Exploring the relationship between translation students' personality characteristics and their preference for using translation strategies

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ABSTRACT
For years, research in translation studies has focused on examining linguistic and sociolinguistic features of the source and target texts, and the active role of a translator as an important agent in the process of producing a target text has been underestimated. However, recently the importance of the influential role of translators and their personal characteristics have been highlighted. Considering this important development, the aim of this study was to examine the possible relationship between translation students' personality characteristics and their preference for using translation strategies based on two translation strategy models proposed by Vinay and Darblenet (1995) and Venuti (1995). For so doing, 100 translation students were asked to answer the NEO FFM Personality scale and choose one of the suggested translations for each of the 69 sentences designed based on the translation models. The data were analyzed using SPSS (version 22) and Smart PLS (3.0) software. The findings indicated that some of the participants' personality traits like neuroticism and openness to experience had a significant relationship with the use of some translation strategies such as adaptation, modulation and borrowing. The findings were discussed and the implications were made.

Keywords: Personality traits; translation strategies; translation students

INTRODUCTION

Personality has been defined as "the relatively enduring style of thinking, feeling, and acting that characterizes an individual" (Costa et al., 1995, p. 124). Different studies have indicated that the personality of individuals can influence their occupational performance (Barrick, 2005; Barrick & Mount, 1991; Barrick et al., 2001; Lounsbury et al., 2004; Ones et al., 2007; Rothstein & Goffin, 2006).

In educational contexts, many studies have been done to examine the relationship between personality types and learning different language skills and components (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999; Hassan, 2001, Milton & Cranney, 1976; Navidinia et al., 2017). For example, the study done by Sadeghi et al. (2012) showed a significant relationship between personality types, learning styles and learners' learning performance among second language learners. In addition, investigating the relationship between individual differences and undergraduate academic success, Farsides and Woodfield (2003) demonstrated that among the five traits of FFM, two traits of openness to experience and agreeableness had positive relationships with academic success.

Furthermore, in a study examining the influence of the two personality traits of extroversion/introversion and risk-taking on second language learning, Zafar and Meenakshi (2012) maintain that the impact of introversion/extroversion

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and risk-taking on language proficiency is more than the other personality factors. As they put it, while the extroverts are more inclined to participate in oral skills and activities in second language learning both inside and outside the classroom, the introverts are not interested in sociable skills of language learning, instead they are more interested in non-verbal skills such as reading and writing.

In addition, the findings of a meta-analysis by Barrick et al., (2003) found that personality is also related to vocational interests. They investigated the relationship between Five-Factor Model of personality (FFM) and Holland's six-vocational types (RIASEC types). The results indicated a significant relationship between the two models, although all of the traits of FFM were not correlated equally with different types of RIASEC model.

Personality in translation studies

Research on the translators' personality traits and their individual characteristics does not have a long history. Based on Barboni (1999), this new field of research was previously regarded as unpleasant to the original author. The reason for this earlier conceptualization may be the threat of weakening the power of the original author.

Studying the influence of personality types of translators on their performance in translating, Reiss (2000) believed that the variety in target texts of the same source text originates from "subjective" differences in translators. Therefore, he recommends the translation teachers and trainers not to underestimate the importance of translators' personality in the translation pedagogy. He further believes that every single translator has a specific motive, a manner of their own way and a unique way of interpreting the texts in the process of translating which should be taken into account.

Furthermore, although the reasons of sticking to the source text may be rooted mostly in the translator's ideology, Wuilmart (2007) showed that the other factor causing this preference could be the translator's personality. She maintains that the translator's feeling of repression can make her/him uncreative and can cause the target text to be oriented to the source text.

In addition, Hubscher-Davidson (2007) tried to examine the impact of translators' personality traits on their performance. She used various methods in order to get access to some information about translators' psychological and personality-related patterns, and also their decision-making procedure during the process of translation. The results showed that the translators' personality traits influence their behavior and consequently the target texts they produce.

Similarly, Karimnia and Mahjubi (2013) found that some personality types such as intuition and sensation have a strong relationship with translators' performance. They maintained that the translation

students having sensing type had a weaker performance in translating compared with that of those having intuitive type.

