask if it is important to have that kind of relationship with one client, Edvin replies: “a lot of freelancers I’ve met there at the office come in and work for them sometimes. So I guess they have a similar relation, I can imagine that … they know, they know each other and so.”

Choosing to accept work can also be a first step towards building a long-term relationship with clients and to plan ahead. That is the way Jessica has reasoned when being contacted by publishing houses: “With the book jobs I’ve got, I haven’t declined a single one but I … I’ve done the one’s I’ve got”.

One of the benefits of having one or a few close relationships with clients is to avoid mass emails with work offers which, according to the business
translators Edvin, Jessica and Christina, are frequent from some translation agencies. Christina mentions the personal contact as one benefit of working with patent translation: “With patent there you often get a personal inquiry – they ask you and you have a reasonable time to answer, but with these other ones, that’s often mass emails.” The goal is to also build that kind of relationship with other clients:

Example 72

Christina: Well it is a balance … now it has turned upwards again, so now, well things take time sometime but now one project manager that I’ve worked with for some time and who’s sitting down in [European country] and the subtitling company just realised that ‘that’s right, you’re specialising in technic stuff, maybe you want to work with this episode’ – ‘yes I do’, is my answer then.

I: Yes.

Christina: So now she’s sent me … since about six months ago, SHE is coming to ME. And that’s not jobs that are coming out for everyone, but she’s coming to me – ‘are you interested in this?’ – ‘mmm’.

I: Is it important to have that kind of personal contact with project managers?

Christina: Yes, it is, even though it’s only digital contacts, it –

I: That’s right –

Christina: – it still is.

I: – you’ve never met her?

Christina: No, she, yes, it is a, well I don’t know if it’s Swedish but they have an office here in Sweden, but now the [European country] office distributes the assignments.

Christina emphasises that it is important to have this kind of personal contact – “even though it’s only digital contacts”. Most of the project managers she works with, and with whom she might be in contact with on a regular basis, she has never meet in real life: “Some of them I’ve talked to on the phone, just that thing ‘wow now I actually hear the voice of the person I’ve emailed so much with’.” Christina also mentions that sometimes it can take time to develop this kind of relationship with a client. For example, she describes the profession as “pretty closed” and exemplifies that she had to keep emailing a subtitling company for over a year just to get into their subtitler training: “so then I kept in touch with that project manager … ‘Happy Easter, anything new?’ and so a couple of times a year and then all of a sudden …”

Sarah’s position is more delicate as her colleagues and her clients – and to some extent also the audience of the target texts – are one and the same: other civil servants working in the authority. Apart from these officials, her colleagues are also the other translators, the head of department, and a language consultant. A couple of years ago, the former translation department was downgraded to a unit and is now a part of the communication department.
While the relationship between the translators is good, it has sometimes been, in Sarah’s words, “an uphill struggle” to make the work of translators known and respected within the institution. One practical example is when the former head of department divided the communication department’s services into the categories “productive” and “creative”. To Sarah’s discontent, the translators’ work was placed within the “productive” category, regardless of Sarah’s argument that translation is in essence a creative activity. For Sarah, this categorisation is a further proof of the low status of translation within the institution. When I ask if this opinion is prevalent in the institution at large, Sarah responds:

Example 73
Sarah I think that it’s a little bit like that in general, but I think that, I feel that it can be perceived that way and [the head of department] had decided that we were … well production and I mean that if she had explained that [translation] is creative, it would have helped.

The translators working with Sarah work closely with the language consultant Åsa, who is reviewing texts written in Swedish, of which some are to be translated into English. While their relationship is generally good – “we are good friends so I can joke with her” – there are also signs of conflicting views regarding plain language versus translation. For instance, when working on long reports, the time allotted to the tasks of plain language and translation is sometimes divided equally, which Sarah finds unfair: “unless it’s a total disaster, she doesn’t need to rewrite the whole text […] but we actually rewrite everything, we need to sit and write three thousand words or five thousand words or thousand words and that takes time”. The importance of plain language also seems to be accepted within the institution to a greater extent than translation is:

Example 74
Sarah And I also think that since [Åsa] has, she’s got more … authority and status, or I joke with her that they [other civil servants] are more afraid of her than they are for me (laughs). So they listen more to her, so she made them obey in Swedish and then I think that they have some kind of need to write long, complicated words in English instead. It’s a little bit ‘we weren’t allowed to have them in Swedish, but we WILL have them in English!’.

Another example shows how the other civil servants, the producers of the source texts that are to be translated, react when they are invited to read the target texts:

Example 75
Sarah Yes. Well … I have lived here for 28 years. I wouldn’t say that I write and speak Swedish as a Swede does. They have, they are around … thirty years old, they have studied English, maybe they
have lived abroad six months as exchange students and they think that, well of course they speak English fluently. Mm, okay, fine. Like ... one has different –

I. Yes (laughs)
Sarah – perceptions and I don't know. I think ... it feels, I mean we usually say to them and I mean it's good that they review [the translations] but ... (laughs) our idea behind that is that it's their text, maybe they have strong feelings about it, that they think that we have transferred the same message and then they also often know the terminology because they read a lot of nerdy things in the subject –

I. Ah yes, some words they might know better or something like that.
Sarah Yes exactly, they know what to use in [different contexts], and then I usually say 'that's great, you can check the terminology and that you feel that we have transferred the same message' and then you get these persons who go in and change the punctuation and I just feel 'what!?'(laughs)

I. Yes yes
Sarah And ... so, and things like that. And you just get so irritated, like 'thank you but I know English grammar'.

Apart from colleagues of different kinds within the institution, there are also other authority translators in other Swedish authorities and institutions. The network functions as an extended circle of colleagues: translators in the other institutions seem to be few in numbers in their respective workplaces, too. Within this network, there is a possibility to ask for help, discuss different solutions when it comes to organising translation management, or CAT tools.

4.4.1.4 Becoming consecrated

Yet another theme constructed at the personal level is that of becoming consecrated. It consists of different sorts of consecration mechanisms for the individual translator – to be granted a value in the capacity of a translator by an authority in the field, be it by a fellow translator, a client or another professional agent such as critics. Being consecrated in turn affects translators’ positions in their respective milieu, and thereby affects the function of the participants’ translatorships.

Anders states that “there's a huge difference” between different translators and that “some translators are awarded lots of prizes and distinctions, and some work in the shadows”. In Anders’ case the literary world is present in forms of the individual translator being awarded and being reviewed:

Example 76
Anders Of course ... I have noticed that, that ... the difference between barely passing as a translator and all of a sudden being raised to the sky, it is ... it is pretty small, it has to do with ... If you do something good that is being acknowledged, then you get cred also for the next book, so ... I, the last book I translated from [SL2],
there it’s almost been embarrassing with everyone writing about how fine the translation is, you’re not spoiled with that kind of thing, it’s more that you write crossly to DN [the largest newspaper in Sweden] and say ‘you forgot the translator’ –

He continues by saying that it is of course nice to hear such words “if there are any reasonable grounds for at least a part of the praise and the enthusiasm”.

In the world of business translation, where consecration might not be as clear-cut nor as visible in the public as literary translation, one form of consecration mechanism is being entrusted, i.e. that the individual translator is entrusted with responsibility at some level. As a freelance translator, even getting work from a new client can be a sign of trust. This is the case for Jessica and Edvin, who, although they both already had a considerable amount of translation experience during their studies, can still be characterised as new translators. They both perceive the MA degree as a clear asset that is appreciated by the clients. Jessica says that she does not think that she would have been offered jobs without the degree and says that “it is a proof in some way that you’re serious and that you’ve … invested in this”. In this respect, having a degree can be a prerequisite in order to being entrusted with professional experience, especially in the early stage of one’s career.

Being entrusted might also be related to a more specific task. Sarah, for example, is responsible for the division of work within the small unit of translators. Another example is Edvin who will function as an external lead translator for a major project:

Example 77

Edvin But I also have … entered in a longer cooperation with one of the agencies that I work for so then I take care of a branch of a client, like external … like external lead translator you could say, so I take care of a part of that, to decrease their administration a little bit, so I take care of that …

Being offered to work in an in-house position in the translation agency, which he eventually turns down, shows that Edvin is considered worthy to be entrusted with this task.

One more clearly distinguishable form of consecration for a business translator is being authorised. Christina is authorised by an international translation association and Sarah is an authorised translator by the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency, as well as by an institute in the UK. For Sarah, getting the authorisation was not required for the work she performs in the institution but she did the authorisation test for her own sake:

Example 78

I. But you don’t need it for this job?
Sarah No.
I. No, so it’s for … it’s for …
Sarah: It was mostly that when I had failed it, you get angry ‘I have to make it!’ Just for that sake …
I: So for your own sake?
Sarah: Yes! (laughs) ‘I have to make it, I can make it’.

Also Edvin has done the authorisation test to become an authorised translator in Sweden and awaits the results from it. He sees the authorisation as a long-term investment and does not expect to be authorised the first time he tries. With time, it can be a way to consolidate himself as a translator, he explains: “But I think there are some things you can do to raise the status, like getting an authorisation” and that it is one way of showing that “I have reached a certain level.”

There are then more or less easily distinguishable consecration mechanisms in the different specialisations, and the translators in this material try to make use of different means, depending on their specialisation and conditions, to affect and consolidate their personal position as translators. However, it is striking that some of the most clearly distinguishable forms of consecration – the awards and reviews for literary translators and the authorisation for business translators – are regarded with suspicion by the more well-established translators Anders, Christina, and Sarah. There is clearly an ambiguity regarding these consecration mechanisms and the value that can actually be attributed to them. For example, Anders, both as a writer and as a translator, stays mildly suspicious towards good reviews in newspapers:

Example 79
I: Okay. So it’s a like a stairway or so …?
Anders: Yes it is a little bit like that, the thing is, there is some kind of psychology, critics are not as independent as one might believe but a bit scared of being the only one praising a book when everyone else dismissed it, so they’re a bit careful. Er … they play it safe, but then if it turns out that everyone liked this book, then they dare, then they …
I: So the later reviews are even more … (laughs)
Anders: Yes so when the next book comes out and is being reviewed, then they write very positive about that one. So the first book marks the foundation of the second one.
I: Mm.
Anders: And it’s the same way with translation, that if you do something very good and something spectacular […] then it … it affects also the next book.

Both Christina and Sarah express doubts towards the processes governing the authorisations. Sarah wrote the authorisation test for the Swedish authorisation at around the same time as she did the authorisation test for the English equivalent. She passed the English one but not the Swedish, which made her suspicious:
Example 80

Sarah But then I thought … how can I get such good grades on this translation but such bad on the authorised one, it just felt a bit silly …

I. Yes, yes …

Sarah I mean they … In England […], they thought that I was really good then but here it was ‘No, not good enough …’ It just felt … it was Swedish into English …

I. Both of them.

Sarah And I guess that in England there are higher requirements regarding English …

I. Yes yes.

Sarah So it felt, it felt very strange.

Consecration is perceived as a double-edged sword: on the one hand, being consecrated by someone regarded as an authority within the respective field, be it an individual or an institution, determines the translator’s position in it, which is deemed important by the translators; on the other hand, the translators are doubting the accuracy of the evaluation of the consecration in itself or the value that can in effect be attributed to it.

4.4.2 The sense of social community

4.4.2.1 Finding a community

On a collegial, intra-professional level, one important function of working as a translator can consist of finding a community of translators. Two forms of translator communities can be constructed from this material and make up the two sub-themes: formal associations and informal networks of different kinds. Anders, Christina and Sarah – all well-established in their respective fields – have much contact with different translators, either in an organised form through a translator association or with informal networks or informal language-specific groups of translators.

Joining formal associations comes across as the main and most easily accessible entry to a sort of translator community. There are formal qualifications for different associations and as long as the translators fulfil these requirements, they can join these associations (see Table 1). The associations mentioned by the participants in this study are ÖS, SFÖ, FAT, ÖC, and the international associations by which Sarah and Christina are authorised.

The participants display different approaches to membership: Anders and Christina have much contact with different translators through formal associations, notably ÖS and SFÖ, respectively. Anders mentions that one way of raising one’s profile as a literary translator is to “get involved with the section”. Christina puts forward the importance of being a member of a translator association since the majority of translators in Sweden are freelancers: “I mean I’m comfortable with [working on my own] but you also like to be a
part of a context.” She regularly attends the annual conferences organised by SFÖ, to “meet people in the same situation for one, but then there’s also interesting lectures and exhibitors and so on.” In Christina’s case, her authorisation by the international translation association requires her to undertake a certain amount of professional development per year, either in the form of attending a translator conference or participating in a webinar, which further motivates her to engage with the business translator community. She has also had help from SFÖ with business-related questions. Sarah used to be a member of both SFÖ and FAT, the latter in her capacity of being an authorised translator. A couple of years ago, she decided not to renew her memberships in these two associations, since they are both more oriented towards freelance translators.

Edvin joined the SFÖ after he graduated but later chose not to renew his membership:

Example 81

Edvin […] it didn’t give me that much at that point … I’m thinking of joining again in a while but at that point no, it didn’t give that much, I just wanted to work (laughs).

Jessica is a member of ÖC and SFÖ and mentions that both these associations have profile pages for their members, which has been an important source of clients for her. She is not yet eligible to become a member of ÖS, but plans to apply for membership when the time comes. Although Jessica is a member of these two associations, she appears to be a passive member; she does not attend meetings organised by either of the associations. As mentioned before, Jessica reports having difficulty finding a natural meeting point, but she suspects that there is a more social programme in ÖS, which she looks forward to.

Another way of being a part of a translator community is by finding informal networks. Because of their informal nature, it might be hard to distinguish any particular traits, but I have noticed different forms of informal networks such as language-specific formations, Facebook groups or email lists. In some cases, these networks can be related to the formal associations described above, such as the ÖS’ email list for literary translators. Although the email list is only accessible for translators who are members of ÖS, it is here considered as an informal network since it is managed independently from the association. Anders used to subscribe to the email list but stopped due to the many emails he received on a daily basis.

