



Self- Oriented Perfectionism, Cultural Intelligence, and Translation Ability in Iranian EFL  
context by Gholam Reza Parvizi

## **Self- Oriented Perfectionism, Cultural Intelligence, and Translation Ability in Iranian EFL context**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of the current study was to investigate the relationship between self- oriented perfectionism, cultural intelligence and translation ability of undergraduate students majoring in English translation studies. To this end, in this study Hewitt et al.'s (1991) self- oriented perfectionism inventory, Ange et al.'s (2007) cultural intelligence (CQ) questionnaire and an English text made up of approximately 200 words were administered to 70 (30 males and 40 females) students majoring in English translation studies at University of Bandar Abbas . Pearson Product Moment correlation and Multiple Stepwise Regression was run to analyze the data. The results indicated that there was a significant relationship between learner's translation ability and their self- oriented perfectionism. Findings also showed that there was a moderate to high relationship between learner's CQ and their translation ability. Likewise, among CQ components, three dimensions (metacognitive, cognitive, and motivational) could act as a predictor of learner's translation ability. Based on the findings it could be implied that increasing learner's CQ and perfectionism through using different techniques like using video recorded programs or implementing natural, non-simplified texts about target language cultures seems conducive to their improvement in translation abilities.

**Keywords:** self- oriented perfectionism, cultural intelligence, translation ability, target language.



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## Introduction

Nowadays, by raising the volume of translated documents, the role of translation as an intercultural mediator is increasing (Acioly-Régnier, Koroleva, Mikhaleva, & Régnier, 2015). In translation as "a cross-linguistic socio-cultural practice" as Hickey (1998: 63) maintains, "a text in one language is replaced by a functionally equivalent text in another". Translation as an act of communication (in the spoken or written form) should fulfill the same purpose in the target language as the original did in the source language (Glodjović, 2010). Put another way, translator needs to be familiar with culture, customs, and social norms of the source and target language speakers (Akbari, 2013) and understand and feel the system of values and the mentality of a foreign culture, and, therefore, to understand implications (ksyonova & Akhtambaev, 2014).

In line with aforementioned explanation the role of translator's cultural awareness or cultural intelligence (CQ) in translation procedures become more dominant. Defining cultural intelligence as "an individual's capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings" Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, Ng, Templer, Tay, and Chandrasekar (2007: 336) explain "CQ is a multidimensional construct targeted at situations involving cross-cultural interactions arising from differences in race, ethnicity and nationality". Glodjović (2010) viewed the notion of CQ as an essential implication for translation. Lack of adequate CQ causes challenges in comprehending and translating texts into the students' native language (Elyildirim, 2008). Another variable of this study is self- oriented perfectionism. Perfectionism could be defined as a high standard of performance accompanied by a tendency to critical self-evaluation (Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990). Hewitt and Flett (1991) numbered three dimensions of perfectionism, self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially- oriented, and defined self-oriented perfectionism as setting self-imposed high personal standards. This allows for setting of realistic goals and trying to achieve these goals (Hamachek, 1978).

Some studies investigated the abilities and skills that a translator needs (Baker 2010; Karimnia, 2012; Coban, 2015), also few studies addressed the relationship between culture and



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translation ability (Aksyonova, & Akhtambaev, 2014). However, only a few studies investigated the relationship between CQ subcomponents and translation ability. Likewise, no study have been done to investigate the relationship between translation ability and perfectionism. So, the aim of the current study is to fill these gaps.

### **Background**

Catford (1969: 20) sees translation "as the replacement of textual material in source language by the equivalent textual material in target language". Translation requires a set of complex skills, abilities, and knowledge (Neubert, & Schaffner, 2000). The ability to translate well is not naturally acquired; it needs training and practice (Ardeshiri, Noorizah & Rosniah, 2011). Bell (1991) names a number of skills, abilities and knowledge areas that make up a translator's "translation competence" (p.43). It includes three main skills that translators should actually have; namely receptive competence, productive competence and meta-translational competence (Wilss, 1976:120; cited in Kelly, 2005).

