

Can the Translator's Behavior influence his Translation's Performance?

Nassima BEKKARI

*Laboratory Didactics of Translation and Multilingualism,
Oran 1 University, Algeria*

*Bordj Bou Arreridj University, Algeria
ness27000@yahoo.fr*

Received date: 25/09/2021

Revised date: 24/09/2022

Publication date: 30/09/2022

Abstract:

The psycholinguistic nature of translation has recently aroused the interest of many researchers in behavioral psychology. The interdisciplinary nature of Translation Studies naturally subjected it to research in Cognitive Sciences. There are, however, other areas of psychology that remain under-studied in translation researches and practices. Although it is increasingly recognized that the emotional aspect of the translator's behavior can influence his performance in the translation process, nonetheless this psychological aspect of the translation process lacks visibility actually. The majority of research results concern the translation of emotional material or emotional language, addressing the personalities or emotions of translators and interpreters.

However, calls to study the behavior of these mediators and to become aware of their work processes have led to a change in the subject of study from translations to translators, leading to the creation of new links with other disciplines and allowing the integration of new perspectives highlighting the interdisciplinarity of Translation Studies.

This communication aims, in fact, to highlight the value of the study of psychology, the emotional intelligence in this case, of translation and interpretation practitioners today, which could be usefully integrated into translation workshops to demonstrate understanding of the psychological and emotional functioning of translators and interpreters.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Psychology; Translation process; Translation Studies; Translator's behavior.

1- Introduction:

Psychological researches are now a big part of Translation Studies after the proliferation of books that interconnect many disciplines. Psychologists had initially gained the greatest attention on other psychological aspects in Translation Studies which had formed new links between Translation Studies and multiple disciplines.

The study of emotions is an old science research topic that has grown in popularity over the time. The concept of Emotional Intelligence though first appeared after the release of a study of Social Intelligence (Gardner, 1983), which was such an aspiration that many psychologists followed and studied people's way of communicating emotions.

In fact, psychological research has made considerable progress in Translation Studies during the last decades. The interdisciplinary nature of this field has made it prone to borrowing and research in Cognitive Sciences.

It is clear that psychological linguistics and Translation Studies are interrelated because of the emotional aspects of the translator's behaviour may have an impact on his translation performance, and this aspect of the translation process lacks vision in literature. However, the shift from the subject of translations to translators has established new links with other disciplines, « *the focus of research in Translatology is the observation and analysis of language processing in translation, it becomes evident that psycholinguistics and Translatology are interconnected.* » (Hatzidaki, 2007, P.14)

2- Psychology and Translator's Ability:

Due to its fertile, effective and more forward ways, Psycholinguistics had gained the most attention of many researchers, its models consider Emotions as a construct with multiple emotion related behaviours that can affect people's ways of dealing with life. It was used to understand and defer individuals. It was an interesting study, but limited, with promising outcomes.

The study of feelings is not a new area of research, and has been the topic of great scientific researches, and it generates many definitions, they can be defined as: « ... *they are organized responses that cross the boundaries of many psychological sub-systems, including physiological, cognitive, motivational and experimental systems.* » (Salovey & Mayer, 1999, P.02).

The study of Emotions has generated widespread interest since the age of Publilius Syrus, who had said: « ... *rule your feelings, and let your feelings rule you* » (Salovey & Mayer, 1999, P.02). The result of this popularization of the domain is a wide variety of definitions and approaches, and the study of emotions continues to be the focus of emotional information. Researchers are trying to find valid and critical answers to the question: Why do we act or behave the way we do?

The concept of Emotional Intelligence goes back to Gardner's vision of Social Intelligence which suggested that there are seven types of intelligence, including Interpersonal Intelligence, the ability to understand others, and Intrapersonal Intelligence, the ability to understand and develop a sense of identity that has inspired many psychologists to study how people assess and communicate their emotions and how they use them to solve problems (Hubscher-Davidson, 2013).

Research on Emotional Intelligence is said to differ from research on Cognition and effect, because it « *does not focus on memory or judgment per se, but on the more general contributions of emotionality to the personality.* » (Salovey & Mayer, 1999, P.06).

In 1990, Salovey and Mayer developed a formal theory of the concept and defined the construction of Emotional Intelligence as : « ...*the ability to monitor one's own feeling and emotions, to discriminate against them, and use this information to guide one's thinking and thoughts and actions* » (Salovey & Mayer, 1999, P.184). Since then, it has been widely accepted that Emotional Intelligence can be conceptualized as a lower level personality trait, known as Emotional Intelligence Trait, or as a type of Cognitive Intelligence, known as the ability to Emotional Intelligence. For

dispositions related to emotions and self-perceptions, it is preferable to measure them using a self-assessment or performance tests.

