

Trait Emotional Intelligence and Translation: A Study of Professional Translators

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A study of 155 professional translators was carried out to examine the relationship between trait emotional intelligence (trait EI) and literary translation, job satisfaction and career success. Participants were surveyed and their answers were correlated with scores from an emotional intelligence measure, the TEIQue. The analysis revealed that literary and non-literary translators have different trait EI profiles. Some significant correlations were found between trait EI and the variables of job satisfaction, career success, and literary translation experience. This is the first study to examine the effect of EI on translator working practices. Findings illustrate that trait EI may be predictive of some aspects of translator behaviour and highlight the relevance of exploring the emotional intelligence of professional translators.

Keywords: professional translators; literary translation; job satisfaction; career success; trait emotional intelligence

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, emotional intelligence (EI) has received increasing attention in the psychological literature, leading to applications in various settings, e.g., organizational, educational, and clinical. There is also much popular interest in EI, for example Goleman's 1995 best-seller. As highlighted in O'Boyle et al. (2011) there has been increasing evidence of the predictive and construct validity of EI, and recent work has highlighted its key role in areas such as job competency, job satisfaction and well-being. Indeed, the ability to successfully recognize emotions in others and to regulate one's own emotions could be the key to effective social interaction and a happier self.

As discussed elsewhere (Cherniss 2010; Matthews, Zeidner, and Roberts 2004; Matthews, Zeidner, and Roberts 2007; Petrides 2010) EI researchers have conceptualized and assessed the construct differently with two distinct conceptualizations, trait EI and ability EI, coexisting in the literature. While ability EI is defined as an intelligence and employs maximum performance measures (Kong, Zhao, and Yu 2012; Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso 2008; Siegling et al. 2012), trait EI is defined as a constellation of emotion-related dispositions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies (Petrides, Pita, and Kokkinaki 2007). Trait EI captures how people experience, identify, understand and use their emotions and those of others, and is measured via self-report. Research has provided strong support for the trait EI theory and, in contrast to ability EI, the operationalization of trait EI is said to enable a straightforward measurement of subjective emotions (Petrides, Niven, and Mouskouni 2006).

The trait EI construct has been studied in relation to various domains such as emotional labour (Austin, Dore, and O'Donovan 2008), well-being (Schutte and Malouff 2011), mental health (Mikolajczak et al. 2007), job performance (Joseph and Newman 2010), and life satisfaction (Kong et al. 2012). Recent studies support the predictive validity of trait

EI in various settings (Davis and Humphrey 2012; Ferrando et al. 2011; Gardner and Qualter 2010) and high trait EI is said to contribute to increased motivation, planning, mood regulation, stress resistance and decision-making (Davis and Humphrey 2012; Downey et al. 2008; Ferrando et al. 2011), among other areas.

According to Bhullar, Schutte, and Malouff (2013, 3) emotionally intelligent people are successful in adapting to circumstances that elicit emotion, either through the effective regulation of emotion or through an efficient application of coping and interpersonal skills. This paper explores the trait EI profiles of 155 professional translators, and examines the links between trait EI, literary translation experience, job satisfaction and career success. Trait EI may be relevant for translation work in terms of coping with a wide range of texts to be translated, some of which may elicit strong emotional responses (e.g., rape depositions). In addition, a growing body of literature indicates the predictive validity of emotional intelligence in foreign language reading and writing comprehension, both of which are important for successful translating. For example, evidence indicates that EI strategies have a considerable effect on writing performance and understanding other people's perspectives, and that literature-based activities have the potential to raise levels of EI (Abdolrezapour 2013; Abdolrezapour and Tavakoli 2012; Shao, Yu, and Ji 2013). The notion that successful writing necessitates an ability to communicate and empathize with readers in a socially meaningful manner (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1987; Shao, Yu, and Ji, 2013; Weigle 2002) also entails that translators with these skills ought to be particularly effective and competent at their jobs.

2. Trait EI and Translation

There is a current lack of interdisciplinary work between personality psychology and translation studies. However, a number of findings from trait EI studies bear relevance for the

translation process. For example, high trait EI has been shown to correlate with greater ability to understand and express emotions (Dawda and Hart 2000; Parker, Taylor, and Bagby 2001) and to focus on and engage with emotional experiences and information (Mikolajczak et al. 2012; Sinclair and Feigenbaum 2012). It could therefore be hypothesized that translators with high trait EI might be better equipped than their low trait EI peers to understand and handle the emotional or sensitive material contained in a source text, and might be more adept at transferring emotions from one language and culture to another.

Texts of an emotional or sensitive nature can be found in many fields where translation takes place (e.g., legal or clinical settings). However, the nature of literary translation makes it a particularly relevant domain for trait EI. Mikolajczak et al. (2007) highlight the relevance of trait EI for professions with an affective component, and the information provided on the website of the American Literary Translators Association (ALTA) clearly highlights the affective dimension of the literary translation profession: “Literary translation bridges the delicate emotional connections between cultures and languages [...] the translator recreates the refined sensibilities of foreign countries and their people.” (ALTA 2010a, “What is Literary Translation?” para. 1) Exploring whether trait EI profiles differ between literary and non-literary translators is the first step to finding out whether emotion-related traits might be associated with literary translation work.