Like any other professional activity translation involves going through a number of steps. Robinson (1997, pp.102-103), for example, divides the process of translation into three major steps:

1. Translate: jump into the text first; translate intuitively.
2. Edit: think about what you've done; test your intuitive responses against everything you know; allowing as intuitive first translation to challenge (even successfully) a well-reasoned principle that you believe in deeply
3. Sublimate: internalize what you've learned

The translated texts must make sense, convey the spirit and manner, and have the same effects on the readers or hearer as the original one (Nida 1964). Also, translator play a critical role in transferring the sense of the source language to the target language (Jamalimanesh, 2009). So, teaching translator to communicate fluently in the target language is not enough (Aksyonovaa & Akhtambaev, 2014).

### **Cultural Intelligence**

On the other hand, review of related literature showed that culture is one of the significant component in translation competence models (see Nord's (1988), Bell's (1991), Kiraly's (1995), Presas' (1996), and PACTE's (2003) translation competence models). A review of abovementioned models shows that all of them see culture as skills, abilities, and knowledge. Nida (1964) maintains that the cultural differences between the source and target culture cause more serious challenges than linguistics differences. The implication of cultural knowledge in



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translation takes several forms ranging from lexical content and structural points to ideologies and ways of life (Glodjović, 2010).

Ang et al. (2007; 336) asserted that "CQ is an individual's capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings, CQ is a multidimensional construct targeted at situations involving cross-cultural interactions arising from differences in race, ethnicity and nationality". Plum (2007:1) defined CQ as "the ability to make oneself understood and the ability to create a fruitful collaboration in situations where cultural differences play a role". Earley and Ange (2003), based on Sternberg and Detterman's (1986) interpretation of intelligence, state that CQ consist of four subcomponents, Metacognitive, Cognitive, Motivational and Behavioral.

*Metacognitive CQ* reflects individuals' mental capability to think about their thought, predict others cultural interests and adapt mental models during and after intercultural communication, interaction, and experience (Ang et. al, 2007). Individuals use Metacognitive CQ to gain and understand cultural knowledge (Flavell, 1979). Individuals with high Metacognitive CQ adapt their mental process during communication activities (Triandis, 2006) because these individuals are consciously aware of the cultural interests and norms of different societies before and during interaction (Ahmadi, Shahmohamadi & Araghi, 2011).

*Cognitive CQ* consists of cognitive flexibility, ability and knowledge gained from encounter with individuals with diverse cultural background and is based on individual capability to develop mental structures that enable them to understand themselves as a cultural being and understand others with different cultural background (Plum, 2007). Those with high cognitive CQ predict similarities and understand and tolerate differences across cultures (Brislin, ,Worthley, &Macnab, 2006).

*Motivational CQ* refer to the capability to direct attention and energy toward learning about different cultures and function effectively in encounter with people from different culture ( Ang et. al, 2007). A person with higher level of motivational CQ has intrinsic motivation to be engaged in other cultures (Deci& Ryan, 1985, Ang et. all, 2007) and has a high confidence in cross-cultural effectiveness (Bandura, 2002).

Finally, *Behavioral CQ* reflects the capability to show appropriate (verbal and nonverbal) behaviors in interacting with people from different cultures (Ng &Earley, 2006, Ang et. all,



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2007). Behavioral CQ put much emphasis on individual abilities at the action level (Ng, Van Dyne, & Ang, 2009).

The four components of CQ are different aspects of an individual capability that enable him to function effectively in culturally diverse settings (Earley and Ang, 2003). Ghonsooly and Golparvar (2013) investigated the relationship between EFL learners' CQ and their speaking and writing abilities. They used CQ scale, IELTS speaking and writing Tests to collect data from eighty three EFL learners. Their findings indicated that EFL learners' CQ significantly correlate with their speaking and writing abilities. Moreover, their findings revealed that among the subscales of CQ, motivational CQ was found to be the best predictor of speaking ability, and cognitive CQ was found to be the best predictor of writing ability. Further studies indicated that CQ was significantly correlated with cross cultural adaptation and cross cultural communication. (Lawrence, 2011). The findings of Yordanova (2011) showed that the manager with high CQ has metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral skills that enable him/her to face the multicultural teams' challenges and contribute to the performances of such teams.

