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Translation, emotion and cognition

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16.1 Introduction

In an increasingly interdependent world, the indispensability of translation for overcoming language barriers and its essential contribution to supporting linguistic heterogeneity add to the need for a deeper understanding of the complex communicative events that involve authors, translators and readers and the use of two languages. Research into the translation process is central to this understanding, not least because it may allow us to give recommendations for practice and to refine teaching methods.

In its beginnings, translation process research has mainly investigated the translation process from a classical cognitive perspective that emphasized the role of information processing (e.g., Shreve & Koby, 1997). However, this perspective does not capture the entire cognitive architecture that underlies human behaviour, especially because it does not emphasize the role of emotion sufficiently. This neglect is all the more striking as, in the past few decades, psychological research has increasingly acknowledged that emotion is central to the organization of human cognition and that “few thoughts are entirely free of feelings and emotions influence thinking” (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003, p. 572). Moreover, in the neurosciences, an understanding of the neural circuits that underlie emotional experience has emerged (LeDoux, 1995).

Over the years, several translation scholars have insisted that emotion deserves increased attention, and that the phenomenon of translation should not be reduced to its rational dimensions only (Jääskeläinen, 1996; Lee-Jahnke, 2011; Risku, 2004; Robinson, 1991). However, the significance of emotion for the translation process as well as for the resulting product has for a long time not been systematically integrated into translation theory, and focused empirical investigations have been lacking. More recently, and in line with research in neighbouring disciplines, translation scholars have acknowledged the relevance of emotion for studying the translation process and have begun to examine the role of emotion in the activity of translating (Hubsch-Davidson, 2018; Lehr, 2014). The following seeks to provide an overview of how emotions have been addressed and studied by translation scholars to date.
16.1.1 Emotions during the early stages of translation research

In Translation Studies, emotions have for a long time rarely been at the centre of interest. This is certainly linked to the theoretical influence of what can now be considered the classical cognitive paradigm, which dominated cognitive psychology for several decades and placed its emphasis on rational processes in cognition. It may also be due to an unwillingness of this fairly young scientific discipline to link its object of study to what is perceived as “irrational behaviour”, as this may appear to run contrary to scientific principles and may also be considered particularly inappropriate in a discipline with an applied orientation towards professional life. Nevertheless, even if emotions were seldom the focus of interest, several translation scholars showed awareness of the importance of emotions. Already at a very early stage of translation theory, Nida and Taber (1969) put particular emphasis on the importance of rendering the emotional impact of a text in its translation. In the context of Bible translation, where the emotional reaction of the reader takes centre stage, they granted emotions an important role in reader response, as illustrated by their definition of message as “the total meaning or content of a discourse, the concepts and feelings which the author intends the reader to understand and perceive” (1969, p. 205). In their theory, where the focus was on the translation product and on assisting the translator by providing suggestions of translation procedures, Nida and Taber addressed a central aspect of the relationship between translation and emotion: the translation of a text’s emotionality. In the 1980s, important works in translation and interpreting theory (e.g., Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1984) moved the translator and cognitive processes into the centre of interest, and, at the same time, shifted attention away from the translation product. Scholars started to investigate the translation process empirically to obtain insight into the mental processes that underlie this complex cognitive activity, and began to develop models of the translation process.

16.1.2 Modelling the translation process within the classical cognitive paradigm

Research studying the translation process examines cognitive processes and therefore has to be coherent with generally prevailing theories on cognition. This has important implications for theory inside the field of translation process research, as it must seek compatibility with the paradigms of cognitive psychology, that is, the generally accepted perspectives which determine the set of practices of a discipline in a given period (Kuhn, 1962). The first dominating paradigm in translation process research became what is now considered the “classical” cognitive paradigm, which conceived of the human brain as a symbol-processing system and used computational functions to describe cognitive processes, with the aim of developing a detailed process-based understanding of cognitive functionalities (e.g. Barber, 1988). Influenced by the prior experience of people working in psycholinguistics (e.g. Shreve & Koby, 1997), the integration of this paradigm into translation process research helped to answer some fundamental questions. At an early stage of research, it allowed an elucidation of the cognitive basis of the translation process, its basic entities and their interaction with each other. Models of the translation process were framed within this paradigm and divided the process generally into three core processes that rely on encoding and decoding of information in memory: comprehension, transfer between the two languages, and production (Danks & Griffin, 1997; Hönig, 1995; Krings, 1986; Padilla et al., 1999). Language comprehension processes and the reading of the source text formed the onset of the translation process and were modelled in accordance with Kintsch’s (1988) construction-integration model (Padilla et al., 1999). This model assumes that the information in the text is
integrated and combined with the readers’ knowledge, leading to the construction of a mental model of the text. Based on the mental model and the interpretation of the source text as well as expectations towards the prospective target text, the translator then develops a macro-strategy. The macro-strategy constitutes the frame of reference for the translation and guides the associative competence (Hönig, 1995) of the translator. The associative competence is the competence that enables proper language transfer and, whenever necessary, is complemented by the translator’s competence in information mining and research. The translated text then emerges from an interplay of macro- and micro-level interpretation, judgements and decisions (Levy, 1967), processes that were seen as primarily rational in the classical cognitive paradigm.