Informal translation networks can take the shape of language-specific formations, which may be formed more or less organically in such a small country, especially when it comes to minor source languages. Anders further elaborates on this matter:

Example 82
Anders: It also depends on whether it’s a minor or a major language, I mean I know … I know everyone who can translate from [SL1], I know who they are and what they do. But don’t ask me to tell you about everyone who translates from French …

In Sarah’s case, the translator network with staff translators functions as an informal network. Some of their activities have been more formal, such as organising seminars about post-editing and exchanging experiences of CAT tools and work flow management, but there has also been one initiative to raise one member’s pay, since statistics on translators working as civil servants within an authority do not exist. For some time, they also had a social programme, where the members regularly met in a bar. According to Sarah, these kinds of activities enhanced informal cooperation between the different institutions: “so you can sit and talk and discuss the development and so on, so that’s … then it’s easier to ask for help, email each other”.

Whether translators are engaging in informal networks or not might be an indication of their position on the field. It is, for instance, noticeable that all the more well-established translators – Anders, Christina and Sarah – have some kind of informal network, be it language-specific as in Anders’ case, work-specific as in Christina’s case (such as the group of freelance translators discussed previously), or translator-specific as in Sarah’s case with the authority network. Although it might not be fair to call neither Edvin nor Jessica complete beginners – they have both worked for around five years as professional translators at the time the interviews were recorded – they do have considerably less experience than the other translators. Neither of them appears to have any strong informal networks. It might be significant that Jessica states that she does not know nor interact with any [SL2] translators, for example. Edvin does mention a translator group on Facebook. He has only seldom initiated a discussion there himself but sees it as an arena to discuss “stuff that might be a bit hard to talk about elsewhere”.

### 4.4.2.2 Striving for status

All translators in this study, in one way or another, talk about a sense of responsibility towards the profession, which posits **striving for status** as an important function of their translatorship. Anders even mentions that it is possible to talk about a sort of “translator solidarity”. It is noteworthy that almost all the translators mention different sets of status strategies for the profession, either on a macro level – for the profession – or on a micro level – for a specific context.

The main status strategy amounts to **improving economic conditions** of the profession. The poor economic conditions are mentioned by all four freelance translators: Anders says that “from an economic viewpoint it is pretty rough to be a translator”; Edvin that “[agencies] are trying to press down the rates”;...
and Christina that agencies “constantly want to press down the rates for us translators”.

In Anders’ words, the most important mission for the translation profession is to maintain the rates “on a somewhat reasonable level”. There is, according to him – especially within literary translation one can assume – a romantic shimmer surrounding translation practice “and that is something that the one who’s paying tries to take advantage of”. Within a literary context, there might also be a balance between the payment the translator will get for the translation, and the potential awards that might be attributed to a translation at a later stage:

Example 83
Anders […] And then … there are many translators who simply choose their jobs, they take work … they translate literature that they see ‘this is easy, I can do this quickly’ in order to earn sufficiently.
I. That’s right, to get in …
Anders If you’re sitting with a very difficult Hungarian novel that really requires deep-reading and research … that you need to read a lot of secondary literature, it just takes too much time if you’re not very dedicated –
I. Mm.
Anders – and are thinking ‘all right this is so good that I will get distinctions and awards’.

The business translators also discuss the low rates and how the agencies are trying to push these down. Edvin’s personal solution to his has already been discussed, i.e. to keep a dialogue with the agencies and to try to raise his rates on a regular basis. Jessica, with one foot in the literary world and one in the world of translation agencies, greatly values the “minimum rate” the ÖS has negotiated, especially in comparison with translation agencies which, according to her, “are more ‘this is what we can offer – take it or leave it’”. Also Christina talks about the agencies and how the rates have been pressed down:

Example 84
Christina […] I can only talk about the agency world now, I mean a lot of agencies are being bought by other [agencies], you’re in these huge procurements where the rates are pressed down and they promise you big volumes, and they are surely promised big volumes as well but no one knows what will happen with it … The rates used to be higher although they’ve never been high, it’s not a well-paid profession.

One way of improving the economic conditions can be by working with union matters. The only association working with union matters discussed here is ÖS, so this is mainly applicable to literary translation. Anders points out that “the section” is doing “a great job for these questions”, and that the situation
is much better than it was before. He emphasises that it is a continuous struggle for better conditions and that one cannot “rest on one’s laurels”.

Although Jessica is not yet a member of the section, the conditions negotiated by the Swedish Writers’ Union also apply for her. Unlike the business translation rates, the minimum rate in the standard agreement is enumerated annually and applies to contracts with publishing houses:

Example 85

Jessica Because when it comes to literary translation, then there is this minimum rate that the Translator Section, or the Writers’ Union, has negotiated and it really is very pleasant to have that and to be able to lean against that, there is no Swedish publishing house who would offer anything below that, so that …

For Jessica, the main concern lies on a more general level for freelancers that is not specific for the translation profession:

Example 86

Jessica What I think is needed more work with has nothing to do with the translation profession in itself but more the conditions of small and medium sized companies, more that concern for social protection and that it isn’t as … strong …

I. Mm strong, no.

Jessica No, so it’s more that kind of thing on a political level, it doesn’t have anything to do with the translation profession itself.

I. No, that’s right. But to strengthen, like the qualifying day for sickness … that kind of things?

Jessica Yes, that kind of things, the right to sick pay … that stuff.

I. Mm, that’s right.

Jessica That you need to de-activate your company …

I. In order to be entitled to unemployment funds …

Jessica Yes, these things, the rules are very … outdated, I think.

She sees these changes as a result of “a shift in the whole labour market” when “a lot of companies … fire their staff and rely only on freelancers”. The insecurities regarding freelancing have an effect for the approach to the profession on an individual level: ”You have to make sure that you last (laughs). You can’t be burned out and you can’t fall sick, because then …”.

On a general level, another status strategy consists of taking part in consciousness-raising activities: to make translation as a phenomenon known, to make translators known – especially in relation to the public and to different stakeholders. Anders, in the context of literary translation, specifically mentions the need to highlight and show “that kind of thing that also people who are not working with translation can find exciting, at least if they’re interested in literature”. Moreover, he emphasises that it is important to maintain “the interest in translators as a phenomenon”: 235
Example 87
Anders  
[…]	And then I also think that it’s important that there is … that the interest for translators as a phenomenon is kept alive by always having interesting perspectives, discussing different sorts of translations, there are different schools and so, phenomenon that have emerged especially among young translators that there are several persons translating [together] and they have one, one link, someone who knows the source language …

To maintain the interest in the translator is furthermore in line with a demand for the individual translator to “raise one’s profile” in the public:

Example 88
Anders  
Yes there’s an … an increasing … an unspoken requirement that you need to get out of the cage and show yourself, and then if that’s on TV or in a journal or on the Internet or by joining … becoming active within the section – but that one somehow raises one’s profile, that is kind of necessary.

Judging from the example Anders mentions, this profile-raising seems to be both within the profession ("becoming active within the section") as well as externally (by participating in TV and journals). One specific area where literary translators in Sweden have made a joint effort is in the question of the literary translator’s name and the importance that it is stated:

Example 89
Anders  
There has been an incredible carelessness with … or nonchalance almost of not mentioning the translator, because it’s one more name to keep track of and all the focus is on the author. It has been an obstinate struggle to, well for example a TV show like Babel [a Swedish literature TV show] to mention the translators or well … the book fair, a lot of these contexts where it easily disappears.

Edvin also discuss consciousness-raising activities in relation to business translation, which do not appear as clear-cut as with literary translation. To the question on what the most important aspect for the translator profession is – specifically for business translators but also for the translator profession in general – he replies:

Example 90
Edvin  
Mm. (silence) Well … I guess that’s … to try to obtain … some kind of status maybe. To be able to … how to put it, reach some level, like ‘but I’m a translator’ or I am … to raise the status some way, maybe raise the perceptions of the profession or something like that.

I.  
Mm, for the profession in general?
Edvin  
Mm. That’s important I imagine. It also leads to well, better recognition, better cooperation maybe. And like higher status, higher rates, something like that.
Edvin continues by saying that “things are not very advanced in that matter, especially within business translation” and that “sometimes it almost feels like you’re just a machine (laughs) who only works …”.

Sarah earlier described the situation as “an uphill struggle” when it came to making translation and the translators’ work known and respected within the institution. The consciousness-raising activities amounts in this context to informing about the time and effort it takes to produce a successful translation – both how translations are carried out by translators, as well as what is a reasonable amount of time to carry out a translation. A major point is to inform colleagues about what a CAT tool is and how it works. Sarah explains: ”Well the thing is that they [the other employees] don’t really get it. They know that we’re using a translation software and then they think ‘machine translation’, that we just run that and then we refine it a little bit and then everything’s fine.” In order to inform the colleagues in other departments, they have arranged information meetings about what the work of the translation unit consists of and how it is carried out.

Furthermore, gaining autonomy in relation to the institution stands out as another important status strategy for Sarah. One example is the organisation of the procurement for English-Swedish translation services, which the translators organise themselves. There are some institutional constraints regarding the economic conditions they can offer: “Since this is an authority, the price is important, one should be careful, one should economise with the taxpayers’ money” – but as she points out “it isn’t economising if we get very bad translations that need to be re-translated”. Instead, the small unit of translators has decided, taking a lead from one of the other authorities in the network, that they wanted to work with individual translators instead of translation agencies. Sarah justifies this choice by saying that agencies are more “money-oriented” whereas they “wanted a more personal contact, so it would be better if we could get individuals and we did. And yes, it works very well.”

Another example of an autonomy struggle as a status strategy regards registration of work. At some point, the translators were asked to register their work in order to be able to show which translator translated what, the word amount, from which department the source text came etc. They continued doing so for a couple of years, before they asked themselves: “Why are we doing this?” Apart from it being time-consuming (“Is there a code for the time it takes to fill this in?”, Sarah asks), the institution did not actually request it nor looked at the outcome. The translators also realised that it could be turned against them:

Example 91
Sarah [...] We had an Excel file and we … but then we realised that they can use this against us when we’re many to kind of …
I. Play you off against each other?
Sarah Yes, that this person works more than that person and ‘you’re not getting a raise because you’re not producing’ and that kind of things.
I. Yes. You translators came to that conclusion?
Sarah Yes. Er … now we have, we haven’t done that in a long time and no one was checking it either, I don’t know if someone told us to do it but we did it for a couple of years, but then we felt ‘Why are we doing this?’ […]
I. So you quit it?
Sarah Yes we just stopped doing it. And nobody commented on it. No one … because nobody requested it! At that point.

Sarah points out that it is particularly difficult to measure productivity, both because they are using a CAT tool and because it can be hard to anticipate the amount of information search required for different projects. Several of the translators within the unit also have other duties apart from translating. The most important reason, though, is the dynamics of the translation unit:

Example 92
Sarah […] and then if we should feel like we’re competing against each other, no that doesn’t feel good.
I. No.
Sarah So … We feel that we’d rather, we’d rather avoid that. We deliver everything as we should and if everyone’s happy with the situation, then that’s good. It doesn’t matter if it’s not [equally divided].

The strong collegial bond between the translators is further manifested by Sarah talking on behalf of the translation unit as “we”. By organising the work the way the translators deem the most appropriate, their autonomy in relation to the institution is strengthened.

4.4.3 The greater purpose

4.4.3.1 Serving society

All translators in this material voice a sense of responsibility that is directed towards society. Another function of translatorship can thereby be serving society. The participants perceive translation to be a societal need and that this need for translation is present in many different sectors in society. Anders discusses translation as a “widely differing concept” and its place in society:

Example 93
Anders […] But it’s a bit interesting, that translation is needed on so many different levels, and that’s a question of … I mean, all the media that require a lot of translation, nowadays there’s translation on the opera and where it didn’t used to be before. Then I also think that … well translation is a widely differing concept that can include
The societal need for translations is increasing and leads, in turn, to a more prominent position for the translator. Serving society as a part of the translation thus amounts to being perceived as of use in society and that the translator’s work contributes to something of value for the greater society. Anders foresees that “the translator will become increasingly important on many different levels”. He elaborates:

Example 94
Anders Because I have a feeling that translators, well you just can’t take that away. Not within the foreseeable future. Automatic [translation] and Google Translate and all that, it’s just too bad and it will be long before that can replace … Especially, it might be possible to replace standard texts and standard documents, but literary translation no, not during my life time.

The quote points towards the necessity of the translator and the translator’s work, but the quote comes of course from the perspective of a literary translator. For the business translators, machine translation is already, as we have seen, a fact within the business translation market. Christina has previously voiced a concern for the development of the profession because of machine translation, although she also agrees on translators’ important function on a general level: “in my darkest hour I feel that I’m participating in dismantling myself, but at the same time I want to see that we have and fill an important function”.

On the question of whether the participants perceive that they perform important work, everyone agrees. However, both Edvin and Jessica compare the translation profession with other professions, where translation is the less important profession. Edvin says that it is “[m]aybe not as important as other professions (laughs)” and Jessica discusses it in the following way:

Example 95
Jessica Well it’s not that I do an important job as maybe a nurse does, but on a more general, one a more general level, sure because these, these texts are needed and a society without books, without translated books is poorer more …

The texts Jessica refers to in the quote above are easy-to-read books, which are translated into easy-to-read Swedish for people with reading impairments. On a more general level, Jessica emphasises literary translators’ importance to the society as they provide books which otherwise would not exist in Sweden.
Sarah is of course in a more literal way translating in the service of Swedish society as she is employed as a civil servant. She is proud to work for the institution and the work they do there – both the translation unit and the institution as a whole. In the capacity of a state-authorised translator, the kind of source texts she works with are mainly different official and often legal texts, which also serve an important function in society.

4.4.3.2 Ensuring quality

In this theme, the responsibility is directed towards the target text and the target readers; ensuring quality is a means in and for itself, and a professional translator is ensuring that translations hold that quality. Since translation is considered a societal need, as was shown in the previous section, it is paramount that the quality of the translations maintains a certain level. Christina elaborates: “in an era where everything is increasingly global and in English, it feels important, and that the quality is high.”

