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Autonomy support, critical thinking, and motivation as key predictors of translator trainees' strategic competence

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ABSTRACT

This study consists of a correlational and regression analysis of certain factors involved in the practice of translator training, as perceived by translator trainees. More precisely, our aim is to examine the relationships between translator trainees' strategic competence (as the dependent variable), and autonomy support, amotivation and critical thinking (as the independent variables) in the translation classroom. Building upon recent advances in educational and social psychology, we have relied on Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2011) as an interpretative frame of reference. After revising the concept of translators' strategic competence, the main contributions in the field of translators' motivation are also reviewed and the notions of autonomy support and critical thinking are approached from the perspective of both psychology and translatology. Our findings seem to point to the fact that autonomy support and critical thinking can play a facilitating role in the development of strategic competence in undergraduate translator students, who may also benefit from both when they encounter new challenges in real professional settings. Finally, the implications for translator training are discussed.

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KEYWORDS

translator training, critical thinking, motivation, autonomy support, translators' strategic competence, translation psychology

1. INTRODUCTION

For at least the last three decades, research on the cognitive aspects of translation has been subject to "interdisciplinary interaction" (O'Brien, 2015, p. 5). Among the various areas of knowledge that have contributed to this interdisciplinary effort, psychology has inspired many advances in a field that mostly "focuses on human translators and influences on their cognitive processes, strategies and behaviour" (O'Brien, 2015, p. 7). The present research falls within the framework of translation psychology (Bolaños-Medina, 2016; Jääskeläinen, 2012), one of the most promising developments in recent translatology (Hubscher-Davidson, 2018) that has already "spawned theoretical advances and methodological innovation, and also substantial research findings" (Zhu, 2020, p. 53). This subdiscipline addresses the study of the underlying emotional, cognitive, behavioural and social factors at play in translators' minds, by incorporating some of the concepts and methods devised by psychology, by adapting them to the specificities of its object of study and by combining them with others traditionally used within translatology (Bolaños-Medina, 2016). Thus, translation psychology is as complex and diverse as translation itself, hence the need to combine a suitable psychological perspective with an appropriate focus of analysis to achieve successful research designs in this field.

Building upon recent advances in educational and social psychology, this study examines certain factors involved in the practice of translator training. More precisely, we have analysed the relationship among autonomy support, amotivation, critical thinking, and strategic competence as perceived by student translators. Translators' strategic competence has been understood as the ability to devise a general plan to carry out a given translation assignment successfully, by adapting to its specific working conditions in a flexible way.

To start with, we introduce the theoretical framework of our research. First, we will address the relevance of the strategic translation subcompetence for translator training. The second subsection presents Self-Determination Theory (SDT), as an interpretative frame of reference that has guided our groundwork and has already proved fruitful within our discipline (Ameri & Ghahari, 2018; Dombek, 2014; Lin, 2013; Núñez & Bolaños-Medina, 2018). In the following sections, the notions of autonomy support and critical thinking are approached from the perspective of both psychology and translatology. After a brief description of the empirical methods and the main results, we present some final considerations and reflect on the implications of our findings for translator training.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research stems from well-established notions in both educational and social psychology. On the one hand, educational psychology addresses the application of psychological principles and methodologies to the study of human learning and development at all levels of educational

settings, in order to provide a better understanding and explanation of the teaching-learning processes (Sampascual-Maicas, 2004). At present, researchers' efforts are mostly directed to clarify the complexity of learning characteristics and learner traits across various systems, social-cultural contexts and learning environments (Reynolds & Miller, 2013). Within this framework of research, the present study delves into the factors that influence learning, so that improvements can be implemented where necessary in order to render the teaching-learning process more effective.

By contrast, social psychology examines the relationship of mutual determination between mind and society: how the mental processes of individuals determine both social functioning and interactions, and, at the same time, how social processes determine individuals' psychology (Morales Domínguez et al., 1999). In this way, social psychology can virtually be applied to any field, and it has already provided "important insights and fresh approaches with respect to many different areas of life" (Schneider, Gruman, & Coutts, 2011, p. 18), from the classroom and health management to political leadership and environmental problems.

