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Negative Emotions as Barriers to Translation Accuracy in Academic Settings

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of emotional negativity on translation performance, focusing on task duration, spelling accuracy, and comprehension of the source text. Emotional factors are increasingly recognized as influencing translators' cognitive processes, particularly under time pressure or evaluative conditions. Forty-eight Arabic-speaking undergraduate translation students, representing both junior and senior levels, showed interest and agreed to participate voluntarily. Emotional negativity was measured using a self-report adaptation of Fredrickson's Positivity Ratio framework, which captures the relative balance between positive and negative affect. Following this assessment, participants completed an Arabic-to-English translation task. The performance was evaluated for overall error score, spelling errors, and source-text (ST) misunderstandings to provide a comprehensive picture of translation quality. Results indicated that higher negativity was associated with longer completion times and more frequent ST misunderstandings. Group comparisons confirmed slower performance in the high-negativity group, whereas the difference in misunderstandings was directionally consistent but not statistically significant. No relationship emerged between negativity and either overall translation error score or spelling errors. These findings suggest that negativity primarily impairs processing efficiency and comprehension while leaving linguistic mechanics intact. Translator training programs may therefore benefit from incorporating emotional regulation strategies to help students sustain efficiency and accuracy under real-world professional demands.

Keywords: Psychometrics; Translation Errors; Cognitive Processing; Mental Stress

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1. Introduction

The capacity to accomplish cognitively challenging tasks is strongly impacted by one's emotional state and particularly by negative emotions [1]. Psychological research illuminates this phenomenon through the concept of negative bias, in which negative events have a disproportionately strong impact on cognition and behavior, in contrast to positive events of similar intensity. In relation to the field of translation, this suggests that a translator's negative emotional state may have a stronger impact on their performance than would a positive state of mind. Indeed, research on bilingual language processing indicates that negative emotions may affect cognitive processing, resulting in a more analytical, careful approach to language tasks. This suggests an interesting research question: How does emotional negativity influence translation performance, especially for undergraduate student translators?

Research in cognitive psychology over the past several decades has developed the theoretical basis for emotional-cognitive interactions, providing increasingly sophisticated frameworks to explain how emotional states impact complex cognitive tasks. Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory [2] is particularly relevant for translation studies, proposing that positive emotions broaden individuals' momentary thought-action repertoires while negative emotions tend to narrow cognitive focus to specific action tendencies such as attack or flee. This narrowing of focus suggests that translators experiencing negative emotional states may adopt more constrained cognitive processing strategies, potentially affecting both translation speed and quality. The theory further posits that while positive emotions promote novel and creative approaches, negative emotions encourage systematic but slower processing approaches. This aligns with emerging evidence in translation performance research [3].

Current research on emotion regulation has improved our understanding of how people regulate their emotions while performing cognitively demanding tasks [4]. Kozubal et al. [4] demonstrated how the intensity of an emotion affects one's choice of regulation strategies; those experiencing emotions of higher intensity tend to favor rumination over cognitive reappraisal. This finding is particularly relevant in the context of translation, as translators must simultaneously manage emotional responses and engage in complex bilingual processing. The adaptive nature of emotion regulation, defined as "the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience or express these emotions," Gross suggests that translators' ability to regulate their emotional state may directly impact their cognitive performance and translation output [5,6].

The intersection of emotion and bilingual cognitive processing adds another layer of complexity for translation research. Ouzia et al. [7] found a notable difference in the way anxiety affects bilingual and monolingual individuals' attentional control, with anxiety a consistent risk factor for decreased inhibitory control accuracy in bilingual participants. This suggests that the cognitive demands of managing two language systems in translation tasks may interact with emotional states in ways that uniquely affect translation performance. Furthermore, Yang [8] demonstrated that bilinguals' working memory advantages are closely linked to their dual language processing environment, where they must hold incoming second language information while simultaneously decoding it; a process that may be particularly vulnerable to emotional interference.