Translation strategies

Vinay and Darblenet's model of translation strategies

This model which was introduced by Vinay and Darblenet (1995) consists of direct and oblique translation strategies, and it totally includes seven procedures. The direct translation strategy is divided into three source-oriented procedures, which are literal translation, borrowing and calque. The oblique translation strategy contains four procedures, namely transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. This model is comprehensive and explains the different categories of translation procedures in more details (Ni, 2009).

According to Vinay and Darblenet (1995), the seven translation procedures of direct and oblique translation strategies can be explained as follows:

1. **Borrowing:** in this procedure, a linguistic unit of the source language is conveyed directly to the target language, and it is mainly used for filling a metalinguistic gap in the target language.
2. **Calque:** this procedure is used when each part of a phrase or an expression in the source language is rendered literally into the target language.
3. **Literal translation:** this procedure includes the process of literally translating each word of the source text into its grammatically and idiomatically appropriate equivalence in the target language.
4. **Transposition**: in this subcategory, one part of speech in the source text is changed into another word class in the target text. It is worth noting that no semantic change is done in this process.
5. **Modulation:** this method involves changing the meaning and point of view of the target language.
6. **Equivalence or idiomatic translation:** this procedure is used for idiomatic expressions and proverbs and in a situation that two different texts describe the same situation in terms of stylistic and structural features of the language.
7. **Adaptation:** this procedure, is applied in situations that the mere translation of the source text might be strange and unfamiliar for the audience of the target text.

Venuti' s model

Venuti (1995) introduced two translation strategies namely domestication and foreignization. Domestication, a target-oriented strategy, is the strategy of familiarizing the foreign text for the

readers of the target text and conforming to their language and culture. On the contrary, foreignization, a source-oriented strategy, is the strategy of preserving the foreignness of the source text in the target text (Venuti, 1995).

In spite of the importance of examining the personal characteristics of translators, studies addressing the role of translation students' personality characteristics and their potential influence on their performance are lacking in the literature. The review of literature for the present study could not find any studies investigating the possible relationship between translation students' personality characteristics and their preference for the use of different kinds of translation strategies. Therefore, the present study aims to address this issue by examining the possible relationship between translation students' personality characteristics and their preference for using translation strategies proposed by Vinay and Darblenet (1995) and Venuti (1995). The following questions guide this study:

1. What is the relationship between translation students' personality characteristics and their use of different kinds of translation strategies, based on Vinay and Darblenet's model (1995)?
2. What is the relationship between translation students' personality characteristics and their use of Venuti's translation strategies of domestication and foreignization (1995)?

METHOD
Respondents
A total of 100 translation students, 73 females and 27 males, whose age ranged from 20 to 30 years with the mean of 24 participated in this study as the sample. All participants were studying translation at two universities in Iran. All of the participants had already passed the courses of 'Translation Models' and 'Translation Theories' before the study, and they were familiar with the translation models and strategies.

Instruments
NEO FFM instrument
The NEO FFM instrument used in this study is a questionnaire measuring personality traits including openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. This instrument is a questionnaire of 60 items, rated on a 1 to 5 Likert scale. The Persian language version of this instrument was distributed among the students. The validation of the Persian version of this instrument on 1717 Iranian university students was confirmed in a study conducted by Garousi Farshi et al. (2001).

The overall Cronbach's alpha for the NEO FFM personality instrument was estimated as 0.66.

Reliabilities of the 5 components of the personality questionnaire was calculated and shown to be acceptable because they were above 0.5. Among all, the trait of Conscientiousness had the highest Cronbach's alpha of 0.85 and after that the traits of neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness and openness to experience had the highest Cronbach's alphas of 0.83, 0.78, 0.70 and 0.50, respectively.

Translation texts
The sentences chosen as the source text were designed based on seven translation strategies proposed by Vinay and Darblenet (1995) and two strategies introduced by Venuti (1995).

With regard to the categorization of translation procedures based on the model of Vinay and Darblenet, 49 sentences as the source text and 98 translations (two target texts for each source text), were collected. In each of the translations assigned for each source text, a specific strategy of Vinay and Darblenet's model was used. But in the other one, there was no sign of using that specific strategy. Of these 49 sentences, every 7 sentences were written based on each of the seven procedures of this categorization. The participants were asked to choose one of the target texts.

Cronbach's alpha for the translation test, designed based on the translation strategies of Vinay and Darblenet's model was 0.62.