16.1.3 The relevance of emotion for understanding translators’ decision making

The perspective of rational information processing outlined earlier allowed an understanding of the basic elements and regularities of the translation process. Yet, it was limited in its explanatory power. In a meta-analytical approach to translation research, Robinson (1991) stated as a main point of criticism that translation research had, until then, regarded translation as a fundamentally cognitive process, not taking into account the importance of emotions for human beings. In line with this criticism, further translation scholars began to include emotions in their theoretical considerations and to acknowledge the general importance of emotion for decision making during the translation process. Describing potentially influential factors in the translation process, Chesterman (2002) and Krings (2005) emphasized that Translation Studies must also take into account the effects of internal, subjective factors on translational choices and listed, among others, the translator’s emotional state, motivation, attitude towards a text and personality as potential internal causes of translator behaviour.

In a similar vein, in her model of decision making in translation, Durieux (2007) assigned a central role to emotion and to subjective evaluations of objects or events which elicit emotions and then exert an influence on information processing and translators’ decision making. More specifically, Lederer (2003) and Hansen (2006) focused on the influence of emotions elicited through the translator’s interaction with the text. Hansen explains that

be it in connection with […] some themes or words, impulses in the form of images, experiences, associations, and emotions immediately emerge and influence the process and the decision during the process. During the act of translation emotions and earlier experiences […] are activated and these have an impact on the actual decisions.

2006, p. 76

In addition, in her influential interpretive model, based on the idea that the identification of sense and its re-expression underlies all translating, Lederer (2003) considers the translator’s emotional reaction to the text to be a prerequisite for the translation of the text’s emotionality and regards emotions as a necessary factor in translators’ decision making. She states that the emotionality of the text can only be translated if the translator feels the emotion of the text and experiences the text’s “affective components” (2003, p. 50).

These theoretical considerations were complemented by empirical studies, which identified several variables influencing the translation process and its components, but which could not be fully explained without considering affective aspects. For example, risk taking in decision making (Pym, 2005), the translator’s way of managing uncertainty (Angelone, 2010), as well as time pressure (Jensen & Jakobsen, 2000) and resulting stress (Bayer-Hohenwarter, 2009) were found to influence translation. The classical cognitive paradigm, however, was limited in its ability
to explain the role and influence of most of the aforementioned variables by insufficiently rec-
ognizing that humans differ from mere processing devices by being emotional creatures. As a
consequence, without entirely re-examining the assumptions underlying the classical cognitive
paradigm, the view of the translation process had to be broadened to increase the understanding
of variables inaccessible in the classical cognitive view, and to do more justice to the translator
as a human being. In the following, we will take a look at relevant neighbouring disciplines and
interface research on emotion and translation process research to respond to this need.