Translation research has long examined translation processes through the lens of cognitive psychology models, using techniques such as think-aloud protocols to reveal details of translators' decision making. But such studies have not emphasized translators' emotional states, whether positive or negative. The effect of daily mood swings on translation quality and techniques is still largely unknown. Given the proven influence of emotion on cognitive processing and the intrinsically demanding nature of translation work, this topic merits exploration. Translation academics have now started openly tackling the function of emotions. For instance, Chramosilová [9] investigated the relationship between translators' degree of optimism and translation quality, discovering that although positivity and translation quality showed no direct correlation, positively oriented translators were calmer under pressure. Likewise, Mekheimer [10] noted more positive effects and higher translating ability among students in interactive learning environments. These results imply that mood can certainly affect stress management and translation effectiveness; nonetheless, the exact effect of negative emotions is yet unknown.

The present work uses Fredrickson's positivity ratio approach [11] to close this gap by evaluating participants' emotional state based on the ratio of recently experienced positive

to negative events. Building on this theoretical basis, and unlike Al-Ismail's work[12] focusing on positivity, this study investigates the impact of emotional negativity on translation performance among undergraduate students, examining multiple aspects of translation performance including task duration, overall translation quality, spelling accuracy, and source text comprehension. This study hypothesizes that a higher degree of negativity correlates with longer task completion times and potentially impacts various aspects of translation quality. Through investigating these assumptions, this study aims to provide insight into the relationship between a translator's emotional state and their performance.

2. Literature Review

Psychological research reveals an interesting disparity between positive and negative emotional stimuli. Strong evidence points to a negativity bias: Negative stimuli have a greater effect than positive ones of the same intensity. When Baumeister et al.[13] famously said that "bad is stronger than good," they recorded how disproportionately negative events and emotions affect cognition and behavior when compared to positive ones. This explains why even mildly negative events and emotions can compromise a translator's performance. Related ideas from psychological research provide additional perspective. Fredrickson[11] describes the "positivity ratio," contending that flourishing people experience almost three positive emotions for every negative one. Her research further implies that negative attitudes may have a negative effect on cognitive performance and cause mistakes in cognitive tasks.

Empirical research indicates that emotion often has a subtle, context-dependent impact on cognition. For instance, positive attitudes can help people solve problems in novel ways, as demonstrated by Isen[14], who found that a mildly positive emotional state improved cognitive flexibility and problem-solving capacity. She further found that people experiencing happiness often assimilated knowledge more effectively. Perhaps surprisingly, negative emotions also have cognitive benefits. Forgas[15] examined data suggesting that a temporary negative mood can occasionally improve performance on detail-oriented jobs. Sadness, for example, has been correlated with increased memory accuracy and fewer judgment errors. In the context of the current study, this suggests that mild negative emotions can help focus one's attention on grammatical details, leading to a reduction in translation errors. In contrast, Shields et al.[16] found that anxiety had a serious negative impact on executive abilities, while rage had no impact. This indicates that certain negative emotions can have a detrimental effect on cognitive processes used in language production and error detection.

Translation scholars are becoming increasingly aware of how much a translator's emotional state affects both process and results. Using Fredrickson's positivity ratio tool, Al-Ismail's study[12] of nearly 50 students looked at this association. His results revealed no significant association between positivity ratios (reflecting personal positivity levels) and translation quality, therefore defying presumptions that happy/positive states always produce superior performance. Nevertheless, participants with a high positivity ratio finished their tasks faster, indicating improved time and stress management. Interestingly, students with lower positivity ratios obtained some of the higher translation scores, suggesting a complicated relationship between performance and emotion.

Rojo and Ramos Carlos[17] undertook an experiment with translation students, varying their emotional states to track the effects on their translation scores. They discovered that induced positive versus negative moods produced different patterns in accuracy and creativity, implying that emotion might influence the precision of a student's work. This offers strong proof that negative emotions, such as worry over critical comments, have an impact on the frequency and kinds of mistakes translators make, therefore supporting the theory that emotional elements directly influence translators' grammatical accuracy. Hubscher-Davidson[18] argues persuasively for considering translators' affective qualities in studies, noting that some emotional qualities correlate with better translating performance. Her work offers theoretical support for the idea that regulating negative emotions matters greatly for translators, suggesting that emotionally stable translators who effectively control negativity generate better translations.