It is of note that recent research on creativity has also highlighted the importance of exploring affect-related processes (e.g., Hansenne and Legrand 2012). As professional literary translators often need to be very creative, it is relevant that recent studies aiming to investigate the association between creativity and trait EI found that personality and emotional aspects play a central role in creativity (Russ 1993, 1998; Sánchez-Ruiz et al. 2011). For example, artists were found to benefit from higher levels of sensitivity and emotion expressiveness (Feist 1998; Sánchez-Ruiz et al. 2011). Bayer-Hohenwarter (2011)

has also discussed the possible profiling of translators in terms of translational creativity. Thus, the present study further explores these lines of research by looking at whether traits relating to affective processes vary across different areas of the translation profession.

3. Trait EI, Job Satisfaction and Career Success

Evidence has shown that trait EI predicts career related performance outcomes and is directly relevant to job satisfaction and performance (Ahmetoglu, Leutner, and Chamorro-Premuzic 2011). According to scholars (Kafetsios and Zampetakis 2008; Vesely, Saklofske, and Nordstokke 2014), employees with high trait EI are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs because they are better able to appraise and regulate their own emotions than employees with low trait EI. Platsidou (2010) suggests that, in a working context, people with high trait EI may be better at identifying feelings of frustration and stress, and regulating those feelings to reduce stress, but that people with low trait EI will be less aware of their feelings and less able to cope when faced with difficult situations, thus increasing their level of stress and decreasing their level of job satisfaction.

Success at work is also positively associated with various trait EI dimensions such as self-esteem, optimism and conflict resolution (e.g., Di Fabio and Saklofske 2014). People can make use of both positive and negative emotions to improve their work performance, as it has been shown that emotionally intelligent people make strategic use of their emotions despite possible hedonic costs (Mikolajczak et al. 2012). For example, it could be argued that translators who experience positive emotions, such as enthusiasm, may be motivated to improve the quality of their translation work or to provide better service to their clients. However, at times, experiencing some negative emotions, such as anxiety, could also promote greater focus on the task at hand. Regulating these different emotions is essential and evidence shows that emotionally resilient people, and people with high trait EI, are more

likely to advance to managerial positions, suggesting that employees with high trait EI are more adept at using their emotions to facilitate job performance (Siegling, Sfeir, and Smyth 2014).

Despite the growing interest in EI, no research to my knowledge has yet explored the relationship between trait EI and career success or between trait EI and job satisfaction in the translation profession. This study aims to bridge this gap and provide further empirical evidence that trait EI may predict both job satisfaction and performance.

In addition, EI can be an important factor for entrepreneurship, as several authors have demonstrated that higher trait EI is associated with effective interaction with other people and is therefore necessary to exploit opportunities and innovations (Ahmetoglu et al. 2011; Chell 2008; Chell and Baines 2000). This relationship between EI and entrepreneurial behaviour is relevant for freelance translators and interpreters who often have to create business, recognize and exploit opportunities, and adapt their practice in line with market demands and/or technological innovation. Therefore, it is highly relevant for translators that emotionally intelligent individuals are said to benefit from higher affectivity informing creative dispositions and enabling innovation (Ahmetoglu et al. 2011; Amabile et al. 2005).

4. The Present Study

The main aim of the present study is to examine the trait EI of 155 professional translators, with a particular focus on the relations between trait EI and experience in literary translation, job satisfaction and career success. The 'career success' variable includes a self-assessment of job performance alongside other indicators of what constitutes success in translation, namely prize winning and experience of publishing one's work. Having one's translations published and winning prizes are considered indicators of career success in the translation profession (e.g., ALTA 2010b).

The first objective of the study is to explore differences in the trait EI profiles of literary and non-literary translators. This objective is exploratory, as there has been no empirical research conducted in this area. As described above, a related objective is to explore whether the amount of literary translation experience is related to high trait EI. The second and third objectives are to assess whether job satisfaction and career success in translation work are positively associated with trait EI. In light of the preceding literature, the following hypotheses were therefore formulated:

Hypothesis 1a. There is a difference in the trait EI scores of literary and non-literary translators.

Hypothesis 1b. The trait EI scores of professional translators will vary according to the amount of literary translation experience

Hypothesis 2. Translators' trait EI scores will associate positively with job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3. Translators' trait EI scores will associate positively with career success.

4.1 Method

4.1.1 Participants

The sample used in this study comprised 155 professional translators, with 122 women and 33 men (mean age = 47 years, standard deviation = 14.302 years, age range = 21-87 years).

Participants were contacted through professional translation associations world-wide, including: Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI), British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT), Society of Authors' Translators Association (TA), Conseil Européen des Associations de Traducteurs Littéraires (CEATL), German Federal Association of Interpreters and Translators (BDÜ), Association for Professional Translators and Interpreters in Catalunya (APTIC), Spanish Association of Translators, Copy-editors and Interpreters

(ASETRAD), American Literary Translators Association (ALTA) and American Translators Association (ATA). This list does not include possible re-postings by participants on other websites or blogs. Approximately 70% of participants indicated that their occupational status was self-employed. In terms of mother-tongue, 93 reported this to be British or American English, 17 German, 12 French, 8 Spanish, 4 Italian, 2 Russian, 1 Dutch, 1 Farsi, 1 Latvian, 1 Portuguese, 1 Serbian, 1 Slovenian, 1 Swedish. Some participants reported that they had two mother-tongues: 7 Catalan/Spanish, 1 Brazilian Portuguese/English, 1 English/French, 1 English/Italian, 1 English/Tagalog, 1 Scottish/English, 1 Spanish/English.

As can be seen, as a result of the purposive sampling method employed, there is a higher proportion of self-employed, English mother-tongue, and women translators in the study. This over-representation impacts on the representative nature of the sample and the results of the research cannot be generalized to the entire population of professional translators. Ideally, this study should be replicated in other settings and with other translators. Nonetheless, it is of note that the data did not highlight a difference in the psychological features of these subgroups¹. The relatively large sample size also contributes to increasing ecological validity.