Researchers now are thinking about whether a success in translation can/should be attributed to a translator's ability to process emotional information, and whether this could be usefully assessed by measures of self-perception of his ability to recognize emotionally charged information. In all cases, measuring Emotional Intelligence capacity is still a challenge. It was argued that measures of Emotional Intelligence capacity assess knowledge about emotions, rather than performance, and interfere with the development of Intelligence Questionnaire Tests. However, researches in this field have yielded mixed results and « *the amount of empirical work done on construction seems to have an inverse relationship to the interest it has generated* » (Hubscher-Davidson, 2013).

3. Emotions, Psychology & Foreign Languages Acquisitions:

Emotional Intelligence is defined as « *the ability to monitor an individual's feelings and the feelings of others, distinguish between them and use this information to guide an individual's thinking and behavior.* » (Hubscher-Davidson, 2013). Since then, two separate and unrelated conceptualizations of Emotional Intelligence have been developed : Trait Emotional Intelligence, which concerns emotion related dispositions and Self-Perceptions, and the ability Emotional Intelligence which concerns emotion related to cognitive abilities.

According to Petrides (Petrides, 2010), the Emotional Intelligence provides a full operationalization of the affective aspects of personality, and the main advantages of the Emotional Intelligence trait theory are found in the conceptual content and the explanatory power. The whole of construction with 13 to 15 behavioural dispositions related to emotions that are expected to affect how individuals cope with demands and pressures.

There are many good measures of the Emotional Intelligence trait that would provide full coverage of the sampling area. Many studies have documented a positive association between the Emotional Intelligence trait

and wellness variables, and the Emotional Intelligence trait has found to significantly moderate stress responses.

Mikolajczak and Bodarwé (Mikolajczak & Bodarwe, 2010). Recently discovered that individuals with a higher character Emotional Intelligence demonstrated greater activation of the left forehead at rest, which is associated with higher extraversion, social competence, and improved emotional regulation skills. They are more likely to use problem-oriented coping strategies than difficult or threatening situations, and to be more creative.

The non-cognitive variables aroused the interest of researchers who used the trait Emotional Intelligence as the main reference. In fact, a large body of research has documented a significant and robust association between the trait Emotional Intelligence and mental health, and the results of studies in this area indicate that individuals with elevated Emotional Intelligence demonstrate recurrent resilience in response to the factors of life stress. However, a certain number of limitations deserve to be emphasized with regard to psychometric studies and studies on employment insurance in particular. First, relatively little empirical work seems to have been done on gender and race differences in the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence. A second related limitation concerns the size and composition of the sample, that is particularly with regard to age, and the results should therefore be interpreted with caution. As a third limit to Emotional Intelligence studies on the traits examined, Mavroveli and Sanchez-Ruiz report that the use of self-reports is based on « ... *the notion that reports on their intra and interpersonal qualities are intrinsically significant and exert significant influence on the individual's behavior.* » (Mavrovelli & Sanchez-Ruiz, 2010, P.113).

Nevertheless, other researches suggest the use of physiological indicators and/or neuro-imaging techniques in conjunction with measures of Emotional Intelligence to eliminate the biases associated with self-assessment instruments (Mikolajczak & Bodarwe, 2010).

Researches on Emotional Intelligence has gathered significant momentum, it also provides comprehensive operational feature of the emotional aspects of the character, and the primary benefits of Emotional Intelligence theory of trait are found in conceptual content and illustrative strength.

4. Emotions & Translation Studies:

Nowadays, the more communities become multicultural the more translators and interpreters become the main mediators in building the bridge between speakers of different languages, but the concept of Emotional Intelligence become the most essential competence for a professional translator including a number of interpersonal and intercultural skills, such as : adaptability to new situations, ability to self-evaluate and knowing how to interact with different communities, in order to better understand the translating process.

As far as Emotion is concerned for professional Translators/Interpreters, Students as well, a large number of studies have documented a positive relationship between the Emotional Intelligence feature and welfare-related variables team performance, group cohesiveness, depression and anxiety, extraversion and social competence, enhanced regulation abilities ...etc. Thus, the higher their trait Emotional Intelligence is, the more translators perform in their work, especially in affect related subjects, so it can be easier for them to learn more languages, and then to translate.