As for the relevance of social psychology to translation, we must bear in mind that translators are socialized individuals who belong to a social system and are involved in a social activity, i.e., translation cannot exist without a social context, nor can translator training. A social-psychological approach to translation (Bolaños-Medina, 2015) arises in accordance with the current conception of translation as a cognitive (Danks, Shreve, Fountain, & McBeath, 1997) and social act (Buzelin, 2013; Tyulenev, 2014; Wolf & Fukari, 2007; Zheng, 2017), and, more specifically, as an interpersonal, situated and distributed activity (Muñoz Martín, 2010; Risku, 2002) of a cooperative nature (Risku, 2010). In Hanna Risku's words, every sociocognitive research includes being able "to describe or at least approximate the perspective of participants in their authentic situations of action and being able to show how they construct meaningful action and structure the research object" (Risku, 2014, p. 337).

Four different domains of psychosocial study have been distinguished (Sapsford, 1998). While the societal domain involves the way people experience the social world and act within it, the group domain entails studying the shared meanings, physical structure, communication processes, and power hierarchies of groups, which shape the behaviour and experience of participants. The interpersonal and the intrapersonal domains are of special interest for translatology. While the former concerns individuals' interactions, the latter deals with social cognition and the analysis of cognitive functioning by describing the internal structures and processes that can be found within the individual. Such theoretical and methodological scaffolding of a social-psychological approach within the framework of translation psychology could be enriching for current translation studies (Bolaños-Medina, 2015). However, it is frequently difficult to categorize the studied phenomena in just one of these four domains. In the current study, the group, the interpersonal and the intrapersonal domains intermingle.

The aim of the current research is to examine the relationships between translator trainees' strategic competence (as the dependent variable), and three independent variables (autonomy support, amotivation and critical thinking) in the translation classroom. These psychosocial factors that may have specific or additive effects on translator trainees' perceived strategic competence will be approached in the following sections.

2.1. Strategic competence

Translation competence (TC) and expertise have now coexisted for two decades in our discipline (Shreve, Angelone, & Lacruz, 2018) and have frequently been used as synonyms

(Tiselius & Hild, 2017). However, the notion of translation competence itself has been recently challenged on the grounds that expertise theory constitutes "an important connection point of cognitive translation studies with the cognitive sciences in general" (Shreve et al., 2018, p. 52) and it embraces the most important aspects of competence models. However, since the object of study of this research (i.e., strategic competence) originated from early works on TC, we will focus our attention on defining and contextualizing it within this framework.

The first proposals for translation competence models came in the late 1970s and 1990s (Pym, 2003) and brought to light the following facts: linguistic competence alone cannot account for TC, more components are needed; those components are various in nature; and the competences required for direct and inverse translation are different (Hurtado Albir, 2017). The most constant effort to empirically study TC has been conducted during the last two decades by the PACTE group. PACTE (2017: 36) defines TC as "the underlying system of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes required to be able to translate". PACTE's TC models have been based on a set of hypotheses that can provide us with an overall image of the current conception of this notion (PACTE, 2017, p. 36): TC is expert knowledge (different from bilingual knowledge) that comprises declarative and procedural knowledge; it consists of an interactive and hierarchical system of subcompetences; and it is subject to change depending on the conditions of the factors and people involved in the translation act.

The fact that strategic competence has been considered one of the components of TC in many models gives us a notion of its relevance for translation (Bell, 1991; Cao, 1996; Göpferich, 2009; Hatim & Mason, 1997; Hurtado Albir, 1999; Katan, 2008; Kelly, 2005; Kiraly, 1995; Neubert, 2000; PACTE, 2000, 2001, 2003; Shreve, 2006). Indeed, since the early versions of the PACTE model (1998, 2000, 2001), the relevance of strategic competence was clear for:

> […] it was used to plan a translation project; detect translation problems; apply translation strategies; activate, monitor, and compensate for shortcomings in other competences; monitor and evaluate both the translation process and the partial results obtained; etc. (PACTE, 2017, p. 39)

Furthermore, from a teaching-learning perspective, the importance of strategic competence in translator training has been emphasized by singling it out as one of the areas of competence desirable in graduates and of great importance for curricular design (Kelly, 2005).

