

Meaning no offense. The impact of anger on translation decision-making when dealing with offensive stereotypes

Beatriz Naranjo, Universidad de Málaga

ABSTRACT

By pursuing an interdisciplinary approach between Psychology and Translation Studies, this work offers some preliminary results about the effects of anger on translation decision-making. In this study, a group of translation students were presented with two types of translation units from a blog entry in which negative judgements about people, places or situations were portrayed – potentially offensive (referred to as 'target units') and non-offensive ('distractors') – and were instructed to choose between two translation options containing linguistic devices aimed at either attenuating or emphasizing the negative content. Their level of anger was measured using the STAXI-2 test and sentiment analysis tools. Based on cognitive and behavioural tendencies found in angry individuals, which include selective attention to anger-congruent stimuli and tendency to act against sources of threat, it was hypothesised that translators would more frequently opt for attenuated translations when they were potentially offensive in order to mitigate the threat that they may represent to them. Contrary to initial predictions, results revealed a higher number of attenuated translations for non-offensive units than for offensive ones. The role of emotion regulation, reappraisal strategies and other carry-over effects of anger in decision-making are discussed as possible factors that may explain our findings.

KEYWORDS

Emotions, anger, offensive content, stereotypes, translation decision-making.

1. Introduction

In less than fifty years the discipline of Translation Studies has experienced a paradigm shift in which the psychological factors around the practice of translation have started to gain significant attention from scholars in the field. This shift of paradigm has been acknowledged as a new research branch within Translation Studies and is known under different labels such as Cognitive Translation Studies (see Halverson 2010), Translation Process Research (see Göpferich et al. 2009) or Translation Psychology (Jääskeläinen 2012; Bolaños-Medina 2016). Mainly focusing on the cognitive processes involved in the act of translating in its origins, this innovative line of research later expanded towards a more comprehensive, embodied and situated perspective in which other psychological aspects surrounding the translation activity were also explored (Rojo 2017: 369). Within this new wider approach, interest in the role of emotions in translation started to emerge, even making its way into thematic issues of specialised translation journals and volumes (see, for instance, Rojo López and Ramos 2016; Cifuentes-Férez and Fenollar-Cortés 2017; Korpala and Jasielska 2019; Naranjo 2019; Koskinen 2020; Hunziker Heeb *et al.* 2021), as well as the most recent editions of some of the most

recent authoritative handbooks in the field (see Schwieter and Ferreira 2017; Alves and Jakobsen 2021; Hubscher-Davidson and Lehr 2022).

Up to now, the intersections between translation and emotions have been studied from different perspectives, including translators' appraisal of different emotional stimuli involved in the translation environment and this appraisal's repercussions on the quality of the target text (translator-oriented approach) and the effectiveness of translated products to induce specific emotional states (audience-oriented approach). Due to the complex and elusive nature of emotions and the difficulty of experimenting with them in a laboratory setting, most studies so far have either adopted a binary perspective contrasting positive *versus* negative emotional states (see Rojo López and Ramos 2016; Korpala and Jasielska 2019; Rojo and Naranjo 2021) or have been based on the traditional classification of basic (or 'discrete') emotions such as happiness, sadness, fear and disgust (see Rojo *et al.* 2014; Ramos 2014; Naranjo 2018). Since the field is still in its infancy, further research needs to be conducted in order to draw more robust conclusions; however, some relevant trends can already be identified in existing literature. For example, Rojo López and Ramos (2016) found that, whereas emotional states elicited by negative feedback on translation performance seem to enhance accuracy in subsequent tasks, positive feedback has been found to increase creative behaviour. Another interesting finding is that negative basic emotions such as sadness or fear are more easily elicited than positive emotions like happiness during the translation process and reception, especially when the text is accompanied by other auditory and/or visual stimuli (see Ramos 2014, 2016; Naranjo 2018, 2019).

Yet, other common discrete emotions that translators may feel while they are undertaking a given task still remain unexplored. This paper aims to fill this gap by exploring the role of anger through potentially sensitive content included in the source text. The first part presents a revision of previous literature dealing with the role of source texts as emotion inducers, the role of anger and offensive stimuli in decision-making and as the most common psychological mechanisms and behaviours used to cope with anger. The second part explains the procedure followed to carry out the main study of this paper. Finally, study results are discussed.

2. The potential of source texts to induce emotions

Source texts have been acknowledged as one of the most relevant emotional factors in translation (Rojo 2017: 372). Research published by Naranjo (2018) has examined the impact of source texts on translation performance when they act as the main emotional stimulus, as well as in combination with other stimuli like background music.

In a subsequent study, Naranjo (2019) examines the translation of emotionally moving narratives portraying basic emotions such as happiness and sadness, exploring the links between translators' emotional involvement and translation quality and creativity. In a recent study, Naranjo and Rojo (2021) explain that such emotional involvement in the text was experienced as empathy with the events and characters portrayed and was reinforced when translators simultaneously listened to emotionally congruent music.

On the other hand, other emotional reactions awakened by source texts, such as anxiety and positive and negative affect, have also been studied, taking into account the context in which the translation took place. Rojo and Naranjo (2021) found that levels of anxiety and negative affect increased more when, during the Spanish lockdown due to the COVID19 pandemic, students translated a pessimistic text about the pandemic as opposed to when they translated an optimistic text about the same crisis.

