Exploring the Relationship between Students' Perfectionism and Their Use of Translation Strategies

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Abstract: Focusing on translators' personal characteristics and their individual differences has gained more momentum in the quest for exploring factors influencing the translation process. The present study aimed to examine the relationship between translator trainees' perfectionism and their preference for the use of different translation strategies. In this quantitative study, 100 translation students were recruited and asked to fill Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale survey and complete translation tasks. The translations were from English to Farsi and vice-versa. The collected data from the questionnaire and translation tasks were analyzed using SPSS (22) and Smart PLS (3.0) software packages. The findings showed that perfectionism influenced the translation trainees' preference in using some translation strategies like literal translation, domestication, and foreignization. The finding further substantiated the importance of the personal characteristics of translators in the translation process.

Keywords: perfectionism, translation strategies, translation students, translation training.

INTRODUCTION

Perfectionist people try to perform any activity flawlessly and perfectly, and most of them are afraid of committing mistakes (Hollender, 1987; Flett & Hewitt, 2002; Schuler, 2000). According to Hollender (1978), perfectionism is the extra expectation one has from herself/himself or others to act in an extremely good way, in a specific situation. Pacht (1984) identifies several key indicators of perfectionism in students. These include setting unrealistically high and inflexible performance standards, being driven more by fear of failure than desire for success, and basing self-worth entirely on productivity and achievement. In

addition, perfectionistic students tend to view outcomes in black-and-white terms, labeling anything short of perfection as failure. They often struggle to feel satisfaction or pride in their accomplishments, viewing success merely as meeting expected standards. These students may also experience significant delays in completing assignments or frequently restart their work, driven by the need for perfection from the outset and throughout the process (Pacht, 1984).

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

According to Hewitt and Flett (1991), perfectionism has three components namely: self-oriented perfectionism, other-oriented perfectionism, and socially prescribed perfectionism. They believe that the self-oriented dimension of perfectionism is the state of trying strongly to be perfect in most (or even all) aspects of life. Conversely, the Other-oriented component of perfectionism is the state of expecting others to behave perfectly without any flaw, and socially prescribed perfectionism is revealed in an individual as a belief that other people expect them to be perfect (Hewitt & Flett, 1991).

Perfectionism has been examined in students' learning and it has been shown that it influences the performance of learners. For example, in a study examining the behaviors of perfectionist students, Brophy (1996) concluded that this type of student fails to have a productive performance during learning because of the fear of mistakes and usually attempts to produce answers only when they are sure about the correctness of their answers. Similarly, in another study, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) found a significant correlation between perfectionism and anxiety in language learners, and they maintained that these two traits can lead to poor performance in language learners.

In a study conducted by Pishghadam and Akhoondpoor Manteghi (2011), the performance of a group of perfectionist students learning a foreign language is examined in four language skills (listening, writing, speaking, and reading). Based on the results of this study, generally, the perfectionism feature of students had a negative influence on their academic performance, and perfectionism mainly correlated with anxiety, indicating that students with a high level of perfectionism are more anxious about learning a foreign language. Likewise in a study done by Barabadi and Khajavi (2020), the researcher found a negative correlation between one aspect of adaptive perfectionism (Organization (ORG)) and maladaptive perfectionism and the achievement of second language learning, however, the other aspect of adaptive perfectionism (Personal Standards (PS)) had a positive relationship with the second language achievement.

Furthermore, Navidinia et al. (2019) conducted a study examining the effects of perfectionism and anxiety on EFL students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in their classes. The research involved 120 Iranian university students (50 males, 70 females) who completed questionnaires on WTC, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, and Multidimensional Perfectionism. Results indicated that both anxiety and perfectionism significantly and negatively influenced students' WTC in language classes.

Researchers in another line of research attempted to examine translators' individual differences influencing their performance during the process of translation. Among the pioneering researchers in this domain are Lörscher (1991) and Tirkkonen-Condit (1997). Using the Think-Aloud protocol, Tirkkonen-Condit (1997) attempted to analyze the verbalizations of translation students during the process of translation and investigate their translation proficiency. Based on her findings, proficient translators are more tolerant of ambiguity compared to non-proficient translators, and this stems from their individual differences or translation experience.