16.2 Core topics

16.2.1 What are emotions?
The question of the origins and nature of emotion already attracted the interest of Aristotle
and Descartes, who reflected upon the types of situations that produce special reactions and
behaviours in humans and give rise to a conscious feeling of a particular quality over a period
of time. William James (1884) is claimed to be the first psychologist who attempted to establish
a comprehensive explanation of emotion. He postulated that emotional experience arises from
bodily responses and the conscious experience of these responses. In the decades following James’s
theory, the study of emotions remained to a large extent outside the mainstream of psychology.
Based on the early conceptions of human intelligence likening the mind to a rational informa-
tion processing system (e.g., Reed, 1982), cognition and “irrational” emotion were considered
distinct concepts and human faculties, with emotion seen, rather, as a source of intrusion or
interruption. A few psychologists, however, did not lose sight of emotional phenomena and
provided increasing evidence of the interdependence of cognition and emotion. They showed
that emotions arise from our thinking and perceptions of situational meaning (Arnold, 1960;
Leventhal & Scherer, 1987; Zajonc, 1980) and revealed that emotions play a fundamental role
in decision making, “the purpose of reasoning” (Damasio, 1994, p. 165), and that people make
decisions sometimes primarily at an emotional level (Bechara, 2004). In the past few decades, the
field of affective sciences, devoted to all aspects of affect and emotion, has been steadily growing
(Sander & Scherer, 2009) and has contributed significantly to our understanding of the crucial
role emotion plays in human cognition and behaviour. Today, psychological research largely
recognizes emotion as a fundamental principle of human behaviour that derives from evolution
and neurobiological development as well as culture and organizes perception, thought and action
tendencies (Izard, 1991). Emotions are thought to very largely determine the contents and focus
of human consciousness (Izard, 2009) by activating relevant associative networks in memory,
altering attention and shifting certain behaviours upwards in response hierarchies. Physiologically,
emotions rapidly organize the responses of biological systems such as facial expression, voice and
autonomic nervous activity (Levenson, 1999). Through these means, they allow human beings to
rapidly make sense of complex environments and to efficiently adapt and respond to changing
environmental demands and stimuli that have more direct relevance for their well-being and
survival than others (Smith & Lazarus, 1990).

Definitions of affective phenomena, and in particular the term emotion, have given rise
to many controversies, and terms are still used in an inconsistent fashion (Scherer, 2005).
According to the definition by Scherer (2005, p. 697), the term emotion refers to “an episode
of interrelated, synchronized changes in the states of all or most of the five organismic sub-
systems in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus event as relevant to
major concerns of the organism”. As outlined by this definition and by Shuman and Scherer
(2014), emotions are generally viewed as episodes that can be evoked by a variety of stimuli
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(Ekman, 1992; Russell, 2003; Scherer, 2009). The emotion-eliciting stimuli can be stimuli that are indeed occurring, such as being anxious about a feedback one receives on a translation, but also remembered or imagined stimuli, such as memories of past failures or worrying about potential outcomes. As emotions are triggered by these internal or external stimuli that are of major significance to the individual, they have also been called relevance detectors. In contrast to emotions, moods refer to “affective states that are of long duration, low intensity and a certain diffuseness” (Fridja in Sander & Scherer, 2009, p. 258). Moods are not perceived as a response to a distinct event; they can, however, result from an experienced emotion. As an overarching term, including both emotions and moods, affect is used in a “generic sense for a mental state that is characterized by emotional feeling as compared with rational thinking” (Fridja & Scherer, 2009, p. 10).

16.2.2 The componential view of emotions

In addition to viewing emotions as episodes, researchers generally agree that emotions have a componential nature. That is, they involve different components which are associated with different functions and influence each other in complex ways. It is commonly assumed that five components interact during an emotion episode: the appraisal component, the action tendency component, the physiological component, the expression component and the subjective feeling component. The multi-componential nature of emotion becomes evident in the definition of emotion that we have adopted (Scherer, 2005). It can also be illustrated by self-reports of emotion (Shuman & Scherer, 2014): for example, “I didn’t have enough time to properly finalize the translation”, “I don’t want to get feedback from the client”, “I feel jittery”, and “I am afraid” refer to the different components of the emotion.

The first expression describes cognitive appraisals of the situation, including goal frustration (“I couldn’t finalize”) and lack of coping potential (“I didn’t have enough time”). Appraisals are at the onset of an emotional episode and evaluate an object or event for its emotional significance. These evaluations can be processed unconsciously or consciously (Leventhal & Scherer, 1987). They include evaluations of novelty, pleasantness, goal compatibility, coping potential, congruency with an individual’s ideal self, and conformity to an individual’s norms and values.

The second expression indicates an avoidance action tendency associated with an emotional state. The function of the action tendency component of emotion is to prioritize actions that are needed in a given situation and to ensure the preparation of appropriate action. For example, feeling afraid is associated with an urge to avoid the situation (Fridja, 1988). Moreover, action tendencies are associated with specific cognitive and motivational processes. Positive emotions, for example, are thought to broaden thought-action repertoires and to enhance creativity (Fredrickson, 1998), whereas negative emotions promote systematic and detailed information processing (Schwarz, 2002).