4.1.2 Measures

Background questionnaire. Professional translators were first surveyed with a detailed background questionnaire in English enquiring as to years of experience, type of qualifications and working languages, as well as experience in publishing translations, prizes won and membership of professional associations. Demographic information was also collected, including age and gender. This enabled the researcher to obtain a detailed picture of the translation profession and of professional translators as a group, and to determine

¹ The independent samples t-tests carried out found no significant differences in global trait EI as regards gender ($t_{(155)} = -.50, p = .62$), employment status ($t_{(155)} = .70, p = .49$), or mother-tongue ($t_{(150)} = -.63, p = .53$).

which translators are professional literary translators. Please refer to the appendix for a copy of the background questions asked.

The background questionnaire included two questions of relevance to the present study. The first asked translators to identify themselves as either literary translators or non-literary translators. CEATL's definition of an active literary translator was provided for this purpose, whereby a literary translator is a translator publishing at least one literary translation every two to three years (CEATL, 2010a). The answer to this question enabled the identification of two categories of translators, literary and non-literary translators, for the purposes of hypothesis 1a. The second question asked all translators taking part in the study to indicate their level of experience in undertaking published literary translation over the course of their working lives. Indeed, some translators may not be active literary translators in CEATL's sense, but may still have had some experience of undertaking literary translations. For example, they may have published a great number of literary translations several years ago before a career change, or they may be publishing literary translations at a slower rate than one literary translation every two to three years. If translators taking part in the study had no experience in published literary translation, they could indicate this by selecting the appropriate option (explained in section 4.1.4). This second question therefore enabled the identification of different levels of literary translation experience, for the purposes of hypothesis 1b.

Trait emotional intelligence. Trait EI was measured using the TEIQue (Petrides 2009), which is a psychometrically robust instrument (Mikolajczak et al. 2007) containing 153 items, covering 15 emotion-related facets and 4 factors. The 15 facets map onto the trait EI sampling domain, and each test item belongs to a single facet (e.g., empathy). Facets are narrower than factors (e.g., emotionality) which, in turn, are narrower than global trait EI.

Participants were asked to rate their agreement on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from ‘completely disagree’ to ‘completely agree’. Sample items include “I’m usually able to find ways to control my emotions when I want to”, “It is easy for me to find the right words to describe my feelings” and “Imagining myself in someone else’s position is not a problem for me”. A global score was computed, with higher scores representing higher levels of trait EI. There are 22 language versions of the TEIQue and non-English versions were made available upon request. The internal consistency (alpha) for overall trait EI in this study was found to be high at .87.

4.1.3 Procedure

Participants completed the first questionnaire online (SurveyMonkey platform), and were then directed to another website that hosted the TEIQue. Once the TEIQue was downloaded and completed, participants emailed the file to a specified email address. A total of 155 participants completed and returned both questionnaires and provided informed consent. All personal data were coded and anonymised, thus ensuring confidentiality. Other studies have shown that electronic methods of data collection are reliable, valid, cost-effective and efficient (e.g., Kong, Zhao, and You, 2012).

4.1.4 Statistical Analyses

All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS. For the question: “Over the space of your working life, what level of experience of published literary translation do you feel you have had?”, participants chose one of 5 possible options in percentages [no experience 0%, little experience 0-20%, some experience 20-50%, quite a lot of experience 50-75%, extensive experience 75-100%]. The percentages refer to the proportion of time dedicated to this

activity since entry onto the labour market. Mean averages were then obtained by allocating a single number to each percentage level (e.g., 0% = 1, 0-20% = 2 etc.).

The prize winning data was drawn from the following item response in the background questionnaire: “If you have won any prizes or awards for published translations, please give details”. This data was converted to numeric values when inputted in SPSS to represent the number of awards won (e.g., Austrian State Prize for Literature Translation = 1; Susan Sontag Award Honorable Mention and Hanging Loose Press Translations Award = 2 etc.).

Data on self-perceptions of job satisfaction and job success were drawn from participants’ answers to the following questions: “How good are you at your line of work?” and “How happy in your job are you?” Participants rated their agreement on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from ‘completely disagree’ to ‘completely agree’.

5. Results

5.1 Literary Translation

5.1.1 Literary and non-literary translators

Descriptive statistics for literary and non-literary translators are reported in Table 1.

Alongside means and SDs of the variables under study, columns in the table show the results of the t-test (means comparison) and Cohen's *d* (effect size). The rows in the table list the trait EI facets and factors.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

An independent samples t-test was carried out to compare the trait EI mean values of the literary and non-literary translators. The proximity of the global trait EI scores for the two

groups masks some important discrepancies in the individual factors and facets. As displayed in Table 1, there are statistically significant² differences in the scores of literary and non-literary translators on the following facets: *emotion regulation* ($t_{(155)} = 2.40, p = .018$) and *stress management* ($t_{(155)} = 2.16, p = .033$). The two groups also differ significantly in their scores for the trait EI factor of *self-control* ($t_{(155)} = 2.12, p = .036$). After controlling for sample size, *stress management* still differed significantly at the $p = .024$ level and *self-control* at the $p = .066$ level. The table also shows small to moderate effect size (Cohen's $d \geq 0.2$) for the factor of *self-control* ($d = 0.36$) and the facets of *self-esteem* ($d = 0.2$), *emotion expression* ($d = 0.28$), *emotion regulation* ($d = 0.42$), *social awareness* ($d = 0.32$) and *stress management* ($d = 0.37$), as well as global trait EI ($d = 0.21$).