Furthermore, out of the two translation procedures of Venuti's model, a set of 20 source sentences, both in English and in Persian, was prepared. For each sentence in the source text, two target texts were suggested, one rendered through domestication strategy and the other through foreignization strategy. The participants of the study were required to choose one of the target texts. Cronbach's alpha for the translation test designed based on the Venuti's model was 0.53.

Procedures
The procedure of collecting data and also the purpose of the research were explained to the participants of the study and they declared their consent of cooperation and participation in the research. The students were ensured that the study is anonymous and the data will be reported collectively. After filling out the personality questionnaire, and in order to assess the participants' preference for translation strategies, they were asked to choose one of the translations of the sentences.

It is worth mentioning that all sentences in the source text were divided into two separate parts, one for Venuti's translation strategies and the other for Vinay and Darblenet's translation strategies. For the former, twenty sentences were written, ten in Persian and the other ten in English. For each sentence in the source text, two translations were given, in one translation, domestication strategy, and in the other foreignization strategy were used. For

the latter, 49 sentences in the source text both in Persian and in English were included. Every seven sentences were selected to address one strategy of Vinay and Darblenet. Here again, for each sentence, two target texts were assigned. One of the two translations contains one of the strategies of Vinay and Darblenet. From the two translations, the participants were asked to determine which one they prefer.

Data analysis

The collected data for the study were analyzed through SPSS version 22 and also SmartPLS 3.0 (Ringle et al., 2015) software. First, the analysis was done by using descriptive statistics. Then, the relationships between the variables were explored using inferential statistics of Correlation and Regression analyses. The reasons for which SmartPLS was used in this study were the suitability of this software for the studies with small samples

and latent variables (Temme et al., 2006) (in this study both personality and translation strategy models had latent variables).

RESULTS

Correlation between personality and selection of translation strategies

Personality and selection of Vinay and Darblenet's model strategies

The first question of the present study is "what is the relationship between translators' personality and their use of different kinds of translation strategies, based on Vinay and Darblenet's model (1995)?". To answer this question, the participants were asked to express their views regarding each of the 60 items of FFM personality questionnaire in a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (see Table 1).

Table 1

Statistical Parameters of the Relationship between the Students' Personality Traits and Their Selection of Translation Strategies based on Vinay and Darblenet's Model