There is ample evidence in everyday life of the increasing importance given to the emotionality of written texts. With users and clients being constantly invited to rate services, products and experiences on a daily basis and encouraged to write positive and negative reviews online, deciphering the emotions that lay behind users' comments has become a major source of interest for businesses. As a matter of fact, research on sentiment analysis, which involves automatic tools able to detect moods by analysing the evaluative language of a given text, have blossomed in the last decades (Braun *et al.* 2022: 1).

Even when the language normally used in these types of texts is straightforward and may not bring about significant difficulties, translators may still face psychological challenges when texts provoke strong emotions in them. This could happen when the attitudes expressed in the text come into conflict with translators' own perceptions or ideology. For example, Rojo López and Ramos (2014) found that, when translators are exposed to words or expressions that may be against their ideological expectations, such expectations can influence their decisions.

However, while the interference of ideology in translation has already been tackled, no studies have yet explored the role of other types of potentially offensive texts, such as negative reviews, nor the specific emotional reactions associated with them, from a psychological perspective. Since anger has been acknowledged as one of the most common emotions associated with the appraisal of something as offensive (see Lerner *et al.* 2006: 118), this study explores the impact of anger triggered by potentially offensive source texts.

3. The psychology of offense and its effect on decision-making

People may find a text offensive for several reasons; however, research has identified specific factors and cues in texts that can be good predictors of annoyance in readers. One of them is related to the geographical proximity of the event they refer to. In their study about Wikipedia articles, Greving and Kimmerle (2020) found stronger emotional reactions of anger, sadness and anxiety and appraisals of threat in Western readers when the articles talked about Europe than when they talked about Asia. Another topic that may be perceived as offensive is that of stereotypes. Siy and Cheryan (2013) found that even positive stereotypes may lead to undesired emotions since the people affected by those stereotypes do not feel integrated into a given social group.

When exposed to a text perceived as offensive, anger and its different variants of intensity (from slight annoyance to furious rage) is the most common reaction that translators would be expected to experience. As opposed to hot anger, which is featured by external manifestations of the emotion through verbal, behavioural and facial expressions, cold anger is a milder version that has been associated with lower levels of arousal (Biaassoni *et al.* 2016: 2). Having been identified as being the most frequent expression of anger in our daily life (Biaassoni *et al.* 2016: 2), cold anger would also possibly be the most common form of anger triggered by source texts.

A great number of studies have directed their attention to the effects of anger on decision-making, which is one of the basic cognitive operations that scholars have frequently found to have a prominent role in translation. Since Levý (1967) published his work entitled *Translation as Decision Process*, it is possible to find numerous attempts to gain a closer look into the black box and explore the ins and outs of how translators face decision making (see Krings 1988; Schreve and Koby 1997; Alves and Gonçalves 2003; PACTE 2009; Prassl 2010, just to name a few). The role of different cognitive factors involved in translation decision making such as perception, language processing, working memory, long-term memory and cognitive effort have been already been extensively investigated. Recently, the influence of emotions in decision-making has also gained attention from some scholars in Translation Studies. Contrary to what one might expect, studies so far reveal that positive or pleasant emotions are not necessarily accurate predictors of successful decision-making in translation as opposed to negative or unpleasant emotions (see Rojo López and Ramos 2016; Naranjo 2018).

Regarding the impact of anger on decision-making, several relevant findings have been pointed out by psychologists. First, anger reduces the amount of time that individuals devote to evaluate situations since it fosters faster

information processing based on superficial cues and stereotypical thinking (Bodenhausen *et al.* 1994: 58–59), which can easily lead to the construction of prejudices (Lerner and Tiedens 2006: 123).

Second, results in numerous studies point to the capacity of anger to alter our perception of risk, making angry individuals more willing to engage in risk-taking due to an optimistic assessment of potentially risky situations (Litvak *et al.* 2010: 291).

Another important finding, according to Litvak *et al.* (2010), is related to our tendency to pay more attention to emotionally-congruent stimuli. Anger can lead to selective attention to angry-congruent stimuli, which makes angry individuals more likely to be persuaded by anger-driven arguments. This selective attention can, in turn, lead to the vicious circle of provoking more anger (Litvak *et al.* 2010: 298). However, research has also found that, once it has been triggered, anger can alter perceptions and behaviour when individuals need to address decisions that are not directly related to the initial source of anger (Litvak *et al.* 2010: 288).

Finally, anger has been associated with a readiness for action-taking motivated by the desire to repair damage and remove obstacles that are perceived as a source of threat (Biaassoni *et al.* 2016: 2), restore justice (Litvak *et al.* 2010: 301) and punish those who have engaged in offensive behaviours (Goldberg *et al.* 1999: 783; Lerner *et al.* 1998: 564).

Despite anger being an undesirable emotion, some voices in the field of the psychology of emotion have found that it may not necessarily lead to undesirable decisions (Lerner and Tiedens 2006: 132). Optimistic perception of risk and superficial cognitive processing can also foster efficiency under time pressure when they prevent individuals' tendencies to indecision or over-analysis (Litvak *et al.* 2010: 305). Actually, some authors have suggested that anger may lead to greater cognitive fluency since it increases alertness towards perceived threats and readiness to produce counterarguments (Young *et al.* 2011: 12).