5.1.2 Literary translation experience

As can be seen in Table 2, a means comparison shows that literary ($M = 3.4$) and non-literary ($M = 1.5$) translators taking part in the study differ significantly in terms of their published literary translation experience ($t_{(154)} = 13.75, p = .00$). This is logical as, due to the nature of their work, literary translators are likely to have published more literary works. It is of note, however, that translators' trait EI is positively associated with quantity of literary translation experience for both literary and non-literary translators (Fig. 1).

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

INSERT FIG 1 HERE

² It is important to note that, in statistics, statistical significance refers to whether differences observed between groups being studied are "real" or whether they are simply due to chance. In this case, statistical significance does not necessarily mean that results are important, but that the differences found between literary and non-literary translators on specific facets is unlikely to be a result of chance alone. In most sciences, results yielding a p-value of .05 or lower are considered statistically significant.

Bivariate correlations between trait EI (global, factor and facet scores) and published literary translation experience are presented in Table 3. The table shows the aforementioned positive association between trait EI and experience in literary translation ($r = .12$). It also reveals that *emotion expression*, *emotion regulation*, *social awareness*, *stress management* and *self control* are all positively associated with literary translation experience ($r = .16, p = .051$; $r = .16, p = .055$; $r = .19, p < .05$; $r = .19, p < .05$; $r = .16, p < .05$).

When further broken down by category (literary versus non-literary translators), literary translation experience is significantly correlated with the facet of *emotion expression* in non-literary translators ($r = .25, p = .01$). However, for the literary translators a negative correlation with literary translation experience was shown for some facets, including global trait EI ($r = -.09, p = .56$).

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

5.2 Job Satisfaction

As expected, a Pearson correlation analysis confirmed that job satisfaction is positively and significantly linked with trait EI ($r = .35, p < .01$). It would therefore appear that the higher the level of trait EI, the likelier it is that translators will be satisfied with their jobs.

5.3 Career Success

The variables employed to measure career success were drawn from the item responses for published literary translation experience, prize winning and job success, discussed in section 4.1.4. Table 4 displays the intercorrelations among these variables.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

Bivariate correlations showed that trait EI correlated positively and significantly with self-perceived career success ($r = .17, p < .05$). This could suggest that translators with low trait EI do not perceive themselves to be as successful in their jobs as their high trait EI peers.

The Pearson correlations also revealed positive and significant correlations between self-perceived career success and published translation experience ($r = .25, p < .01$) as well as between self-perceived career success and prize winning ($r = .18, p < .05$). In addition, published translation experience also correlated very significantly with prize winning ($r = .47, p < .001$). Translators who believe that they are successful at their jobs therefore have more extensive experience of publishing their work, and this publication experience is strongly linked to prize winning. It must be noted that the correlations between trait EI and the variables of published translation experience ($r = .11, p < .15$) and prize winning ($r = .07, p < .40$) were not statistically significant. However, as the data trendlines depict in Fig. 2, translators high in trait EI are likely to have published more and to have gained more prizes for their work than translators low in trait EI.

INSERT FIG 2 HERE

6. Discussion

This study examined differences in professional translators' trait EI profiles. It also explored the relations between (1) trait EI and literary translation experience, (2) trait EI and job satisfaction and (3) trait EI and career success. Results supported hypotheses 1a and 1b: there

is a difference in the trait EI scores of literary and non-literary translators, with literary translators obtaining higher trait EI scores than non-literary translators; however, statistically significant differences were only identified at the factor and facet level. In addition, a positive relationship was found between trait EI scores and literary translation experience. In line with hypothesis 2, translators' trait EI scores associated positively with job satisfaction and, overall, translators' trait EI scores were also associated with career success, thus offering some support for hypothesis 3.

6.1 Trait EI and Literary Translation

In line with hypothesis 1a, literary translators obtained different (marginally higher) global trait EI scores than non-literary translators. However, differences between the two groups were only statistically significant at some facet levels. The strongest relationships were obtained with *emotion regulation* and *stress management*.

The results are consistent with studies showing that people with higher levels of trait EI are able to handle the affective nature of texts particularly well (Abdolrezapour 2013; Ghosn 2002; Shao, Yu, and Ji 2013). More specifically, high scorers in *emotion regulation* are able to appraise their emotions more accurately than low scorers and have a greater ability to control their emotions through personal insight and effort (Petrides 2009). Literary translators process complex ideas and make difficult decisions when translating and navigating between two languages and cultures. They are often said to suffer from a sense of discomfort, illegitimacy, and physical invasion by the original text (Anderson 2005; Batista 2003; Durastanti 2002). They read, analyze, dissect and recreate texts, actively considering a source author's perspective and communicating it to their target readers in socio-culturally meaningful ways. As a result, they need to be able to regulate their feelings effectively so as to prevent a negative impact on personality, identity and self-image: "Rebellion must be

choked down for the disturbing work to proceed” (Anderson 2005, 177). Due to the nature of their work, literary translators may therefore be better equipped to control their (positive and negative) feelings and emotional states than non-literary translators. Anderson (2005, 172) argues that personal readings and personal decisions happen with greater frequency in literary translation than in technical translation due to the subjective nature of literary work, which may explain the difference in emotion regulation scores between literary and non-literary translators.