Akbari (2013) argues that translation is the transposition of thoughts, ideas and feelings expressed in one language by one social group into the appropriate expression of another group with different language. This entails the process of re-coding source language cultural norms and en-coding them in target language norms (Akbari, 2013; Glodjović, 2010). The results of Glodjović (2010) indicated that culture has significant role in translation and translator should appreciate the tone and spirit of the source and target language, through words, sentences and paragraphs.

### **Self- Oriented Perfectionism (SOP)**

Perfectionism could simply be defined as striving for flawlessness (Flett & Hewitt, 2002) or the effect of critical evaluations of one's performance and high personal standards on the setting of personal goals (Burns, 1980), or the tendency to reach high standards (Hill, Zrull & Turlington, 1997). Shafran, Cooper, and Fairburn (2002: 778) define it as "overdependence of self-evaluation on the determined pursuit of personally demanding, self-imposed standards in at least one highly salient domain despite adverse consequences". Hewitt and Flett (1991) conceptualize perfectionism as a multidimensional construct that consists of three main subcomponents. The first of these is self-oriented perfectionism (SOP), which is a requirement for the self to be perfect. Other-oriented perfectionism is the other component which involves requirements for considering high standards for others (others activities must have the best quality) , and socially-



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prescribed perfectionism, which is others expectation of an individual to be perfect or the need to attain expectations prescribed by others (putting high standards on an individual by others) (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Hewitt & Flett, 2001).

SOP regarded as personal dimension of perfectionism that involves, critical assessment of one's behaviors, adoption of principles, self-imposition of high standards (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Flett, Hewitt & Martin, 1995 ; Frost & DiBartolo, 2002; Powers, Zuroff, & Topciu, 2004), having high expectations regarding orderliness, neatness, or organization for himself/herself (Öngen, 2011). Previous studies indicated that there is a positive correlations between SOP and self-esteem and goal attainment (Feast, & Hayward, 2009; Stoeber & Yang, 2010). Also, Blankstein and Dunkley (2002) found a positive correlation between SOP and student achievements in school.

Research indicates that perfectionism as a multidimensional personality characteristics has both positive and negative aspects (Hamachek, 1978; Chang, 2000; Ram, 2005; Stoeber & Otto, 2006; Dykstra, 2006; Yao, 2009; Butt, 2010). Positive or adaptive perfectionism refers to behaviors that motivate individuals to achieve high-level goals (Kung & Chan, 2014) or set high-achievable personal standards such as a sense of self-satisfaction or a desire to excel (Baş & Siyez, 2010). The findings of Kantena and Yesiltas (2015) indicated that adaptive perfectionism has significant positive correlation with desirable output and positive work place attitude. It refers to the setting of reasonable expectations (Erozkan, Karakas, Ata, & Ayberk, 2011) which increase life satisfaction and psychological well-being (Rambow, 2007; Tziner and Tanami, 2013). On the other hand negative or maladaptive perfectionism result in putting high unrealistic standards, feeling pressure from others to be perfect (Enns & Cox, 2002), and having high levels of distress in achieving the goals (Beauregard, 2012). Such individuals perceived large discrepancy between their performance and their desired standards (Baş & Siyez, 2010) because they believed that they should perform better (Frost, Heimberg, Holt, Mattia, & Neubauer, 1993). Accordingly it can be said that while positive/adaptive perfectionism lead to positive results such as work engagement (Childs & Stoeber, 2010; Tziner & Tanami, 2013), positive emotions and decreases individual anxiety (Geranmayepour & Besharat, 2010), negative/ maladaptive perfectionism has negative consequences (Ram, 2005), has negative effects on mental and psychological health (Geranmayepour & Besharat, 2010), and causes unfavorable outcomes on both individual's sense, actions and their social life and interactions (Gotwals, 2011; Shih, 2012).