Decision-making in translation is not free from the influence of emotions, as some authors have already pointed out (Tirkonnen-Condit and Laukkanen 1996, Durieux 2007), but the question remains: how will translators' decisions be influenced when emotions such as anger arise from source texts perceived as offensive? Considering all the previously mentioned findings in the field of psychology, this study tried to shed some light on this issue with an experiment in which participants were instructed to choose between two different translations for potentially offensive translation units. Both translations conveyed the same message but they differed in terms of the

positive or negative connotations of some lexical and grammatical choices (see section five for more detail).

4. Anger and coping strategies

Findings in literature (see Szasz *et al.* 2016) point to a beneficial effect of emotion regulation strategies to attenuate the effects of negative moods such as anger on decision-making. Within the framework of emotion regulation, two main types of strategies have been identified to cope with emotions: antecedent-focused strategies, which are deployed before the emotional response has been completely activated, and response-focused strategies, which occur after the emotion has fully appeared (Biaassoni *et al.* 2016: 3).

More specific strategies that involve diminishing the intensity of the emotional response have also been found to be effective to counterbalance the prejudicial effects of emotions on decision-making. These include time delay, cognitive reappraisal or crowding out the emotion (Lerner *et al.* 2015: 811).

Taking into account that anger is considered a short-lived emotion (Scarantino and de Sousa 2018), the simplest way to minimise its impact on decision-making would be to postpone the decision until its effects have disappeared (Lerner *et al.* 2015: 805); however, since anger is an action-oriented emotion, patiently waiting to return to baseline levels of arousal may not be easy. Furthermore, some decision-making processes may require rapidness and the possibility of delaying the decision may not always be available.

Cognitive reappraisal, defined as the reinterpretation of the emotion-triggering event, has been considered one of the most effective and effortless antecedent strategies, preventing the emotional response from being perceived or expressed by the individual (Biaassoni *et al.* 2016: 3). In Translation Studies, psychological factors and abilities associated with translation expertise, such as emotional regulation, resilience and emotional intelligence, seem to be predictors of an effective translation performance (Hubscher-Davidson 2013, 2017; Rojo López and Ramos 2016).

Finally, another effective way to reduce the carryover effects of emotions is 'crowding out' the emotion, i.e., presenting the individual with an overload of information about a specific decision-making process (Lerner *et al.* 2015: 811).

However, when these preventive strategies are not put into practice, the individual needs to cope with the pleasant or unpleasant manifestations of the emotional reaction. At this stage, response-focused strategies would be the only option available. Duhachek (2005: 48) developed a three-dimensional

model based on the three main response-focused strategies that individuals employ when coping with stress and negative emotions such as anger: active coping, expressive coping and denial. Unlike expressive coping, by which individuals verbally communicate their feelings, active coping involves taking action to address the problem at hand and has proved to be more effective to prevent rumination, therefore facilitating recovery from the initial undesired mood (Strizhakova *et al.* 2012: 416).

When undertaking a translation task, the need for active coping to repair angry moods triggered by the attitudes portrayed in the source text may lead translators to consciously or unconsciously alter the original sense, especially where the differences between source and target languages allow some room for intervention such as in the case of ambiguity or when there are two acceptable options available in the target language but they differ in some nuances of meaning that may reveal the speakers positive or negative attitudes.

In the next sections, I provide some preliminary results of a study which was carried out to determine possible effects of angry moods on translation decision-making.

5. The study

5.1. Aims and hypotheses

The main aim of this study was to explore whether angry reactions prompted by potentially offensive stereotypes can have an impact on the lexical choices made during a translation task. Based on the observed effects on cognitive processing and behaviour, I hypothesised that:

1. Reading a negative review portraying potentially offensive geographically-based stereotypes will provoke angry moods in translators.
2. When tackling potentially-offensive translation units, translators will more frequently opt for an attenuating versus an intensifying approach than when tackling non-offensive translation units.

Hypothesis 1 is based on the works highlighting the potential of geographical proximity and stereotypes to induce negative moods (Siy and Cheryan 2013; Greving and Kimmerle 2020). On the other hand, predictions made in hypothesis 2 were formulated on the basis of previous findings revealing that anger makes individuals pay more attention to emotionally-congruent stimuli (Litvak *et al.* 2010: 298) and initiate actions to remove potential threats (Biaassoni *et al.* 2016), restore justice (Litvak *et al.* 2010), punish those who

engage in offensive behaviours (Goldberg *et al.* 1999; Lerner *et al.* 1998) and produce counter-arguments (Litvak *et al.* 2010). These tendencies could lead translators to focus their attention more on translation units that are perceived as a threat to them rather than on other more neutral ones, as well as to opt for attenuating options to restore what they may consider unfair treatment.

5.2. Participants

A total of twelve Spanish translation fourth-year undergraduates took part in this experiment in a classroom at the University of Murcia (Spain). They received some course credit for their participation. As the experimental part of this study was conducted in November 2020, strict mobility and social-distance COVID19 restrictions were still in force in Spain, which hampered the possibility to work with professional translators in situ. However, during the three previous years, the participants had already completed a total of eight translation courses for the English-Spanish language pair. The sample consisted of three males and nine females, with a mean age of 21.67 and an age range of 20–27 years. They were all born and raised in the Region of Murcia and still lived there.