The third expression refers to the physiological component of emotion. This component regulates and supports the bodily reactions during an emotional response. For example, when an event is appraised as relevant to an individual, this is associated with increased activity in such brain areas as the amygdala and the frontal cortex (Sander et al., 2005). Also, action tendencies are supported by changes in the autonomic nervous system. The experience of anger, for example, goes together with an increase in heart rate and an increase of blood flow to the hands and arms (Levenson et al., 1990).

Further, observable motor activities are linked to emotion. In emotional situations, facial expressions, such as smiling or frowning, or changes in the voice, such as raised pitch, can
be apparent. The expression component of emotion serves a communicative function, for example, when we express our feelings of happiness after receiving positive feedback by smiling at the feedback giver.

The noticeable responses and changes in the appraisal, the action tendency, the physiological and the expression component, then, give rise to the particular quality of the subjective emotion experience (Scherer, 2009), which may be labelled as, for example, “I am afraid.” As a fifth component, the subjective feeling component integrates the information of the previous four components and is considered to have a monitoring function, as feeling fear enables the individual to take regulatory efforts to reduce the emotion, and feeling less fear signals that the regulation was successful. Emotion-regulatory processes, attempts to influence the quality, intensity and expression of emotions (McRae & Gross, 2009), may therefore be part of an emotion episode, especially when we try to upregulate and change negative emotional states. Individuals may undertake different strategies, such as situation selection or attentional deployment, to shape the trajectory of an emotional response (Gross & Thompson, 2007). These strategies are dependent on inter-individual differences, related to broad domains of personality and emotional competences which influence and moderate emotion processes.

16.2.3 Translation as an emotion episode—A perspective on the translation process beyond the classical cognitive approach

Based on our understanding of an emotion episode and the modelling of the translation process within the classical cognitive paradigm, the aim of this section is to integrate translation process research and recent research on emotion. We will provide a perspective on the translation process which attempts to broaden the classical cognitive approach to translation by framing the translation process within the componential view of emotion. As outlined before, this componential view of emotion enables an understanding of an emotion episode during translation by dividing it into different components. In the following, we will therefore discuss the role of the five components that form an emotion episode in the translation process.

16.2.3.1 The appraisal component during the translation process

As explained earlier, emotions are triggered by internal or external stimuli that are of major significance to the individual. During the translation process, cognitive evaluations of objects or events thus form the onset of an emotion episode. These appraisals are based on the translator’s subjective perception of the circumstances, and the result of this cognitive evaluation is assumed to produce changes in the other four components of emotion, leading to different emotional states and an adaptation to the current situation. A translator may, for example, be happy about a particular translation solution or be worried about the functioning of a translation memory.

In the translator’s workplace, potentially emotion-eliciting stimuli can be divided into four major groups: the text that is translated, performance assessments, the translator’s working conditions and the translator’s personal well-being. Emotion-eliciting stimuli during the translation process can be not only actually occurring stimuli but also remembered or imagined stimuli, such as past experiences or worry about potential positive or negative outcomes of one’s actions. Moreover, two types of emotions can be distinguished: integral and incidental emotions. Integral emotions, such as text-related emotions, refer to emotional responses that are directly linked to the object of judgement or decision and are experienced through direct exposure to the object itself or in response to some representation of it. In the translator’s work, the text that is translated constitutes an important potential stimulus, as emotions are a vital part of the mental representation of texts (Hansen, 2006; Lederer, 2003). During the translation process, emotional
responses to text content and aesthetic responses co-exist. A translator can, for example, get annoyed because of the poor style of a text or be moved by the fate of a person described in a narrative. Incidental emotions, on the other hand, are unrelated to the judgements or decisions being made during translation and are elicited through other stimuli that are present in the translation situation (Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003). Performance assessments, for example feedback during training or feedback from revisors or clients, are an important group of appraisals associated with incidental emotions. In addition, the translator’s working conditions involve a range of emotional stimuli. For example, time pressure, submission deadlines, job uncertainty, adaptation to working with new translation technologies, contacts with clients or other team members, and workload have the potential to elicit a range of positive and negative incidental emotions as well as stress. The last term refers to a particular emotional response to “either acute or chronic strains” (Uchino et al., 2009, p. 383). The last group of appraisals can be subsumed under the category that relates to the translator’s personal well-being. These appraisals depend on stimuli entirely external to the translation situation. For example, anger elicited by a traffic jam in the morning can shape the emotional state of the translator at work.