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Perfectionism as a multidimensional personality trait has a significant role in many aspects of human life (Crăciun & Dudău, 2014). Kobori (2012) investigated the relationship between SOP and selective attention using the social cognitive paradigm. The findings showed that students with high SOP have high degree of emotional concern for mistakes or failure than those with low SOP. Sadeghi, Soleymani, Saadaty, Matinpour and Asadollahi (2010) conducted a study to investigate the association between the dimensions of perfectionism with the academic achievement, anxiety, and depression. They used Perfect Scale-Revised (APS-R) questionnaire and participants' scores on their English language final exam as the main source of data collection. Their findings showed that SOP was negatively correlated with anxiety and depression and positively correlate with language achievement. Stoeber and Rambow (2007) showed that SOP correlated with self-esteem, motivation and school achievement. In a similar study by Ghorbandordinejad (2014), the relationship between perfectionism and English academic achievement was investigated. He collected data from 239 high school third-graders students. The findings indicated that although maladaptive perfectionists were not as successful as adaptive and non-perfectionists regarding their performance on the final English exam, perfectionism was not proved to be of great significance in the EFL learning process.

In Iran a few study have addressed the role of culture in translation and no study have been investigated the role of perfectionism in translation. The present study aims at investigating the relationship between EFL learners CQ, SOP, and their translation ability. Its assumed that the findings of the present study have pedagogical implications for instruction and curriculum development. Accordingly the following research questions were proposed.

- 1- Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners CQ and their translation ability?
- 2- Can any subscales of CQ act as a predictor of EFL learners' translation ability?
- 3- Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners SOP and their translation ability?



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## Method

### *Participants*

The participants in this study were 70 Iranian EFL learners from University of Bandar Abbas , ranging in age from 20-24 comprising 30 males and 40 females. It's worth mentioning that the sample were chosen randomly based on availability and accessibility, from among those who showed willingness to participate in the study and were interested in choosing translation achievements as part of their future professional career.

### *Instruments*

In this study three different data collection instruments were implemented to examine the research questions. The first one was a translation test of an English text made up of approximately 200 words. The participants were asked to translate the text from English to Persian. They were allowed to use any kind of dictionary they desired. After translating the text two raters were asked to score their translation. The other one was the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) developed by Ange et al., (2007). CQS is a 20-items closed-ended, self-report scale consisting of four components, *Metacognitive CQ* ( $\alpha = .76$ ) composed of 4 items (items 1, 2, 3, and 4), *Cognitive CQ* ( $\alpha = .84$ ) composed of 6 items (items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10), *Motivational CQ* ( $\alpha = .76$ ) included 5 items (items 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15), and *Behavioral CQ* ( $\alpha = .83$ ) has 5 items (items 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20). It should be mentioned that CQS is a five- points Likert scale with five choice (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). The third one is Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS) developed by Hewitt and Flett (1991). That is a 45-item measure of perfectionism; with 15 questions assessing each of the three dimensions comprising *self-oriented*, *other-oriented*, and *socially-prescribed* perfectionism.

The MPS has been shown to exhibit acceptable reliability and validity (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). According to Hewitt and Flett (1991) the test-retest reliability of the subscales were 0.88, 0.85, and 0.75 for self- oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism respectively. The Hewitt and Flett (1991) MPS is considered as the most suitable questionnaire for measuring perfectionism in educational setting (Samar & Shirazizade, 2011). It should be mentioned that in this study just items related to self-oriented perfectionism, e.g. "I must work to my full potential at all times", used to measure learner' self-oriented perfectionism. The items were scored using a 7- point likert type scale (1= totally agree, 7= totally disagree).





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### **Data Collection**

This study was done in the Bandar Abbas University during the first semester of 94-95 academic years. Before administrating the questionnaires to the participants, they were asked if they would volunteer to participate in the study. We gave the participants the essential instruction on how to translate text and how to fill the questionnaires. First, the test was given to them to translate and once each participant had finished the assignment, s/he was given the questionnaires to fill. After collecting the data SPSS software was used to analyze them.

### **Results and Discussion**

As mentioned in the previous section two raters were asked to rate the translation ability of the students. Table 1 shows the inter-rater reliability of the raters.

Table 1. *Inter-Rater Reliability of the Two Raters*

		Rater 1	Rater 2
Rater 1	R	1	.721**
	Sig	...	.00
	N	70	70

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table.1 shows that the correlation coefficient between two raters is .721. The level of significance is (.00) indicating that the rated assessments significantly correlate.