5.3. Materials

The source text used was a fictional blog entry written ad hoc so that it would be potentially offensive for participants. The text gives an account of the author's experience living in Murcia in which Spanish and Murcian customs are heavily criticised. At the beginning of the text, the fictional author presents herself as a native English speaker with no experience in translation who was hired by a Murcian translation agency. The author explains how she would substitute a recent Spanish translation graduate, who had been just dismissed from the company due to her strong foreign accent.

To test participants' levels of anger prior to and after the reading the task, two measurements tools were used:

(1) The Spanish version of the State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory, second edition (STAXI-2) developed by Spielberger *et al.* (1983) and translated into Spanish by Miguel-Tobal *et al.* (2001). This inventory assesses the intensity of anger and provides an overall measure of total anger expression. We only used the state version of the scale, which contains 15 items for state anger to be rated in a 4-point Likert-type format. According to the authors, state anger is defined as a psychobiological emotional situation characterised by feelings which that may range from a slight annoyance to intense fury (Miguel-Tobal *et al.* 2001: 3). This questionnaire consists of three subscales: sentiment, which corresponds to items 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7; physical expression, which covers

items 4, 8, 11, 13 and 14 and verbal expression, which is assessed through items 6, 9, 10, 12 and 15. In the original study, with a sample of 1900 American subjects, the internal consistency of the subscales varied from $\alpha = .82$ to $\alpha = .75$ (Spielberg *et al.* 1999).

(2) Text sentiment analysis tools. For this experiment, *ToneAnalyzer* – an online tool developed by IBM Watson™ – was used to analyse the emotional content of the participants' written reactions to the text. This tool algorithmically detects emotional tones in written text at both text and sentence level, including joy, fear, sadness, anger, analytical, confident and tentative tones. I used the latest version at the time, which had been updated in December 2019, according to the official website.

5.4. Procedure

Participants completed two tasks in a classroom at the University of Murcia with their own laptops. In the first one, they were asked to read the blog entry and give their opinion about the author of the text and her ideas. Dominant emotional tones in their answers were later assessed with sentiment analysis tools.

Next, they were presented with twenty translation units in English (ten target units and ten distractors). The ten target units (hereafter 'offensive TUs') were extracted from the text participants had just read and were selected for their potential to be offensive for participants since they contained some sort of criticism towards Spanish and Murcian people or customs; the remaining ten were expected to be emotionally neutral for our participants, but they also contained instances of negative evaluative language and presented the same types of translation challenges as the target units. For each translation unit in English, participants were given two options (a, b), either intensifying or attenuating the intensity of the evaluative language contained in the original sentence. Intensification and attenuation are defined here as the use of a variety of lexical and grammatical choices that either emphasise or diminish, respectively, the negative semantic content or the intensity of the speaker's negative attitude. All translation units (target and distractors) as well as the translation options (intensification and attenuation) were presented in a randomised order. Some examples of targets and distractors with their corresponding translation options are provided below:

- 1) Murcian university students are the clearest example. All they do is comfortably laze around the terrazas and drink unlimited amounts of beer.

(Offensive/ target TU)

(a) Translation 1. *No hay más que fijarse en los universitarios murcianos: todo el rato vagueando sin complejos por las terrazas y bebiendo cantidades ingentes de cerveza.*

[You just have to take a look at the university students from Murcia: they spend all their time shamelessly lounging around on terraces and drinking copious amounts of beer].

(Attenuating translation approach)

(b) Translation 2. *No hay más que fijarse en los universitarios murcianos: en las terrazas sin dar ni golpe y bebiendo cantidades ingentes de cerveza.*

[You just have to take a look at the university students from Murcia: lounging around on terraces without lifting a finger and drinking copious amounts of beer].

(Intensifying translation approach)

2) In fact, all you can see in video games is dudes beating the hell out of each other and shooting each other dead.

(Distractor)

(a) Translation 1. *De hecho, lo único que hay en los videojuegos son tíos venga a darse palos y a dispararse unos a otros.*

[In fact, the only thing you find in video games is guys giving each other a good beating and shooting each other nonstop].

(Attenuating translation approach)

(b) Translation 2. *De hecho, lo único que hay en los videojuegos son tíos dándose de hostias y pegándose tiros.*

[In fact, the only thing you find in video games is guys beating the crap of each other and shooting each other].

(Intensifying translation approach)

In these two homologous examples, the translation challenge involved a verbal phrase with adjective or adverb conveying manner ('shoot sb. dead', 'laze around') accompanied by intensifier: 'comfortably' in distractor and 'the hell' in target TU which was syntactically embedded in the verbal phrase 'beat *the hell* out of'.

In the target TU (example 1), the attenuating translation strategy used in (a) consisted of the use of the Spanish verbal equivalent of 'laze' (*vaguear*) together with adverbial phrase *sin complejos* meaning without insecurities or feeling ashamed. On the other hand, the intensifying strategy applied in b)

was based on the use of the colloquial verbal phrase *no dar ni golpe* ('not lifting a finger'), reinforcing the speaker's negative attitude towards idleness.