While previous research has examined either positive emotions[12] or induced emotional states[17], this study makes three novel contributions: (1) it specifically isolates and measures naturally occurring negative emotions using Fredrickson's framework, rather than artificially induced states; (2) it simultaneously examines multiple performance dimensions including task duration, comprehension errors, and spelling accuracy, revealing differential effects of neg-

ativity across these measures; and (3) it provides empirical support for compensatory mechanisms whereby translators maintain accuracy despite reduced efficiency under negative emotional states. This multidimensional approach reveals the nuanced trade-offs between speed and accuracy that previous studies have overlooked.

2.1. Cognitive Load and Working Memory in Translation Performance

Working memory research has increasingly illuminated the cognitive demands of translation processing. It is conceptualized as a metaphorical mental workspace used to temporarily store and process information during cognitively demanding tasks. Li[19] demonstrated that the processing function of verbal working memory in the second language has a strong effect on translation, while the processing function in the first language influences translation quality. This suggests that various emotional states may impact these cognitive components in different ways, with negative emotions possibly increasing cognitive load, thereby interfering with the careful balance between the storage and processing functions necessary for effective translation.

Yang's work[8] further clarifies the relationship between bilingualism and working memory, finding that being bilingual does not automatically benefit working memory. Instead, working memory advantages are a product of the unique cognitive environment inherent to translation work, where translators must store and simultaneously decode second language information. This dual-task processing results in what Yang describes as a "heavier cognitive load" that may be especially prone to emotional interference. This suggests significant implications for translation performance: Negative emotions may add to the already demanding process of managing bilingual working memory, leading to the slower processing speeds observed in emotionally distressed translators.

2.2. Emotional Intelligence and Regulation in Translation Contexts

Recent research has improved our understanding of how emotional intelligence and regulation strategies specifically impact translation performance. Cheng[20] found that emotion regulation and its components, including emotional intelligence, intuition, resilience, and professional expertise, significantly influenced translation outcomes. Their research showed that translators with greater emotional intelligence consistently outperformed their peers, suggesting that the ability to actively regulate emotions protects against the potentially adverse effects of negative emotional states on cognitive performance.

Qiu[21] provided comprehensive evidence that both emotional intelligence and anxiety can have a tremendous effect on translation quality, with emotionally intelligent translators producing high-quality translations even under stressful conditions. The findings suggest that negative emotions such as anxiety may compromise translation performance in multiple ways: by reducing cognitive efficiency, disrupting attention regulation, and hindering the strategic application of translation skills. Qiu further highlighted how scholars have largely overlooked affective factors in favor of linguistic and sociolinguistic factors affecting translation quality. Importantly, Qiu's work demonstrates that beyond mere theory, these factors have practical implications for translator education and professional development.

2.3. Attention Control Theory and Bilingual Cognitive Processing

Applying attention control theory to bilingual cognitive processing provides key insights into the effects of negative emotions on translation performance specifically. Ouzia et al.[7] demonstrated that anxiety serves as a reliable risk factor for decreased inhibitory control accuracy in bilingual but not monolingual participants, suggesting that the cognitive demands of bilingual processing interact with emotions in unique ways. According to attention control theory, anxiety has a stronger impact on processing efficiency than on task performance; individuals compensate by focusing their efforts on maintaining accuracy. This pattern is clearly observed in translation research findings, in which translators have exhibited slower task completion while maintaining accuracy.

This theoretical framework provides insight into why negative emotions may have varying effects on different aspects of translation performance. Negative emotions activate the stimulus-driven attentional system, potentially compromising the goal-directed attentional system, which is crucial for maintaining focus on translation objectives. This shift in attention could explain the increased task duration and comprehension difficulties observed in translators experiencing

negative emotions; at the same time, translators' ability to maintain a high level of accuracy indicates effective compensatory mechanisms that preserve performance quality despite reduced processing efficiency.