To determine whether Iranian EFL learners CQ relate to their translation ability Person Product Moment Correlation was used. The results are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: *Correlation Coefficient of Translation Ability with Four Dimensions of CQ*

		Metacognitive	Cognitive	Motivational	Behavioral
Translation	R	.341**	.427**	.462**	.372**
Ability	Sig	.002	.000	.000	.001
	N	70	70	70	70



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\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As the data in Table 2 reveals, there is a significant positive correlation between EFL learners' translation ability and Metacognitive CQ [ $r = .341$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. There is also a positive and meaningful relationship between translation ability and Cognitive CQ [ $r = .427$ ,  $p = .00$ ], Motivational CQ [ $r = .462$ ,  $p = .00$ ], and Behavioral CQ [ $r = .372$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. The findings indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between EFL learners' translation ability and four dimensions of CQ in the sense that the higher the learners' CQ, the higher their translation ability. This finding is in agreement with what found by Akbari (2013) and Glodjović (2010).

The second research question dealt with the predictive power of CQ dimensions on Iranian EFL learners' translation ability. To answer this question, Multiple Regression analysis was run, using CQ and its subscales as the predictor of variance in translation ability. The findings are presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table. 3 *Regressions of Components of CQ and Translation Ability*

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig
	.487	.248		.000

Table. 4 *The Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for Learners Translation Ability and Components of CQ*



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Model	Unstandardize Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1(Constant)	-32.024	7.993	.....	-4.006	.000
Metacognitive	2.864	1.338	.203	2.142	.035
Cognitive	7.172	2.530	.275	2.835	.006
Motivational	7.591	2.485	.299	3.055	.003

As is manifested in Table 3 and Table 4 the significance values of Behavioral CQ ( $p = .125$ ,  $p > .05$ ) is higher than meaningful level of determined value level (0.05), so this component doesn't have any role in predicting the variance of EFL learners translation ability. According to table 2 and table3, the Motivational CQ (beta= .299,  $p = .003 < 0.05$ ), the Cognitive CQ ( beta = .275,  $p = .006 < .05$ ), and the Metacognitive CQ ( beta= .203,  $p = .035 < 0.05$ ) could act as the predictors for EFL learners translation ability respectively. It should be mentioned that Motivational CQ (beta= .299,  $p = .003$ ) has more predictive power for EFL learners' translation ability. Motivational CQ "provide argentic control of affect, cognition and behavior that facilitate goal accomplishment" ( Kanfer and Heggstad, 1997, p. 39).



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The third research question dealt with whether there is any relationship between EFL learner's SOP and their translation ability. Person Product moment Correlation was used to answer this question.

Table 5. *Correlation Coefficient of Translation Ability with SOP*

		SOP
TA	R	.357**
	Sig	.001
	N	70

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As the data in Table 5 reveals, EFL learners SOP are positively correlated with their translation ability [ $r = .357$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. The higher the learners SOP, the higher their translation ability. The findings of this study aren't in the same line with the results of Akhondpoor (2011), who found that perfectionism subcomponents are negatively correlate with academic achievement and performance in language skills. However, the findings are in agreement with findings of Ashby and Rice (2002) and Bieling et al. (2003) maintaining that SOP correlate with self-esteem and academic achieving positively. Also, the findings are in agreement with what found by Kantena and Yesiltas (2015), who argue that perfectionism are positively correlate with out-put production, and Sadeghi et al. (2015), SOP correlate with academic achievement positively and with anxiety and depression negatively.

### Conclusion

The major aim of the current study was to investigate the relationship between EFL learners' CQ and SOP and their translation ability. The results of data analysis indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between EFL learners' CQ and their translation ability. All of the



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subcomponents of CQ positively correlate with translation scores among them three dimensions, cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational can act as a predictor of learner's translation performance. Another finding of this study was that, there was a low positive correlation between SOP and translation ability. Based on the finding of this study it could be implied that increasing EFL learners' CQ and SOP, through using different techniques like using authentic text, natural non-simplified texts in translation classrooms, implementing new technologies and strategies in this classrooms, using group works and letting students to translate text collaboratively with great interaction, and also bringing audio and video clips that shows different aspects of target cultures, seems to increase learners' translation ability and the quality of their performance.

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