In the distractor (example 2), the attenuating translation strategy in (a) is achieved by omitting profanity (the hell) and compensating by emphasizing the repetitive character of the action *darse palos* ('beat/hit someone several times') through the verbal phrase *venga a* + infinitive ('non-stop'). Conversely, the intensifying approach in (b) maintains blasphemous content with obscene connotations from *hostias* and adds a colloquialism (*pegarse tiros*) to translate the verb 'shoot' which reinforces the speaker's negative attitude towards videogames.

A Google Form was designed to guide participants through all the steps of the experiment, as well as to collect their answers for each task. Participants were asked to complete the STAXI test prior and after reading the text to assess whether angry levels had increased.

After the translation decision-making task, participants were asked two questions. In the first one, they were asked how reading the text had made them feel. This was presented as a multiple-choice question with the following options: 'I found it funny,' 'It upset me,' 'It gave me a sense of injustice,' 'It was indifferent to me' or 'It made me feel sad.' In the second one, they were asked what they found to be the most difficult aspect about the decision-making task.

The program SPSS was used to carry out the statistical analysis. In order to test the first hypothesis, I first tried to find out potential differences between baseline and post-task anger levels by comparing the results of pre- and post-STAXI tests. Then, the scores and predominant moods detected in participants' answers were analysed by the sentiment analysis tool Tone Analyzer. To test hypothesis 2, the number of translation units resolved through an attenuating (vs. an intensifying) approach were compared in both groups of TUs (offensive and distractors). Therefore, two data samples were considered for this analysis: one with the offensive TUs and the other with distractors. For each data sample, descriptive statistical parameters were calculated, including maximum and minimum values in the sample (min-max), mean (M), median (m) and standard deviation (ST). Then, the samples were checked for normality and homogeneity of variance with Shapiro-Wilk and Levene tests, respectively. When our data satisfied the normality and homoscedasticity assumptions ($p > 0.05$), Student t-tests were performed; when this was not the case, the Wilcoxon test, a non-parametric equivalent of the Student t-test was used instead.

6. Results

6.1. Emotional impact of source text on participants

In order to determine whether the source text provoked anger in the participants of this experiment, two measurement tools were used: the STAXI test and the sentiment analysis tool *Tone Analyzer*.

STAXI subscale	Measurement	Descriptive statistics				Normality test (Shapiro Wilk)			Levene (based on mean)		Wilcoxon test	
		Min-Max	M	m	SD	W	df	p	F	p	Z	p
Sentiment	Baseline (12)	5-15	8.7	7.0	3.4	.863	12	.054	.362	.554	2.586	.010
	Post-read (12)	6-19	12.9	12.0	4.2	.929	12	.370				
Verbal expression	Baseline (12)	5-12	6.3	5.0	2.5	.564	12	.000	1.791	.195	2.264	.024
	Post-read (12)	5-15	7.9	6.5	3.7	.786	12	.007				
Physical expression	Baseline (12)	5-15	7.6	6.5	3.4	.741	12	.002	.766	.391	2.809	.005
	Post-read (12)	7-19	11.2	9.5	4.0	.869	12	.063				
Total score	Baseline (12)	15-41	22.5	20.5	7.5	.847	12	.034	1.922	.180	2.988	.003
	Post-read (12)	19-51	32.0	20.0	11.0	.820	12	.016				

Table 1. Descriptive and inferential statistics of baseline and post-reading STAXI scores

As displayed in Table 1, the Wilcoxon test shows significant differences in all scales of the STAXI test with p-values <0.05, which reveals higher levels of anger after reading the source text.

Next participants' written opinions about the source text were analysed by *Tone Analyzer*, which detected dominant moods and their intensity (none, moderate, strong) at sentence level for each participant's opinion:

Participant	Dominant tone	Intensity	Mean intensity
1	Anger	Moderate	0
2	Anger	Moderate- strong	0.685
3	Anger	Moderate	0.56
4	No tone detected	No detected	0
5	Anger	Moderate	0.51
6	Anger	Moderate	0.65
7	Anger	Moderate	0.51
8	Anger	Moderate	0.71
9	No tone detected	No detected	0
10	Anger	Moderate	0.65
11	No tone detected	No detected	0
12	No tone detected	No detected	0
Total % angry tones: 66.67			
Total % not conclusive: 33.33			
Overall average intensity (excluding not conclusive): moderate (0.61)			

Table 2. Dominant tones and intensity detected in participants' answers by Tone Analyzer (intensity: none =<0.5; moderate =0.5-0.75; strong = >0.75)

According to the data displayed in Table 2, anger was the prevailing tone in 66.67% of participants' opinions with an average moderate intensity (0.61). The software was unable to detect any dominant tone in the rest of the answers collected (33.33%).

Finally, in order to back up the previous findings, participants were directly asked how the text had made them feel. According to the answers collected in the questionnaire, most participants indicated having felt negative feelings towards the contents of the text with 41.66% reporting being 'upset,' 33.33% having felt a 'sense of injustice' and 8.33% reporting sadness. Only 16.67% (2 participants) indicated having perceived the text as 'funny.'

6.2. Differences in the preferred translation approach in offensive and distracting TUs

To find out whether there was an inclination towards an attenuating approach when the translation units were potentially offensive, differences in the number of translation units in which participants opted for the attenuating option were sought between both groups of TUs (offensive and distractors).