It is noticeable that this theme is only discussed by the business translators in relation to business translation. Jessica, who previously discussed the easy-to-read books and their importance for society, now turns to the importance of manuals being translated correctly: “these manuals are needed as well because you can see that these Google translated manuals are often […] in different ways, so of course it’s important.” The need to discuss the quality of manuals “as well”, as Jessica phrases it, further indicates that they are a low value type of text, but that their quality is important nonetheless – even manuals should hold a high quality. Securing high quality might be even more important since business translators come across a lot of different text types which the public may not be aware are, in effect, translations. Edvin phrases it as: “Maybe nobody notices us but (laughs) us translators, but it’s everywhere, what we have worked with. […] It’s everywhere, the result of it.”

In the cases of operative text types where the users are supposed to interact with the target text in different ways, such as translations of software, the requirement for high quality translations is put to the test in different ways. Edvin further discusses the quality and more specifically the translator’s responsibility for the quality: “It is important in … in one way, that … you’re responsible for the quality of the end products and so on. Er … I see a responsibility in that at least.” The responsibility for the quality amounts to how “all Swedish readers” should be able to use the products the way they are intended to be used and to “get the same impression” as the original users:

Example 96

Edvin Well I guess it is to make sure that all content and everything that comes from the outside … that it is transferred the right way and presented in the right way for all customers and everyone who’s going to read the text and all that, to use the software and that. That it is … that the quality is good, that they can … get the same impression as the original products had, the original texts. A bit

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Christina also discusses the applicability as a measurement of a successful translation: “Do [the end-users] understand what they should do? Isn’t it a little bit overly complicated? Maybe it’s possible to make it in another way?”

Christina perceives a recklessness when it comes to how translation is viewed in Sweden, which according to her is, in turn, related to the low interest in language in general in Sweden. She compares the situation in Sweden with the US, when she attended a translator conference where she had the impression that “[translation] took up another space”:

Example 97

Christina

Yes it was so cool, and there were so many exhibitors and so many companies and … you noticed that … it took up another space than it does here, but of course Sweden is such a small country and Swedish is a small language, it’s very clear in these circumstances.

I.

Yes, yes. But that it’s noticed there … in society in general? That it has an important …?

Christina

Yes in some way, I have a feeling that language is more important there … actually. Because I sometimes feel that here … One can think that the machine translation programmes and Google Translate and so on, that they are good enough and that is one of my … that people will … accept ‘but it’s good enough’ … And I think that it is, that it’s worrying, and I can’t really understand it either, especially when it comes to … a company’s marketing material … where they are SEEN through their text, that they don’t really care about how it’s translated. But I guess it’s a general tendency … maybe.

The theme ensuring quality takes the form of a responsibility towards both the text and greater society. In one sense, this responsibility can also be interpreted as a responsibility and concern directed towards the translation profession, and more specifically business translation, as it aims to prevent bad impressions of translations, which would in turn reflect back on translators.

4.4.3.3 Acting as a cultural ambassador

The literary translators Anders and Jessica express a responsibility towards certain source languages, mainly minor source languages, and their position as a source language translators in Sweden, which gives rise to the theme acting as a cultural ambassador as a part of the translatorship on a societal level. Anders, who apart from being a literary translator refers to himself as an “introducer” of foreign literature, stresses translators’ importance for, and influence on, the Swedish literary field, in particular when it comes to minor languages. For example, he “feels a greater responsibility for [SL1] than for [SL2]”, primarily because there are many more translators for [SL2]:
Anders has never translated anything for the large publishers, only for the minor ones who specialise in translated literature; “they are the only ones who dare to publish literature from for example [SL1] and [SL2], the big publishers are very afraid of that.”

Jessica also feels a special sort of responsibility for her [SL2]. She knows that each title is carefully selected, since there are so few titles published every year:

Edvin, who nourishes dreams about literary translation, would probably like to take this kind of responsibility though he is unsure of what this would actually mean. He says that the translator makes “connections between cultures, that you transfer … transfer … you connect cultures in some way. And you could take a bigger part in that I guess. Er … whatever that would be”. In the realm of business translation, ambassadorship might be harder to execute than in a literary translation setting. However, Sarah also has experience of being a cultural ambassador, although it is in a more hands-on experience as a Swedish to English translator. The translators in the translation unit are often asked to help the other civil servants with formulating letters or emails in English. She stresses that her colleagues are “very good [in English] but there’s a difference between spoken and written language” and that they might require help with nuances in written form:
kind of errors people with other mother tongues make in English. So yes.

Another example regards formulating answers in English in a formal manner:

Example 101
Sarah [...] and what you do is that you (laughs) ... make it fluffy ... all the time.
I. Yes. Okay. So that it’s not hep hep hep (laughs)
Sarah (laughs) no exactly. It’s like ‘Hello, I want bla bla bla’ and you’re like er ‘all right – “Dear all ...”’ (laughs) or or, when you send someone a proposal and kind of just ‘Hello’, ‘no you can’t do like that, change that into “Dear all. I hope this email finds you well. Thank you for your interesting question. Unfortunately, we can’t ...” and so on (laughs). Let’s write like this instead!’
I. Yes, yes, that’s right.
Sarah So ... there’s a lot of cultural in that maybe.

Effectively, this kind of intercultural competence positions the translators in the institution as (inter)cultural ambassadors in relation to their non-translator colleagues.

To conclude, acting as a cultural ambassador posits the translator as a mediating force on a societal level. As such, they fulfil a function of introducing specific titles, authors and, what comes across as more important in this study, source languages into Sweden. Within an institutional translation setting, Sarah’s function also bears resemblances to acting as a cultural mediator, although this plays out on a micro level.

4.5 Discussion
This study has aimed to provide an individual, personal view on the functions of translatorship for five translators working in Sweden. The research question was formulated as follows:

3. How do five translators perceive the functions of their translatorship on an individual, professional, and societal level?

Conceptualising the functions of translatorship on these three levels can account for different factors of individual translators lives. In turn, this enables us to consider what these perceptions tell us about how the participants make sense of the different functions of their translatorship, and thus how they perceive their socio-cultural contexts. In this section, I go through the findings presented in the previous sections and relate them to previous research.
4.5.1 The individual, professional and societal functions of translatorship

The thematic analysis resulted in a number of themes and sub-themes, which together can help conceptualise translatorship from an individual-centred perspective. As explained in the introduction, the individual perspective is not limited to the individual’s personal perceptions, but rather provides the lens through which the context is perceived. The questions posed by Flynn and Gambier (2011:94) as to what translatorship means in a broader social sense and what form this social role takes, or rather what forms these social roles take, receive a multifaceted answer. When looking at Table 21, it is clear that the themes and sub-themes constructed from this material are divided unequally between the three levels, with the majority of themes (living with languages, negotiating freedom, maintaining relationships, and becoming consecrated) with their several sub-themes being found at the individual level. On the professional level, there are two themes (finding a community and striving for status) with two sub-themes within each theme. On the societal level, however, the three themes (serving society, ensuring quality, and acting as a cultural mediator) lack sub-themes. The high concentration of themes and sub-themes on the individual level can partly be explained by the fact that the method of choice – individual in-depth interviews – can be expected to generate utterances that are related to the interviewees’ personal reflections and viewpoints at first hand. It might also, however, point to the importance of the individual level in the construction of translatorship for individual translators. The emphasis on the personal satisfaction, especially in combination with the few themes and the lack of sub-themes related to the higher purpose, might reveal a disconnection of how the translators perceive their jobs and how their work is valued on a societal level. The focus on the individual level is in line with how other scholars have perceived translators’ attitudes to their profession: as deeply connected to their individual competencies and distinct situations (see Sela-Sheffy 2006; Katan 2009a, 2009b). Moreover, it resonates closely with the findings from Study 1, where the respondents clearly valued their profession highly, but had more negative perceptions towards how the profession was valued in society. In the context of this specific study, this can be interpreted as uncertainties to what the greater purpose of being a translator actually consists of.

In the following, I will present and discuss the main findings from each level. When it comes to personal satisfaction related to translatorship, the most noticeable finding is that the participants express being satisfied with their choice of career and their overall situation. This is proven not least by Jessica and Christina who have changed career in order to become translators. All participants express being satisfied with working with language on a general level, perhaps not surprisingly – after all, it is the foundation of working as a translator. The joy of working with languages is associated both with
working with languages on a practical level (see Katan 2009b; Dam and Zethsen 2016) as well as a kind of affinity with a certain source language and/or culture (see Flynn 2007; Voinova and Shlesinger 2013; Sapiro 2013; Heino 2017; Georgiou 2018).

In terms of de Jong’s concept of career commitment, i.e. “the extent to which involvement in a career is central in one’s life and future” (de Jong 1999, 1), most participants display a high degree of career commitment and they foresee continuing as translators in the future by making different long-term plans. The only participant who expresses doubts on this matter is Christina, who has re-organised her situation with a non-translation related on-the-side job, which gives her an opportunity to combine her interest in technology with financial stability as well a job that she can “leave” at the end of the day. In turn, this resonates with Hirschman’s (1970) term exit, to which I will return shortly.

The involvement in the participants’ careers points towards another of the study’s main finding, namely the centrality of freelancing in how translation is constructed. The theme negotiating freedom revolves around the freelance translators’ agency to balance some of the more structural shortcomings associated with freelancing with the positive outcomes for the individual translator in terms of different forms of freedom (e.g. selecting work/commissioners, working from home, no commuting). Previous research by Dam and Zethsen (2010) showed that freelance translation can be a positive force in the quest for translator status since it enables the translator to select commissioners and to organise their daily lives in a way that seems fitting to them. In effect, this seems to be the common view among the freelance translators in this study as well, as seen in the sub-themes selecting work, structuring one’s time and moving freely. Regarding the selection of work and commissioners, it is interesting to note that several of the participants point out that one of the main incentives in this matter was to keep a variety of different sorts of work in terms of source languages, specialisations, commissioners, and text types. For example, both Jessica and Christina stressed the combination of different sorts of assignments (in Jessica’s case business translation and literary translation, and in Christina’s case patent translation and AVT), and explicitly stated that they would not want to specialise in only one sort of translation. Also Sarah pointed out the varied translation tasks at the institution – including both economic reports, press releases, and occasionally even PowerPoint presentations – as one of the job’s advantages. Business translators’ varied and intellectually stimulating job has been put forward as an explanation for their job satisfaction (Dam and Zethsen 2016; Dam 2013). In addition, this provides a possible explanation to one of the findings from Study 1, where around one-third of the respondents had several main professional identities (see Table 8). While this could be interpreted as a forced solution due to a shortage of work in the preferred specialisation, the findings from this
study rather suggest that working with different sorts of translation specialisations (either within one specialisation or between different specialisations) may be a way for individual translators to have a varied, and thus stimulating, working life, which in turn increases their job satisfaction.

The fact that the translators in this study discuss freelancing in terms of the positive word “freedom” instead of the inherent insecurities that the participants are obviously aware of, can be said to reflect how entrepreneurialism has gained ground due to, in Jessica’s words, “a shift in the labour market”. In this sense, the translators’ discourse fits into a greater narrative on entrepreneurialism on a societal level. When Christina says that “it’s been rough sometimes […] it’s like that being a freelancer”, she does not only refer to the economic conditions related to business translation, but also to the structural conditions which govern the role of the freelancer in a wider perspective. In effect, being a freelancer affects the structure and the impact of several other themes and sub-themes. For example, as freelance translators the participants represent both themselves and their company; in a sense they are their companies, and their personal brand is constituted by their specialisation, language combinations, translation output and the quality thereof, to name a few. In turn, this gives different sorts of consecration mechanisms a prominent position.

Despite the often positive connotations of the word freedom, functioning as a sole trader involves negotiating this freedom, and the majority of the participants make use of the coping strategies voice and exit (Hirschman 1970) in one way or another. Abdallah and Koskinen (2007:684) argues that one problem with the freelance business translation industry is precisely that the circumstances do not allow for voice by individual translators. This is partly supported in Jessica’s claim that with translation agencies there is no room for negotiation: “it’s more ‘take it or leave it’.” This should be compared to the situation with literary translation, where the space for negotiating might appear as larger due to, for example, the standard agreement negotiated by the Swedish Writers’ Union which sets the lowest bid for literary translations. However, Edvin’s negotiating experiences contradict this claim and show that there is an opportunity, albeit limited, to exercise voice in a business translation setting. When Edvin negotiated his rates, in spite of the more or less explicit “threat” that there might not be more assignments coming his way if he raises his rates, it is an example of exercising voice in relation to a situation that is clearly not in his favour in a long perspective. Christina’s new work situation can also be seen in the light of the two coping strategies: by making a semi-exit out of the profession, she has found a way to be able to stay in it in a longer perspective. The common point for both Edvin and Christina, and their different coping strategies in the examples discussed here, consists of the long-term perspective. Working as a freelance translator for a longer period of time may require some sort of coping strategy (cf. Abdallah and Koskinen 2007).
Related to the personal satisfaction is also the possibility of **developing collegial relationships**, and maintaining them, both by **having translator colleagues** and by **collaborating with clients**. With this lack of recognition from the public, recognition and support from fellow translators carries extra weight, as discussed by Anders. Nymans (2009:26) highlights the intra-professional relationship among the literary translators as important. However, freelance translators are also competitors. Both Anders and Christina mention the competitive side of freelance translating, although they do not elaborate on this. Tekgül’s proposal to use the term “co-opetition”, i.e. the “simultaneous pursuit of co-operative and competitive strategies” (2017:59), might be worth investigating further in the area of freelance translating.

The success of a freelance career is based on collaboration with clients: all the freelance translators mention the importance of maintaining good relationships with their clients in order to secure a steady inflow of work. In many ways, these discussions mirror Abdallah and Koskinen’s (2007) discussion on trust management, but here from the translator’s perspective. The freelance translators explain that part of their business success is due to being familiar with project managers and/or editors. The majority of the freelance translators in this study report that it is important to have at least one relationship of this kind, and the ideal solution is to find more business contacts of the same kind. For example, Jessica says that, in general, she does not say no when she is offered a literary translation, with the explicit aim to foster that kind of long-term relationship with that publisher. Christina also keeps in touch with translation agencies although they have not given her any work lately. This communication takes place through emails, and judging from the discussion it is clear that the translators stress politeness and personal remarks, which according to Abdallah and Koskinen (2007:681) is in line with how trust management is sustained over geographical distances.