Other studies highlighted the fact that students with some specific personal aspects are most likely to grasp and understand authors' expressed emotions which give them the opportunity to build a successful translating and interpreting career. Actually, « ... *the translation of texts with high emotive potential is likely to be more successfully undertaken by an emotionally intelligent translator, but that texts with low emotive potential do not have the same requirement, as they rely less on the ability to the translator to regulate and manage emotions.* » (Hubscher-Davidson, 2013).

There is no doubt, a translator must mediate cultures effectively, understand the needs and expectations of a target reader, and know how to successfully communicate the message of a source author to target readers or target audience. Today, the ability of translators to understand and transfer context-sensitive and sensitive information is recognized as a key skill of qualified translation professionals, which could have a significant impact on the current training of translators and interpreters. Many also discussed the links between translation and creativity. In fact, research in the field of creative writing has generated a number of interesting results on the role and the impact of emotions and effects on the writing process (Lin, 2006). The function of intuition has been shown to be significantly and positively linked to higher levels of Emotional Intelligence. This correlation between high Emotional Intelligence and levels of creativity in writers is consistent with the results of studies which indicate a much higher probability of suffering from affective disorders, depression and anxiety, often considered to be the result of intense sensitivity, deep empathy and other Emotional attributes.

The differences in creativity levels between translation practitioners have been theoretically linked for a long time to the different emotional meaning that a text could have for each of them. Therefore, today Translation Studies research is looking more and more to demonstrate it scientifically by borrowing measures in the field of psychology to better understand the processes of translation and interpretation.

Results of comparative research between personal parameters show that people with high levels of negative affectively declared lower skill levels as interpreters, that the dimension of emotional stability is essential as a predictor of the competence perceived by the interpreter, and that the personality has an impact on the self-perception of the interpreters competence (Hubscher-Davidson, 2013). Another study using self-assessment measures to explore the attitude profiles of translators and interpreters led them to obtain information on linguistic self-confidence, motivation and linguistic anxiety. Some other studies have explored non-cognitive psychological and behavioral processes to emphasize the

importance of studying the personal and individual traits of translators and interpreters. Self-perceived intuition and emotional traits had a positive impact on the performance of the translation.

5. Translation Studies & Emotional Intelligence Explorations:

Psychological based researches on Emotional Intelligence in higher education contexts have mostly focused on the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and academic performance. Actually, the Emotional Intelligence may have a more pronounced impact on students' academic performance when attitude requirements tend to outweigh their intellectual resources, as well as professional translators and interpreters.

The focus is more especially on trait Emotional Intelligence due to the increased experimental support they attract, and because of actions related to non-emotional perception should be studied along with cognitive abilities in translation process research.

Some studies that benefited from measures based on ability models found positive links between Emotional Intelligence and academic performance. Therefore, these results can be usefully reflected in the context of the training of translators and interpreters, and deserve further explorations (Davou, 2007).

Other studies wondered how to better study the Emotional Intelligence subject scientifically. The construction of Emotional Intelligence generated a large body of researches and questions of validity, reliability, factor structures and convergence were discussed at length, which resulted in two favored, widely marketed and commonly used Emotional Intelligence instruments for each school of thought.

Researchers interested in the subjective nature of emotions and facets of the personality linked to affect often choose to operationalize the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, and then well-established measures, and Translation Studies researchers interested in further exploring cognitive and emotional capacities could usefully integrate them into their empirical study plans.

Thus, it should be a priority to think carefully about the purpose and objectives of the research and to decide on the most appropriate method or combination of methods to apply. It would then be possible to test the hypothesis that literary translators could have higher levels of Emotional Intelligence trait than other professional translators.

A comparative study of the Emotional Intelligence of professional literary translators and trainees could be carried out to better understand the personality profile of a literary translators. However, line and ability instruments are not the only appropriate means for investigating the Emotional Intelligence of translators and interpreters, and it would be unwise to rely entirely on these tools.

It would appear that the use of a mixed approach to study the Emotional Intelligence of translators and interpreters, with a focus on both the process and the product, will produce rich narratives and, in many cases, will be a more successful survey method than just using a self-report questionnaire.

6. Emotions & Translators/Interpreters:

The ability to evaluate and communicate with each other's passions is a key aspect of intercultural communication, and therefore a critical skill for translators and interpreters. Besides being a competent linguist, the translator needs to mediate effectively between cultures, to understand the needs and expectations of target readers, and how to successfully convey the source author's message to target readers, or to a target audience, this is part of what psychologists call Emotional Intelligence.