Even though all the subcompetences described by PACTE (2003) that make up TC are present in all translation acts, the strategic competence occupies a central position because it interacts with all the others, and it involves the operative knowledge necessary to warrant the efficiency of the translation process (Hurtado Albir, 2007). As a result, strategic competence was maintained as a subcompetence in the revised version of PACTE'S TC model (2003), i.e., as a cornerstone "that affects all the others since it creates links between the different subcompetences as it controls the translation project (selecting the most appropriate method)" (PACTE, 2017, p. 40). It is in this sense that enhances organising and planning skills, that we have defined strategic competence for the purposes of the present research: it entails elaborating a global scheme of the translation assignment, and, at the same time, devising a general strategic plan to carry out a given translation assignment successfully by adapting to its specific working conditions in a flexible way (Bolaños-Medina & Núñez, 2018).

2.2. Self-determination theory of human motivation

Motivation regards how and why a certain pattern of behaviour is activated with a given intensity and in a specific direction (Fernández-Abascal, Jiménez-Sánchez, & Martín-Díaz, 2003).

Therefore, it influences all other psychological activities (perception, attention, memory, thought, etc.). Self-determination theory constitutes a broad framework for the analysis of human motivation, personality, and optimal functioning, and it has been successfully applied in recent years to different areas of knowledge, such as work motivation, sport, and behavioural change (Deci & Ryan, 2011). But, most importantly, it has already been successfully applied to different kinds of learning contexts at all levels of education (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009), including translation and interpreting, and undergraduate translator training (Ameri & Ghahari, 2018; Dombek, 2014; Lin, 2013; Núñez & Bolaños-Medina, 2018). On these grounds, we claim that it can serve as a theoretical background that could contribute to the extension of the conceptual framework of our discipline and to a better understanding of professional translators' and translation undergraduates' behaviour.

According to SDT, there are three types of motivation: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation, which lie along a continuum from higher to lower levels of self-determination. Intrinsic motivation refers to performing a behaviour just for the pleasure and satisfaction derived from doing it (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and implies an active engagement with tasks that people find interesting and that, in turn, promote a sense of growth (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Intrinsically motivated behaviours do not rely on incentives or external pressure (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Extrinsic motivation involves performing a task to obtain reward, for instance, of a social or material nature. It is a heterogeneous category that includes different types of motivation, which, from the highest to the lowest level of self-determination, are as follows: integrated regulation occurs when individuals regard a behaviour as being valuable and congruent with their interests; identified regulation means individuals' consciously identify with a behaviour while experimenting a high degree of volition; introjected regulation involves performing a behaviour to feel good, proud and to avoid feeling guilty; and, finally, external regulation takes place when individuals perform a behaviour in order to gain rewards and avoid punishment. Therefore, intrinsic motivation is not the only form of self-determined motivation, extrinsic motivation can also be autonomously enacted.

Integrated and identified regulations are two forms of autonomous extrinsic motivation, but they differ from intrinsic motivation in the degree of interest, enjoyment and fun (Ryan & Deci, 2020). As for amotivation, it concerns the lack of motivation for learning or the absence of contingencies between a certain behaviour and its consequences; accordingly, it is associated with the absence of intentionality and a lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Amotivated people tend to express feelings of incompetence and helplessness. Thus, these three dimensions of motivation are part of a self-determination continuum (Deci & Ryan, 2000), in which intrinsic motivation lies at its highest end (i.e., behaviour performed for its own sake and not for external rewards or instrumental motives) and amotivation at its lowest.

Different types of motivation lead to different consequences (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Those forms of motivation that are more self-determined (e.g., intrinsic motivation and other ways of extrinsic motivation such as integrated and identified regulations) are also more closely related to positive consequences such as critical thinking (Manganelli et al., 2019). Conversely, lower levels of self-determination, such as amotivation, tend to lead to more negative consequences, for instance, to a depressive state (Ryan, 1995). However, many of the activities people do are not, strictly speaking, intrinsically motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000); motivation is dynamic in nature and many behaviours we engage in can be explained by multiple forms of motivation (Litalien et al., 2017). Finally, SDT also suggests that social or contextual factors (e.g., environments that support the subject's autonomy) affect motivation (Núñez & León, 2015).