Barboni (1999) and Reiss (2000) separately examined the relationship between translators' personality and their performance in the act and the quality of translation. Following Barboni's (1999) and Reiss's (2000) studies, Hubscher-Davidson (2007) also attempted to investigate the influence of personality on translators' performance; and based on her finding, the personality of a translator has an important impact on the quality of their product. Furthermore, Gevaert (2020) in his study regarding the role of personality in the process of translation stated that translators with a sensing personality have a better performance as compared to those with an intuitive personality.

In addition, Pourgharib and Dehbandi (2013) reported the absence of the effect of translators' personalities on their productions of narrative texts. However, Qiu (2023) stated that emotional intelligence is proven to have an influence on the translators' performance and the quality of their production.

Navidinia et al. (2021) conducted a study on the predictability of translation trainees' personality traits on their use of translation strategies. The findings showed that two traits of personality traits of FFM personality (neuroticism and openness to experience) can influence translators' preference in choosing strategies such as adaptation and modulation of the oblique procedures and the literal translation strategy of direct procedures.

As far as the authors know, no comprehensive study has been carried out concerning the relationship between the perfectionism of the translators with their use of various translation strategies. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between the translators' perfectionism and their use of different kinds of translation strategies in the process of translation (based on Vinay and Darblenet's translation strategies (1995) and translation strategies of domestication and foreignization proposed by Venuti (1995).

Vinay and Darblenet's Model of Translation Strategies

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) categorize translation procedures into two main strategies: direct and oblique. The direct strategy encompasses literal translation, borrowing, and calque, while the oblique strategy includes transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. Borrowing involves transferring source language units directly to the target language to address metalanguage gaps. Calque entails word-for-word translation of phrases. Literal translation converts each word into grammatically and idiomatically appropriate equivalents. Transposition changes parts of speech without altering meaning. Modulation shifts the meaning and perspective in the target language. Equivalence or idiomatic translation is used for proverbs and idioms, maintaining structural and stylistic features. Adaptation is employed when direct translation might result in unfamiliarity for the target audience (Vinay & Darblenet, 1995).

Providing different ways of translating in case of facing different problems when translating source texts is the main aim of using this theory of translation by Vinay and Darblenet (1995). Also, as Saridaki (2021) declared describing the translators' way of rendering the text in the process of translation, it enables them to have their 'stylistically motivated" choices in translation the process.

Venuti's Model of Translation Strategies

Venuti (1995) proposed two translation strategies namely domestication and foreignization. Domestication, a target-oriented strategy, is the strategy of familiarizing the foreign text to 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 (Gile, 2009). According to Venuti (2012), domestication is a strategy that makes the translation familiar to the receivers of the translation product. In other

words, it localizes the translation and reduces the intensity of its strangeness and foreignness. Venuti (2012) also considers it consistent with Schleiermacher's words (1813) when he states that the translator "leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author toward him" (Venuti, 2012, p.49).

The other opposite strategy is foreignization. By this concept, Venuti (1995) refers to the visibility of the translator and the preservation of the foreign and unfamiliar color of the source language and culture in the target text. Therefore, the translation product resulting from foreignization is "non-fluent, estranging or heterogeneous" (Munday, 2012, p.219).

Venuti (1995) considers the matter of the invisibility of the translator in his two strategies of translation (domestication and foreignization), indicating that in the case in which the translator produces a transparent and fluent text, the translator becomes invisible. By fluency and transparency, he means the translation is the state of being highly recognizable and readable for the readership of the target text. To reach this quality, the translator should avoid strange and foreign linguistic units and structures that are unfamiliar with the usual form and content of the untranslated texts in the target language. Consequently, while the translator will be unseen, the original writer will be visible. This case of invisibility of the translator happens as the result of the translation strategy of domestication. Conversely, when the translator uses the strategy of foreignization, she makes herself visible, and therefore the target text is obviously seen as a translation by its readers in the target language and culture. Target text deriving from this strategy is unknown to the readers and they clearly feel the strangeness and unfamiliarity of the translation.

Comparing the strategies applied by foreign language students as non-professional and professional translators, Lörscher (2005) observes that the translation units that non-professional translators considered are small linguistic units (e.g., words), while professionals considered larger units of translation (e.g., phrase, sentence…) when rendering elements of the source language into that of the target language.