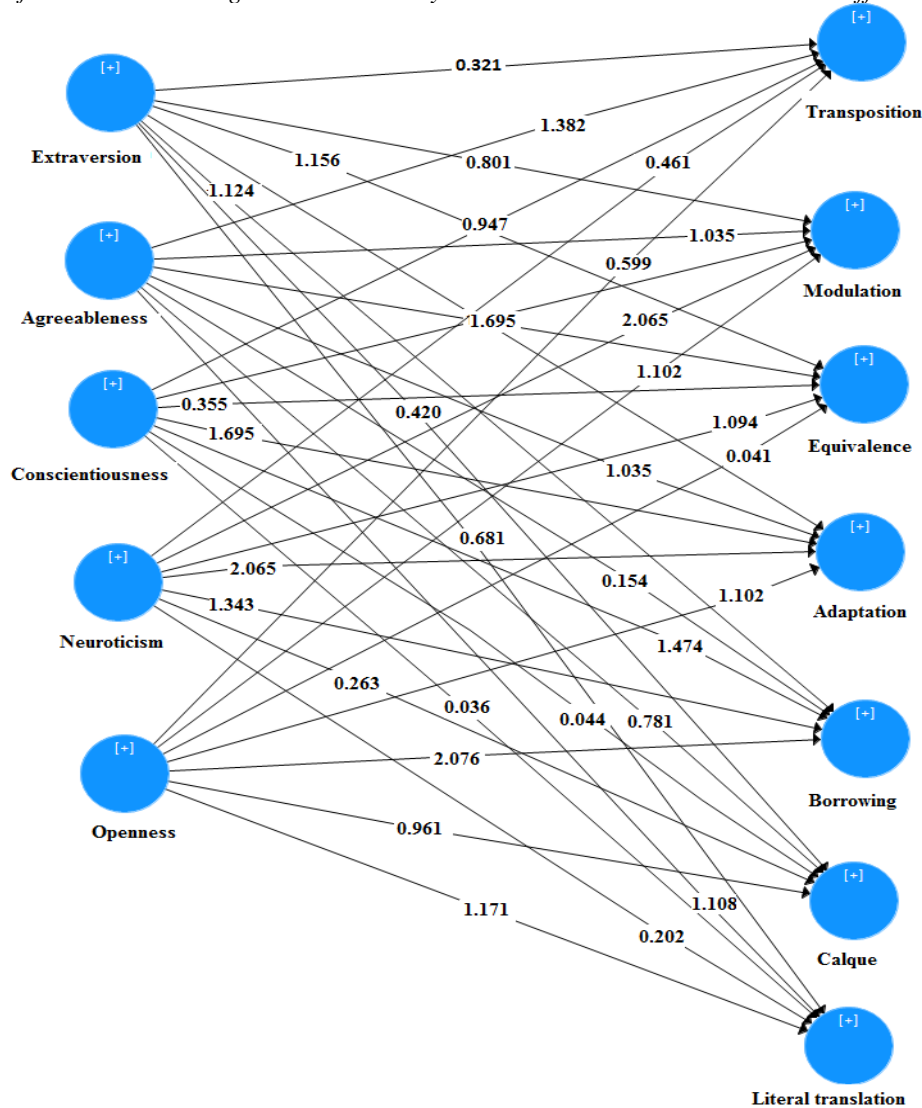| Relationship			T-Statistics*	P-Value**
Extraversion	→	Adaptation	0.801	0.423
Extraversion	→	Borrowing	1.124	0.261
Extraversion	→	Calque	0.420	0.674
Extraversion	→	Equivalence	1.156	0.248
Extraversion	→	Literal Translation	0.681	0.496
Extraversion	→	Modulation	0.801	0.423
Extraversion	→	Transposition	0.321	0.749
Agreeableness	→	Adaptation	1.035	0.301
Agreeableness	→	Borrowing	0.154	0.878
Agreeableness	→	Calque	0.781	0.435
Agreeableness	→	Equivalence	0.710	0.478
Agreeableness	→	Literal Translation	1.108	0.268
Agreeableness	→	Modulation	1.035	0.301
Agreeableness	→	Transposition	1.382	0.168
Conscientiousness	→	Adaptation	1.695	0.091
Conscientiousness	→	Borrowing	1.474	0.141
Conscientiousness	→	Calque	0.044	0.965
Conscientiousness	→	Equivalence	0.355	0.723
Conscientiousness	→	Literal Translation	0.036	0.971
Conscientiousness	→	Modulation	1.695	0.091
Conscientiousness	→	Transposition	0.947	0.344
Neuroticism	→	Adaptation	*2.065	**0.039
Neuroticism	→	Borrowing	1.343	0.180
Neuroticism	→	Calque	0.263	0.793
Neuroticism	→	Equivalence	1.094	0.274
Neuroticism	→	Literal Translation	0.202	0.840
Neuroticism	→	Modulation	*2.065	**0.039
Neuroticism	→	Transposition	0.461	0.645
Openness to experience	→	Adaptation	1.102	0.271
Openness to experience	→	Borrowing	*2.076	**0.038
Openness to experience	→	Calque	0.961	0.337
Openness to experience	→	Equivalence	0.041	0.967
Openness to experience	→	Literal Translation	1.171	0.242
Openness to experience	→	Modulation	1.102	0.271
Openness to experience	→	Transposition	0.599	0.550

*T> 1.95; **P< 0.05

In addition, in order to recognize the translation students' preference with regard to Vinay and Darblenet's translation strategies, the participants were asked to answer 49 items of the translation set, and select one of the suggested translations for each sentence in the source text. The collected data about the frequency of the use of different strategies of Vinay and Darblenet's model by the participants, and their personality characteristics were entered into the SPSS software and the descriptive statistics were computed. In order to determine the relationship between the two variables mentioned in the first question (personality and the use of strategies in Vinay and Darblenet's model), another statistical model named Smart PLS was used, and through which a structural model for this research question was drawn. The structural model with PLS is demonstrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

The Structural Model of the Relationship between the Students' Personality Characteristics and Their Selection of Translation Strategies based on Vinay and Darblenet's Model with Path Coefficients

As Table 1 shows, the P-value and T-statistics for the majority of the variables are more than 0.05 and lower than 1.96, indicating that there is not any significant correlation between these variables. The path coefficients shown in Figure 1 indicate that the lowest value of path coefficient (in terms of strength) is between the two variables of conscientiousness and literal translation. Among these five factors of personality, the one showing the lowest correlation with the translation strategies based on Vinay and Darblenet's model of translation startegies, is conscientiousness, as it has the highest overall P-value. It is worth mentioning that specifically the factor of extraversion had the weakest relationship with the translation startegies of transposition with P-value of 0.749 and T-statistics of 0.321. Neuroticism, contrary to conscientiousness, has the lowest overall P-value among all five factors of personality.