2.3. Autonomy support

Autonomy support is the interpersonal behaviour teachers provide during instruction to nurture and build students' inner motivational resources (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Autonomy support is a contextual factor affecting individuals' functioning. Autonomy support promotes choice, minimizes the pressure to perform tasks in a certain way, and encourages initiative (Deci & Ryan, 1991). Several conditions are necessary to support the autonomy of individuals: providing meaningful rationale, acknowledging negative feelings, using non-controlling language, offering meaningful choices, nurturing inner motivational resources, providing unconditional positive regard, and displaying patience to allow time for self-paced learning to occur (Núñez & León, 2015).

It has been documented that autonomy support leads to important psychological benefits in educational settings like autonomous motivation, better psychological wellbeing, fewer problem behaviours, higher self-esteem, less dropping out, and stronger persistence (Chirkov, 2009), because it promotes satisfaction of the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Need for autonomy refers to the experience of behaviour as volitional and reflectively self-endorsed (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009); competence concerns a sense of mastery, and relatedness concerns a sense of belonging and connectedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). SDT hypothesis that both autonomy and competence are necessary conditions for intrinsic motivation has also been corroborated by many experimental studies (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). Thus, factors that support basic psychological needs play a critical role in the development of intrinsic motivation (Ryan, Deci, Vansteenkiste, & Soenens, 2021).

In the translation arena, although the relevance of pursuing learner autonomy in undergraduate translation programs has been recognized by several scholars (Alves, Magalhaes, & Pagano, 2003; Bergen, 2006; Kearns, 2008; Kiraly, 2000; Yumuk, 2002), it has not been subject to systematic research yet. Along the same lines, for Donald Kiraly (2000), not only autonomy, but also competence, are primary goals of translator training, and they are to be achieved through authenticity, i.e., the fact that activities are representative of the nature and complexity of those to be performed by professional translators in the real translation market (p. 58). Kelly (2005) also emphasizes the need for translation students to develop the autonomy required for complex collaborative work and suggests that such autonomy can be fostered by progressing from a task-based approach to a project-based methodology for translator training.

Finally, it has even been acknowledged that translator trainers' success rests to a large extent on teachers' capacity to foster autonomous learning and control in learners (Washbourne, 2014, p. 382), not only on our ability to "favour the conditions conducive to translator competence" (p. 377). Notwithstanding, autonomy support as understood by SDT has not been formally approached in our main field of study yet.

Autonomous motivation (e.g., intrinsic motivation) leads to positive learning orientations like critical thinking. Intrinsically motivated students tend to acquire knowledge better, because they voluntarily devote more time and energy to their studies (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). In this sense, Semerci (2011) found a positive and statistically significant correlation between intrinsic motivation and critical thinking in university students. Likewise, it has been observed that, after intrinsic motivation was increased in secondary students they managed to think about and analyse the contents of the subject more critically (Yang & Chang, 2013). It has also been shown that the higher a student's score in intrinsic motivation, the higher the score in critical thinking (León, Núñez, Ruiz-Alfonso, & Bordón, 2015); that is, the greater the students' interest in acquiring new knowledge, the greater their willingness to relate it to prior knowledge and to think about it critically.

2.4. Critical thinking

Students can use different strategies to learn and process the information they are provided with in the classroom, ranging from memorization without reasoning to the transformation of contents; other strategies include analysing and thinking critically about contents, and comparing them with previous knowledge (Cano García, García, García-Berbén, Pichardo Martínez, & Justicia, 2014; García Duncan & McKeachie, 2005; Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & Mckeachie, 1993). In this sense, critical thinking has been defined as the "process of actively and skilfully conceptualizing, applying, analysing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action" (Scriven & Paul, 1987).

Although we live in a society characterized by easy access to information, this fact does not ensure individuals' ability to use their knowledge intelligently to facilitate problem solving and decision-making processes. To succeed both in the classroom and in a working context, it is imperative to use prior experiences, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and reasoning to make sense of new information (Weinstein & Palmer, 2002); so much so that the difference among experienced individuals and those without experience does not only concern the extent of their knowledge, but also, and more importantly, the way in which new knowledge is gained and organized. Hence, critical thinking has become a key outcome of university programs (Stupnisky, Renaud, Daniels, & Haynes, 2008).