The personal brand as a translator – and hence one function of being a translator – is further strengthened by different consecration mechanisms, which partially differ depending on specialisation. The translators in this material discuss different ways of **becoming consecrated** as a translator, either through **being reviewed** and **being awarded**, by **becoming authorised**, or by **being entrusted** on a more general level. The common feature lies in the fact that the consecration is granted by another agent or institution, and thus mostly lies beyond the power of the individual translator. This, in turn, gives rise to the ambiguity of consecration, as seen in the discussion on reviews by Anders (examples 79 and 83) and on authorisation by Sarah (example 80). While the personal reputation of a translator is dependent on these consecrations, the accurateness of them is often disputable, according to the senior translators Anders, Christina, and Sarah. It is noteworthy that the translators who question the consecrations mechanisms are the well-established translators who have already been consecrated, whereas the newcomers are aware of them but do not question them.
In sum, the function of translatorship on an individual level lies on four different pillars. Firstly, it permits them to work with something they find highly enjoyable as well as an opportunity to keep in touch with a foreign language or culture. Secondly, the freelance translators discuss translatorship in terms of different sorts of freedom, and most of them value the freedom the work entails, despite its structural shortcomings. In this sense, the freedom structures the form of the translator’s role. Thirdly, the role is dependent on personal relationships, especially with clients, and to a greater extent for the freelance translators. Colleagues are also valued by the participants in this study, although less so for the newcomers. The role as a translator is also dependent on different sorts of consecration mechanisms, which determine the individual translator’s position within the profession.

Regarding the translators’ sense of social community, the main finding is that the respondents have different perceptions of – and a different perceived need for – this kind of collegial community. The formal associations (the ones mentioned here are ÖS, ÖC, SFÖ, FAT, and two international translator associations) are seen, in line with Pym’s (2014) observations, to fit different functions and serve as either trade organisations, organisers of social events, help resources, and discussion groups. The importance of and appreciation for the associations are highlighted by several of the participants, such as when Anders states that the section (ÖS) is doing “a great job with these questions” or when Christina talks appreciatively about the business-related guidance that she has received from SFÖ. The view of the Swedish translator associations is in stark opposition to how the elite literary translators in Sela-Sheffy’s (2005, 2016) material perceive the Israeli translator association, but closer to how the non-elite translators in her material (e.g. 2016) see the value of organisations. In this study, translator associations are perceived, from the translators’ perspective, as being the structuring force of the Swedish translation markets taken as a whole.

Participation in informal networks can be seen as an indicator of the translators’ immersion in the profession, and is considerably lower for the newcomers Jessica and Edvin. The other three translators have a network, either in the form of acquaintances with language-specific translators (Anders), a group of translators with different specialisations working together (Christina), or the network with employed translators (Sarah). ÖS’ email list is mentioned only in passing but is active – Anders had to stop subscribing to it since he was “drowning in emails”. The network of staff translators can in McDonough Dolmaya’s (2011) terms be labelled a network of practice which functions over institutional borders. It might be significative that employed translators in a workplace that does not specialise in translation, such as the authority where Sarah works, have had to create a network of their own. As Sarah’s discussion reveals, the network deals both with professional development for these translators as well as more social activities. It should be noted that Edvin comments on membership in a Facebook group for translators,
which could be seen as an informal network, saying that these groups enable “talk about stuff that might be a bit hard to talk about elsewhere”. This might reveal what Tekgül (2017:58) refers to as network as a place to discuss “professional anxiety”. He does not, however, seem to contribute to these groups in an active manner.

The newcomers Jessica and Edvin stand out as the translators who have both a significantly lower degree of interaction with other professionals as well as a perceived lower need for it, as seen in both the sub-themes having translator colleagues (personal level) and finding informal networks (professional level). Although they are either a member of a translator association (Jessica) or have been previously (Edvin), their actual interaction with other translators appears as scant. Edvin says that he stopped being a member of SFÖ since it “didn’t give [him] that much” and that “[he] just wanted to work”. Jessica expresses a desire to get more involved with other translators but that she “hasn’t found a natural meeting point”. These findings can be related to the discussion in Group 2 in Study 2, where the students discussed the importance of “just keep working, keep translating” in order to gain experience as new translators. Ultimately, the goal was to “make yourself a name” or to “get a reputation”, showing from early on an awareness that translation is, to a large extent, a “reputation-based industry” (Tekgül 2017). However, in the light of these findings, it is even more intriguing that the need for actual social interaction with fellow translators appears close to non-existent. Nymans describes the collegial fellowship among literary translators as “both the condition for and the reward of a successful translation practice” (2009:53, translation mine). In this material, the collegial fellowship appears more as the reward after being active as a translator over a long period of time, rather than the condition for a successful translation practice. As shown in Edvin’s and Jessica’s examples, it is possible to work as a translator and have a successful translation business without being in close contact with fellow translators. One possible explanation for the low degree of social interaction can be found in de Jong’s (1999) study (see 4.2). Her results indicate that newcomers’ incentive to translate is mainly associated with intrinsic motivation, such as the joy and intellectual challenge of translating. De Jong (1999:434) summarises:

In the beginning of a career as a literary translator, the intellectually challenging activity of translating motivates the translator to continue, while later on extrinsic factors become important as well: the dealing with deadlines set by publishers, the money, the recognition and the opinions of others, even though the intellectually challenging activity of solving translation problems remains important.

The extrinsic motivation is then associated with other themes found in this study, such as the recognition by fellow translators or the different consecration mechanisms. Though de Jong’s study is focused on literary translation, the findings in this study indicate that a similar pattern can also be noticed for
newcomers to business translation. Yet another factor is the time perspective; the findings in de Jong’s study (1999:434) suggest that the shift from intrinsic to extrinsic motivation could take around 10 years, and Jessica and Edvin have so far worked less than that.

All participants in this study express a sense of responsibility towards the profession, and discuss different sorts of strategies with the aim of **striving for status**. This result supports the main finding on translator status: that translators perceive the status of the translation profession to be low and that they wish to change this (e.g. Dam and Zethsen 2008, 2009a; Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018; see also Study 1). The main concern for the freelance translators, literary and business translators alike, consists of **improving the economic conditions**. Edvin’s negotiation on his rates can be interpreted in this way: he does not accept that his rates should remain the same while the basic cost of living constantly increases, and negotiating the rates is a means for him to ensure that he will be able to “work with this on a long term”, in his own words. Anders, on the other hand, puts forward the collective effort in order to “keep the rates on a somewhat reasonable level”, as he puts it. These two contexts differ in a fundamental way: it is of course possible for an individual literary translator to argue for raising his or her rates when negotiating with a publisher; it is, however, not possible for business translators to rely on an association to negotiate a minimum rate for them. Whereas a literary translator can both engage on a collective and an individual level, the only means for a business translator remains trying to improve their economic conditions on their own. Consequently, for some translators, this can be channelled into **working with union matters**, which also could be interpreted as the coping agency voice in order to make more profound changes (Hirschman 1970). In comparison with the elite literary translators in Sela-Sheffy’s (e.g. 2006, 2008) studies, material conditions – not least remuneration – are important for the translators in this study, and something that they do not hesitate to discuss.

On a more general level, **taking part in consciousness-raising activities** can be a means of indirectly changing the status of translation in society by advancing society’s knowledge of translation as a phenomenon, the translation profession, and individual translators. Anders indicates that is almost a prerequisite these days for translators to “come out of the cage and show themselves”, mainly in relation to the public. Though no participant in this study has taken active measures such as, for example, started blogging, as the translators in Dam’s (2013) study, there seems to be a belief that this kind of actions is a positive force for both the translation profession and for individual translators. Nymans (2009:35) finds that the efforts taken on behalf of the social community for the benefit of the profession do not only affect the group but also strengthen the individual translator. In this study, the reverse situation is more common: in the cases when the translators discuss their own individual consecration mechanisms, there is often an assumption that the mechanisms
that will be beneficial for them personally will also be beneficial for the profession as a whole. For example, Edvin discusses authorisation with the underlying assumption that more authorised translators will help to raise the status for business translation. Similarly, Anders discusses a review of a translation where the translator’s name was not mentioned as an opportunity to raise awareness of translation as a phenomenon as well as the literary translation profession. Christina also talks about her fear of machine translation as if she is “contributing to dismantling myself and my profession” (example 65) when she agrees to do machine translation assignments. In this sense, the relationship between the consecration mechanism on the personal level and the status strategies on the professional level are reciprocal and form a bridge between the personal and the professional levels: the consecration mechanisms for the individual translator can, in the long run, affect status strategies for the profession. The self becomes a representative for the profession.

The prevalent discourse on this matter would seem to revolve around different forms of struggle as well as a greater concern for the collective of translators than seen in Sela-Sheffy’s (2006, 2008) studies, where the small group of elite translators have an interest in continuing the mystification of their own qualifications. This is particularly interesting in the case of Anders. It is clear that Anders bears many resemblances to Sela-Sheffy’s elite translators: he comes from a cultural background, has an additional career within the literary field, calls himself well-established and privileged, and has a close bond to many literary translators as well as to other cultural agents, in Sweden as well as in [SC1] and [SC2]. However, he also distinguishes himself from the star translators in several crucial aspects. For one, he at several occasions comes back to the importance of an organised ‘struggle’ for the literary translators’ conditions, which is led by the Translator Section in the Swedish Writers’ Union. Furthermore, he points to a sort of ‘translator solidarity’ whereby translators stand up for each other, for example when a translator in public life has suffered some sort of injustice. He also has an ambiguous attitude to awards and prizes, of which he has received several.

Most status-raising activities primarily concern the freelance translators, possibly because status advancement is of most dire need in these contexts. Sarah’s different measures for gaining autonomy for the translator unit in relation to the institution, is another example. By distancing herself from the requirement to measure the translators’ productivity, which, just as in other institutional translation settings such as the European Commission (Koskinen 2008) and the Canadian Translation Bureau (Mossop 2014), is perceived as a major demotivator, Sarah exercises her agency to change a potential damaging working environment, both for her personally as well as for the well-being of the translator unit as a collective. The example of the procurement procedure, where the translator unit opted for involving individual translators instead of translation agencies, is another example of taking charge of a situation in order to secure one’s professional well-being. Sarah’s different strategies can be
seen as the coping strategy voice, i.e. to trying to affect unsatisfactory conditions. The difference between Sarah’s situation and some of Abdallah’s (2010:37–38) participants, who exercised voice in relation to their commissioners, consists of the latter having an actual discussion between the two parties. In Sarah’s case, voice is unidirectional from the translators’ side in the sense that they have actively taken measures to secure their own voice, but without involving the institution. To put it bluntly, the translators did not “ask permission” to stop tracking their productivity, but, in Sarah’s words, “just stopped doing it”. These rebellious acts also recall the concept of professional autonomy, discussed by Weiss-Gall and Welbourne (2008:284, cited in Dam and Zethsen 2013:29) as the right of workers to make work-related decisions on the basis of their professional knowledge and values, without being subject to the directives of those outside the profession that are inconsistent with that knowledge and those values.

In the examples above, we can again see how translators take control of their professional autonomy by making informed decisions based on “their professional knowledge and values”. This interpretation further strengthens the ‘outside’ position of the translation unit within the institution, since it implies that the other civil servants working in the institution do not fully understand the translators’ perspective.

The function of translatorship in relation to the professional level – the sense of social community, in Nymans’ words – highlights the importance of the status struggle for the profession, both seen as a whole and within different specialisations. The need for this social community in constructing one’s role as a translator is also quite different between the established translators and the newcomers, notably since the freelance translators depend more on the different consecration mechanisms in order to be able to secure a position in their respective specialisation.

Regarding the higher purpose of working as a translator, three different themes were constructed: serving society, ensuring quality, and acting as a cultural mediator. In serving society, translation is conceptualised as a societal need. Anders discusses translation as a “widely differing concept” which is essential in many different sectors of society. Anders is the participant who is the most optimistic about the prospects of translation and translators in society: “the translator will become increasingly important on many different levels.” In general, he is also the one participant who talks the most about topics related to the societal level. Nymans (2009:36) constructs a similar theme in her study: “translation for the sake of society”, which partially covers the same topics as has been presented in previous research, such as the “societal need” for translation in Dam and Zethsen’s (2010) study on what translators perceive
as helpers or opponents for translator status, and the theme “translation is important and therefore meaningful” in Dam and Zethsen’s (2016) study on employed business translators. The societal need for translation renders the translators as a professional group important. However, the importance of the profession is often related to other, in the participants’ eyes more important, professions, such as being a nurse. Nevertheless, despite the importance of translation, the translators in this material continuously get back to feelings of invisibility, such as when Edvin says: “Maybe nobody notices us but (laughs) us translators, but it’s everywhere, what we have worked with. […] It’s everywhere, the result of it.” In relation to the results in Study I, where the question regarding translators’ influence according to themselves received the extremely low mean 1.57 out of 5, it is clear that there is a shift between the translators’ perception of the importance of translation in society, and the actual influence they think that they exert in society.

The theme ensuring quality highlights that high quality can be a means in itself for business translation. This theme can be interpreted as a response to the ‘anyone-can-do-it’ attitude reported by Dam and Zethsen (2010); if high quality translation is of paramount importance for the good of society, it is equally important that these translations are performed by highly skilled professionals, like themselves, and not by laypersons without experience in translation. The theme thus denotes a responsibility towards both the text and greater society. In one sense, this responsibility can also be interpreted as a responsibility and concern directed towards the translation profession, and more specifically business translation, as it aims to prevent bad impressions of translations, which in turn would reflect back on translators as a professional group.