However, among this apparent compelete lack of correlation between the variables of FFM personality and the strategies of Vinay and Darblenet, there were some significant relationships in three paths of this structural model. Two out of these three relationships were between the factor of neuroticism as the independent variable, which correlated significantly with two strategies of Vinay and Darblenet's model namely modulation and adaptation, both with P-value of 0.039 and T-statistics of 2.065. The other significantly correlated relationship is between openness to experience and borrowing with P-value of 0.038 and T-statistics of 2.076.
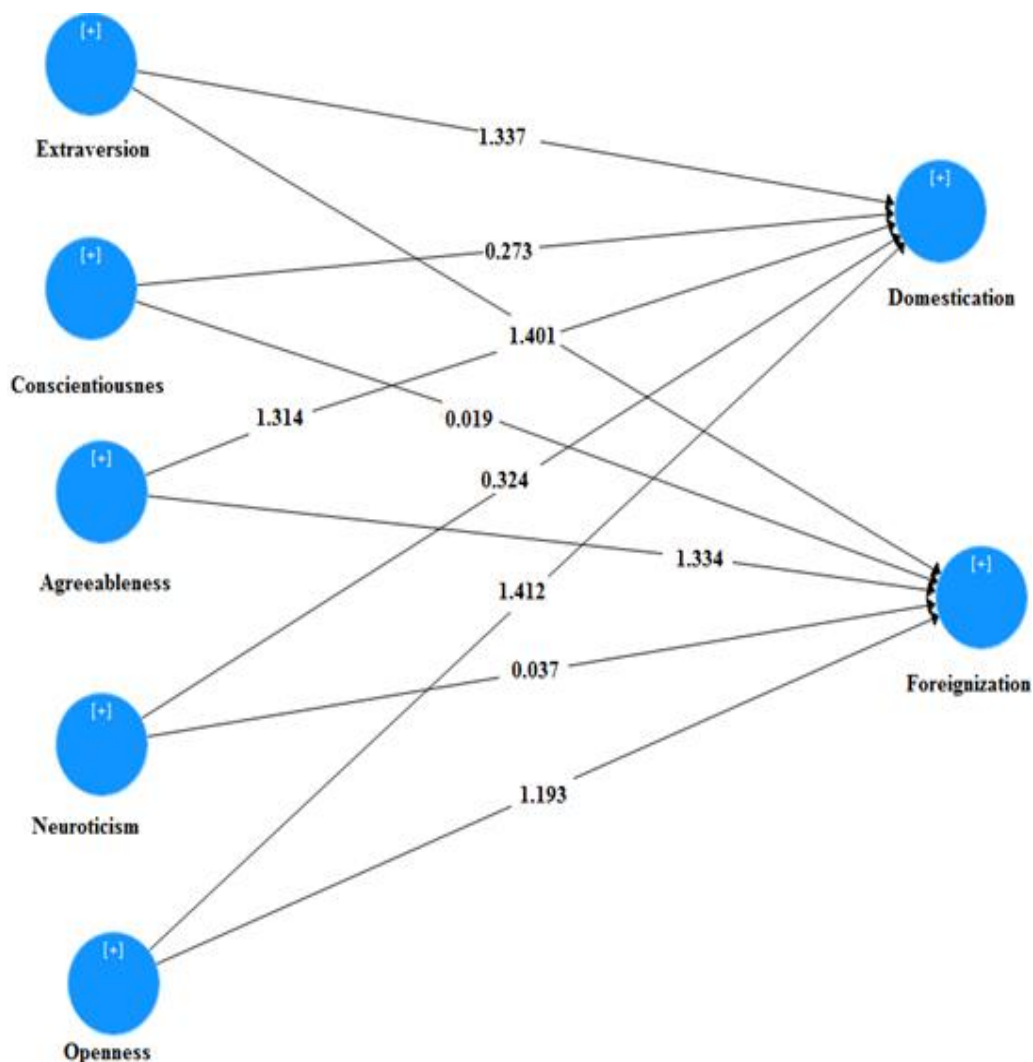
Personality and selection of Venuti's model strategies
The second research question of this study is "what is the relationship between translators' personality and their use of Venuti's (1995) translation

strategies of domestication and foreignization?". To answer this question, a translation set containing 20 sentences with two suggested translations, one with domestication and the other with foreignization was used to evaluate the participants' preference in choosing either the strategy of domestication or the strategy of foreignization. As indicated in the Table 2, P-values of each relationship between the personality traits and translation strategies of domestication and foreignization of Venuti's model, indicated no significant correlation.