16.2.3.2 The action tendency component of emotion and its influence on translators’ decisions

The action tendency component of emotion ensures the preparation and direction of appropriate action during an emotion episode. It is of crucial importance in the context of translation, as action tendencies are associated with specific cognitive and motivational processes, which can influence the translator’s information processing, perception and mental representation of the translation situation. Three core influences of emotion have been identified: (1) emotion-congruence effects, (2) the processing consequences of affect and (3) inferential mechanisms (Forgas, 1995; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Schwarz & Clore, 1983). These different influences of emotion facilitate the processing of emotion-congruent information, influence the translator’s cognitive processing style or lead to generally more positive or negative judgements.

(1) Emotion-congruence effects are based on the assumption that during an emotional state, information that is associated with the emotion is primed, its processing is facilitated, and it is more likely to be used in information encoding and retrieval. This leads to attentional selectivity to emotion-congruent features in the translation task and a potential mediation of perception by the emotional state (Forgas, 1995).

(2) Moreover, emotion may influence not only what people think but also how people think, through its effects on the way information is processed. Research studying the processing consequences of affect (Fredrickson, 1998; Schwarz, 2002) assumes that negative emotions function as a warning signal, indicating that the environment is threatening and that these concerns must be addressed. Individuals therefore become more motivated to identify, alleviate or eliminate the problem, resulting in increased attention to the details at hand and a more analytic, systematic processing strategy. Conversely, positive emotions signal that the environment is safe and are associated with reliance on less demanding heuristic processing and prior general knowledge. Also, they imply a tendency to explore, as well as a general openness to the unusual, and have the ability to widen attention and to broaden people’s momentary thought-action repertoires. Through this, positive emotions stimulate diverse thoughts and actions, enhance creativity and allow a building up of intellectual resources.

(3) Lastly, influences of emotion on inferential mechanisms start from the assumption that people attend to their feelings as a source of information (Schwarz & Clore, 1983). As affective states convey information about the positive or negative aspect of things, they lead
to generally more positive or negative judgements. This influence of affective states increases with its perceived relevance for the judgement, but it may also be misattributed, so that emotions aroused by one event may affect judgements in an entirely different situation.

As a consequence, through their influences on both lower-level and higher-level cognition, emotions can modulate attention, interpretation, judgement, problem solving and decision-making processes during the translation process. Influences of emotion on translational choices may then become visible in the translated text and may have an influence on the perception of the text by the reader, but may also be retraceable during the process itself, through their influence on the use of auxiliary devices, time spent translating, pauses, production speed, segmentation or revision behaviour.

### 16.2.3.3 The physiological and the expression component of emotion during the translation process

When a translator is experiencing an emotion, the physiological component of emotion ensures an appropriate response from the body system. Apart from increased activity in brain areas implicated in emotion processing, such as the amygdala and the frontal cortex (Sander et al., 2005), cardiovascular and electrodermal responses (Mauss & Robinson, 2010) or changes in eye properties (Bradley et al., 2008) will indicate activation in the autonomic nervous system as a function of emotional responding. Moreover, higher stress levels have been shown to affect salivation during interpreting (Moser-Mercer, 2003) as well as translators’ levels of adrenaline (Bayer-Hohenwarter, 2009).

Further, the expression component of emotion can be observable during the translation process. It includes the verbal and non-verbal communication of emotion and is particularly important at an inter-individual level, for example during a translator’s interactions with colleagues or clients. A translator may smile at a client to express happiness, or the acoustic properties of the translator’s voice can be affected by his anger in social interactions with colleagues. Moreover, variations in body movements, such as the adoption of expansive and diminutive body postures, can be behavioural indicators of emotional reactions (Tracy & Robins, 2004) and can convey specific information about the translator’s emotional state while translating.

### 16.2.3.4 The translator’s subjective feeling

During an emotion episode, activation in the different emotion components gives rise to the translator’s feeling, i.e. the conscious experience of emotion. The subjective feeling component underlies the experience of feeling good or bad, the experience of a particular discrete emotion, and the extent to which translators enjoy the translation task. This emotion component is continuously updated and has an important monitoring and regulatory function. A negative feeling, for example, allows the translator to make regulatory efforts and to employ an emotion regulation strategy, such as situation selection, where a translator may choose not to translate a particular text to avoid frustration.