Descriptive statistics					Normality			Homogeneity of variance		Student T test	
Type of TU	Min-Max	M	m	SD	W	Df	P	F	p	t	p
Offensive	1-6	3.83	4.00	1.33	.932	12	.403				
								.512	.482	2.116	.046
Distractors	3-7	4.92	5.00	1.17	.896	12	.142				

Table 3. Number of translation units resolved with an attenuation approach in offensive vs. distracting TUs

Table 3 reveals significant differences between offensive TUs and distractors (p -value = 0.046). However, the number of distracting TUs resolved by the attenuating approach was higher than the number of offensive TUs.

7. Discussion and conclusions

This study aimed at examining whether potentially offensive stereotypes portrayed in a source text could lead to higher anger levels in translators and thus, influence translation decision-making.

Both the STAXI-2 test and *ToneAnalyzer* allowed us to detect participants' emotional reactions toward the source text and suggest confirmation of our first hypothesis. The blog entry written ad hoc revealed itself as an effective stimulus to induce the desired mood, as participants' post-reading scores in the STAXI test were higher than their baseline scores. Sentiment analysis seemed to confirm these results with moderate anger as the prevailing emotional tone detected in more than 60% of participants' answers.

On the other hand, the results obtained in the translation decision-making task reject hypothesis 2. Contrary to what was predicted, participants opted for the attenuating option in a higher number of non-offensive TUs (or distractors) than offensive TUs. According to the theories of emotional congruence, our participants may have paid more attention to the offensive TUs than they did to distractors since offensive TUs were part of the source text that had previously provoked their anger; however, the fact that the options were almost identical may have led to counterbalance these carryover effects of the emotion if participants were cognitively saturated ('crowding out' effect).

However, the fact that the number of TUs resolved with an attenuating approach was statistically higher in the group of distractors than in the group

of offensive TUs may be also considered a revealing result. Even if the differences between the attenuated and intensified translations in this task were very subtle, the fact that the text effectively triggered angry moods in them and that there were significant differences in the decision-making task may be a sign that participants unconsciously chose a different translation approach depending on the offensive/non-offensive nature of the translation units. In other words: given the results, there may be a legitimate possibility that, having experienced angry reactions associated with the source text, participants treated offensive TUs extracted from the text differently than non-offensive ones. Previous literature suggests that anger may condition cognitive and behavioural tendencies. This may have led to different decision-making patterns when tackling offensive vs. non-offensive TUs.

As for why participants opted for the attenuating approach more frequently in the distractors and not in the offensive TUs, there are several possible explanations. First of all, if angry moods were still present when participants tackled the decision-making task, their decision-making abilities could have also been affected when they were to address the non-offensive TUs. According to research, individuals' anger can still have cognitive and behavioural consequences on decisions unrelated to the source of their anger (Litvak *et al.* 2010: 288). Moreover, it is possible that participants were conditioned by the presence of the STAXI-2 and the open question asking their opinion right before engaging in the decision-making task. These retrospective questions made participants reflect on their own mood after reading the text. As a result, participants may have gained awareness of their own negative emotions towards the text and they may have also realised that such emotions could negatively affect their performance in the next task. Therefore, they may have applied reappraisal strategies and subconsciously tried to avoid the impact of their own feelings by over-selecting the intensifying approach in the sentences they may have rightly identified as 'target units'. In this regard, some studies that have explored the role of emotions triggered by positive and negative feedback in translation performance (Rojo López and Ramos 2016) reveal higher levels of accuracy in translation after having experienced negative emotions, which is precisely what our participants may have been seeking to achieve in the decision-making task.

In fact, answers to the final question 'What was the most difficult thing of this translation task?' do not reveal any conflict of interest when translating but they mainly comment on the specific linguistic aspects and the high level of similarity between the options given. Therefore, another possible factor that may explain the results in the decision-making task is that negative feelings of anger may have disappeared (time delay effect) with participants being more concerned now about performing well on the translation task than about the annoyance that reading the text may have caused them at the beginning.

From a methodological point of view, perhaps it could have been more effective to make participants translate the whole text instead of giving them specific translation choices, with which they may not have fully identified themselves. This would have enabled them to determine whether they spontaneously apply attenuating and intensifying strategies as well as other ways of manipulating the text with the conscious or unconscious intention of altering the original emotional content.

The fact that neither the source text nor the specific translation units had been previously tested to make sure that they were able to induce anger in our participants should also be acknowledged as a limitation. Furthermore, it would be advisable to collect information about participants' emotional intelligence and mood regulation abilities. Previous studies (Hubscher-Davidson 2013; 2017) have demonstrated that emotional regulation may play a decisive role in translation performance. The low level of participants' expertise in translation could have also been a limiting factor in this regard, since professional translators would have most likely managed their emotions more successfully than translation students to minimize a potential impact on their performance.

Finally, this study could also benefit from other physiological measures such as heart rate and galvanic skin conductance as indicators of differences in terms of emotional arousal, which would counterbalance the subjective character of self-reported answers collected through the STAXI-2.

