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Does personality matter in translation?

Though a comparatively young discipline, Translation Studies has already managed to win the status of an interdisciplinary field that shelters a number of 'disciplinary migrants', struggling to solve the riddles of translation as a process and as a product (cf. Gile 2008). Both approaches, process-oriented and product-oriented, share one common 'feature' – the agent of translation. A human being capable of linguistic, cultural and interpersonal mediation, a professional whose competences should embrace the whole complexity of tasks.

Following Holmes (1988) and his map of TS, Chesterman (2009) suggests adding a new branch called 'Translator Studies'. Such a proposal testifies to the existing gap in the TS research into the area of translator's personality. A number of scholars − Snell-Hornby, O'Brien, Jääskeläinen, Tirkkonen-Condit, Tymoczko, Whyatt, to name but a few − have oftentimes referred to this lacking field, but little has been done so far.

The anthropological line of approach to translation can be traced back to Reiss (1971) who was the first to apply the characterological typology designed by Schpranger (1922) to translator's personality, and later Henderson (1987) used Cattell's 16PF personality inventory to compare the personality profiles of conference interpreters and translators. A very interesting research was conducted by Hubscher-Davidson (2009) who used MBTI to gauge how the personalities of translation students affected their decision making processes.

It was Savory who in his book 'The art of translation' (1968) was one of the first to postulate that 'to linguistic knowledge and literary capacity, a translator must add *sympathy, insight, diligence and conscientiousness*' (Savory 1968:35), and then, much later, Robinson in his 'Becoming a translator' added that 'by necessity translators and interpreters carry a wealth of different *"selves"* or *"personalities"'* (Robinson 2003:22). So what are those personality characteristics of translators that positively correlate with their professional performance? What are the peculiarities of the psycho-physical disposition (Göpferich 2007, TransComp competence model) or psycho-physiological component (PACTE competence model 2003) of the translator's profile that contribute to their expertise?

In this presentation I intend to report on a pilot study aimed to test a hypothesis that a set of personality traits might prove decisive for successful development of translation competence. Data obtained from the two sets of psychometric tools, HEXACO-PI and MBTI measuring traits and cognitive types, as well as the log files received from Translog, the key-logging software to record the translation process (Jakobsen 2005), will be triangulated with the impacted areas in the translation product. The pilot study will be conducted on three groups of participants: translation trainees, professional translators and a control group of specialists in other fields of expertise. The results of the study are aimed to serve as a basis for further research into constructing the personality profile of translators.

The implications of the study concern primarily translation trainees who, entering the profession, should be given an opportunity to recognize their own personalities and work on their strong and weak points to successfully develop the necessary competences.

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