Finally, acting as a cultural mediator is a means, mainly for literary translators, to introduce new literature in Sweden, often guided by a concern for a specific SL for which the translators assume a self-imposed responsibility. Both Anders and Jessica display a concern for their respective [SL1] (and in Anders’ case also [SL2]) regarding both the limited number of translators as and the low number of titles published in Sweden. Similarly to Nymans’ study, the responsibility for the wider Swedish literary field is echoed in their replies. Sela-Sheffy’s two other role-images, the cultural gatekeeper and the artist, are not present in this material, in line with Nymans’ result. The perceptions voiced by the literary translators Anders and Jessica bear more resemblances with the non-elite literary translators in Sela-Sheffy’s studies, although at least Anders’ position in the literary field is closer to the elite translators, as discussed above. Whether this different position-taking vis-à-vis the profession, where words like responsibility, collective, and struggle are often repeated, is pertinent to the Swedish literary translators as a whole, remains to be investigated. In this study, this theme is mostly discussed by the literary translators, contrarily to previous research where business translators also put forward
their mediating force between two cultures (Dam and Zethsen 2010). However, Sarah also takes the role as a mediator in the institution, possibly as a “translator-ambassador” in the same way as in Koskinen’s (2009) study, albeit on a micro level within the institution.

In sum, the respondents’ perceptions of the function of translatorship on a societal level primarily stress the importance of translation, and consequently of translators, in the wider society. The importance of translation in many different areas of society further positions translation as a societal need, which in turn posits the translation profession as important and meaningful. Moreover, ensuring high quality of translations can also ensure the need for professional translators. Finally, acting as a cultural mediator in mainly the literary sphere evokes a responsibility towards the literary Swedish field as well as to certain, often minor, SLs.

4.5.2 Concluding remarks

The third study focused on five translators and how they perceive their function of their respective translatorship. Through in-depth interviews with five translators, randomly selected from either Study 1 or Study 2, the different functions of translatorship have been explored on a personal, professional, and a societal level.

For the two former translation students Edvin and Jessica, who both work successfully as freelance translators, the study has shown the continuous development of university-trained translators outside of the educational institution. Overall, the different specialisations of the participating translators in this study have both highlighted characteristics of the different specialisations, as well as stressed similar approaches to themes for translators working with different specialisations. Furthermore, the individual accounts provided in this study have expanded on and offered nuances to the results of previous studies, such as the individualistic focus a freelance-dense profession brings. It has also emphasised the awareness of the profession’s low status, as well as stressed the importance of a more or less explicit translator struggle, and the importance of translator associations in this struggle.

The three different levels of professional functions, adapted from Nymans (2009), concern personal satisfaction (individual level), sense of social community (professional level), and higher purpose (societal level). Together, they provide a framework that can distinguish and differentiate individuals’ approaches to their profession, while at the same time creating links between the three levels which lead to a more holistic take on a translator’s working life. As such, it offers a conceptualisation of translators, their relation to the profession, and the function translatorship has in their lives.

The next chapter concludes this thesis and is divided into three parts. First, I discuss the rationales to conduct a mixed methods study, the main theoretical
contribution, and the findings from the three studies. Thereafter, common features emerging from the three studies are discussed collectively in order to show how the three studies inform one another and together enrich the understanding of translatorship. Finally, I discuss possible avenues for continuing researching different aspects of translatorship.
5 Final discussion

5.1 Three studies on extratextual translatorship

The present thesis set out to investigate extratextual translatorship, defined as the translator’s social role, in the contemporary Swedish context. It was assumed that translatorship is context-dependent and likely to change over time. With this thesis, I hope to have contributed to the agent-oriented branch of translation sociology (Chesterman 2006; Wolf 2006), as well as to the growing empirical body of knowledge on translators as an “extreme example of an understudied occupational group” (Sela-Sheffy and Shlesinger 2008:82). Through the three studies in this thesis, I have explored different facets of translatorship. Targeting different objects of study (the translation profession, the translation student, and the individual translator), using a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection (questionnaire, focus groups, and in-depth interviews), as well as analysis methods (descriptive statistics, non-parametric statistical tests, and thematic analysis), this thesis has led to an increased and multifaceted understanding of the dynamics of extratextual translatorship in contemporary Sweden.

As discussed in 1.2, the notion translatorship had been used by Translation Studies scholars to designate various concepts in different contexts, often without providing a definition. With the proposed distinction of textual, paratextual and extratextual translatorship, I hope to contribute to a more well-defined notion, which will facilitate further research in this area. For the present thesis I have defined extratextual translatorship as the translator’s social role following Flynn and Gambier (2011). This definition fits the overarching aim of this thesis, but it is by no means the only way of defining extratextual translatorship. On a general level, the use of this notion has opened up the floor to investigate different social dimensions of translatorship within different theoretical frameworks. The empirical findings from this thesis relate in different ways to the discussion of translatorship made by Toury (1995), Paloposki (2016), and Flynn and Gambier (2011). They have all conceptualised translatorship as highly social and context-dependent, whether they have discussed it on a theoretical level like Toury, in a historical context like Palopouloski, or in a general, contemporary setting like Flynn and Gambier.

One of the main findings of the thesis lends support to Toury’s claim that translatorship needs to be earned. The importance of external appreciation is seen in all the three studies: in the high modes in the items appreciation and
trust by commissioners and workplaces in the questionnaire study; in the discussion of the sub-theme *agentship*, i.e. when to call oneself a translator, as well as in the discussions on reputation management in the focus group study; and in the discussions of the sub-theme *consecration mechanisms* in order to remain a translator in the interview study. In relation to this earning of translatorship, Paloposki’s (2016) notion of assumed translators comes to play a crucial part in Study 2, where some students start identifying as translators precisely when an external authority assumes that they are translators. Toury’s *earning* of the translatorship and Paloposki’s *assumed translatorship* does not seem to be exactly corresponding with one another. Rather, they might point to different stages of the acquisition of a translatorship. In this study, the students who have *earned* the translatorship, Jessica and Edvin, have both engaged in the professional from an early stage. Emma and Erik, on the other hand, have earned their *assumed* translatorship in virtue of their education, but it has still not been put to the test. The two notion then differ in the investments made in order to obtain the translatorship, but they are similar in the sense that they determine the translators’ own self-identification as translators. Finally, Flynn and Gambier’s emphasis on translatorship “in an even broader social sense” has helped to conceptualise translatorship in relation to the wider society, not least in Study 3 which positioned translations as a societal need with the result that translators’ societal importance was emphasised. Through the continuation of the longitudinal study, whereby Edvin and Jessica also participated in the capacity as translators, Study 3 explored what happens with the translator’s social role “when the knowledge and competences developed during training are put into practice and further developed” (Flynn and Gambier 2011:94).

In terms of the rationales for conducting a mixed methods study (see Greene et al. 1989) presented in the introductory chapter, complementarity stands out as the primary rationale, with development and expansion as the secondary rationales. As Willig (2001:10) asserts, the design of a study inevitably affects the “construction” of data and consequently also the findings that can be drawn from them. Investigating a phenomenon at three levels is in line with the rationale complementarity, when different methods are used to examine “overlapping but also different facets of a phenomenon, yielding an enriched, elaborated understanding of that phenomenon” (Greene et al. 1989:258). The metaphor of the peeling of an onion has turned out to be a fitting description of the thesis’ top-down investigation of translatorship, from a professional perspective to an individual perspective. Moreover, what one method hides, another method can reveal. This interplay is especially apparent in the first and third studies. For example, the respondents in Study 1 show little faith in the societal value of the profession, yet the participants in Study 3 (of which three responded to the questionnaire) do see their societal impact as one function of their translatorship. This kind of paradox is only one out of
many that has been brought to the fore by the present thesis, thereby complying with the rationale of initiation. From a translation sociological perspective, the thesis has broadened the scope of the object under investigation to also include translation students, which fits with the rationale expansion that aims “for scope and breadth by including multiple components” (Greene et al. 1989:260). Some aspects of the rationale development, where one part of the study informs the next, were also present, such as participants from the first two studies participating in Study 3, or the deductively induced themes in the thematic analysis in Study 2 informing the interview guide in Study 3. Additionally, the study has given rise to new insights relating to translators as a professional group and different specialisations, also pertaining to the rationale initiation, not least those raised by the results from the statistical tests, which invite further research.

I will now turn to presenting and discussing the three studies and their results. The quantitative backdrop in Study 1 maps out the scene of the translation profession. It provided valuable insights into the members of the translation profession and their attitudes towards the profession and its value in society. The first research question was phrased as:

1a. What are the respondents’ perceptions on items related to translatorship in contemporary Sweden?

The results showed that the respondents participating in the questionnaire approached the profession in a certain fashion, namely showing that perceptions of translatorship are harmonised within the translation profession. In particular, this study showed that the respondents deem translation to be highly creative and demanding work that requires a large degree of special skills and expertise. It is also associated with responsibility, and, to a lesser degree, with prestige. The respondents feel largely appreciated and that the quality of their translations is trusted by their commissioners and workplaces. However, the respondents’ perceptions of how the profession is valued in society are low when it comes to the status, its societal visibility, societal influence and the extent to which it is valued in comparison with occupations of similar education. Despite the harmonised findings, closer statistical analyses revealed several statistically significant findings which nuance this result. Some of these include different perceptions sorted by gender, translator-related education, and working status. Furthermore, the tests also revealed that different specialisations (literary translators, business translators, audiovisual translators, and EU translators) have different perceptions regarding various items, which highlight different characteristics of the specialisations.

The second part of the first study concerned translator status from a comparative Nordic perspective, with a point of departure in the following research question:
In what ways do the findings relate to corresponding research on translator status carried out by Dam and Zethsen in Denmark and Ruokonen in Finland?

This question was answered through a comparison of different items in the three different countries structured around Dam and Zethsen’s (2008) status parameters: income, education/expertise, visibility/fame, and power/influence. In the items investigated in this thesis, the Swedish findings showed generally lower mean values than the Danish and the Finnish means. Clear-cut comparisons were difficult with the Danish questionnaire due to different selection criteria and a slightly different focus for the questionnaires. The Finnish circumstances were, however, closer to the Swedish. In some cases, Swedish answers yielded notably lower results than in the other two Nordic countries, for example concerning the proportion of translator-educated respondents and annual income. Another notable difference concerns the item on translators’ societal influence, which measured 1.76 out of 5 in Sweden and 3.35 in Finland. One of the more interesting findings was precisely that the greatest discrepancies between the three Nordic countries were found in the status parameter power/influence, which is worth investigating further.

The second study revealed the longitudinal process of acquiring a translatorship during formal training for two groups of translation students in a Swedish university. By conceptualising the socialisation process as non-linear, it laid bare the mechanisms of this complex process. The first research question was phrased as follows:

How can translation students’ socialisation process during formal training be characterised using Weidman et al.’s (2001) core elements?

In order to answer the first research question, the material was deductively analysed with a point of departure in the core elements Knowledge Acquisition, Investment, and Involvement from Weidman et al.’s socialisation model. The four themes Practice, Profession, Agents, and Education, constructed in each core element, provided a way to conceptualise the students’ socialisation process longitudinally. The four themes accounted for different aspects of the students’ social contexts as translation students. It emphasised that acquiring translatorship from a student perspective is more encompassing than just the acquisition of practice-related skills, such as learning how to translate. Instead, the results underscore the importance of ‘softer’ elements, such as developing self-confidence in the capacity of a translator.

The core elements and themes carried various weight during different stages of the programme. For example, the theme of Knowledge Acquisition and Practice were the most predominant in the first focus groups sessions, while Involvement and Profession occurred the most in the later focus group.
sessions. The results further highlight the students’ different socialisation outcomes, where only one out of four students in Group 1 but all of the students in Group 2 worked in the translation field after graduation.

The second part of the second study investigated the structural factors governing the socialisation process using the research question:

2b. How do structural factors affect the socialisation process of the two groups?

The socialisation process turned out to be marked by certain structural factors in various ways. One of them concerned the groups’ different SLs, which influenced the individual students’ motivation for studying translation. It also affected other aspects, such as the feedback received from the teachers and the two groups’ indirect involvement with the profession through their teachers.

Another structural factor concerned the high degree of individualism, which comes across as inherent both in the programme and in the translation profession. This is reflected in the programme itself, e.g., by the elective courses that represented 25% of the programme’s total ECTS, which led to the students already becoming specialised in the early stages of the programme, not least the students who undertook internships. However, the translation profession and its focus on freelancing also exerted individualism as a structural factor on the students and their socialisation process. Throughout the focus group sessions, emotional resources are discussed in relation to becoming a freelance translator. It is clear that becoming a freelance translator demands a higher investment of emotional resources compared with working as an in-house translator.

The third study showed how working as a translator can fulfil different functions for individual translators, with the point of departure in the following research question:

3. How do five translators perceive the functions of their translatorship on an individual, professional, and societal level?

Following a deductive thematic analysis with these three levels (adapted from Nymans 2009) as a starting point, this study revealed similar and yet specialisation-specific approaches to how the participants perceive the functions of their respective translatorships.

By conceptualising the functions of translatorship on these three levels, this study has provided insights into the function translatorship plays in individual translators’ lives. Considering the function of translatorship on an individual level highlights the joy of working with languages, the freedom it entailed in being a freelance translator (for the freelancing translators), and the collegial relationships with both clients and colleagues. Furthermore, it also touched on
the consecration mechanisms that are structuring much of the translators’ success, especially for freelance translators. Examining the function of translatorship on a professional level further revealed how different translation communities play a role in organising the profession and hence its members. Different sorts of status struggles also structured the translatorship. On a societal level, the importance of translations in the greater society, and hence of translators, were stressed. The business translators also put forward the need to ensure quality, which in turn safeguards the translational profession. Literary translators, on the other hand, stressed acting as a cultural mediator as a function of translatorship, thereby assuming responsibility for minor SLs in Sweden as a target culture.

5.2 Some features of extratextual translatorship

As discussed in 1.3, a mixed methods research design can highlight a potential overlap of recurrent topics across several studies. Indeed, taken as a whole, the three studies reveal certain features which seem to be prominent for translators’ social role in contemporary Sweden. In the following, I will discuss these features with reference to the three studies, and in this way show how the studies inform one another and together enrich the understanding of extratextual translatorship. The discussion is structured around the features individualism, entrepreneurialism, collectiveness, translator status, responsibility, and exit.