This study challenges the assumption that emotional effects on translation are predictable or self-evident. Our results reveal an unexpected paradox: while negative emotions significantly impair processing speed and comprehension accuracy, they do not compromise overall translation quality or linguistic precision. This selective impairment pattern suggests that translators unconsciously deploy compensatory strategies under emotional distress, a finding that contradicts both intuitive expectations and previous research suggesting uniform performance degradation. By demonstrating that emotional negativity triggers adaptive mechanisms that preserve quality at the cost of efficiency, this study opens new avenues for understanding the complex interplay between emotion, cognition, and bilingual processing in professional contexts.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

Forty-eight Level 5 students enrolled in the English–Arabic translation track at Qassim University participated in the study. All participants were native Arabic speakers aged from 20 to 23. Participation was entirely voluntary, with informed consent obtained in advance.

3.2. Materials

The study utilized two main assessment tools: a negativity assessment and a translation task. The negativity measure was adapted from Fredrickson's positivity ratio framework[11], quantifying emotional negativity based on the frequency of negative affective states experienced over a 48-hour recall period. This frequency served as the independent measure. Translation performance was operationalized through four measures: (1) an overall translation error score (ranging from 0 to 46) encompassing grammatical errors, lexical inaccuracies, and other linguistic mistakes; (2) spelling errors, counted separately; (3) misunderstandings of the source text, also counted separately; and (4) task duration in minutes. While grammatical accuracy was a component of the overall translation error score, spelling errors and source text misunderstandings were isolated for separate analysis to examine whether emotional negativity affects different aspects of translation performance differently. Translation outputs were evaluated by a professional translator who assigned the overall error score and identified specific instances of spelling errors and source text misunderstandings.

3.2.1. Translation Task

Participants translated a structured Arabic source text, approximately 180 words in length, which discussed the topic of Riyadh Expo 2030. The passage was informative and characterized by lexical simplicity and formal syntactic structures. Its selection adhered to Reiss's genre-based text-type classification and was specifically designed as informative prose[22]. The translation quality assessment employed a comprehensive error analysis approach based on the American Translators Association (ATA) certification exam framework, which has been validated for academic contexts[23]. This framework was selected for three reasons: (1) it provides standardized criteria for identifying and categorizing translation errors across multiple dimensions; (2) it allows quantitative scoring that facilitates statistical analysis; and (3) it separately tracks different error types (grammatical, lexical, comprehension, spelling), enabling examination of how emotional states might differentially affect various aspects of translation competence. The 0-46 error score range reflects the cumulative impact of errors, with higher scores indicating lower translation quality No external reference tools, digital or printed, were permitted during translation. Although participants were allowed unlimited time to complete the task, their task durations were systematically recorded.

3.2.2. Negativity Assessment

Emotional negativity was measured using a self-reporting scale based on Fredrickson's Positivity Ratio Assessment[11]. This scale comprises items capturing the frequency of specific negative emotions, including anxiety, guilt, irritability, and discouragement, experienced by participants over the preceding 48 hours. The assessment was explicitly adapted to focus solely on the negativity component, differing from typical positivity ratio measures used in prior research such as Al-Ismail[12], which primarily analyzed overall positivity correlations. The resulting scores represented the participants' negativity intensity within their recent emotional experiences.

3.2.3. Illustrative Cases

To illustrate the patterns observed, we present two contrasting cases. Participant 26 (negativity score = 8) required 83 minutes to complete the translation and made 15 source text misunderstandings, yet maintained an overall error score of 25. Their translation showed careful attention to grammatical accuracy but significant comprehension difficulties, exemplifying the speed-accuracy trade-off. In contrast, Participant 32 (negativity score = 3) completed the task in 94 minutes with zero errors and no misunderstandings, demonstrating that low negativity alone does not guarantee speed, but may facilitate both accuracy and comprehension. These cases highlight the complex relationships between emotional state and various performance dimensions.

3.3. Procedures

Data collection was conducted in a structured single-session format. Initially, participants completed the negativity self-assessment, immediately followed by the translation task. Task duration was manually recorded by the researcher upon submission. Translation outputs were then evaluated by a professional translator who assigned the overall error score and identified specific instances of spelling errors and source text misunderstandings.