Despite the acute lack of research on critical thinking in the field of translation, its fundamental role for translator training has been particularly emphasized when it comes to teaching creative translation, thus translator trainers must take care that students "always preserve a critical and evaluative attitude towards the ideas that come to their minds" (Kussmaul, 1995, p. 50). Beyond creative translation, critical thinking has also been linked to specific phases and facets of the translation task (Kashirina, 2015, p. 275):

> [c]ritical thinking is the psychological basis for both pre-translation source text analysis and post-translation editing. Besides, it contributes to the ripening of creative thinking, or translator's insight. Consequently, it is crucial for translation quality.

In fact, recent studies have also highlighted critical thinking's role in modulating translators' self-regulatory activity, which not only "seems crucial in the development of translation expertise" (Pietrzak, 2018, p. 819) but has also been found to be a fundamental factor in predicting machine-translation post-editing performance (Yang & Wang, 2020). Furthermore, according to results from a study performed on Iranian English translation students, learners with more critical abilities were more successful in translation performance (Azin & Tabrizi, 2016). Undoubtedly, more research is needed regarding the role of critical thinking in the development of translator trainees' competence and its impact on academic and professional outcomes.

3. METHODS

3.1. Aims and hypotheses

The aim of the current research is to examine the relationships between autonomy support, critical thinking, amotivation, and translator trainees' strategic competence. From the findings of

previous studies, three hypotheses can be formulated. First, a positive association will exist between autonomy support, critical thinking, and strategic competence. Second, a negative relationship will exist between amotivation and each of the other three variables studied (i.e., autonomy support, critical thinking, and strategic competence). Then, we hypothesise a prediction of autonomy support, critical thinking, and amotivation, on strategic competence, in the sense that a model that includes these three independent variables will predict the dependent variable (students' perceived strategic competence).

3.2. Participants

Participants were 83 (14 male and 69 female) students enrolled in the undergraduate programme in Translation and Interpreting at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and with a mean age of 23.43 years (SD = 6.76). As for the inclusion criteria, participants had to be full-time students majoring in Translation, with English as their first foreign language. All participants had already undergone three years of training in translation.

3.3. Procedures

The purpose of the study was explained to the participants and written consent was obtained from all of them. Participation was voluntary. All students who agreed to participate completed all measuring instruments. The questionnaires were administered individually and distributed one after the other in the same class and for all participants by one researcher. Students' cooperation was requested, and the importance of their contribution was stressed. They were also asked to complete the questionnaires as honestly as possible. All responses were to be treated in a confidential manner.

3.4. Measures

All the scales used to measure the variables of the study (i.e., autonomy support, amotivation, critical thinking and strategic competence) have been validated in university students.

3.4.1. Autonomy support. The learning climate questionnaire (Núñez, León, Grijalvo, & Martín-Albo, 2012) assesses the autonomy support instructional style. This teachers' instructional style is assessed through five items rated on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), and related to the confidence and handling of emotions that teachers transmit in the classroom:

1. My teacher conveyed confidence in my ability to do well in the course.
2. I feel a lot of trust in my teacher.
3. My teacher handles people's emotions very well.
4. I feel very good about the way my teacher talks to me.
5. My teacher tries to understand how I see things before suggesting a new way to do things.

According to the recommendation of Mellinger and Hanson (2017), the reliability in the present sample was strong (Cronbach's α = 0.93, 95% CI [0.91, 0.95]), in line with previous applications (e.g., Núñez et al., 2012).

3.4.2. Amotivation. To measure amotivation, we used the Amotivation subscale of the Situational Motivation Scale (SIMS; Guay, Vallerand, & Blanchard, 2000), with four items referring to general translation activities carried out in the classroom:

1. There may be good reasons to do these activities, but personally I don't see any.
2. I do these activities, but I am not sure if they are worth it.
3. I don't know; I don't see what these activities bring me.
4. I do these activities, but I am not sure it is a good thing to pursue them.

All items were rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (does not correspond at all) to 7 (corresponds exactly). The reliability in the present study was adequate (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.79$, 95% CI [0.71, 0.86] and similar to previous studies (e.g., Martín-Albo, Núñez, & Navarro, 2009).

3.4.3. Critical thinking. To assess students' critical thinking, participants rated the following five items of the Critical Thinking subscale of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ; Pintrich et al., 1993) on a Likert type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree):

1. I often find myself questioning things I hear or read in this course to decide if I find them convincing.
2. When a theory, interpretation, or conclusion is presented in class or in the readings, I try to decide if there is good supporting evidence for it.
3. I treat the course material as a starting point and try to develop my own ideas about it.
4. I try to play around with ideas of my own related to what I am learning in this course.
5. Whenever I read or hear an assertion or conclusion in this class, I think about possible alternatives.