One striking feature is the high amount of individualism portrayed in the different studies. Translators’ individualistic understanding of the profession has been discussed in relation to professional translators by Sela-Sheffy (2006) and Katan (2009a, 2009b), and the results from this thesis further highlight the connections between individualism and translatorship. The findings from Study 1, in accordance with previous research by Dam and Zethsen (2009a) and Ruokonen and Mäkisalo (2018), revealed a paradox where the respondents personally felt appreciated and trusted by their commissioners and workplaces, although they did not think that the profession enjoyed a high status in society generally. In the discussion to Study 1, I put forward that this finding indicates that the translators are quite satisfied in their personal contexts and that they personally feel appreciated and trusted, but that their belief in the value of their work declines the further away from their daily life and work one looks. There are reasons to look into this paradox more closely. It is of course possible that the respondents as individuals genuinely feel appreciated and satisfied in relation to their commissioners and workplaces as suggested by the results: 84% feel appreciated either ‘to a high degree’ or ‘to a very high degree’, and 98% believe the quality of their translations to be trusted either ‘to a high degree’ or ‘to a very high degree’. Study 3 also showed
a similar pattern where the participants discussed the low status of the profession in society while at the same time often emphasising their own personal position as privileged and “being in a good situation”. The great discrepancy between the view of the status of oneself, to borrow Ruokonen’s (2019) paraphrase of the appreciation item, and the status of the profession may also point towards an imbalance between the self and the profession. If the respondents feel so appreciated, why do they perceive the status of the profession to be so low? On the other hand, if the status of the profession is so low, why do they feel so appreciated? While the respondents are obviously aware of the greater picture in terms of the perceived societal value of translators, it cannot be excluded that this sense of being appreciated personally is a sort of compensation for the low status of the profession. For example, Risku (2004) has showed that trust management is a strategy used by translation agencies in order to foster good and personal relationships with translators. Whereas it is highly unlikely that the commissioners of all the respondents in this thesis are consciously employing the same strategy, the outcome – translators who feel trusted and appreciated – matches. A more plausible possibility is that the commissioners, whether a translation agency or a publishing house, are doing what seems to be the best solution – which in some cases is likely to overlap with the cheapest solution – in their respective situation; they may not be in a position to offer higher rates for some reason, but they can offer a feeling of appreciation and trust to individual translators. Here we can recall the Swedish literary translator Annakarin Thorburn’s quote in 1.5 who stated that the radio show made her re-evaluate her position: “It took someone pointing a microphone in my direction and asking me to describe my situation for me to be able to see it. It wasn’t pleasant. Because it’s much more pleasant to just be satisfied.” This quote indicates that focusing on one’s personal, inner satisfaction attached with working as a translator can be a means of – consciously or not – cope with a demanding and unfavourable situation (cf. the ‘biting the bullet’ strategy used by a participant in Abdallah 2010:35).

For the students in Study 2, individualism turned out to be one of the main features characterising the students’ socialisation process into the profession. Although the main analytical focus was that of the student group, the high level of individualism soon made this focus problematic because of the students’ highly individual outcomes. As discussed before, some of the individualism traits were due to the design of the programme, with elective courses making up 25% of the total ECTS, while others seem to be inherent in the translation profession, with many freelancers having highly different specialisations. The individualistic tendency of professional translators noticed by

21 It should also be added that the results from Study 3 shows that trust management as a strategy is also used by translators to sustain a good collaboration with clients, which is essential especially for freelance translators.
Sela-Sheffy (2006) and Katan (2009b) then seems to start at an early stage during formal training as the students gradually grow more aware of the conditions of the translation profession. Furthermore, Katan’s claim that “translation is a profession when it is ‘earned’ individually as a result of having made a name for oneself individually” (Katan 2009b:123), describes the findings rather accurately. Indeed, the students early on recognised the need to, in Toury’s (2012:277) words, “earn” the translatorship, by “making [oneself] a name” (Group 1) or “getting [oneself] a reputation” (Group 2); this “earning” is an individual effort based on individual investments. It is noticeable that the students’ (especially Group 1) conceptions of when they “are” translators change during the course of the programme: from having a degree in Translation Studies, to earning a living as a translator, to, in the final stages, being recognised as a translator by an external authority. The translatorship of a new translator then needs to be continuously re-earned: reputation as a translator is built one translation at a time, and eventually makes up the translator’s repertoire and in turn his or her reputation. The management of the translator’s reputation stood out as crucial in order to succeed as a translator.

The qualitative interview study with professional translators further revealed the importance of individualism for work of the five translators who participated in the study. As previously noted, most of the respondents describe their own experience as positive, although they were generally aware of the low status of the profession, either on a societal level or in different contexts, such as was the case with the authority where Sarah worked. The importance of individualism for the function of their translatorships also revealed itself in the participants’ emphasis on the personal-level themes – the possibility for them, as individuals, to work with something that they find creative, interesting and meaningful, thereby complying to the results from previous research on translators’ job satisfaction (e.g. de Jong 1999; Katan 2009a; Dam and Zethsen 2016). The focus on individualism was also made clear in other themes, for example the different consecration mechanisms which stood out as crucial in order to establish themselves as individual translators on the market, not least for the freelancers, but which left the well-established translators with mixed feelings. These consecration mechanisms relate to the discussion in Study 2 about how individual translators position themselves as translators in their respective fields, confirming their ideas that translatorship also needs to be re-earnt after having established oneself as a translator.

The emphasis on individualism leads to the, partly interrelated, feature of entrepreneurialism, which is present to different extent in the three studies. One aspect of both individualism and entrepreneurialism relates to the high proportion of the profession being made up of freelance translators. That translation as a profession is marked by freelance translators is well-established, but what it means for the dynamics of the profession – for the profession, for the individual translators, and for translation students who wish to join the profession – remains largely uncharted. A profession marked by freelancers
gives the profession a particular figuration, and Study 1 revealed significant differences between freelance and employed translators in terms of income and working hours etc. For example, the majority of the respondents were overall satisfied with their situation, and, when the respondents were asked how they would rather work (as freelance translators or employed translators), an overwhelming majority preferred their current situation, whether that was as freelance or employed translators. Thus, to be a freelance translator does not appear to be a forced alternative, although the freelance translators have a considerably lower income median than the employed translators, but rather as a result of wanting to work independently, which again reflects back on the individualistic feature. On the other hand, 33% (n = 92) of the respondents connected their freelance position with external requirements, i.e. ‘requirement from clients’ or ‘could not find employment’, which shows that freelancing is not a completely free choice but dependent on how the profession is organised more generally. This is especially true in the specialisations that are not normally associated with an employed position, such as literary translation or subtitling. The statistical tests also provided insight into how the different employment statuses correspond with different perceptions. The freelance translators’ higher rankings on both the expertise and responsibility items, compared to employed translators, can be understood as a reflection of their roles as sole traders, where they need to specialise in different areas and present themselves as highly responsible professionals in order to thrive. In the discussion following Study 1, I put forward the idea that employment status can in effect be more significative for certain matters than the different specialisation. The results from Study 3 support this claim, since entrepreneurialism was in fact the dividing line between the freelance translators and the employed translator Sarah in many themes. Although the themes and sub-themes constructed in the analysis were rather broad, the results showed that the freelance translators in many ways had similar approaches to their translatorship regardless of their specialisation. That translation is a reputation-based industry (Tekgül 2017) is here again brought to the fore, for example when the freelance translators in the study are discussing the importance of maintaining good collaborations with clients.

For the students in Study 2, the feature of entrepreneurialism was present as an aspect of individualism, taking the form that the students were more or less explicitly prompted to become freelance translators during training. For the students in this study, becoming a freelance translator is discussed in terms of emotional resources, such as “being a coward” vs. “being brave”, as well as feeling “worth something as a translator”. The reputation management already discussed above, built translation by translation in the beginning of a career and thereafter maintained in order to secure a successful freelance translation business, also points toward the entrepreneurial side of translatorship. In sum, becoming a freelance translator can be said to require a considerable investment in terms of emotional resources, and the nature of these
emotional resources is of a different kind than those needed in order to become an employed translator.

The features individualism and entrepreneurialism, then, influence and reinforce one another. Alongside the emphasis on the individual translator and on his or her individual specialisation and accomplishments, there is also an emphasis on collectiveness and on the community of translators. In Study 1, this is mirrored by the respondents’ unanimous attitudes towards the profession, as seen in high or low modes: the results from Study 1 clearly show that there is a shared view within the profession, at least on the items investigated in this thesis. Although the statistical tests reveal statistically significant results based on different specialisations, it is worth highlighting how unanimous the profession taken as a whole perceives the profession and its value in society. The participants in Study 3, mainly the well-established translators Anders, Christina and Sarah, put forward collective efforts to change certain conditions that were deemed damaging for the profession, mainly low remunerations and the public’s low interest in the translation profession and in translation as a phenomenon. Study 1 showed that the respondents tend to be members of several translator associations, and the personal reasons for being a member of a translator association was further explored in Study 3. For the well-established translators, the associations fulfilled different functions and served social purposes (meeting colleagues), professional purposes (finding collaborations, receiving work-related guidance), and societal purposes (engaging in changing translator status, ensuring an interest in the phenomenon of translation) (see Pym 2011). The newcomers Edvin and Jessica did not yet seem to have found a natural place in a formal association or an informal network, but they also did not appear to express much desire for this. The results from Study 1 suggest that this is indicative for the youngest group of translators: since the questionnaire was mainly distributed through the translator associations, the low number of young translators among the respondents (only 4% were under the age of 30 years old) may be an indication of the associations’ low number of young translators. During the time of the studies in Study 2, the students were aware of translator associations but were seldom members, and, in general, questions of collective measures were rarely discussed. As not yet being member of the profession, their awareness of pressing issues – and their opportunities to engage in them – are scarce. The low involvement with the profession for the majority of the focus group participants throughout the programme is also likely to have influenced this. If these results should hold true for the overall profession, it surely points towards a challenge for the translator associations in attracting new members. One can also ask how it would affect the profession in the longer perspective if this trend should continue and translator associations fail to attract new members in the future. The findings of this thesis emphasise the communities of translators and the collective strategies used for various matters, and they are in a
way a counter feature to the individualism and entrepreneurialism discussed previously.

The collective feature is, in turn, intertwined with the feature of **translator status**, which is especially apparent in Studies 1 and Study 3. In Study 1, the respondents deemed the translation profession in Sweden to hold middling to low status, in accordance with previous research conducted in Denmark and Finland. In general, all the four items that reflect the translation profession’s value in society received low rankings, displaying a completely different response pattern to the items investigating the profession’s characterisation. While the results from Sweden were generally similar, albeit often slightly lower, than the results from Denmark and Finland, the most exceptional discrepancy was found in the status parameter power/influence, where the Swedish mean for the influence item was 1.76, to be compared with the Finnish mean 3.35. In Study 3, individual interviews revealed that translators are aware of the low status perceptions associated with the profession, and different strategies to change the status were discussed by the respondents. While these strategies partially differ depending on specialisation, they can be divided into two types: individual strategies and collective strategies. For certain translation specialisations, such as literary translation, the opportunities for collective strategies are greater than, for example, business translation, due to the different functions of the associations (see Table 2 in 1.5.1). This was also made clear in Study 3, where the different status strategies discussed by Edvin and Anders differed in a fundamental way: for the literary translator Anders, the main status strategy is to get involved in ÖS and thereby affect, for example, the standard agreement negotiated by the ÖS and the Swedish Publishers’ Association; it is then a collective status strategy. For the business translator Edvin, however, this kind of collective agreement between an association and the commissioners is not available and he is then left to an individual status strategy, such as when he re-negotiates his rates with a translation agency. In relation to previous research, the findings from this study, which all point towards a high degree of awareness of the unfavourable situation and the belief in collective efforts to change the circumstances, are in opposition with previous findings from e.g. Sela-Sheffy (2006, 2009, 2010; see however Nymans 2009). The participants in especially Study 3 talk openly about remuneration, the nitty-gritty life of being a translator, and the ‘translator struggle’; there are rarely instances of glorification or mystification of the translation profession or of the participants’ own qualifications – not even by Anders, who shares many resemblances with the elite literary translators in Sela-Sheffy’s study. On the contrary, Anders is the respondent who suggests that it is possible to talk about a sort of “translator solidarity”. However, it cannot be excluded that there is another strata similar to Sela-Sheffy’s elite literary translators that are not members of the different translator associations and was therefore not reached by the questionnaire.
The features of individualism and entrepreneurialism, on the one hand, and the collectiveness of translators on the other, denote an interplay between the individual translator and the translation profession (see also Tekgül 2017). The relationship between the self and the profession stands out as being reciprocal: the collective efforts taken to affect the profession’s status are thought to reflect back on, and enhance, the individual’s position (see Nymans 2009), but measures taken by individual translators are also thought to affect the profession as a whole, which positions the individual translator as a representative of the profession. This kind of position-taking thus involves the translator assuming a high degree of responsibility towards the profession. Indeed, translators’ self-inflicted responsibility constitutes another recurrent feature throughout the three studies. Most obvious is the item responsibility which was investigated in Study 1, and which received the highest mean in the study: 4.58 out of 5. This high mean is particularly intriguing in the light of the extremely low degree of influence (1.57) the respondents perceive themselves to have, and it indicates an imbalance between the translators’ input and output, as it were, on a societal scale. Responsibility was only discussed occasionally in Study 2, and in those cases in relation to the students’ ethical awareness: that they would like to act in a responsible way in their future roles as translators. In Study 3, responsibility was discussed on the professional and societal level, and it was mainly directed to the benefit of the profession, as in the cases discussed above, and to the benefit of society in a wider sense. In the latter case, this responsibility responds to the need for translations on a societal level, but it also involves the translators feeling responsible for translations maintaining a high quality, which can be interpreted as a concern and a feeling of responsibility for how translators are perceived as an occupational group by the public more generally. Moreover, the mediatorship assumed by the literary translators is directed towards certain minor SLs, and reflects a responsibility towards these languages in the Swedish target culture. In general, the recurring emphasis on responsibility positions the translator as a socio-cultural responsible agent.