3.4. Data Analysis

Analysis combined descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Summary statistics were computed for translation error scores, spelling error totals, misunderstandings of the source text, negativity scores, and task duration. The researcher applied Pearson correlation analyses to identify relationships between negativity levels and translation performance indicators. Also, translation duration was examined independently to explore potential variability related to emotional negativity. SPSS was used for statistical computation.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Participants reported varied levels of negativity, with scores ranging from minimal (1) to notably high (10), averaging around 5.40 (SD = 2.48). Translation error scores were also diverse, ranging from 0 (excellent performance, minimal errors) to 46 (poor performance, high number of errors), with an average score of 14.21 (SD = 10.27). Time dedicated to translation varied considerably, from as brief as 21 minutes to as long as 108 minutes, averaging around 55.85 minutes (SD = 22.41). Misunderstanding of the source text occurred unevenly among participants, ranging from zero to as many as 15 instances, averaging 2.56 (SD = 3.46). Spelling mistakes showed similarly broad variation, ranging from 0 to 18 errors, averaging about 3.48 errors (SD = 5.07). These substantial differences underscore individual variability in emotional state, cognitive processing, and linguistic precision during translation tasks. These data are shown in **Table 1** below.

See the **Appendix A** for the complete data set for individual participants.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Negativity, Translation Performance, and Linguistic Accuracy Measures.

Variable	Mean	*SD*	Min.	Max.
Negativity score	5.40	2.48	1.00	10.00
Translation error score	14.21	10.27	0.00	46.00
Task duration (minutes)	55.85	22.41	21.00	108.00
Misunderstanding of ST	2.56	3.46	0.00	15.00
Spelling errors	3.48	5.07	0.00	18.00

4.2. Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis revealed notable patterns. A moderate yet significant positive relationship emerged between negativity and task duration ($r = 0.34$, $p = 0.017$), suggesting that participants experiencing higher negativity took longer to translate. This likely reflects increased cognitive strain or reduced efficiency. Additionally, negativity correlated moderately and significantly with misunderstandings of the source text ($r = 0.33$, $p = 0.023$), indicating that negative emotional states might interfere with comprehension and interpretation abilities. Interestingly, negativity showed no significant association with either overall translation error score ($r = 0.05$, $p = 0.74$) or spelling errors ($r = 0.05$, $p = 0.75$).

This suggests that emotional negativity primarily influences cognitive processes related to task pacing and comprehension depth rather than general linguistic accuracy or spelling proficiency. Furthermore, increased task duration did not enhance translation error scores ($r = -0.14$, $p = 0.36$), reduce misunderstandings ($r = 0.15$, $p = 0.31$), or reduce spelling errors ($r = -0.05$, $p = 0.72$), indicating that additional time alone is not a reliable predictor of improved translation outcomes. **Table 2** below shows the results of this correlation analysis.

While the correlation coefficients appear moderate ($r = 0.33$–0.34), these effect sizes are meaningful in translation studies contexts where multiple variables influence performance. The statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) indicates these relationships are unlikely due to chance. More importantly, the pattern of results, significant effects on duration and comprehension but not on spelling or overall errors, reveals a theoretically coherent picture of selective emotional influence. The converging evidence from both correlational and group comparison analyses (**Table 3**) strengthens these findings, with effect sizes (Cohen's $d = 0.83$ for duration, $d = 0.71$ for misunderstandings) considered large by conventional standards [24].

Table 2. Correlation Matrix of Negativity, Task Duration, and Translation Quality Indicators.

Variable	Translation Error Score	Negativity Score	Duration	Misunderstanding ST	Spelling Errors
Translation error score	1.00	0.05	−0.14	0.29	0.49*
Negativity score	0.05	1.00	0.34*	0.33*	0.05
Duration	−0.14	0.34*	1.00	0.15	−0.05
Misunderstanding ST	0.29	0.33*	0.15	1.00	0.28
Spelling errors	0.49*	0.05	−0.05	0.28	1.00

*$p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

Table 3. Comparative Analysis of Translation Performance Between High- and Low-Negativity Groups.