### 16.2.3.5 The dynamic relations of the emotion components

While zooming in on single emotion components allows us to describe an entire emotional episode as well as the processes within the five emotion components, it is important to note that these components are not independent of each other and interact in complex and dynamic ways during the translation process. As appraisals and the changes they produce form the context for the following subjective evaluations of a situation, recursive effects of an elicited emotion can occur, and emotions may not only exert a momentary influence but impact on whole sequences of action during the translation process. Recursive effects of emotions happen through feedback...
from the pattern of emotional reaction in the different components on the ongoing process of cognitive evaluation, which then again influences the other emotion components, namely subsequent action tendencies, physiological response, expression and subjective feeling.

16.3 Recent developments and future directions

16.3.1 Empirical investigations into influences of emotion on the translation process and translation performance

16.3.1.1 Exploratory empirical evidence from think-aloud protocols

Against this theoretical backdrop, it is now time to turn our attention towards the more recent empirical evidence that has been provided for influences of emotion on the translation process and on the resulting product. At earlier stages of translation process research, several studies based on think-aloud protocols provided some exploratory empirical evidence for the relevance of emotion for the translation process and insights into how emotions may influence translation performance. In many cases, this evidence emerged accidentally as a by-product of research that had an essentially exploratory nature. In Kussmaul’s (1991) study, which he describes as an attempt to “find out more about […] translation problems which involve creative thinking” (1991, p. 91), two translators were asked to discuss their activities with the experimenter while translating a text from English into German. From his study, Kussmaul concluded that creative solutions during the translation process are associated with moments of positive affect. A few years later, Tirkkonen-Condit’s and Laukkanen’s (1996) explicit aim was to “shed light on the affective side of translators’ decisions” (Tirkkonen-Condit & Laukkanen, 1996, p. 45). They analysed evaluative statements of professional translators in think-aloud protocols and compared differences between routine tasks and non-routine tasks. Tirkkonen-Condit and Laukkanen concluded from their observations that the “affective differences” (1996, p. 48) between the tasks may have been related to the better quality of the translation in the routine task. In particular, they suggested a positive relation between a translator’s confidence and translation quality, for “in a feeling of security” (1996, p. 50), the subject was more likely to assume the “role of a communicator” (1996, p. 56) and detach herself from the source text. Even if Tirkkonen-Condit’s and Laukkanen’s study involved only two subjects, they suggested a new relation between a translator’s affective state and translation performance. In particular, their findings indicated that detachment from the source text may be emotion sensitive. Moreover, Jääskeläinen (1996) compared think-aloud protocol data and translation evaluations from a sample that was composed of subjects with three different proficiency levels: bilingual laymen, students and professionals. Jääskeläinen’s comparison revealed that contrary to the expectations underlying the study, neither a translator’s degree of proficiency nor specific translation procedures accounted for translation quality. Rather, Jääskeläinen pointed out, “the effort invested in the process bears fruit as higher translation quality” (1996, p. 66). Her results illustrated the relevance of motivation, which is largely guided by the affective system (Higgins, 2009), for translation performance. In a similar vein, Fraser (1996) observed, in a study relying on think-aloud protocols and retrospective data, that in order to achieve high standards in their work, professional translators invest emotional commitment. In conclusion, the studies mentioned provided indications that affective factors can influence translation performance in different ways: either emotions promote translation quality by enhancing creativity or through motivational processes, or emotions have a negative influence by inhibiting detachment from the source text. It was a methodological issue, however, that all the studies relied on very small samples. Building on this exploratory evidence, further translation scholars set out to examine the role of affect and emotion with larger samples.
16.3.1.2 Larger-scale studies focusing on influences of emotion on translators’ decision making and translation performance

Acknowledging the potential significance of emotion for the translation process as well as the resulting product, Lehr (2014) conducted a focused empirical investigation aiming at providing insight into how translators’ emotional state influences decision making and performance. The two-phase study relied on reader responses and expert evaluations of translation quality and involved 42 professional translators, who completed two translations in their usual work environments. Starting from the notion that the text is an important emotional stimulus when translating (Hansen, 2006; Lederer, 2003), but that also other situational aspects can elicit emotional reactions, such as, for example, feedback (Kussmaul, 1991), the study focused on the relation between two different types of emotions, integral and incidental emotions, and performance in translation. The first phase of the study examined the influence of integral text-related emotions on the emotionality of a translated text, that is, the text’s potential to prompt an emotional response. Based on the assumption that this relation could be explained through emotion-congruence effects and primed emotional information (Niedenthal et al., 1997), translations by translators who had themselves experienced a more or a less intense emotional response to the text were rated for emotionality by readers and compared. No evidence in support of the assumption that the emotional response of the translator influences the emotionality of the translation was found, suggesting that emotion-congruence effects at lower levels of processing only have a limited impact on more controlled processes and the translation product. Indeed, the study’s results indicate, rather, that emotion-congruence effects in more controlled language processing, such as translation, may be subject to other processes, for example intentions to overcome a bias.