Concerning foreignization, personality trait of extraversion with P-value of 0.116 and T-statistics of 1.575 had the highest correlation with this strategy of translation from Venuti's model. It is worth noting that although the relationship between the strategy of domestication and foreignization, and extraversion was not significant, their P-values and T-statistics were 0.136 and 1.491, respectively.

Figure 2
Structural Model of the Relationship between the Students' Personality Traits and Their Selection of Translation Strategies based on Venuti's Model with Path Coefficients

Table 2
Statistical Parameters of the Relation between the Students' Personality Traits and the Selection of Translation Strategies based on Venuti's Model

Relationships			T-Statistics*	P-Value**
Agreeableness	→	Domestication	1.348	0.178
Agreeableness	→	Foreignization	1.362	0.174
Conscientiousness	→	Domestication	0.284	0.777
Conscientiousness	→	Foreignization	0.020	0.984
Extraversion	→	Domestication	1.491	0.136
Extraversion	→	Foreignization	1.575	0.116
Neuroticism	→	Domestication	0.328	0.743
Neuroticism	→	Foreignization	0.038	0.970
Openness to experience	→	Domestication	1.357	0.175
Openness to experience	→	Foreignization	1.140	0.255

*T> 1.95; **P< 0.05

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between translation students' personality traits and their preference for the use of translation strategies based on Vinay and Darblenet's, and Venuti's models. The results demonstrated that most of the personality traits did not have a significant relationship with students' use of translation strategies of Vinay and Darblenet's model, as the majority of the paths between personality traits and translation strategies of Vinay and Darblenet's model had P-values higher than 0.05.

However, it was revealed that neuroticism and openness to experience had a significant relationship with the students' decisions in using a particular strategy, indicating that those who were more neurotic or had a high degree of openness to experience were more eager to use the strategies of adaptation and modulation.

Although some studies examined the effect of personality of translators or translation students on their performance in the process of translation (Barboni, 1999; Hubscher-Davidson, 2009; Reiss, 2000) and interpreting (Bontempo & Napier, 2011, Rammstedt et al., 2016), the relationship between personality of translators and their preference in using different translation strategies in the process of translation has not been investigated. As far as the authors know, there has been a lack of empirical studies in this area, and the present study is the first one attempting to explore the relationship between translation students' personality and their preference for using translation strategies.

According to the results of the present study, all beta path coefficients of the statistically significant correlated relationships between neuroticism and openness to experience and translation strategies of modulation and adaptation were positive. Therefore, it indicates that any positive changes in the independent variable can have a positive change in the dependent variable, and in this case if the individuals' score in a specific type of personality trait increases, their preference in using that specific strategy also increases. In other

words, the higher the translators' degree of neuroticism is, the keener they are on using the translation strategies of modulation and adaptation.

Regarding the trait of openness to experience, Rammstedt et al. (2016) and Bontempo et al. (2014) referred to the positive relationship between this trait and interpreting competency. However, Bontempo and Napier (2011) maintained that the personality trait of neuroticism correlates negatively with the sign language interpreters' performance.

The trait of neuroticism deals with the negative reaction of its owners in a tense or stressful situation. According to Merrens (1998), neurotic people often feel worrying, nervous, emotional, temperamental, self-conscious, and vulnerable.

Adaptation is a strategy which can be applied in the translations when a situation existing in the culture of the source language cannot be found in the culture of the target language, so the cultural reference would be changed. Therefore, with regard to the significant correlation between the personality type of neuroticism and the strategy of adaptation, it seems that given the worrying characteristics of the neurotic individuals, they may feel that there is a risk of ambiguity in understanding the content and meaning of the source text when the source text contains a situation which is almost special to the source culture and is not familiar for the target culture's audience. Therefore, they try to use the translation strategy of adaptation to convey the content of the source text in a familiar way to the audience's culture (target culture).