We have now seen that translators are trying to change the current situation by both collective and individual strategies, which corresponds to the coping strategy voice (Hirschman 1970), i.e. to try to change damaging conditions. This denotes a rather subversive side of translatorship, which has not yet been explored in depth. Finally, a feature hovering in the background in all three studies is the coping strategy exit (Hirschman 1970). Study 1 revealed that 40% of the respondents considered leaving the profession from time to time: 15.5% (n = 56) considered this option once or twice a year, whereas 3% (n = 11) thought of this on a daily basis. The reason for the high percentage of translators considering leaving the profession by making an exit requires further examination, especially since the other items investigated in the questionnaire paint a picture of a rather high degree of job satisfaction. The paradox mentioned by both Dam and Zethsen (2016:174) and Koskinen (2009:108) as
to “what makes [translators] stay in a profession that seems to be offering sub-standard working conditions?” (Dam and Zethsen 2016:174), does not receive a definitive answer from this study. Rather, it highlights the gravity of the situation. Also the findings from Study 2 can be discussed in terms of exit, since at least two students in Group 1 were leaning towards making an exit by the final focus group session. Considering the investment made in order to gain an MA degree in Translation Studies in terms of time, effort, and field-specific knowledge, the choice to make an exit before one has even entered the profession does not appear to be an easy one. In Study 3, we met Christina who had made what could be called a semi-exit by finding part-time employment within a completely different field. By partially leaving the profession, she has paradoxically found a way to remain in the profession. In Study 3, Anders says that “you just can’t take [translators] away”, indicating a more prominent position for the translator in the near future, yet there are obviously different circumstances that makes translators navigate away from the profession or, in the case of some of the students, choose not to enter the profession at all.

In relation to the other features, exit can also be interpreted as a sign of individualism and entrepreneurialism since it denotes the translator’s freedom to evaluate his or her position and decide what measures that needs to be taken (see also Abdallah 2010). It is a question of when it is time to ‘give up’ the responsibility towards the profession, and in the long run the community of translators, in order to secure a healthy position for oneself. A similar thought is evoked in Annakarin Thorburn’s quote in 1.5 where she states: “I have felt privileged to get to work with what I’m the most interested in. It outweighs everything. Or does it?”. As we have seen throughout this thesis there are a number of positive aspects of the profession that can outweigh the more negative sides – until it does not. For the survival of the profession in the long run, these are questions that urgently need to be addressed by translation education institutions, translator associations and other stakeholders as well as by Translation Studies scholars. On a brighter note, the high awareness of the problems surrounding the profession and the different strategies – individual or collective – discussed by the participants in order to redeem the situation, point towards a sort of resistance among translators, which may eventually lead to a renewed perspective on translators and translatorship.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

The present thesis opens up further avenues for continuing to explore different aspects of translatorship. In this concluding section, some of these aspects are discussed.

For the questionnaire study, possible future continuation involves expanding both the depth and breadth of the investigation. At this stage, only a few
of the many items in the questionnaire have been thoroughly explored. For example, a closer examination of a small number of aspects, e.g. how freelancer and employed business translators perceive their micro agency in relation to e.g. deadlines and quality of the final output (see Ruokonen 2019) as well as to project managers, is one possible extension. How the group of literary translators perceive their working situation (see Heino 2017) and their cooperation with editors is another. These two possible directions would map onto the pre-existing research on translators’ workplaces (see Risku et al. 2017; Kolb 2017) and their cooperation with different agents (see Jansen 2017; Solum 2018). Another possible avenue consists of continuing in the direction of more purely translator status studies and a more fine-grained analysis by comparing different groups of translators within the Swedish translation profession, as well as comparisons with the Danish and Finnish translators.

The focus group study contains rich material with many possible avenues of further study. Some more fine-grained studies focusing on a certain aspects of the students’ educational journey have already been carried out (see Svahn 2016, forthcoming), but it can be investigated in more detail. For example, while this study focused on how translation sociological research on translation students can shed new light on translation students and translator education, there are also translation didactic implications for translator education to be drawn from the results. Some of these implications include how the structural constraints I have identified affect students to different extents. Also, feedback on translation assignments stand out as an important factor for the students, especially when the feedback appears to be missing (see also Svahn 2016), which deserves further attention. Another small but yet intriguing finding worth investigating further concerns the small amount of translated literature read by translation students throughout the programme, which has to be considered an unusual approach towards translated literature for someone who strives to become a translator.

Yet another possible venue for further research consists of the more or less implicit entrepreneurial focus of the programme. While it is certainly a well-established fact that most translators work as freelancers, what this form of working entails from a student perspective on a personal or individual level is largely uncharted territory. Moreover, a large part of the “life of the profession”, to use Weidman et al.’s (2001) expression, takes place online, in different email lists and/or groups on Internet. This also has bearing on the accessibility for students to become involved with the profession during their studies, and how accessible the profession appears from the outside. Following this line of thought, one possible continuation could explore translation students’ involvement with professional agents during training, for example through the study of how translation students relate to role models.

The interview study revealed the benefits of follow-up interviews with former translation students. One possible continuation is to expand the breadth
of the study in order to create a truly longitudinal study on individual translators’ life trajectories. In general, the many benefits of Qualitative Longitudinal Research (QLR) can offer much for Translation Studies. Another possibility would be to conduct a more extensive interview study with a larger number of translators of the same specialisation, e.g. literary translators or the rather hidden but important group of staff translators working in Swedish authorities or banks, to gain a better insight into how a certain group of translators perceive their specific functions in a target culture. Yet another possible avenue concerns the function of the Swedish translator associations in organising the ‘translator struggle’ which has been one recurrent topic. An historical approach to how the translation organisations has developed over time alongside the translation profession would provide a contextualisation of the translation profession in a wider perspective. Finally, in the light of the results from all three studies, yet another possible avenue for further investigations concerns the translators who are thinking of leaving the profession, or even of those who have already left it. All in all, the preceding study has contributed towards a deeper understanding of translatorship in the Swedish context. It has also opened up the floor to more research in this direction.
6 Sammanfattning


Avhandlingen är en så kallad mixed methods-studie, vilket vanligtvis innefattar en kombination av både kvantitativa och kvalitativa metoder. Det innebär att extratextuellt översättareskap undersöks med både kvantitativa och kvalitative metoder: delstudie 1 undersöker översättareskap ur ett professionsperspektiv genom en enkäterundersökning; delstudie 2 undersöker hur två grupper med översättarstudenter socialiseras in i översättareskapet genom en longitudinal fokusgruppstudie; och delstudie 3 undersöker genom djupintervju vilken funktion översättareskapet har för fem översättare. På detta sätt undersöks översättareskap på tre olika nivåer: profession (studie 1), grupp (studie 2) och individ (studie 3). I linje med detta är det huvudsakliga skalet för att kombinera metoder komplementaritet: att kombinera olika tillvägagångssätt för att belysa studieobjektet ur olika perspektiv (Greene et al. 1989; för svenska begrepp se Meister under utgivning). Sekundära skäl är expansion, i och med valet att
inkludera översättarstudenter i en avhandling om verksamma översättare, och till viss del även utveckling, vilket innebär att en del av studien ligger till grund för en senare del. Nedan presenteras delstudierna mer utförligt.

**Studie 1: Kartläggning av översättarskap**


Sammantaget bestod enkäten av ca 80 enkätfrågor men endast ett mindre antal undersöks i studien. Undersökningen centrerades utifrån tre teman: 1) respondenternas bakgrund och arbetssituation, 2) deras syn på vad som utmärker översättning och översättaryrket och 3) deras syn på hur översättaryrket värderas i samhället. Delen om respondenternas bakgrund och arbetssituation syftade till att få en större inblick i översättarkåren i Sverige. Ämnen som undersöcktes var: kön, arbetssituation, bosättningsland, ålder, utbildningsnivå, språkkombinationer, auktorisering, yrkesfarenhet, medlemskap i översättarorganisationer, vilken sorts översättning man arbetat med de senaste fem åren, huvudsaklig yrkesidentitet, inkomstnivå, tillfredsställelse med inkomstnivån, vilken arbetssituation man helst skulle vilja ha och tankar om att lämna yrket.

Det andra och tredje temat bestod av Likert-frågor, där svaren rangordnas från 1 (”I låg grad eller inte alls” eller liknande) till 5 (”I mycket hög grad” eller liknande). I det andra temat undersöktes hur respondenternas såg på översättning och översättaryrket, och temat innefattade frågor kopplade till expertis, speculkunskaper, kreativitet, ansvar, prestige, tillit (uppdragsgivare och arbetsplatsens tillit till översättningens kvalitet) och uppskattning. I det tredje och sista temat undersöktes hur respondenterna uppfattar att översättaryrket värderas i samhället med utgångspunkt i frågor om översättares status, synlighet, inflytande och värde. Likert-frågorna analyserades genom deskriptiv statistik och de icke-parametrika testerna Mann-Whitney U och Kruskal-Wallis H. De självständiga variablerna för de icke-parametrika testerna var kön, arbetssituation (frilans eller anställd), översättarutbildning, specialisering (facköversättare, skönlitterär översättare, facklitterär översättare och EU-översättare), längd på yrkesfarenhet, utbildningsbakgrund och ålder. De statistiska analyserna genomfördes i SPSS IBM.
Sammantaget ger resultatet en något splittrad men samtidigt samstämmig bild av översättaryrket i Sverige – splittrad utifrån respondenternas bakgrund och arbetssituation men samstämmig i fråga om deras syn på yrket och hur det värderas i samhället. Samstämmigheten tar sig uttryck genom typvärdet, dvs. det mest svarade alternativet, som angenget var höga (andra temat) eller låga (tredje temat). Resultatet följer i hög grad tidigare forskning som visar på att översättare själva anser sig själva ha hög status i förhållande till sina arbetsgivare, men att de inte anser att översättaryrket åtnjuter hög status ur ett samhälleligt perspektiv (se Dam och Zethsen 2009a; Ruokonen och Mäkisalo 2019). Trots den höga graden av samstämmighet nyanseras resultatet av de statistiska testerna som uppvisade statistiskt signifikanta resultat, dvs statistiskt signifikanta skillnader i uppfattningar, utifrån följande variabler: kön, ålder, specialisering, yrkessituation, längd på yrkeserfarenhet och huruvida respondenterna har gått en översättarutbildning eller ej.


Studie 2: Översättarskap i vardande

forskning (QLR; Qualitative longitudinal research), där fokus ligger på skärningspunkten mellan tid och förändring.


Studiens resultat lyfter också fram hur strukturella faktorer har haft en djupgående inverkan på studenternas socialiseringsprocesser och deras möjligheter att kunna bli en del av yrket. Det handlar bland annat om hur de olika källspråken inverkan på de olika kärnelementen och, i förlängningen, på studenternas socialiseringsprocesser. Ett mindre källspråk som japanska tycks
förutsätta högre individuella investeringar av studenterna för att de ska bli en del av översättaryrket. Ytterligare en aspekt är den starka koppling Grupp 1 har med källspråket japanska, som i girode att två studenter i Grupp 1 efter examen föredrog att arbeta med japanska i ett icke-översättningsrelaterat område än att arbeta med översättning med ett annat källspråk än japanska.

Ett annat viktigt resultat handlar om den höga graden av individualisering i studenternas socialiseringsprocess, vilket delvis problematiserade studiens val av metod i form av fokusgrupper. Individualisering framstår dessutom i någon mån som ett karakteristiskt drag för både programmet och översättaryrket. Den höga andelen valbara kurser gör att studenterna blir specialiserade redan i ett tidigt skede, samtidigt som de också mer eller mindre explicit förbereds för en karriär som frilansande översättare, vilket i sin tur kräver individuella investeringar. I studien är det tydligt att tillblivandet som frilansande översättare kräver emotionella resurser av ett annat slag än att ”bara” bli översättare, vilket påverkade studenterna på en djupt personlig nivå. Det yttrade sig bland annat genom utsagor om att ”vara feg” eller ”vara modig”.

Sammanfattningsvis visar studien på ny empirisk kunskap om hur översätтарstudenter socialiseras in i översättaryrket samt vilka sorters strukturella faktorer som påverkar socialiseringsprocessen. Studien har också lyft fram översätтарstudenter som agenter i översättningssociologisk bemärkelse.

### Studie 3: Översättarskapets olika funktioner


Med utgångspunkt i Nymans (2009) resonemang om översättares drivkraft har översättarskapets funktioner delats upp på tre nivåer: den personliga tillfredsställdelse (individuell nivå), den sociala gemenskapen (yrkesnivå) och


På en yrkesnivå konstruerades två teman. Det första handlar om att hitta en professionell gemenskap, vilket antingen kan ske genom att gå med i en över- sättarorganisation eller genom att vara en del i ett informellt nätverk. Det andra temat handlade om översättarfackens status och olika sätt för att förbättra den; det diskuterades i termer av en ständigt pågående ’översättarkamp’, som framför allt bestod i att hålla ersättningsnivåerna på en rimlig nivå, men också att höja medvetenheten om yrket och översättning som fenomen i förhållande till allmänheten.


Sammanfattningsvis fördjupar studien förståelsen av översättarskap ur ett individcentrerat perspektiv och visar på kopplingar mellan det individuella, professionella och samhälleliga planet. Studien nyanserar också en del resultat från de tidigare delstudierna. Trots att de tema som konstruerades behövde vara relativt breda visar analysen på liknande förhållningssätt inom de olika specialiseringarna. Två huvudsakliga skiljelinjer går mellan äna sidan de nyblivna översättarna och de mer välstable, å andra sidan mellan de frilan- sande översättarna och den enda anställda översättaren i studien.
Slutsatser

I kapitel 5 sammanfattas de huvudsakliga resultaten från de tre studierna för att därefter diskuteras i förhållande till varandra. I inledningen diskuteras hur ett antal översättningsvetare har använt sig av begreppet översättarskap och att de oftast diskuterade olika saker. Den föreslagna indelningen av textuellt, paratextuellt och extratextuellt översättarskap innebär ett mer väldefinierat begrepp, som möjliggör fortsatt forskning inom det här området. Sammanfattningsvis konstateras också att avhandlingens kombination av kvalitativa och kvantitativa metoder har belyst olika aspekter av det extratextuella översättarskaps sociala dimensioner i en samtida svensk kontext.