As one of the aims of psychological studies is predicting the future behavior one will have in a specific situation (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2016), pursuing this goal can be very beneficial in translation studies. However, despite the importance of exploring the personal characteristics of translators, to the best of the authors' information, no empirical study has been conducted to examine the relationship between perfectionism on translator trainees' use of different translation strategies. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate how perfectionist tendencies among translation students correlate with their choices of various translation strategies by answering the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between translator trainees' level of perfectionism and their use of different kinds of translation strategies, based on Vinay and Darblenet's model (1958)?
2. What is the relationship between translator trainees' level of perfectionism and their use of Venuti's (1995) translation strategies of domestication and foreignization?

METHODOLOGY

Participants
The participants of the study included 100 translation students, 73 females and 27 males. They were selected based on convenience sampling. Of this number, 49 were postgraduate students and 51 were undergraduate ones. They were all aged between 20 to 30 years. They were translation students in two Iranian universities. All of them had passed the courses related to translation theories, and therefore they were familiar with the translation theories, models, and strategies.

Instruments

Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS*)***
For measuring the level of students' perfectionism, the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (Hewitt et al. 1991) was used. This tool measures the different aspects of perfectionism which are, Self-Oriented Perfectionism, Other-Oriented Perfectionism, and Socially Prescribed Perfectionism. The questionnaire includes 45 Likert scale items.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's alpha is reported for the Multidimensional Perfectionism questionnaire. As Table 1 shows, the overall Cronbach's Alphas calculated for the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale in this study is .854. The Self-oriented dimension has the highest Cronbach's alpha of 0.855 and after that, the dimensions of other-oriented and socially-oriented have the highest Cronbach's alphas of 0.679 and 0.648, respectively. The calculated measures are acceptable and, therefore, this test is considered reliable.

Table 1: Results of the Measurement Model of Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale

Constructs	Cronbach's Alphas
Perfectionism	0.854
Self-oriented	0.855
Other-oriented	0.679
Socially-oriented	0.648

Translation texts

To examine students' preference for the translation strategies proposed by Vinay and Darblenet (1995), a set of 49 texts was given to them. Each text had two translations, one with the use of one of the specific strategies mentioned in the model, and in the other one, the use of that specific strategy was absent. Furthermore, a set of 20 texts with their two translations was designed for the two strategies of domestication and foreignization proposed by Venuti (1995). Based on these two translation procedures, a set of 20 source texts, both in English and in Farsi, was prepared. For each 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 that they preferred. Before the main administration, the instrument was piloted with 30 students.

In order to check the reliability of the two instruments, the Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The reliability indices of the first translation sets based on the models of Vinay and Darblenet (1995) and the second one based on Venuti (1995) were (0.627) and (0.534), respectively.

Procedures

The process of distributing the perfectionism questionnaire and translation texts was carried out in two stages, all in one single session. In the first stage, the respondents were asked to fill out the perfectionism questionnaire. In the second stage, four translation sheets of papers containing source texts and their target texts were distributed among the participants and the participants answered them by choosing one of the suggested translations for each item.

Data Analysis

The obtained data were entered into SPSS version 22 and also SmartPLS 3.0 (Ringle, et al. 2015). SmartPLS was used in this study because of the appropriateness of applying this software package for examining, directly and indirectly, observed variables with small samples (Temme et al. 2006). This examination was carried out firstly, by utilizing descriptive statistics. Then, the relationships between the factors were investigated by using the two models of inferential statistics: Regression and Correlation analyses.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Perfectionism and preference for translation strategies

Descriptive Statistics

This part of the study presents the frequency of using the translation strategies of Vinay and Darblenet's model and perfectionism items. Results indicated that the strategies of transposition, borrowing, and adaptation were the most-selected ones which were preferred by 47, 41, and 34 participants, respectively. Also, the least-selected strategies were literal translation, calque, and modulation.

Furthermore, a majority of the participants (63) selected the translations in which the strategy of foreignization was applied, and also 26 of them selected the strategy of domestication, indicating that the majority of the subjects preferred the translation strategy of foreignization over the strategy of domestication in the Venuti's model. It is worth noting that 11 participants selected the two strategies equally.

According to the scorings to each of the perfectionism dimensions by the participants, most of the participants scored highly on the self-oriented type, and after that, they scored the same on other-oriented and socially-oriented. On the other hand, the types of socially-oriented, other-oriented, and self-oriented have gained the lowest scores among the subjects, respectively. Generally speaking, participants were more self-oriented individuals and less socially-oriented ones.