Results regarding *stress management* are also in line with those of studies showing that people with higher emotional intelligence are able to manage stress effectively (Mikolajczak et al. 2009) and have a greater resilience to stress and failure (Sevdalis, Petrides, and Harvey 2007). All translators can find it difficult and stressful to make a living, but a study of literary translators’ working conditions undertaken by CEATL highlights that “nowhere in Europe can literary translators make a living under the conditions imposed on them by the ‘market’; in many countries (including some of the wealthiest) their situation can only be described as catastrophic” (CEATL 2010b, “Working Conditions,” para. 2). In view of the particularly vulnerable situation that literary translators are made to work in, and their struggle to survive in current conditions, it becomes clear why literary translators need to develop resilience and coping mechanisms so as to be able to withstand a lot of pressure and stress, which could explain their high scores in these areas. This result is also in line with research on stress management in other vulnerable professions, such as interpreters working in healthcare contexts, where aspects of personality are key for developing useful coping strategies (Bontempo and Malcolm 2012).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, as both *emotion regulation* and *stress management* are traits pertaining to the regulation of emotions and impulses, the relationship with the factor to which they belong, viz., *self-control* also reached statistical significance. It could therefore be

argued that the trait EI factor of *self-control* might play a role in the literary translation profession and, thus, deserves further investigation.

A small to moderate effect size was also found for the global score and the facets of *self-esteem*, *emotion expression* and *social awareness*. These moderately positive correlations also indicate that emotion-related dispositions could be relevant variables for literary translators. According to the TEIQue Technical Manual (Petrides 2009), translators who scored high in these areas are confident, socially sensitive, perceptive and have a gift for expressing feelings and emotion-related thoughts accurately. It could be argued that literary translators with high ability in these domains are likely to be particularly adept at bridging the “delicate emotional connections between cultures and languages” (ALTA 2010a, “What is Literary Translation?” para. 1).

Interestingly, the trait EI differences found between literary and non-literary translators could be related to vocational choice. In the same way that trait EI profiles may have a role in predisposing students to choose a specific academic field (e.g., Sánchez-Ruiz, Mavroveli, and Poullis 2013), they may also have supported translators’ vocational decisions, thus impacting on their choice to be or not to be a literary translator. The correlation between trait EI and a literary translation career is a new finding which deserves further investigation. The literature on foreign language reading and writing comprehension (e.g., Abdolrezapour 2013) indicates that individuals high in emotional intelligence are more likely to become successful writers, but also that writing practice can help to develop emotional intelligence. Future studies could usefully test the direction of the effect, as it would be interesting to find out whether literary translators are developing their emotional intelligence through their daily work. Although this point is speculative, the data showed, in line with hypothesis 1b, that trait EI scores were positively associated with literary translation experience for both the literary and the non-literary translator groups; in other words, the more experience translators

had of publishing literary translations -and therefore of working in the literary translation profession- the higher their trait EI scores were. This finding is consistent with Shao, Yu, and Ji's (2013) claim as regards the benefits of literature-based activities on EI levels and indicates that a creative literary activity, such as literary translation, could enhance levels of EI.

In line with other studies that show that the ability to stick to a training activity for many years requires drive and determination and is key to the acquirement of expertise (Petrides et al. 2006, 105), literary translation experience was positively associated with the trait EI factor of *self-control*.

Due to the specific characteristics of literary translation (e.g., echoing the style, creativity and tone of source texts), it is unsurprising that experience in literary translation also correlates with *emotion expression*, *emotion regulation*, *social awareness*, and *stress management*. The positive and statistically significant relationship between literary translation experience and the facet of *emotion expression* amongst the non-literary translator group is consonant with the above-mentioned theory that undertaking literature-based activities improves both EI and writing ability (e.g., Abdolrezapour 2013). It seems logical that, when translating literature, non-literary translators will have improved their skills in communicating and expressing emotions. In contrast, the negative association with *relationships* indicates that this facet is less likely to have been affected by increasing translation experience. Although there is evidence to suggest that the translation profession is a social one in many respects (e.g., Pym 2004; Robinson 1997), there are no convincing data to suggest that experience in translating literature would have any impact on one's capacity to maintain relationships with other people.

Interestingly, quantity of experience was not positively associated with some components of trait EI for the literary translation professionals. Although it is unclear why

this might be the case, one could speculate that the background and training of the literary translators has already conditioned them for the challenges of literary translation and, therefore, accumulating further experience in this area has less impact on the positive development of their EI than for the non-literary translator group. Indeed, translating emotional experiences into language is said to provide health gains, but this kind of emotion activation only has limited long-term benefits (Pennebaker and Chung 2011). This is partly due to the role of habituation to emotional stimuli which renders individuals less susceptible to benefit from repeated exposure to emotional stimuli. However, further research on the development of literary translators' trait EI is warranted in order to fully understand this result.

6.2 Trait EI and Job Satisfaction

The present study extends recent research on the role of trait EI in the workplace by testing for links between trait EI and job satisfaction in translators. The results underline the positive and significant role of trait EI in this relationship. In keeping with recent studies (Kafetsios and Zampetakis 2008; Lopes et al. 2006) the results demonstrated that trait EI could be an important predictor of job satisfaction.

The results, which indicate that translators with higher trait EI have higher job satisfaction, suggest that translators with high trait EI are more skilled at identifying, expressing, perceiving and regulating their emotions (c.f., Petrides 2009). Translators with high trait EI could therefore be more aware of what elicits certain emotions and more likely to understand the effects of those emotions, thus enabling them to act and react in specific ways that have an impact on job satisfaction. For instance, they may decide not to accept unrealistic work deadlines, despite financial incentives, in order to minimize stress and possible burnout.