Ett antal olika drag som i någon grad återfinns i de tre studierna identifieras. Det första är individualisering och syftar på den starka kopplingen mellan det individuella och översättarskap. Ett exempel är paradoxen att enskilda översättare å ena sidan känner sig personligen mycket uppskattade, samtidigt som översättaryrket i stort uppfattas har låg status, i likhet med tidigare forskning (Dam och Zethsen 2009a; Ruokonen och Mäkisalo 2019). Ett liknande förhållningssätt återspeglas i den tredje delstudien där flera översättare lyfte fram sin egen personliga gods situation, samtidigt som de diskuterade yrkets låga status. För översättarstudenterna yttrade sig individualisering bland annat genom studenternas mycket olika utfall efter examen. Programmets uppbyggnad gjorde också att de i enlighet med sina individuella val blev specialiserade, till exempel genom att lägga till ett extra källspråk, i ett relativt tidigt skede.

Det individualistiska draget är nära sammankopplat med det entreprenöriella draget, genom att yrket till övervägande del består av frilansare; 76 % av respondenterna är frilansare. I både den första och den tredje studien framgår en tydlig skilljelinje mellan anställda översättare och frilansöversättare. Att vara frilansare framstår dock inte som ett påtvingat val av varken respondenterna i enkätstudien eller deltagarna i intervjustudien, trots att de enskilda personerna lyfte fram osäkerheten som omgärder frilanspositionen. Det entreprenöriella draget framstår som uppenbart även för studenterna, som var medvetna om att de i någon mån förväntas bli egenföretagare. Det visades bland annat i utsagor om vikten av ”att göra sig ett namn” eller ”att skaffa sig ett rykte” och de emotionella resurser studenterna behöver aktivera för att bli frilansöversättare – att man till exempel är ”för feg” för att vara frilansare.

I motsats till de individualistiska och entreprenöriella dragen står dock det kollektivistiska draget. Det tar sig bland annat uttryck av den höga grad av samstämmighet som präglar enkätstudien och som visas i de oftast antingen höga eller låga typvärdena, men även i en del av de statusstrategier som lyfts fram i den tredje delstudien. Den andra delstudien präglas minst av det kollektiva draget, förmodligen eftersom studenterna generellt sett endast hade begränsad kontakt med yrket. Det kollektiva draget är i sin tur nära besläktat med draget översättarstatus, vilket är allra tydligast i delstudie 1 och 3. I den första delstudien uppfattade respondenterna att översättaryrket värderas i låg
grad av samhälleligt, vilket också reflekterades i intervjuerna med deltagarna i den tredje delstudien. Där diskuterades också en del kollektiva strategier, framför allt i förhållande till litterära översättare. Generellt sett diskuteras översättarstatus som något som yrket arbetar aktivt med att förbättra.

Ytterligare ett drag utgörs av den stora ansvarskänsla som utmärker respondenterna i avhandlingen. Det blir tydligt dels i den första delstudien där enkätfrågan om ansvar fick det högsta medelvärdet i studien – 4.57 av 5 – och dels i den tredje delstudien där en självpåtagen ansvarskänsla riktades mot översättning som fenomen, mot översättaryrket liksom mot samhället i stort. Avslutningsvis är även förhandlingsstrategin sorti, dvs. att lämna yrket (Hirschman 1970), ett drag som återfanns i alla tre delstudier: I den första delstudien angav 40 % av respondenterna att de funderade på att lämna yrket i någon grad; i den andra delstudien hade Christina gjort en halv sorti och valt ett halvtidsjobb utanför översättaryrket, vilket paradoxalt nog har gjort att hon har kunnat stanna kvar i översättaryrket. Förhandlingsstrategin sorti kan också vara ett uttryck för det individualistiska och entreprenöriella draget eftersom sortin förutsätter att den enskilda översättaren själv kan bestämma vad hon vill göra av sin situation, vilket då skulle innebära att ge upp ansvarskänslan gentemot yrket och kollektivet av översättare.


Sammantaget har föreliggande avhandling bidragit till en fördjupad förståelse av översättarskap i den svenska kontexten, men den har också öppnat upp för mer forskning inom det översättningssociologiska forskningsområdet.
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ENKÄT OM ÖVERSÄTTARES YRBILD OCH ÖVERSÄTTARYRKETS STATUS I SVERIGE

Hej!


Räkna med att det tar minst 30–40 minuter att svara på enkäten. Av tekniska skäl kan man tyvärr inte spara en del av svaren och fortsätta senare. Om det är ett...
orange frågetecken (?) efter frågan får du ytterligare instruktioner om hur du ska svara genom att föra musen över det.

Svaren behandlas anonymt och strikt konfidentiellt så att de inte i något skede kan kopplas till en enskild respondent. Bland de medverkande lottas 10 biocheckar ut. Vinnarna meddelas via mejl.

Tack för dina svar och tveka inte att kontakta mig om du har några frågor!

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Appendix 2

I Questions on the respondents’ background

1. Ange kön:
   
   Man  
   Kvinna  
   Annat  
   Vill ej ange

2. På vilket sätt arbetar du som översättare just nu?
   
   Anställd i någon form  
   Frilans i någon form  
   Jag arbetar inte som översättare just nu

3. Var är du permanent bosatt just nu?
   
   Sverige  
   Utomlands

4. Hur gammal är du? Ange ålder:

5. Ange din högsta utbildningsnivå:
   
   Gymnasium  
   Yrkesskola eller yrkeshögskola  
   Universitetsstudier  
   Lägre högskoleexamen (exempelvis fil.kand.)  
   Högre högskoleexamen (exempelvis fil.mag., master)  
   Doktorsexamen eller licentiatexmen  
   Annat (ange nedan)

6. Ange huvudämne, utbildningsprogram eller motsvarande:

8. Är du auktoriserad översättare, s.k. translator?
   
   Ja
   Nej

9. Är din arbetsgivare … (för antällda)

   Staten
   En internationell organisation eller sammanslutet (t.ex. EU)
   Ett stort bolag i annan bransch än översättningsbranschen (över 250 anställda), svensk
   Ett stort bolag i annan bransch än översättningsbranschen, internationellt
   Ett företag inom översättningsbranschen, internationellt
   Ett företag inom översättningsbranschen, svenskt
   Eget företagsbolag (familjebolag)
   Annat (ange)

10. Hur lång tid totalt har du arbetat inom översättningsbranschen totalt sett? Ange antal år:

11. Vilka av följande uppdrag inom översättningsbranschen har du utfört under de senaste fem åren? Välj alla alternativ som stämmer in:

   Litterär översättning
   Facklitterär översättning
   Facköversättning
   Medieöversättning
   Korrekturläsning
   Språkgranskning
   Projektledning
   Tolkning

12. Anser du att din huvudsakliga yrkesidentitet främst är

   Facköversättare
   Skönlitterär översättare
   Facklitterär översättare
   EU-översättare
   Medieöversättare
   Annat (ange)
13. Vilka organisationer eller fackföreningar är du medlem i:

Sveriges facköversättarförening (SFÖ)
Sveriges Författarförbunds översättarsektion
Översättarcentrum (ÖC)
Föreningen Auktoriserade Translatorer (FAT)
Medietextarna
Annat (ange)

14. Hur många timmar arbetar du i genomsnitt i veckan?

Under 16 timmar
16–31 timmar
32–40 timmar
41–50 timmar
51 timmar eller mer

15. Hur mycket tjänar du på översättningsarbete per år (bruttoinkomst eller ditt företags omsättning)? (frilans)

Vad är din månadslön (brutto)? (anställd)

16. Är du nöjd med din inkomstnivå?

Mycket missnöjd
Ganska missnöjd
Varen nöjd eller missnöjd
Ganska nöjd
Mycket nöjd

17. Om du fick välja fritt, skulle du helst arbeta som

Frilansare
(Fast) anställd översättare

18. Har du funderat på att byta bransch under det senaste året?

Inte alls
3–4 gånger per år
1–2 gånger per år
Varje månad
Varje vecka
Varje dag
II Questions on the translation profession (Likert-type questions)

1. Uppfattar du översättning som ett expertarbete?
2. Kräver översättning specialkunskaper?
3. Är översättning enligt din mening förknippat med kreativitet?
4. Är jobbet som översättare förknippat med prestige?
5. Har översättaren mycket ansvar i sitt arbete?
6. Får du intrycket att dina uppdragsgivare litar på kvaliteten på dina översättningar? (frilans)
   Får du intrycket att man litar på kvaliteten på dina översättningar på arbetsplatsen? (anställd)
7. Får du intrycket att dina uppdragsgivare uppskattar ditt arbete som översättare? (frilans)
   I vilken grad uppskattar man dig som översättare på din arbetsplats? (anställd)

III Questions on the translation profession’s value in society (Likert-type questions)

1. Anser du att översättaryrket har hög status i Sverige?
2. Syns översättare som yrkesgrupp i samhället?
3. Tycker du att arbetet som översättare ger inflytande av ekonomisk, politisk, samhällsmässig eller annan karaktär?
4. I vilken grad värderas översättare enligt din mening i Sverige i jämförelse med andra yrken med samma utbildningsnivå?
Appendix 3

Samtyckesformulär


Genom att skriva under godkänner du att materialet används till de saker som beskrivs ovan.

Jag har fått tillräcklig information om projektet och godkänner min medverkan

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Appendix 4

Table 21. Core elements, themes, and sub-themes in the eight focus groups
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<td>Japanese Group</td>
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**Knowledge Acquisition (-)**

- How to translate (3); Tools (3)
- General knowledge of the profession (3)
- Entering the profession (2)
- What is valued in/by the profession (2)

**Investment (-)**

- Educational procedures (4); Value of education (1); Possibility to specialise (1)
- Tools (5); How to translate (4); Specialisation (1); Internship (1); Starting a company

**Involvement (-)**

- Contact with the profession (3); Associations (1)
- Translating students (3); Professional translators (1)
- Non-involvement with the program (2)
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**Japanese Group**

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**Knowledge Acquisition (–)**

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**Non-involvement with programme (1)**
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<td>Theory-practice (1)</td>
<td>Experience of the profession (1); Choosing the profession (1); Internship (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tools (1); Translation experience (1); Reading translations (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FG</td>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>Profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Knowledge Acquisition (+)</td>
<td>How to translate (8); Experience of translating (8); Multiplicity of translation (5); SLs and TL (4); Tools (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Knowledge Acquisition (-)</td>
<td>Tools (3); How to translate (2); General knowledge of the profession (1); Specialisation (1); Entering the profession (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Investment (+)</td>
<td>Reading translations (1); Contact with the profession (1); Professional translators (4); Translation students (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Investment (-)</td>
<td>How to translate (2); Experience of the profession (1); Possibility to specialise (2); Educational procedures (1); Theory-practice (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5

Samtyckesblankett för intervjustudie

Projektet

Stockholms universitet är forskningshuvudman.

Studien


Deltagande
Deltagandet är frivilligt och kan avbrytas när som helst, utan att detta får några negativa följer. Om du vill avbryta ditt deltagande i studien kontaktar du Elin Svahn.

Behandling av personuppgifter

Ljudfilerna kommer att förvaras i ett låst förvaringsskåp på Stockholms universitet samt i Stockholms universitets lagringstjänst. Dina svar och dina resultat kommer att behandlas så att obehöriga inte kan ta del av dem.

Stockholms universitet (org. nr. 202100-3062) är personuppgiftsansvarig för behandling av personuppgifterna och kommer att spara personuppgifterna. Forskningsdata ska lagras i minst 10 år, i enlighet med Regler om bevarande och gallring av handlingar inom forskningsverksamhet vid Stockholms universitet (Stockholms universitets tillämpningsföreskrift av Riksarkivets

- återkalla samtycket utan att det påverkar lagligheten av behandlingen som skett i enlighet med samtycket innan det återkallades.
- begära tillgång till dina personuppgifter
- få dina personuppgifter rättade
- få dina personuppgifter raderade
- få behandlingen av dina personuppgifter begränsade
- inge klagomål till datainspektionen

Om du vill göra något av ovanstående kontaktar du Elin Svahn. Om du är intresserad av att ta del av materialet kan du fylla i din mejladress nedan så kommer Elin Svahn att informera dig när en publikation finns tillgänglig.

**Försäkring och ersättning**
Som besökare och deltagare vid verksamhet vid Stockholms universitet omfattas du med svenskt personnummer av ett Särskilt personskadeskydd (SPS) via Kammarkollegiet.

Som ersättning utgår en biobiljett.

**Ansvariga personer**
Ansvarig för studien och projektet: Elin Svahn
Handledare: Yvonne Lindqvist
Behörig företrädare för forskningshuvudman: Gunlög Sundberg
Dataskyddsombud vid Stockholms universitet: Benita Falenius

**Samtycke**
Jag har läst och förstått ovanstående och lämnar mitt samtycke till:
☐ deltagande i studien
☐ behandling av personuppgifter

______________________________
Signatur

______________________________
Namnförtydligande

______________________________
Ort och datum
E-postadress (frivilligt)

**Kontaktinformation:**

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This thesis is concerned with Swedish translators and the society in which they work. It begins with an exploration of the concept of translatorship and a review of previous scholarship on the subject, leading to a three-part distinction consisting of textual, paratextual and extratextual translatorship. Adopting a mixed methods approach, the empirical body of the thesis consists of three studies in which different aspects of extratextual translatorship – defined as the translator’s social role – are investigated focusing on the translation profession, two groups of translation students, and individual translators. Overall, the three studies generate a greater understanding of the dynamics of translatorship in contemporary Sweden and, taken as a whole, the thesis demonstrates the value of a mixed methods approach in the field of agent-oriented translation sociology by shedding light on the links between the translator and society.