Group	Duration (min)		Translation Error Score		Misunderstanding ST		Spelling Errors	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
High negativity (≥ 6)	62.72	22.41	14.24	9.51	3.56	4.08	3.60	5.57
Low negativity (< 6)	45.37	18.40	14.16	11.62	1.48	2.23	3.32	4.53

4.3. Inferential Analysis

Participants were categorized into high-negativity (scores ≥ 6) and low-negativity (scores < 6) groups for deeper analysis. As can be seen in **Table 3**, those with higher negativity scores required significantly more time to complete their translations ($M = 62.72$ min, $SD = 22.41$) compared to those with lower negativity ($M = 45.37$ min, $SD = 18.40$; $t(46) = 2.81$, $p = 0.007$), reinforcing the notion that negativity may lead to cognitive overload and slower performance. Furthermore, the high-negativity group showed significantly more frequent misunderstandings of the source text ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 4.08$) compared to their low-negativity counterparts ($M = 1.48$, $SD = 2.23$; $t(46) = 2.13$, $p = 0.038$). Participants with higher negativity did not differ significantly regarding total translation error scores (high negativity: $M = 14.24$, $SD = 9.51$; low negativity: $M = 14.16$, $SD = 11.62$; $t(46) = 0.03$, $p = 0.98$) or spelling errors (high negativity: $M = 3.60$, $SD = 5.57$; low negativity: $M = 3.32$, $SD = 4.53$; $t(46) = 0.19$, $p = 0.85$). Thus, negative emotions appear primarily to compromise efficiency and comprehension clarity rather than overall translation quality or basic linguistic accuracy.

As illustrated in the case studies presented in section 3.2.3, these quantitative patterns manifest differently across individual participants, highlighting the complexity of emotion-performance relationships.

Overall, these findings highlight a nuanced impact of negative emotions on translation processes, primarily affecting cognitive speed and comprehension accuracy, with minimal influence on linguistic correctness or spelling proficiency.

5. Discussion

This study revealed a nuanced relationship between emotional negativity and translation duration and quality.

Translation tasks took significantly longer for participants with a higher level of negativity. Significantly, however, increased negativity did not result in a greater number of translation errors. This suggests a subtle influence of negative emotions on translation tasks, in which translators experiencing negative emotions take longer to complete tasks but are able to maintain translation accuracy.

5.1. Alignment with Prior Research

These findings reinforce prior research by Rojo and Ramos Caro [17] and Lehr [25], who noted that different emotional states influenced translators' choice of strategies. Those experiencing positive emotions favored expansive, creative approaches, whereas those feeling negative emotions used a more precise, methodical style. This aligns with our results, since our negatively affected participants managed to maintain translation accuracy, suggesting that they likely adopted a careful, meticulous approach. While this increased the amount of time required to complete the translation task, it apparently preserved accuracy by promoting careful attention and thoroughness.

In addition, our findings are consistent with Lehr's observations [25] regarding the relationship between cognitive processing and emotions. Lehr noted that more intensive or creative cognitive tasks tend to most clearly show the influence of emotions. In particular, positive emotions often foster creative solutions, while negative emotions may encourage deliberate, error-minimizing strategies [25]. Similarly, our data suggest that participants experiencing negative emotions tended to utilize careful, deliberate processing, a strategy reflected in their longer task durations and stable accuracy scores.

Moreover, this pattern of slower task completion without loss of accuracy is supported by the attentional control theory (ACT) posited by Eysenck et al. [26]. According to this theory, anxiety, a prominent negative emotion, taxes attentional resources, leading to a decline in cognitive efficiency (speed). At the same time, performance effectiveness (accuracy) is unaffected due to compensatory mechanisms. Participants in our study possibly experienced a greater cognitive load due to their negative emotional state, thereby slowing their work. To compensate, they seem to have applied extra cognitive effort to preserving translation accuracy. This aligns precisely with ACT: reduced efficiency without compromising effectiveness.

5.2. Broader Psychological Context and Implications

Our findings add a valuable contribution to the broader psychological literature on negativity bias, particularly the assertion of Baumeister et al. [13] that negative stimuli usually exert a stronger impact on cognitive processes than positive stimuli. This idea may explain why our negatively affected participants demonstrated longer translation times, utilizing more careful and meticulous, and thus slower, cognitive processing. Additionally, according to Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory [2], negative emotions often narrow cognitive attention to immediate details; this could result in translators using excessive caution or double-checking. This is reflected in our results: Participants likely spent substantial time double-checking their lexical choices, resulting in a stable level of accuracy but at a slower speed.