Compared to translators with low trait EI, their high trait EI peers could be better at identifying, understanding and regulating feelings of frustration, and developing coping strategies to manage this frustration. Translators with low trait EI, on the other hand, could be less able to cope with their emotions when dealing with emotionally difficult situations encountered in the translation profession, such as lack of recognition for the value of their work, remuneration issues, working conditions, deprofessionalisation, professional isolation and lack of peer support. This situation could increase their level of frustration and decrease their level of job satisfaction.

6.3 Trait EI and Career Success

The results of the study indicate that translators with high trait EI may be more successful in their careers, suggesting that they are able to use their emotions to facilitate job performance. Due to their heightened awareness of the influence of emotions on behaviours and work-related outcomes (Petrides 2009), it could be that translators with high trait EI are able to take emotions into account and align these with the requirements of their careers thus making strategic use of emotions. For example, translators with high trait EI could experience more confidence and positivity; these emotions are a source of strength and predispose people to actions promoting the building of personal, physical and intellectual resources (Fredrickson 2001). Translators high on trait EI may therefore be more proactive and likely to compete for translation prizes. This finding is consistent with other studies on job satisfaction and performance that indicate that EI can predict various forms of career success and outcomes, including entrepreneurship (e.g., Ahmetoglu et al. 2011, Zampetakis, 2008). High trait EI has been shown to be associated with effective interactions with people and to promote creativity, innovation and exploiting of opportunities (e.g., Hansenne and Legrand 2012; Sánchez-Ruiz

et al. 2011), so it is not surprising that translators with high trait EI are more likely to experience career success.

When asked to judge their competence at their line of work, translators high in trait EI are significantly more confident about their abilities than those with lower scores. This self-assessment is borne out by the data, since translators high in trait EI outperform their peers in terms of prize-winning and quantity of published translations. Interestingly, studies have found that self-assessment of L2 proficiency is positively correlated with trait EI scores (e.g., Ożańska-Ponikwia 2013). Positive self-perceptions of one's skills in work involving more than one language could therefore be a predictor of job performance, though it is difficult to gauge the direction of the effect. It has been argued elsewhere that scores from an intelligence test could have explanatory power and become a predictor of translation success (Muñoz Martín 2010, 92), but the results presented here support the hypothesis that trait EI scores may also have some explanatory and predictive power for success in translation. However, results should be interpreted with caution as the relationship between trait EI and the variables of published translation experience and prize winning did not reach significance. It is also worth noting that high trait EI can also have maladaptive outcomes (e.g., increased susceptibility to negative mood induction) and there is therefore no magic profile of the emotionally intelligent translator (Petrides 2010; Petrides and Furnham 2003).

7. Limitations

This study contributes to enriching our understanding of trait emotional intelligence and its role in translation. However, its results must be interpreted in light of the following limitations.

Firstly, the data were collected via self-report measures which can be affected by the social desirability bias. Although it has been argued that participants have nothing to gain

from lying on an anonymous questionnaire (Dewaele and McCloskey 2014), it would be useful to triangulate methods of data collection in future studies, for example by employing in-depth interviews to obtain a more complete picture of the presence and influence of emotions on translators.

A second limitation relates to the indicators chosen to measure job success. Prize winning and published translations are prevalent in the area of literary translation, but translators in other areas might be very successful without having their work published or winning prizes. It remains very difficult objectively to measure job success in translation. Although remuneration details were provided by translators as part of the TEIQue demographics page, this information was deemed unreliable for use as there is huge variation between different national practices and different types of translation jobs. Future studies could usefully develop a more direct way to measure job success in translation.

A third limitation is the specificity of the domain. Translation is a general thematic field, but there exist sub-domains alongside literary translation (e.g., business, advertising, medical) that can be studied and even micro-domains, as noted by Sánchez-Ruiz et al. (2011, 473), such as poetry translation or novel translation. Future work should endeavour to recruit participants from these different areas, as it is not straightforward to generalize results to all types of translation work.

A fourth limitation, which applies to EI studies more generally, is the potential difference in the expression of traits across cultures. As Matthews, Zeidner, and Roberts (2012, 121) highlight, “understanding of dispositional differences in emotional functioning cannot be fully separated from the cultural context.” Though there is evidence for some generality across cultures, particularly in Western Europe, it could be argued that responses to the TEIQue provided by participants may have been influenced by cultural factors.

Finally, it seems important to recall that the sample of participants is not necessarily representative of the entire translation population, and that results of the research may not have general applicability. Further research is required to gauge whether findings may be transferable to other contexts. In addition, although the data revealed some new and interesting correlations, two points are worth noting. First, not all of the test results showed statistical significance and, even where statistically significant results were found, these are not necessarily substantively significant. Indeed, statistical significance is only a small part of an enquiry concerned with the importance of relationships (Ziliak and McCloskey 2008) and the results presented here need to be replicated with extension research before substantive significance can be claimed. Second, some of the correlation coefficients found in the study are low and therefore account for a small percentage of the variation.³ Although it is not unexpected or unusual for correlation coefficients to be low for studies attempting to predict complex human behaviour (Domino and Domino 2006, 58), low correlation coefficients can indicate low explanatory power. It is unlikely that the relationships demonstrated in this study are due to chance alone, however, caution must be taken when interpreting the results.

Some translation scholars would argue that this kind of quantitative research into individual differences does not provide a full picture of what is going on during the translation process. Although the advantages of using qualitative methods to explore translators' working practices are undeniable, such studies also suffer from limitations, such as small sample sizes and a lack of replicability and generalisability. As Ożańska-Ponikwia and Dewaele (2012, 115) suggest, psychological traits determine an individual's social behaviour and, in identifying the psychological variables of translators, we can shed a unique light on the predispositions of translators to engage in particular behaviours with the help of systematic, rigorous and controlled studies employing precise measurements.