Inferential Statistics

Perfectionism and selection of strategies in Vinay and Darblenet's model

Regarding the relationship between perfectionism and the seven strategies of Vinay and Darblenet's model, the data collected through the MPI questionnaire and translation set designed based on Vinay and Darblenet's model were analyzed, and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 2: parameters of the relationship between the students' perfectionism and their selection of translation strategies based on Vinay and Darblenet's model

Relationship			T-Statistics*	P-Value**
Perfectionism	⟶	Modulation	0.417	0.677
Perfectionism	⟶	Transposition	0.179	0.858
Perfectionism	⟶	Equivalence	0.392	0.695
Perfectionism	⟶	Adaptation	0.417	0.677
Perfectionism	⟶	Literal translation	2.117*	0.035**
Perfectionism	⟶	Borrowing	0.433	0.665
Perfectionism	⟶	Calque	0.044	0.965

*T> 1.95; **P< 0.05

The results of measuring the relationship between perfectionism with the translation strategies of Vinay and Darblenet's model suggest that most of the measured relationships were of no significant link, except for the relationship between the strategy of literal translation and perfectionism with a P-value of 0.035 and T-statistics of 2.117.
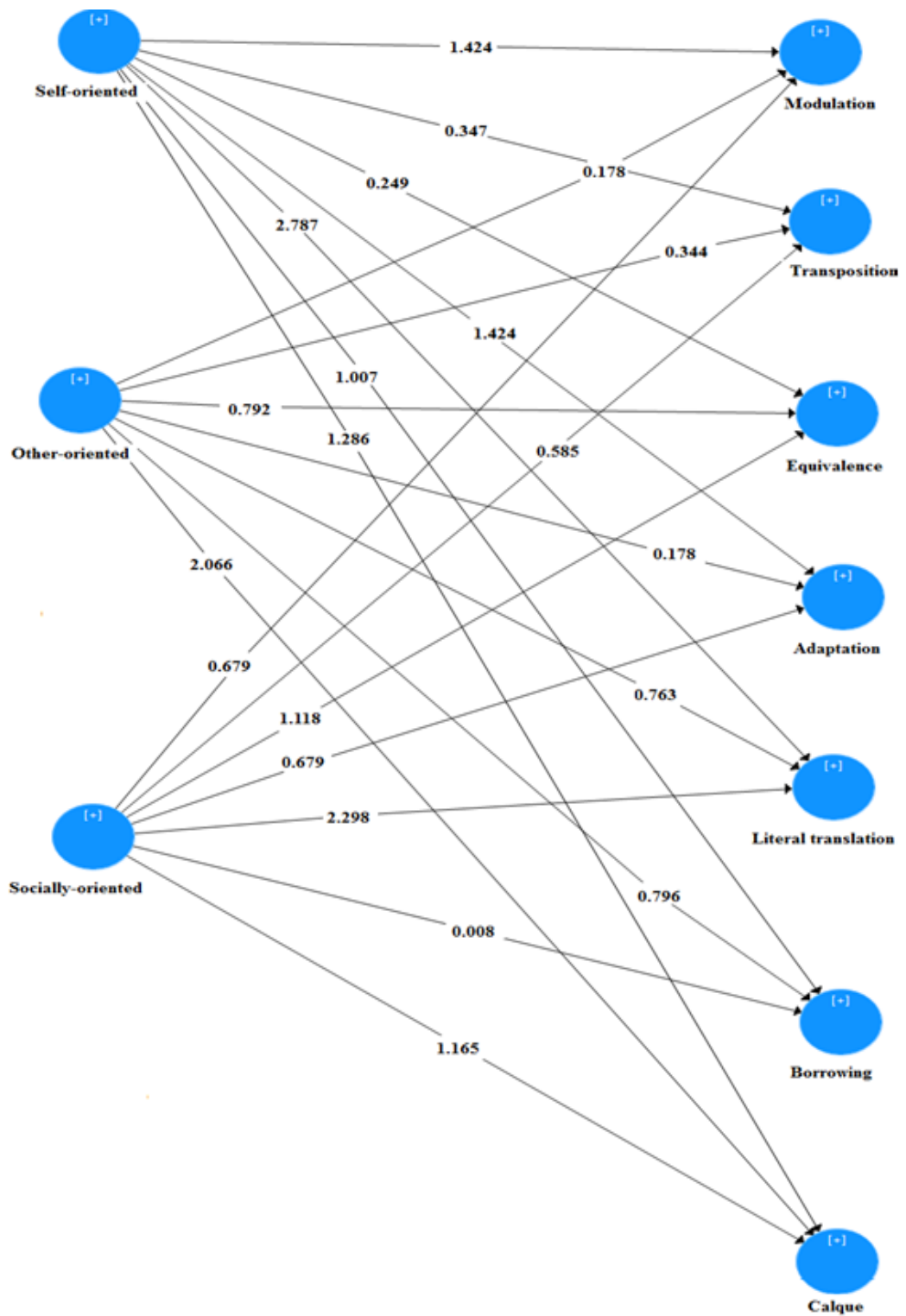
Figure 1: The structural model of the relationship between the students' perfectionism and their selection of translation strategies based on Vinay and Darblenet's model with path coefficients
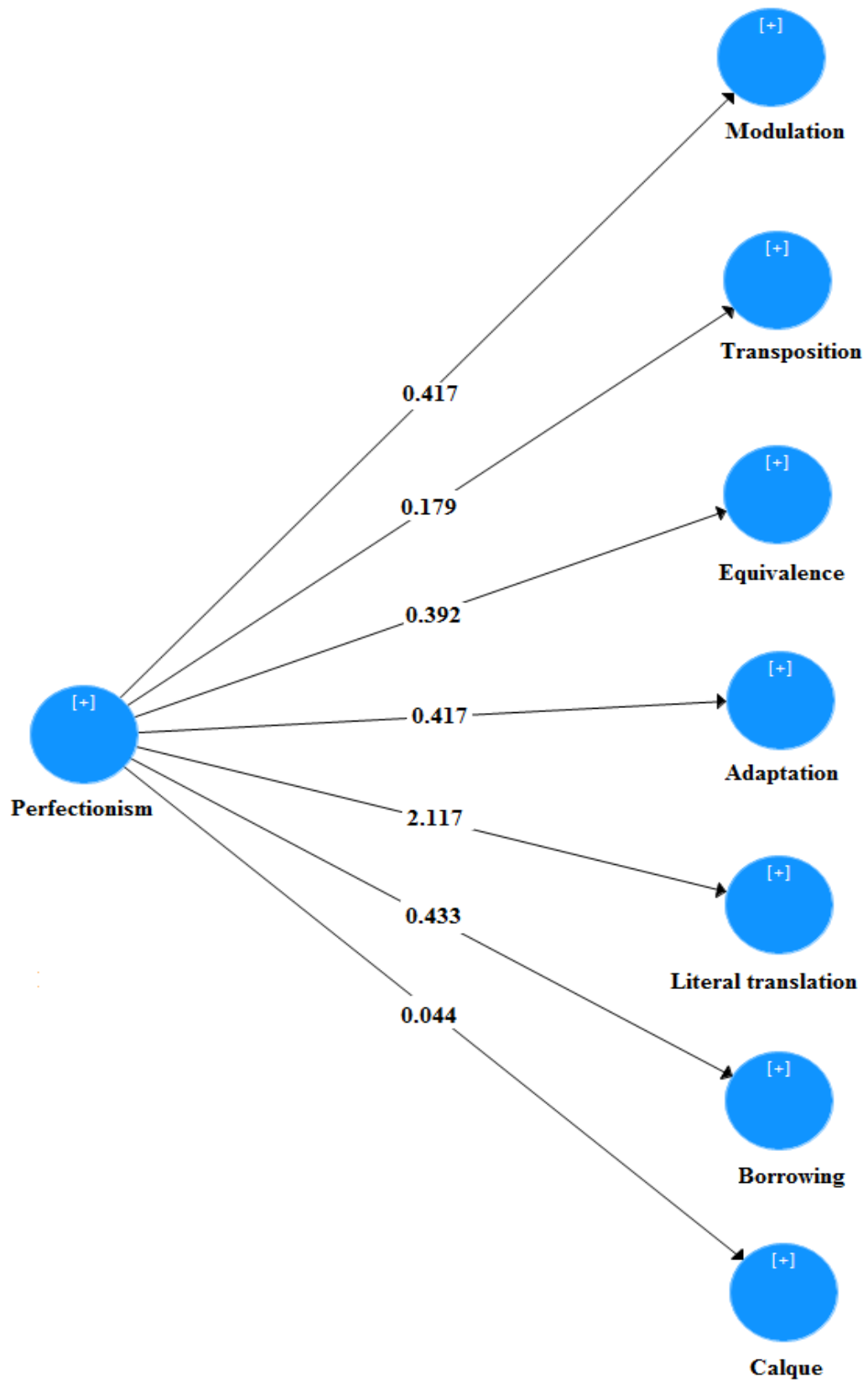
Figure 2. The structural model of the relationship between the students' perfectionism as a whole and their selection of translation strategies based on Vinay and Darblenet's model