Forgas [15] provides further context for our findings by highlighting that mild negative moods, such as feeling slightly down or skeptical, can enhance specific cognitive functions like memory accuracy and error detection by promoting a systematic, analytic approach. In the context of translation, mild negativity could similarly encourage translators to methodically check grammar and terminology. Such systematic processing potentially accounts for the observed maintenance of translation accuracy. Nevertheless, systematic approaches naturally impose temporal costs, leading to the slower processing documented in our results. Thus, emotional negativity appears capable of impairing performance efficiency (duration) while potentially supporting, or at minimum, not impairing, final accuracy and translation quality.

However, the specific nature and intensity of the negative emotions must be considered carefully. Participants in our study presumably experienced only moderate negative emotions; they may have felt discouraged or mildly anxious without experiencing any more intense emotions. This moderate level of negativity might actually have a positive, facilitative effect on problem-solving rather than merely reducing cognitive performance. This interpretation is consistent with the Yerkes-Dodson law [27], which indicates that increasing mental arousal improves performance up to a certain optimal threshold, beyond which it declines sharply. Likewise, Rojo López et al. [28] and Hansen [29] found that intense emotional

distress or extreme time pressure reduced translation quality. Given these findings, it is likely that the moderate negative emotions experienced by participants in our study remained below the optimal threshold, allowing them to adopt a careful strategy without becoming overwhelmed and thereby maintain high accuracy.

The cognitive load perspective provides crucial insight into our findings. As demonstrated by Li[19] and Yang[8], translation inherently involves managing high cognitive demands through dual-language processing. Our results suggest that negative emotions compound this cognitive load, forcing translators to allocate additional cognitive resources to maintain accuracy. This increased load manifests as longer processing times without corresponding decreases in quality, supporting the notion that emotional regulation and cognitive load management are interrelated challenges in translation performance. Future research should explicitly measure cognitive load during emotionally charged translation tasks to further elucidate these relationships.

5.3. Complicating Existing Paradigms

Our findings provide empirical evidence that challenges simplistic views of emotional influence on cognitive processing. The data demonstrate that negative emotions produce measurable effects on specific performance dimensions: a 38% increase in task duration (62.72 vs. 45.37 minutes) and a 140% increase in comprehension errors (3.56 vs. 1.48) for high-negativity participants. These statistically significant differences ($p = 0.007$ and $p = 0.038$ respectively) confirm that negative emotions selectively impair processing efficiency and comprehension while preserving overall accuracy, a pattern consistent with attention control theory's distinction between performance effectiveness and processing efficiency[26].

This has clear practical applications for translator training programs. Translator trainers and educators might recognize how mild negative emotions can encourage a more vigilant and detail-oriented approach in their students. However, considering the fact that prolonged or intense negative emotions may compromise professional productivity and adherence to deadlines, training programs should emphasize emotional regulation and awareness, teaching translators not just to avoid emotional distress, but to modulate their emotions strategically to preserve both speed and accuracy. This recommendation is supported by Hubscher-Davidson's research[18] on the importance of emotional intelligence for translators, which emphasizes that translators with higher emotional intelligence are often better able to produce high-quality translations while under stress.

6. Conclusion and Future Directions

This study presents a complex but clear relationship between negative emotional states and translation performance. While translators experiencing moderate negativity had a greater incidence of textual misunderstandings and required significantly more time to complete the translation task, their overall translation accuracy and linguistic precision was not compromised. They were able to compensate for their decreased efficiency by adopting a meticulous and careful approach, thereby maintaining the quality of the translation. These findings call into question more simplistic views of negative emotions as uniformly detrimental, instead highlighting their potential adaptive role albeit with trade-offs.