At any rate, even if the results obtained here concerning the impact of anger in translation behaviour were not exactly those initially predicted, statistically significant differences revealing a different treatment of offensive and non-offensive translation units suggest that this may still be path worth exploring.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the Grant PID2021-123650NB-100 from the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation.

References

- **Alves, Fabio and Arnt Lykke Jakobsen** (2020). *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Cognition*. London/New York: Routledge.
- **Alves, Fabio and Jose L. Gonçalves** (2003). "A Relevance Theory approach to the investigation of inferential processes in translation." Fabio Alves (ed.) (2003). *Triangulating Translation: Perspectives in Process Oriented Research*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 3–24.

- **Biassoni, Federica et al.** (2016). "Hot or Cold Anger? Verbal and Vocal Expression of Anger While Driving in a Simulated Anger-Provoking Scenario." *Sage Open* 6(3), 1–10.
- **Bolaños-Medina, Alicia** (2016). "Translation Psychology within the Framework of Translation Studies: New Research Perspectives." Celia Martín de León and Víctor González-Ruíz (eds) (2016). *From the Lab to the Classroom and Back Again*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 50–100.
- **Bodenhausen, Galen Von, Sheppard, Lori A. and Geoffrey P. Kramer** (1994). "Negative affect and social judgment: The differential impact of anger and sadness." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 24, 45–62.
- **Braun, Nadine, Goudbeek, Martijn and Emiel Krahmer** (2022). "Lost in transmission? Self- and other-annotation of emotional words." *Acta Psychologica* 229 (103713).
- **Cifuentes-Férez, Paula and Javier Fenollar-Cortés** (2017). "On the impact of self-esteem, emotion regulation and emotional expressivity on student translators' performance." *Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 14(1), 71–97.
- **Duhachek, Adam** (2005). "Coping: A Multidimensional, Hierarchical Framework of Responses to Stressful Consumption Episodes." *Journal of Consumer Research* 32, 41–53.
- **Durieux, Christine** (2007). "L'opération traduisante entre raison et émotion." *Meta* 52(1), 48–55.
- **Goldberg, Julie H., Lerner, Jennifer and Philip E. Tetlock** (1999). "Rage and reason: The psychology of the intuitive prosecutor." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 29(5–6), 781–795.
- **Greving, Hannah and Joachim Kimmerle** (2020). "The impact of event type and geographical proximity on threat appraisal and emotional reactions to Wikipedia articles." *PLoS ONE* 15(6), e0233770.
- **Göpferich, Susanne, Jakobsen, Arnt L. and Inger M. Mees** (2009). *Behind the Mind: Methods, Models and Results in Translation Process Research*. Copenhagen: Samsfundlitteratur.
- **Halverson, Sandra L.** (2010). "Cognitive translation studies: Developments in theory and method." Gregory M. Shreve and Erik Angelone (eds) (2010). *Translation and Cognition*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 349–369.
- **Hubscher-Davidson, Séverine** (2013). "Emotional Intelligence and Translation Studies: a New Bridge." *Meta* 58(2), 324–346.
- **Hubscher-Davidson, Séverine** (2017). *Translation and Emotion — A Psychological Perspective*. London/New York: Routledge.
- **Hubscher-Davidson, Séverine and Caroline Lehr** (2022). *The Psychology of Translation. An Interdisciplinary Approach*. London/New York: Routledge.

- **Hunziker Heeb, Andrea, Caroline Lehr and Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow** (2021). "Situated Translators: Cognitive Load and the Role of Emotions." Ricardo Muñoz, Sanjun Sun and Defeng Li (eds) (2021). *Advances in Cognitive Translation Studies. New Frontiers in Translation Studies*. Singapore: Springer, 47–65.
- **Jääskeläinen, Riitta** (2012). "Translation psychology." Yves Gambier and Luc Van Doorslaer (eds) (2012). *Handbook of Translation Studies*, vol 3. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 191–197.
- **Korpala, Paweł and Aleksandra Jasielska** (2019). "Investigating interpreters' empathy: Are emotions in simultaneous interpreting contagious?" *Target* 31(1), 2–24.
- **Koskinen, Kaisa** (2020). *Translation and Affect. Essays on Sticky Affects and Translational Affective Labour*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- **Krings, Hans P.** (1988). "Blick in die "Black Box"—Eine Fallstudie zum Übersetzungsprozess bei Berufsübersetzern." Reiner Artz (ed.) (1988). *Textlinguistik und Fachsprache*. Hildesheim: Olms, 393–412.
- **Lerner, Jennifer S., Goldberg, Julie H. and Philip E. Tetlock** (1998). "Sober second thought: The effects of accountability, anger, and authoritarianism on attributions of responsibility." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 24, 563–74.
- **Lerner, Jennifer S. and Larissa Z. Tiedens** (2006). "Portrait of The Angry Decision Maker: How Appraisal Tendencies Shape Anger's Influence on Cognition." *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 19(2), 115–137.
- **Lerner, Jennifer S. et al.** (2015). "Emotion and Decision Making." *Annual Review of Psychology* 66, 799–823.
- **Levý, Jiří** (1967). "Translation as a Decision Process." Roman Jakobson (ed.) (1967). *To Honor Roman Jakobson: Essays on the occasion of his seventieth birthday*, vol. 2. The Hague: Mouton, 1171–1182.
- **Litvak, Paul M. et al.** (2010). "Fuel in the Fire: How Anger Impacts Judgment and Decision-Making." Michael Potegal, Gerhard Stemmler and Charles Spielberger (eds) (2010). *International Handbook of Anger*. New York: Springer Science+Business Media, 287–310.
- **Miguel-Tobal, Juan José et al.** (2001). *STAXI-2. Inventario de Expresión de Ira Estado-Rasgo*. Madrid: TEA Ediciones.
- **Naranjo, Beatriz** (2018). "Moving music for moving source texts: The influence of emotional music in translation performance." *Translation. Cognition & Behavior* 1(2), 319–340.
- **Naranjo, Beatriz** (2019). "Immersed in the source text: The role of psychological transportation in literary translation." *Babel* 65(2), 264–285.
- **Naranjo, Beatriz and Ana Rojo** (2021). "In and out of tune. The effects of musical (in)congruence on translation." *Target* 33(1), 132–156.