Perfectionism and selection of Venuti's model strategies

To examine the relationship between the two variables, perfectionism and Venuti's translation strategies, the same gathered data from the perfectionism questionnaire and the translation set designed based on Venuti's model were used. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 3: Statistical parameters of the relationship between the students' perfectionism and their selection of translation strategies based on Venuti's model

Relationship s			T-Statistics*	P-Value**
Perfectionism ⟶		Domesticatio n	*2.084	**0.038
Perfectionism ⟶		Foreignizatio n	*2.228	**0.026

*T> 1.95; **P< 0.05

As displayed in Table 5, perfectionism has a significant correlation with both of the translation strategies of Venuti's model. The strategies of domestication and foreignization are correlated with perfectionism with P-values of 0.038 and 0.026, respectively.
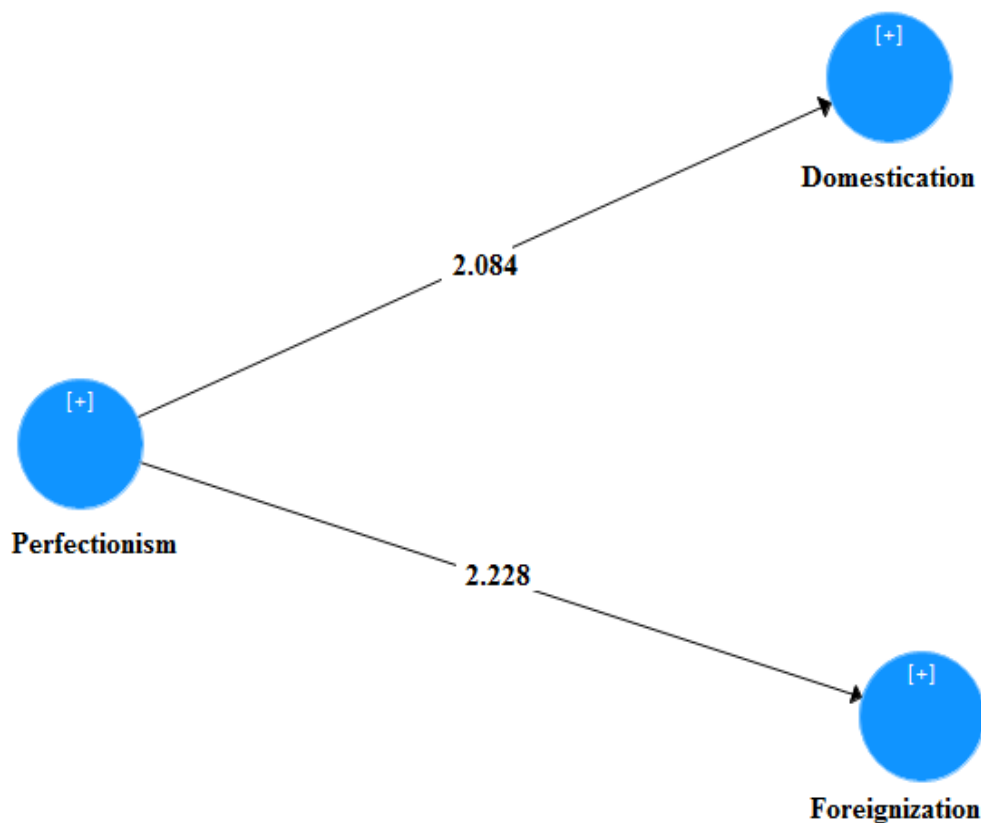

Figure 3. The structural model of the relationship between the students' perfectionism and their selection of translation strategies based on Venuti's model

According to the findings, there is a significant correlation between perfectionism and the translation strategy of Literal Translation from the direct strategies of Vinay and Darblenet's model. A reason for this relationship might be a fear that perfectionist translator trainees feel due to the probability of failing to transfer the full content and concept of the source text. Therefore, they try to use the strategy of Literal Translation, so that they can feel more confident in fully transferring the source text. This fear, in turn, may originate from the ideology of translators toward perfectionism, meaning that this type of translators may believe that the best and more confident way to be perfect in translating the texts is that the translator relies on word-for-word translation (here Literal Translation) rather than sense for sense translation, and in their opinion, the Literal Translation is better than sense for sense translation.