In the second part of the study, Lehr (2014) examined the influence of incidental emotions, which the literature has associated most notably with the processing consequences of affective states and differences in accuracy and creativity (Bohner & Schwarz, 1993; Kussmaul, 1991). With this aim, translations from translators who had received either positive or negative feedback on a previous translation task were compared. The feedback induced emotions that were clearly separated on the positive–negative axis. Moreover, the comparison of translation evaluations between the two groups showed higher ratings for idiomatic expression and stylistic appropriateness after positive feedback, criteria that can be attributed to the creativity category, and higher ratings for terminology after negative feedback, a criterion that can be attributed to accuracy in translation. The study thus found that translators’ emotional state can influence the translated text through its influences on cognitive processing style. More specifically, emotions aroused by positive or negative performance feedback seem to have an influence on particular aspects of accuracy, fundamental to all translation activity, and creativity, which is necessary at certain points in the text to varying degrees. Having framed the translation process within the componential view of emotion, we would assume that influences of emotion on accuracy and creativity in translation occur through the recursive effects of emotion on subsequent appraisals during the translation process. The results outlined here seem to indicate that the influence of affective states may be manifested most clearly in instances when there is a need for something “on top” of the basic routine processes, such as, for example, very careful scrutiny for terminology or finding a particularly idiomatic formulation. Effects of affective states may thus be especially impactful when the task becomes increasingly difficult and translators cannot draw on routinized solutions. Similar tendencies, namely that positive affect seems to promote creativity and negative affect accuracy, were observed by Rojo & Ramos Caro (2016), although their results lacked statistical significance. In line with the results from the first phase of Lehr’s (2014) study, their observations indicate that decision making in professional translation may
only to a certain extent be susceptible to emotion effects, and that emotion effects in the translation process may be subject to routine procedures and other controlled processes, for example motivations to be accurate. How emotions influence translation performance, and how strong the effects are, no doubt depends on numerous variables that remain to be further investigated and have to be integrated with other factors that influence emotion processes, such as inter-individual differences between translators.

16.3.2 Differences between individual translators—emotions as traits and competences

Research suggesting that emotional states may influence translation performance and therefore the actual quality of a translated text does not merely imply that emotions are a significant variable in translation performance; it allows us to draw an additional important conclusion. If translators’ emotional states influence their performance, then not only are translators supposed to identify and accurately re-express emotions, but regulating and using emotions is also part of performing well as a translator. In line with this conclusion, Hubscher-Davidson (2014; 2018) emphasizes that emotion processes can be related to or moderated by inter-individual differences in emotional competences. Emotional competences can be collectively defined as the ability “to optimally use the emotion mechanism as it has been shaped by evolution” (Scherer, 2009, p. 92), and they can be divided into four core competences: understanding, identification, utilization and regulation of emotion (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Psychological research has studied emotional competences from different perspectives. One perspective sees emotional competences as a set of abilities and a form of intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997); others perceive them as conceptually related to dimensions of personality, and therefore a set of personality traits related to emotion (Petrides & Furnham, 2003). Debates on the status of emotional competences as intelligence or trait have given birth to a tripartite model, which tries to capture all aspects of emotional competence and posits three levels: knowledge, abilities and traits (Mikolajczak et al., 2009). The knowledge level refers to the complexity and breadth of knowledge about emotions; for example, our knowledge about which emotion regulation strategies exist and how efficient they are. The ability level of emotional competence refers to the ability to apply such knowledge in an emotional situation and to implement a given strategy. It focuses on what people are able to do. Finally, the trait level of the tripartite model refers to people’s tendencies to behave in a certain way in emotional situations. The focus of this third level is not on what people are able to do but on what people consistently do. It addresses their dispositions; whether and how they use their emotion-related knowledge and abilities in their everyday life.