In addition, future research should broaden the participant base beyond undergraduate cohorts. While the present study deliberately focused on translation students to control for training background and linguistic homogeneity, it is essential to examine whether the same patterns hold for professional translators working under authentic industry conditions. Extending the design to other language pairs would also allow scholars to determine whether the effects of emotional negativity are universal or whether they vary depending on linguistic and cultural distance. Such expansions would not only enhance the generalizability of the findings but also provide a stronger foundation for pedagogical and professional applications.

Another path for future research would be to explore how the degree of emotional intensity and type of emotion affect translation outcomes. For example, how and to what degree does mild anxiety differ from frustration in influencing translator effectiveness? Additionally, longitudinal studies could investigate how persistent negative emotions impact translators' productivity and mental health. Finally, practical studies exploring the efficacy of various emotion-regulation interventions, such as mindfulness or cognitive reframing techniques, could be of great benefit to the field of translation studies, suggesting ways translators can effectively reg-

ulate their emotional state to improve translation outcomes. This aligns with Bandura's self-efficacy theory [30], which suggests that belief in one's ability to manage challenging situations including emotional challenges directly influences performance outcomes.

The theoretical implications of these findings extend beyond translation studies to broader questions about emotion-cognition interactions in bilingual processing contexts. The differential impact of negative emotions on processing efficiency versus performance effectiveness observed in this study aligns with emerging research on bilingual cognitive advantages and their vulnerability to emotional interference. Future research should examine how the unique cognitive demands of translation, requiring the translator to activate and control two language systems at the same time, may differ from monolingual cognitive tasks in their specific vulnerabilities to emotional influence.

Methodologically, future research would benefit from the use of objective physiological measures of emotional intensity, such as heart rate or cortisol levels, to complement self-reported emotional states during translation tasks. Eye-tracking studies could also provide further data on how negative emotions influence visual attention patterns and reading strategies during source text processing, potentially revealing the cognitive mechanisms contributing to comprehension errors.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings suggest that emotional awareness and regulation training could be a valuable addition to translator education programs, offered alongside traditional linguistic and cultural competency training. Specifically, curricula might include modules on recognizing emotional triggers, developing adaptive coping strategies, and practicing translation tasks under controlled emotional conditions. Such training could help future translators develop the emotional capabilities necessary to maintain both efficiency and accuracy in professional contexts, where the pressure of deadlines and client demands may trigger negative emotional states.

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Informed Consent Statement

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Data Availability Statement

All data are available upon request.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Table A1. Dataset for All Participants.

Participants	Translation Error Score	Negativity	Duration	Misunderstanding ST	Spelling Errors
P1	33	2	43	5	18
P2	27	9	75	0	2
P3	15	3	45	2	3
P4	3	6	75	0	2
P5	33	9	40	8	15
P6	16	1	21	5	0
P7	6	2	21	0	2

Table A1. *Cont.*

Participants	Translation Error Score	Negativity	Duration	Misunderstanding ST	Spelling Errors
P8	9	6	103	3	0
P9	6	4	31	0	11
P10	3	4	72	4	1
P11	3	6	46	0	0
P12	14	8	32	11	15
P13	9	6	56	5	1
P14	4	1	25	0	0
P15	12	9	87	10	5
P16	5	7	46	0	2
P17	16	2	54	0	0
P18	9	3	49	0	5
P19	9	5	54	0	2
P20	14	7	108	6	3
P21	7	9	59	0	1
P22	7	1	62	0	2
P23	46	4	49	5	15
P24	17	7	45	5	0
P25	12	8	50	0	6
P26	25	8	83	15	0
P27	9	6	67	0	0
P28	11	8	26	5	0
P29	29	4	35	1	4
P30	24	1	48	0	4
P31	11	6	75	4	0
P32	0	3	94	0	0
P33	11	6	82	0	4
P34	9	8	64	0	0
P35	6	5	30	0	0
P36	12	10	64	4	0
P37	13	2	27	0	0
P38	20	6	76	0	15
P39	21	7	45	0	1
P40	7	7	84	0	5
P41	17	7	89	7	6
P42	26	6	63	5	14
P43	6	6	39	2	1
P44	10	6	80	0	0
P45	14	4	52	5	2
P46	8	6	30	3	0
P47	13	2	50	3	0
P48	45	6	30	0	0

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