A reason behind finding a significant correlation between perfectionism and the strategy of Literal Translation can be explained by referring to the significant positive relationship between the socially-prescribed perfectionism and loyalty which was found by Flett et al. (2001) (as cited in Gaines, 2016). Examining closely the strategy of literal translation, we can trace the footsteps of loyalty in this strategy (towards the source text and language). Accordingly, loyalty can be considered as a mediator in the relationship between perfectionism (especially the socially-prescribed dimension of perfectionism) and the strategy of literal translation.

In addition, significant correlations were found between perfectionism and the two strategies of Venuti's model. Although most of the participants chose the foreignization strategy of translation, both strategies have been positively correlated with perfectionism, indicating that the more a translator is a perfectionist, the more they use the translation strategies of domestication and foreignization. Taking this finding into consideration, we can explain that perfectionism from different translators' points of view is not the same regarding the use of translation strategies of domestication and foreignization.

One assumption might be that perfectionist translators believe that both of the strategies are desired in translating a text depending on the source text and the given culture-specific terms in it, indicating that perfectionism in translators when being put in the state of choosing between the two binary translation strategies like the strategies of domestication and foreignization encourages them to select the best and perfect strategy concerning the source text and the given cultural unit. Some of the perfectionist participants consider using the strategy of domestication helpful in producing a perfect translation, so they use the strategy of domestication rather than foreignization and the best way to translate the culture-specific texts is to consider an equivalent that is familiar and naturalized for the target readership, therefore they try to use the target-oriented procedures like domestication in translating the culture-bound terms and expressions. On the other hand, in some of the perfectionist translators' opinions, the flawless and excellent option to translate culture-specific texts or expressions is the source-oriented strategy of Venuti's model which is the strategy of foreignization. In other words, to some translators, being a perfectionist in translation is when the translator selects an equivalent far from the culture and language of the target audience and instead close to the source language culture, preserving the cultural information of the source text. This binary perspective towards the translation of cultural texts by perfectionist translators might arise from their ideologies according to which they might consider either foreignization or domestication as the most perfect strategy.

The present study, despite its novelty and efficient results which can create new perspectives concerning the importance of the personal factors' impact on the translators' performance in translating, was limited in some ways. First, this study like the other questionnaire-based studies has a limitation of the probability of inaccurate and not actual information obtained from the participants' answers to the items of the questionnaire. The other

limitation of the research can be the small sample size of the study which affects the results of the research.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMANDATION

Research has demonstrated that perfectionist traits significantly impact students' achievements across various educational domains. The findings of the present study indicated a significant relationship between students' perfectionism and their preference to use strategies of literal translation from Vinay and Darblenet's model, and both strategies of domestication and foreignization from Venuti's model.

No previous research has been done to report the relationship between perfectionism and translators' use of translation strategies in the process of translation. However, given the paucity of studies carried out about perfectionism in translation studies, focusing on this interdisciplinary field of research can enrich the literature on translation studies and also clarify the theoretical and practical aspects of this field of study.

The results of the present study draw out the implications for curriculum designers, materials developers, teachers, and lecturers in the field of translation studies to assist students in solving problems they may encounter in producing an accurate translation due to their personal characteristics.

As the research of individual differences in translation is one of the new research areas in Translation Studies, varied aspects of this area of study need more investigation and research. The importance of the studies about the translation process should not be underestimated, because such studies emphasize the importance of doing research on translators' individual and personal traits.

As the research about personal aspects of translation studies is a relatively less explored area, varied aspects of this area of study need more investigation and research. It is hoped that future studies replicate this study with a larger sample. Also, subsequent studies can explore the effect of other personal characteristics and factors on the performance of translators. Future research can also focus on examining the relationship between perfectionism and other translation strategies with a group of professional translators.

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