In particular, the last trait level of emotional competence has attracted the interest of translation scholars. Regarding emotional competences as personality-based and emotion-related dispositions, Hubscher-Davidson (2018) conducted an extensive study comprising 155 professional translators. Using the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (Petrides, 2009) as an assessment instrument, her aim was to explore professional translators’ individual differences in emotional competences, and how they are related to various aspects of behaviour and professional success. In her study, Hubscher-Davidson found several interesting correlations. For example, she reports that emotion regulation skills are positively associated with the acquisition of literary translation experience. Although the direction of the effect remains unclear, as translators with good competences in emotion regulation may also benefit from good interpersonal relations and therefore be able to acquire more clients and professional experience, Hubscher-Davidson suggests that translators may develop their emotion regulation skills through literary translation
work and the emotional aspects it involves. She argues that one could assume that the more they translate literature, the more translators engage in multifaceted emotional experiences and have opportunities to improve the way they handle these. With regard to emotion regulation, Hubscher-Davidson also finds a trend towards a positive association between emotion regulation competences and translators’ job satisfaction and success. She explains that inadaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as suppression, may impair translators’ performance. They may lead translators to experience more stress or fewer good interpersonal contacts in teams or with clients, and they may also interfere with the self-control translators must have in order to know the limits of their task and not to interfere with the author’s original work. Further, Hubscher-Davidson finds a trend for translators’ job success to be positively associated with trait emotional competences in emotion expression. In an attempt to integrate situational and personality-related aspects of translation performance, Hubscher-Davidson suggests that one could explain this result through the relation between positive affect and creativity, addressed by other studies in translation process research (Lehr, 2014; Rojo & Ramos Caro, 2016). As individuals high in emotion expression tend to experience more positive affect, which is conducive to a more creative processing style, these translators may have more instances of creative expression and be able to produce translations of a higher quality.

In the preceding sections, we have studied how both translators’ situational affect and emotional competences can influence translation performance. The existing evidence allows us to conclude that the ability to deal with emotions and, consequently, emotional competences should be viewed as an integral part of translation competence. Hence, emotional competences should also be integrated into translator training in order to enhance translators’ employability and to prepare them to handle emotions they may encounter in the workplace. This may involve training translators to apply specific emotional competences, such as emotion regulation strategies, in their professional life and may also include the integration of some theoretical knowledge about emotion in translator education.

16.4 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, we have reviewed how emotion, which, for a long time, was neglected as the unwanted irrational side of human thinking and behaviour, has made its way into translation process research. Emotion and affect emerged accidentally in think-aloud protocols as an influential variable, and their relevance was acknowledged through the integration of theory from neighbouring disciplines, arguing that emotion cannot be dissociated from human thinking processes. Based on targeted empirical studies during the past years, we can now conclude, on empirical grounds, that emotion is an important variable in translation performance and that it should be integrated into our conception of translation competence. As emotions have only fairly recently become a topic of focused investigation in translation process research, numerous questions remain to be addressed by future research to increase our understanding of how and when emotions impact on translators’ work, and how situational and inter-individual factors interact in this influence. It follows, also, that emotion should become a topic of learning in the training of translators in order to enhance translators’ emotional competences through specific exercises. In addition, we will have to address topics raised by new technological developments, such as the role of emotion in the adaptation to and interaction with technology, the capacity of machine translation engines to render emotional content, or the influence of emotion on new forms of translation activity, such as post-editing or transcreation. Addressing these issues should allow us to continuously develop our models of the translation process and to get a more comprehensive understanding of performance in translation, now and in the future.
Note

1 According to Scherer's (2005) emotion theory, the following five organismic subsystems are involved in an emotion episode and underlie the different emotion components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organismic subsystem</th>
<th>Emotion component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information processing (evaluation of objects and events)</td>
<td>Appraisal component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support (system regulation)</td>
<td>Physiological component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive (preparation and direction of action)</td>
<td>Action tendency component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action (communication of reaction and behavioural intention)</td>
<td>Expression component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor (monitoring of internal state and organism–environment interaction)</td>
<td>Subjective feeling component</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further reading


A central study providing evidence for the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions.


This recent book provides a comprehensive overview of the role of emotion in the translation process.


A key paper that well explains how affect and emotion may influence decision making.


One of the rare studies in translation process research examining how emotion influences creativity in translation.


One of the fundamental theoretical papers in emotion theory, outlining the component process model of emotion.

References


Translation, emotion and cognition