³ I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing this point to my attention.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provided new and meaningful information as regards what impacts professional translators' work. The study provides some evidence of the relationships between trait EI and literary translation, trait EI and job satisfaction, and trait EI and career success. However, there are many avenues for further research. For example, no studies seem to have examined the influence of emotional intelligence on translation proficiency, or the development and nurturing of emotional abilities during translator training, though recent studies have shown that at least some aspects of emotional functioning can be improved (e.g., Durlak et al. 2011). We are still a long way from using measures of EI in high stakes translation assessment situations such as personnel selection, but the construct of EI clearly has great potential and needs to be considered more widely in the translation studies community. This paper marks the first step in this exciting direction.

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Appendix

Background questions

1. Please indicate your gender and year of birth:

- Male Female

19.....

2. What is your mother-tongue and what are your working languages?

3. What is the highest translation qualification you have received?

- Bachelor degree (e.g. a BA)
 Graduate degree (e.g. an MA)
 PhD in Translation
 Other (please specify)

4. If you have received any non-translation qualifications or degrees, please list these below.

5. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

- Employed by a translation company or agency
 Employed by a non-translation company or agency as a translator
 Self-employed/freelancing as a translator
 Not currently employed
 Retired

6. How many years of professional translation experience do you have? Please enter a number.

7. As a translator, do you work:

- Full time (at least 85 % of your total work hours)
 Three quarters of your total work hours
 Two thirds of your total work hours
 Half time
 A third of your total work hours
 Occasionally (less than a quarter of your total work hours)
 Rarely or otherwise (please specify)

8. Would you consider yourself a professional literary translator? [If you are retired, please answer in relation to the whole of your career]

- Yes, I am a professional literary translator - applies to literary translators who publish at least one literary translation every two to three years
 No, I am not a professional literary translator

9. Over the space of your working life, what level of experience of published literary translation do you feel you have had?

- No experience (0% of my working life)
 Little experience (0-20% of my working life)
 Some experience (20-50% of my working life)

- Quite a lot of experience (50-75% of my working life)
- Extensive experience (75-100% of my working life)

10. If you have won any prizes or awards for published translations, please give details.

11. If you are a member of any professional translation associations, please give details.

12. On a scale of 1-7, how happy in your job are you?
[1=Not at All Happy; 4=Average, 7=Very Happy]

13. On a scale of 1-7, how good are you at your line of work?
[1=Poor; 4=Average, 7=Very Good]

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Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations and t-values for Trait EI in the Literary (n = 45) and Non-literary (n = 110) Translator Groups

| Scales | <u>Literary translators</u> | | <u>Non-literary translators</u> | | t | Cohen's d |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|-------------|------------------------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Self esteem | 5.12 | .89 | 4.94 | .88 | 1.16 | .20^a |
| Emotion expression | 5.18 | 1.27 | 4.83 | 1.20 | 1.61 | .28^a |
| Self-motivation | 5.06 | .89 | 5.14 | .71 | -.60 | -.10 |
| Emotion regulation | 4.64 | .95 | 4.24 | .92 | 2.40 | .42^a |
| Happiness | 5.72 | 1.20 | 5.65 | 1.07 | .38 | .07 |
| Empathy | 5.47 | .99 | 5.35 | .78 | .83 | .14 |
| Social awareness | 4.85 | .85 | 4.58 | .85 | 1.79 | .32^a |
| Impulsivity (low) | 4.80 | .91 | 4.72 | .92 | .50 | .09 |
| Emotion perception | 5.08 | .96 | 4.97 | .84 | .70 | .12 |
| Stress management | 4.72 | .97 | 4.37 | .88 | 2.16 | .37^a |
| Emotion management | 4.50 | .93 | 4.59 | .85 | -.60 | -.10 |
| Optimism | 5.26 | 1.10 | 5.29 | 1.01 | -.13 | -.02 |
| Relationships | 5.57 | .90 | 5.56 | .72 | .09 | .02 |
| Adaptability | 4.58 | .88 | 4.54 | .94 | .25 | .04 |
| Assertiveness | 4.60 | .80 | 4.56 | .94 | .20 | .04 |
| Well being | 5.37 | .91 | 5.29 | .84 | .51 | .09 |
| Self-control | 4.72 | .80 | 4.44 | .70 | 2.12 | .36^a |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|------|-----|------|-----|------|------------------------|
| Emotionality | 5.32 | .86 | 5.18 | .67 | 1.14 | .19 |
| Sociability | 4.65 | .76 | 4.58 | .72 | .54 | .09 |
| Global trait EI | 5.01 | .67 | 4.89 | .49 | 1.25 | .21^a |

Note 1. ^a indicates a small to moderate effect size (Cohen's $d > .2$)

Note 2. Figures in this table have been rounded at the .01 level, and discrepancies may occur between sums of component items and totals.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Literary Translation Experience and Global Trait EI

| Variable | Mean | SD | N |
|--|------|-----|-----|
| Trait EI (literary translators) | 5.01 | .67 | 45 |
| Trait EI (non-literary translators) | 4.89 | .48 | 110 |
| Literary translation experience (literary translators) | 3.40 | .84 | 45 |
| Literary translation experience (non-literary translators) | 1.50 | .73 | 109 |

