

Is there a translator personality?

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Psychologically, there seems to be no one dominant personality trait among translators. Although recent years have seen many studies on translators' psychological behaviour, no study has led to the identification of a special translator personality. Previous studies in comparable areas, which were inspired by a growing interest in translator and interpreter personalities (Hubscher-Davidson, 2009; Bolaños Medina, 2014; Eyckmans and Rosiers, 2017), have used various psychological tests to examine the existence of a translator personality, and rather little has been found.

An experiment with 16 translators working into Persian uses the NEO-FFI personality test to find that all translators have a degree of all personality traits, even if one is dominant over others. Although this study does not show a personality profile for translators, it does find that the more years of experience a translator has, the more closed-to-experience a translator becomes and the less the translator takes account of authorial intention in the process of translation, i.e. personifies less. In other words, personification is not part of a developmental translator personality. It is also found that translators who personify in everyday life also tend to personify while translating. That is, they personify because of their psychological make-up, not because they are translators. A significant positive correlation is also found between years of experience and risk-taking: the more experienced translators personify less and take more risks. These results contrast with the findings of Eyckmans and Rosiers (2017), who found professional translators to score significantly higher on Open-mindedness, as measured by the MPQ test and on Openness-to-experience as measured by the NEO-FFI. They seem to contradict the results of this research that finds translators are particularly tolerant of ambiguity. The reasons for the different results might be that experience leads to automatisations: it teaches the translators to work faster, make decisions without reflecting on too many alternatives and assume authority for the result. It could also be a matter of cultural difference. Most of the TAPs and psychological research has been on Western European translators. There is no guarantee that what those researches find should be the same in other cultures.

Key words: translator personality, risk-management, culture, experience