The Cronbach's alpha for the variable critical thinking was adequate (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$, 95% CI [0.78, 0.89] in line with previous studies (e.g., León et al., 2015).

3.4.4. Strategic competence. Strategic competence was evaluated with the Strategic Competence subscale of the Translation Self-efficacy Scale (TSE; Bolaños-Medina & Núñez, 2018). All items were rated according to a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (no confidence) to 5 (high confidence). This subscale has been validated with undergraduate students of a Translation and Interpreting degree course and is composed of four items:

1. Elaborating a global scheme of the translation assignment, accounting for: communicative situation, skopos, deadlines, recipients' expectations, etc.
2. Elaborating a general strategic plan from a global scheme of the translation assignment in order to carry out the translation successfully.
3. Explaining the determinant aspects of a given translation assignment and the steps taken during the whole process.
4. Adapting to the working conditions of every translation assignment in a flexible way.

The reliability in the present study was adequate (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.83$, 95% CI [0.76, 0.88]), and higher than in previous studies (see Bolaños-Medina & Núñez, 2018, for details about TSE validation in university students).

3.4.5. Data analysis. Descriptive analyses were conducted, including bivariate correlations among the four variables of interest. A multiple linear regression to establish an explanatory model of the linear relationship between the explanatory (independent) variables and the

response (dependent) variable, was also conducted. All data were analysed using the software package SPSS 27.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive analyses

Descriptive statistics of each of the variables of the study can be found in Table 1. As can be seen, all the skewness values were below 2, and the kurtosis values were below 7, which indicates similarity to the normal curve, as recommended by Patrick Curran, Stephen West, and John Finch (1996) to carry out the estimations through parametric methods (e.g., Pearson's correlation).

4.2. Correlation analysis

The correlation analysis was performed using Pearson's coefficient. As seen in Table 2, the correlations between amotivation and the other three variables were negative. Strategic competence correlated in a positive and statistically significant way ($P < 0.01$) with autonomy support and critical thinking.

4.3. Regression analysis

In the multiple linear regression analysis carried out, strategic competence was taken as the dependent variable. Autonomy support, amotivation, and critical thinking were introduced as

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Variables	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Autonomy support	4.75	1.48	–0.33	–0.58
Amotivation	2.15	1.12	1.30	1.17
Critical thinking	4.73	1.14	0.05	–0.93
Strategic competence	4.53	1.10	–0.00	–0.15

Table 2. Correlations and coefficient alphas in the diagonal

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Autonomy support	0.93	–0.22*	0.20	0.36**
2. Amotivation		0.79	–0.18	–0.36**
3. Critical thinking			0.84	0.41**
4. Strategic competence				0.83

(* $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$).

Table 3. Multiple linear regression

Variable	Beta coefficient	t	*P*	Confidence interval	Tolerance	VIF
Autonomy support	0.24	2.49	0.01	[0.04, 0.32]	0.92	1.08
Critical thinking	0.31	3.25	0.00	[0.12, 0.49]	0.94	1.06
Amotivation	–0.25	–2.53	0.01	[–0.43, –0.05]	0.93	1.07

independent variables. The overall regression model was statistically significant (F [3, 82] = 11.46, P = 0.00, R^2 = 0.30). The results showed that autonomy support, amotivation, and critical thinking predicted strategic competence. To confirm the validity of the regression model, we analysed the independence of the residuals. The Durbin-Watson D statistic obtained values between 1.83 and 2.32, confirming the absence of positive (values approaching 0) and negative autocorrelation (values approaching 4). As seen in Table 3, high tolerance values and low variance inflation factor (VIF) values support the absence of multicollinearity and the stability of the estimates.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The aim of the current research was to examine the relationships between autonomy support, critical thinking, amotivation, and translator trainees' strategic competence. The results confirm our hypotheses. Strategic competence correlated in a positive and statistically significant way with autonomy support and critical thinking, and negatively with amotivation. Likewise, autonomy support, amotivation, and critical thinking have the capability to predict strategic competence in a statistically significant way and explain 30% of the variance of students' perceived strategic competence. Even if this result does not necessarily imply a causal relationship, our findings seem to point to the fact that autonomy support and critical thinking play a facilitating role in the development of strategic competence in undergraduate translator students, who may also benefit from both when they encounter new challenges in real professional settings (Semerci, 2011).