This matter also can hold true about the probable reason of the relationship between neuroticism and the participants' preference in using the strategy of modulation. Modulation which, according to Vinay and Darblenet (1995), is called as "a touchstone of a good translator" (p. 246), is a strategy through which the point of view, semantics and what Molina and Hurtado (2002) call "cognitive category" (p. 510) of the source language may be changed. As both of the strategies of modulation and adaptation are target oriented strategies in Vinay and Darblenet's model, and the common goal of these

strategies is producing a translation which is consistent and prevalent in the target culture and language use, therefore, the neurotic participants may feel worried about the probability of producing a translation which is not frequent and common in the language use of the target audience. Thus, the neurotic translator may attempt to use a strategy through which the probability of producing an uncommon translation becomes lower.

Moreover, people with higher level of neuroticism are emotional. Concerning this feature of neurotic people, they might consider the emotion and feeling of the target audience who read the translation in terms of its naturalness and fluency. Consequently, these types of translators may prefer to produce a fluent translation, using relevant translation strategies like modulation and adaptation.

In addition, this positive relation and its interpretation hold true for the other correlated path which is the path between the trait of openness to experience and the translation strategy of borrowing. Individuals with high level of openness to experience are often interested in new experiences and ideas, and according to Merrens (1998) they are creative, imaginative, original and untraditional and prefer variety, as opposed to less open individuals who are not willing to new ideas and experiences, and are uncreative, down to earth, conventional, and traditional.

With regard to the significant correlation between the personality type of openness to experience and the translation strategy of borrowing, it seems that as one of the characteristics of people with high openness to experience level is being original (Merrens, 1998), these types of people often prefer primary versions and not its alternative ones. Therefore, for translators with such a personality type, it can be explained that in case of translating the borrowed words in the source text, they prefer to use the original word in the source text and transfer it to the target text through borrowing. The other feature of this personality category is that they tend to untraditional and new things (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Therefore, translators who score higher on openness to experience measures would prefer to use a linguistically new word like borrowed words rather than a new target equivalent for the specific word in the source text. In addition, the other relevant characteristic of the individuals with higher levels of openness to experience is their preference to the variety (McCrae & Costa, 1997) and therefore, they are looking for something far from uniformity and monotony and try to go beyond the familiarity. Therefore, it can be inferred that translators with higher levels of openness to experience may tend to choose those equivalents which are not familiar for the readers of the target text and cause them feel variety in the translation.

Furthermore, as the results of the study showed, there was no significant correlation between the students' personality traits and their preference of using translation strategies of Venuti's model. This is in line with the finding of Pourgharib and Dehbandi's study (2013) which indicated no relationship between personality of translation students and their performance in translating the literary texts. Therefore, it may be argued that some other factors than personality might affect the preference for the use of strategies of domestication and foreignization.

CONCLUSION

Personality types have been shown to play an important role in different contexts and across different occupations. The findings of the present study indicated the relationships between the personality trait of neuroticism and the students' preference to use translation strategies of modulation and adaptation, and also between the personality trait of openness to experience and the students' preference to use the strategy of borrowing. However, none of the traits of FFM had significant relationship with the strategies of Venuti's model (1995). Therefore, it shows that in the case of two binary translation strategies (i.e. domestication and foreignization), personality traits did not have any relationships with the translators' preference in choosing one of the two strategies.

Although there have been some studies examining the effect of personality on the translation process, there is still a paucity of studies about the relationship between FFM personality traits and translation process and even no study could be found in the literature which directly investigated the relationship between FFM personality traits and the translation students' preference for using translation strategies during the process of translation.

According to Hubscher-Davidson (2013), in spite of the vast range of individual and personal characteristics influencing translator's performance, the studies of the translator's personality characteristics, self-perception and attitudes are very few. Therefore, the findings of this study can add to the existing literature of the role that personality can play in translator's performance. Apart from adding to the existing literature, the finding of this study can have some implications for translator trainers, and designers of curriculum and textbooks to pay more attention to the individual characteristics of translation students while teaching and designing teaching materials.

The study had some limitations. As questionnaires were used for data collection, the findings are reliable to the extent that the participants answered the items carefully and accurately. In addition, just 100 translation students

agreed to participate in this study. Therefore, considering the important role of individual differences especially personality characteristics in translators' performance, it is hoped that the future researchers continue this line of research. Replicating this study with a larger sample size can be one area for further research.

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