Table 3

Correlations between Trait EI and Literary Translation Experience

| Variable | Literary translation Experience (all translators) | Non-Literary Translators | Literary Translators |
|--------------------|--|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Self esteem | .10 | .05 | .03 |
| Emotion expression | .16[†] | .25^{**} | -.21 |
| Self-motivation | -.03 | .07 | -.07 |
| Emotion regulation | .16² | .03 | -.05 |
| Happiness | .02 | .15 | -.14 |
| Empathy | .05 | -.08 | -.08 |
| Social awareness | .19[*] | .05 | .00 |
| Impulsivity (low) | .05 | -.06 | .18 |
| Emotion perception | .07 | .13 | -.09 |
| Stress management | .19[*] | .06 | .06 |
| Emotion management | .03 | .13 | -.08 |
| Optimism | -.02 | .12 | -.09 |
| Relationships | -.05 | -.00 | -.19 |
| Adaptability | .03 | .07 | -.12 |
| Assertiveness | .06 | .02 | .02 |
| Well being | .04 | .13 | -.08 |
| Self-control | .16[*] | .01 | .07 |
| Emotionality | .09 | .13 | -.18 |
| Sociability | .11 | .07 | -.03 |
| Global trait EI | .12 | .13 | -.09 |

Note. One outlier was removed from the sample.

****.** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

¹. $p = .051$

². $p = .055$

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations between Career Success Variables (N = 154)

| Variable | M | SD | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. Global trait EI | 4.93 | .55 | .17* | .11 | .07 |
| 2. Job success | 6.06 | .78 | | .25** | .18* |
| 3. Published translations | 2.05 | 1.16 | | | .47** |
| 4. Prizes won | .12 | .33 | | | |

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

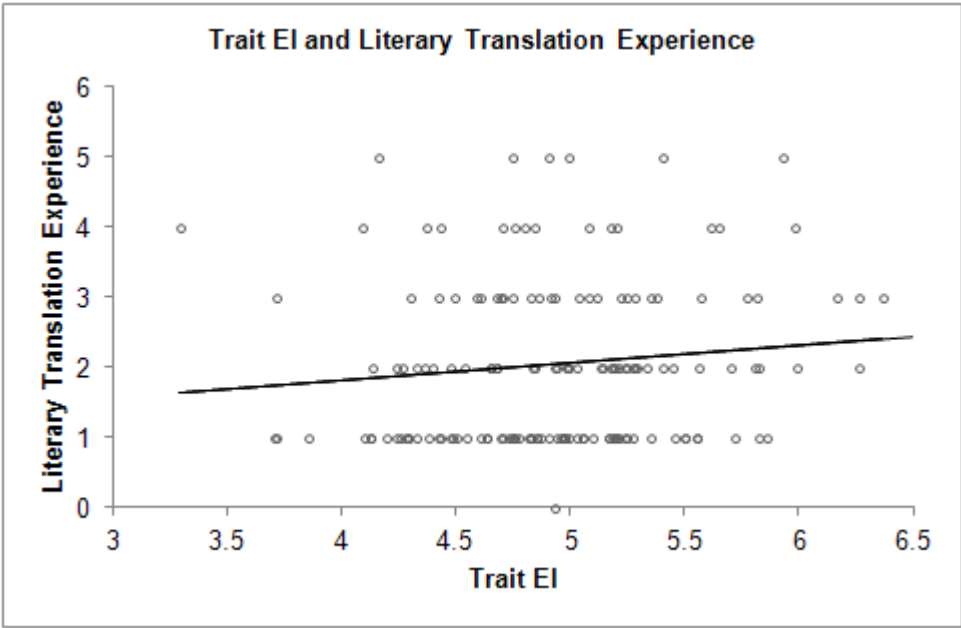


Figure 1. Relationship between Trait EI and Literary Translation Experience

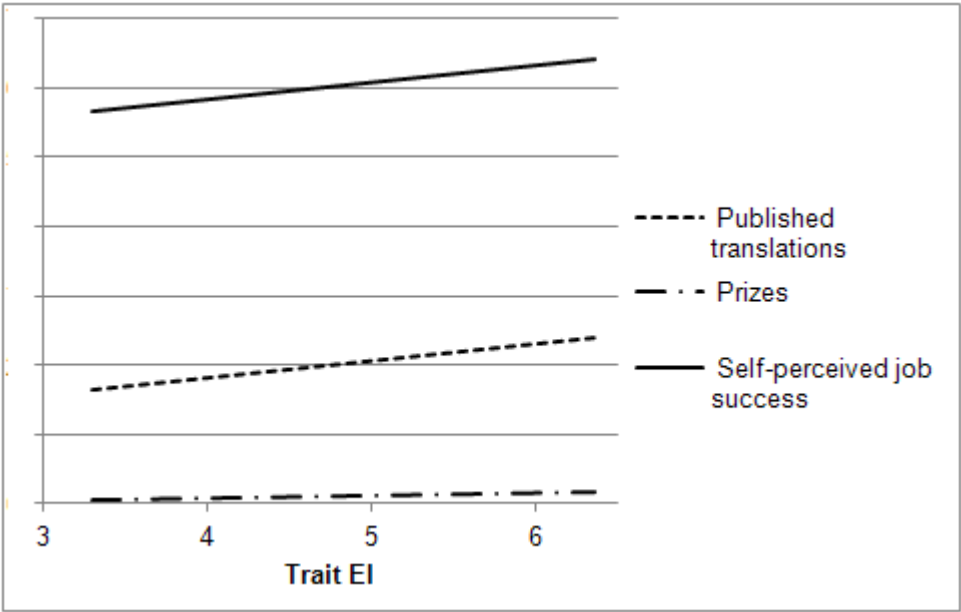


Figure 2. Relationship between Trait EI and Career Success Variables