

Research of a psychological nature has gained a lot of ground in Translation Studies (TS) over the last few decades. The interdisciplinary nature of the field has naturally rendered it prone to borrowing (Brownlie 2008: 338) and research in cognitive science has, for example, informed the study of translation processes as evidenced by the recent proliferation of publications that bridge these disciplines (see for example Papavassiliou 2007; Bergen 2009; Shreve and Angelone 2010; Chmiel 2010, etc.). AsHatzidaki (2007: 14) aptly puts it, “given that the focus of research in translatology is the observation and analysis of language processing in translation, it becomes evident that psycholinguistics and translatology are interconnected.” There are, however, other areas of psychology that have arguably not been given nearly as much attention within TS practice and research, and that therefore remain under-researched. Despite increasing acknowledgment that emotional aspects of translator behavior may have an influence on translation performance (Jääskeläinen 1999; Hansen 2005; Hubscher-Davidson 2009) this aspect of the translation process has lacked visibility in the literature. A search for the term “emotional intelligence” in the John Benjamins Translation Studies Bibliography (11 August 2011) returned 0 hits. A further search for the word “emotion” returned a mere 27 hits, and a search for “personality” returned a total of 68 hits. The majority of results are concerned with the translation of emotional material or emotive language (see Hiirikoski 2002; Lee 2003; Wittwer 2007; Mohammady 2008), with only a handful addressing the personalities or emotions of translators and interpreters. Yet, there are increasing calls within the TS community to study the behaviors of these mediators and to raise awareness of their working processes (see Chesterman 1997; Hönl 1998; Hubscher-Davidson 2007; Alvstad, Hild et al. 2011). This increased visibility and recognition (Venuti 1995) has resulted in a shift of the object of study from translations to translators (Munday 2008a: 15), led to the creation of new links with other disciplines (e.g. sociology, cultural studies) and enabled the integration of new perspectives into the interdisciplinary that is TS. As argued in this paper, however, areas such as emotional intelligence and personalities remain under-researched and could usefully be incorporated into TS to bring to light a wide range of issues and a new understanding of how translators and interpreters operate. This article, therefore, aims to highlight the value of studying emotional intelligence (EI) of today’s translating and interpreting students and practitioners. Firstly, the concept of EI will be defined and a review of trait EI profiling will be undertaken, with a focus on two recent non-cognitive studies in Psychology that have relevance for Translation Studies. Secondly, recent research within TS and related disciplines that provide evidence of the value of studying the affective and emotional traits of translators and interpreters will be discussed. The final section of this paper will provide some recommendations for the study of EI in TS research to benefit the translation and interpreting community. It will be argued that investigating emotional intelligence is both necessary and desirable to gain a deeper understanding of translation and interpreting processes.