- **PACTE** (2009). "Results of the validation of the PACTE translation competence model: Acceptability and decision making." *Across Languages and Cultures* 10(2), 207–230.
- **Prassl, Friederike** (2010). "Translators' decision-making processes in research and knowledge integration." Susanne Göpferich, Fabio Alves and Inger M. Mees (eds) (2010) *New Approaches in Translation Process Research*. Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur, 57–81.
- **Ramos, Marina** (2014). "The emotional experience of films: Does Audio Description make a difference?" *The Translator* 21(1), 68–94.
- **Ramos, Marina** (2016). "Testing audio-narration: the emotional impact of language in audio description." *Perspectives* 24(4), 606–634.
- **Rojo López, Ana M. and Marina Ramos** (2014). "The Impact of translators' Ideology on the Translation Process: A Reaction Time Experiment." *MonTI* 1, 247–271.
- **Rojo López, Ana M. and Marina Ramos** (2016). "Can emotion stir translation skill? Defining the impact of positive and negative emotions on translation performance." Ricardo Muñoz Martín (ed.) (2016). *Reembedding Translation Process Research*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 107–130.
- **Rojo, Ana** (2017). "The Role of Emotions." John W. Schwieter and Aline Ferreira (eds) (2017) *The Handbook of Translation and Cognition*. Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 369–385.
- **Rojo, Ana and Beatriz Naranjo** (2021). "Translating in times of crisis: A study about the emotional effects of the COVID19 pandemic on the translation of evaluative language." *Journal of Pragmatics* 176, 29–40.
- **Scarantino, Andrea and Ronald De Sousa** (2018). "Emotion." Edward N. Zalta (ed.) (2018). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2018 Edition) <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/emotion/> (consulted 25.02.2023).
- **Schwieter, John W. and Aline Ferreira** (2017). *The Handbook of Translation and Cognition*. Hoboken, New York: Wiley-Blackwell.
- **Shreve, Gregory M. and Geoffrey S. Koby** (1997). "Introduction: What's in the "Black Box"?" Cognitive Science and Translation Studies." Gregory M. Shreve *et al.* (eds) (1997). *Cognitive Processes in Translation and Interpreting*. London: SAGE, 11–18.
- **Siy John O. and Sapna Cheryan** (2013). "When compliments fail to flatter: American individualism and responses to positive stereotypes." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 104(1), 87–102
- **Spielberg, Charles D. et al** (1983). *Manual for the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory*. Palo Alto, California: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- **Spielberg, Charles D. et al.** (1999). "Measuring anxiety and anger with the state-trait anxiety inventory (STAI) and the state-trait anger expression inventory. STAXI." Mark E. Maruish (ed.) (1999). *The Use of Psychological Testing for Treatment Planning and Outcome Assessment*. Mahwah: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates Publishers, 993–1021.

- **Strizhakova, Yuliya, Tsarenko, Yelena and Julie A. Ruth** (2012). "I'm Mad and I Can't Get That Service Failure Off My Mind": Coping and Rumination as Mediators of Anger Effects on Customer Intentions." *Journal of Service Research* 15(4), 414–429.
- **Szasz, Paul L. et al.** (2016). "Effect of regulating anger and sadness on decision-making." *Cognitive Behaviour Therapy* 45(6), 1–17.
- **Tirkkonen-Condit, Sonja and Johanna Laukkanen** (1996). "Evaluations — a Key Towards Understanding the Affective Dimension of Translational Decisions." *Meta* 41(1), 45–59.
- **Young, Maia. J. et al.** (2011). "Mad enough to see the other side: Anger and the search for disconfirming information." *Cognition and Emotion* 25(1), 10–21.

Data availability statement

The data for this study can be retrieved from: Naranjo, Beatriz (2023), "The impact of anger on translation decision-making", Mendeley Data, v1 <http://dx.doi.org/10.17632/y3dvtxw52p.1>.

Biography

Beatriz Naranjo is a PhD researcher and lecturer at the University of Málaga. She has authored several publications in translation journals about the role of music, emotions and narrative transportation in translation. Her main research interests revolve around the intersections between translation and psychological aspects such as emotions, visualisation, narrative engagement and creativity, as well as the relation between voice and emotions in dubbing.

Email: beatriz.naranjo@uma.es

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8852-6821>