In today's world, where borders and multicultural societies are increasingly disappearing, it is clear that translators and interpreters have a major role in building bridges between cultures and in mediating between speakers of different languages. It seems probable that exploring the Emotional Intelligence of translators and interpreters can add something to understand their business processes. In turn, this information can have an important impact on how translators and interpreters are trained.

One of the areas where the importance of personal traits in performing translation may be more evident is the area of literary translation, where discussions of the translator's style and individual characteristics emerge. The links between creativity and emotion are highlighted by indicating that creativity may be a product of the different emotional importance that motivates different ideas of different people.

Successful translators are sometimes described as emotionally involved individuals who derive their personal and contextual meanings from texts, and create personal relationships with source text authors and presumed target text readers. The implications Emotional Intelligence are that translation of texts with a high emotional potential is more likely to be performed more successfully by an Emotionally Intelligent Translators, but texts with a low emotional potential do not have the same requirement, because they depend to a lesser degree on a translator's ability to organize and manage emotions.

In the fields of writing, many psychometric scales have already been used in practical studies to highlight aspects of creativity and efficiency. Empirical studies at Translations Studies would also benefit from the further integration of concepts and metrics based on non-cognitive psychology in their work (Bergen, 2009).

It is important to remember that the process research conducted to date has not always yielded consistent results and included relatively small samples of participants making it difficult to generalize the results.

Using psychometrics to take advantage of the feeling and emotions of translators and interpreters, along with other methodologies, may go a long way towards providing a level of consistency and validity for empirical studies in the technical summary.

7. Conclusion:

Some groundbreaking studies have started to use the tools available from educational and personal psychology to test the « soft skills » between interpreters and translators. However, Emotional Intelligence has not been

explored yet and researchers may ask about the optimal way of scientific investigations of the subject of Emotional Intelligence, the most appropriate methods to use in order to uncover links between levels of Emotional Intelligence and aspects such as a translator or a translator's performance.

The aspect of emotional and individual differences is important in translation and interpreting, and Emotional Intelligence can help to know the reason behind behaviour of the translator and interpreters, through :

1. exploring available psychometric tools that have already been developed for this purpose, because the collaborative work with scientists in the field of psychology adds to the efforts of cross borders;
2. Exploring the Emotional Intelligence for translators and interpreters is to reflect on the research goal and objectives, and decide on the most appropriate method or set of methods for application.

References:

1. Bergen, David (2009) « **The role of metacognition and cognition conflict in the development of translation competence** », In : Across Languages and Cultures, N°02, Vol. 10, December 2009.
2. Davou, Bettina (2007) « **Interaction of emotion and cognition in the processing of textual material** », In : Meta, N°01, Vol. 52, Mars 2007.
3. Gardner, Howard (1983) « **Frames of mind** », Basic Books Inc, New York.
4. Hatzidaki, Anna (2007) « **The Process of Comprehension from a Psycholinguistic Approach: Implications for Translation** », In : Meta, N°01, Vol. 52, Mars 2007.
5. Hubscher-Davidson, Séverine (2013) « **Emotional Intelligence and Translation Studies: A New Bridge** », In : Meta, N°02, Vol. 58, Août 2013.
6. Lin, Xavier (2006) « **Creative Translation, Translating Creatively: A case study on aesthetic coherence in Peter Stambler's Han Shan** », In: Translation and Creativity : Perspective on Creative Writing and Translation Studies, Continuum, London and New York.

7. Mavrovelli, Stella and Sanchez-Ruiz, Maria José (2010) « **Trait Emotional Intelligence influences on academic achievement and school behaviour** », In : British Journal of Educational Psychology, N°81, December 2010.
8. Mikolajczak, Moira and Bodarwe, Kerrin (2010) « **Association between EEG asymmetries and emotional intelligence among adults: Personality and individual differences** », Springer, New York.
9. Papavassiliou, Périclès (2007) « **Traductologie et sciences cognitives: une dialectique prometteuse** », In Meta, N°01, Vol. 52, Mars 2007.
10. Petrides, Kostantinos (2010) « **Trait Emotional Intelligence theory : Industrial and Organizational Psychology : Perspectives on Science and Practice**», Springer, New York.
11. Salovey, Peter and Mayer, John (1999) « **Emotional Intelligence, Imagination, Cognition and Personality** », Dude Publishing, New York.