These results are in line with the postulates of SDT and previous studies in the academic context that highlight the psychological benefits of autonomy support in the classroom (Núñez & León, 2015) and a positive relationship between the most self-determined types of motivation (e. g. intrinsic motivation) and cognitive strategies of deep elaboration of contents (León et al., 2015; Manganelli et al., 2019). In fact, strategic competence is a cognitive skill that involves planning translation tasks, detecting potential problems and establishing appropriate strategies, among others. Thus, students whose teachers generate an autonomy-supportive context in the classroom are likely to have more cognitive elaboration skills and, therefore, higher translation competence. Our findings are also consistent with Azin and Tabrizi's (2016) recommendation about promoting thinking skills and problem-solving activities requiring critical thinking in translator training.

Further research and replication studies in different contexts are needed to be able to generalize our findings to a larger population. This is partly due to the limitations of this study, such as its restricted geographic representativeness and the relatively small size of the sample;

but it is also due to the potential differences in student translators' demographics and backgrounds, among others, and to the fact that translator training differs across countries and educational systems. Even so, we believe that we have paved the way for other studies on the facilitating conditions for the development of translation competence in the university classroom.

The relevance of this predictive study for assessing translation students' strategic competence is clear. Thus, a better fit of learning-teaching techniques becomes possible in the class context. The potential benefits of such a diagnosis are twofold. On the one hand, it may show the trainer that a small group of translator trainees needs additional assistance so that they can fully engage in the course; on the other hand, the trainer can design a methodology that allows a group to go beyond the standard? through additional independent or small group tasks; or design a better way of catering for individual students' needs, such as different types of strategies entitled? to foster autonomy support, critical thinking skills, or both. On the other hand, translator students' self-awareness of the processes involved in the development of translation competence could be improved, which, in turn, could encourage self-reflection and lead to adjustments in their own learning processes, i.e., to a better self-regulation performance (Moser-Mercer, 2008).

To ensure that translation students develop their strategic competence successfully and are fully able to adapt to the specific characteristics of every assignment, translator trainers should become aware of the benefits of generating an autonomy-supportive environment and promoting a climate for critical thinking in the translation classroom. Students benefit from perceiving autonomy support from their teachers, satisfying their need for autonomy, which promotes greater intrinsic motivation and, hence, less amotivation. Therefore, it is advisable that teachers provide a meaningful rationale (i.e., highlighting the personal utility of the classroom tasks to translator students), acknowledge negative feelings (i.e., understanding students' emotions and showing empathy), avoid the use of controlling language (i.e., fostering a communication that minimizes pressure), offer meaningful choices (i.e., providing information about options), and nurture inner motivational resources (i.e., reinforcing the interest, curiosity, enjoyment, and the personal initiative while engaging in translation tasks). These actions will not only have direct effects on intrinsic motivation but also on the wellbeing and performance of translation students (for an overview, see Núñez & León, 2015). As for nurturing translator trainees' critical thinking abilities, methodologies such as error analysis, case study and data-driven decision-making activities have been recommended (Guo-liang, 2010). Finally, guidance talks to translator trainers on the factors that improve the development of strategic competence in translation students could provide a first step towards the implementation of these interesting experiences.

Altogether, these findings lead us to think that describing translation students' determinants of motivation and their potential relationship with other variables of interest related to student translators' competence development and self-efficacy (e.g., communicative competence, problem-solving), could be a promising field that can yield valuable information for translator trainers. Future lines of research include the study of other related variables that could potentially account for a further percentage of the variance of students' perceived strategic competence, for the sake of better understanding and streamlining the conditions conducive to the development of strategic competence in the translation classroom. These variables could include the influence of translator trainers' interpersonal style in supporting relatedness (i.e., making it easier for the student to feel connected to others), as well as other factors currently relevant in

the educational context, such as the emotional involvement and psychological well-being of students in the classroom. We expect to have contributed to promote a thought-provoking dialogue among scholars from different specialised backgrounds, in a joint interdisciplinary effort for the advancement of our discipline.

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