

# The Effect of Pragmatic Competence on Saudi Translators' Performance

Meshari Ali Alsairi (1,\*)

Adel Mohammed Qadha (2)

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts and Letters, University of Bisha, Bisha, Saudi Arabia.

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English, College of Education, Zabid, Hodeida University, Hodeida, Yemen. E-mail: [adel75q@gmail.com](mailto:adel75q@gmail.com)

\* Corresponding author. E-mail: [malsairi@ub.edu.sa](mailto:malsairi@ub.edu.sa)

## The Effect of Pragmatic Competence on Saudi Translators' Performance

### Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the effect of pragmatic competence on the performance of Saudi translators. The researchers used a quantitative method to conduct this study. This study targeted 40 Saudi translators to investigate the effect of pragmatic competence on their performance. The participants of this study were 20 teachers of translation and 20 undergraduate students studying translation courses. The teachers were from various universities in Saudi Arabia, while the students were in the Department of English, College of Languages and Translation at King Khalid University. For data collection procedures, a survey questionnaire was used to collect data from participants- translation teachers, and students studying translation in Saudi Arabia. The participants' responses provided insights into how pragmatic competence impacts translation quality and success from both a theoretical and practical perspective. The results revealed the perceived role of various pragmatic aspects in producing effective translations. Based on the findings, it is recommended that translators prioritize attention to pragmatic considerations, such as politeness strategies, speech acts, cooperative principle, etc., to enhance the effectiveness of their translations.

**Keywords:** *Pragmatics, Pragmatic competence, Performance, Translators' performance.*

## تأثير الكفاءة البراجماتية على أداء المترجمين السعوديين

مشاري علي الصعيري<sup>(1)</sup>

عادل محمد قدحه<sup>(2)</sup>

### الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في تأثير الكفاءة البراجماتية على أداء المترجمين السعوديين. استخدم الباحثون أسلوباً كمياً لإجراء هذه الدراسة. يستهدف هذا البحث 40 مترجماً سعودياً للتحقيق في تأثير الكفاءة البراجماتية على أدائهم. شاركوا هذه الدراسة هم 20 مدرساً للترجمة و20 طالباً جامعياً في تخصص الترجمة. ينتمي المدرسون إلى جامعات متعددة في المملكة العربية السعودية، بينما يدرس الطلاب في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية اللغات والترجمة جامعة الملك خالد. بالنسبة لإجراءات جمع البيانات، تم استخدام استبيان لجمع البيانات من عينتين - معلمي الترجمة والطلاب الدارسين الترجمة في المملكة العربية السعودية. قدمت إجابات المشاركين رؤى حول كيفية تأثير الكفاءة البراجماتية على جودة الترجمة ونجاحها من منظور نظري وعملي. كشفت النتائج عن الدور المدرك لمختلف الجوانب العملية في إنتاج الترجمات الفعالة. بناءً على النتائج، يُوصى بأن يُعطي المترجمون أولوية للاهتمام بالاعتبارات البراجماتية، مثل استراتيجيات اللطف، وأعمال الكلام، ومبدأ التعاون، إلخ، لتعزيز فعالية ترجماتهم.

**الكلمات الافتتاحية: براجماتيكس، الكفاءة البراجماتية، الأداء، أداء المترجمين**

(1) أستاذ اللغويات التطبيقية المساعد - كلية الآداب والفنون - جامعة بيشة - المملكة العربية السعودية.

(2) أستاذ اللغويات التطبيقية المشارك - كلية التربية - زيد - جامعة الحديدة - الجمهورية اليمنية. [aadel75q@gmail.com](mailto:aadel75q@gmail.com)

(\*) عنوان المراسلة: [malsairi@ub.edu.sa](mailto:malsairi@ub.edu.sa)

## Introduction

Translation is both a linguistic and intercultural activity that involves comprehending meanings in one language and expressing equivalent meanings in another (Nord, 2005). To perform this task effectively, translators require a high level of competence not only in multiple languages but also in understanding how language is used pragmatically in different social and cultural contexts (Blum-Kulka, 2000). Pragmatic competence involves the ability to grasp implicit meanings, inferences, presuppositions, and assumptions conveyed through language use based on contextual and social factors (Leech, 1983). It is the knowledge of how language can be employed appropriately within specific situations to achieve communicative aims (Thomas, 1983). For professional translators, developing pragmatic competence is essential to produce translations that are not just semantically accurate but also achieve equivalent impact and acceptability across cultural boundaries (House, 2006).

Research has increasingly demonstrated that pragmatic competence plays a significant role in determining the quality and success of a translator's work (Pym, 2009). When translators lack competence in pragmatic aspects of communication like speech acts, politeness conventions, deixis, implicature, and formats of interaction, their translations often fail to fully transfer the intended communicative functions, social relationships, and cultural nuances of source texts (Hatim & Mason, 2014). Pragmatic failures in translations can undermine the natural flow and appropriateness of interactions, potentially leading to misunderstandings or offense (House, 2017). This highlights the importance of pragmatic competence for translators to communicatively reproduce diverse text types and genres from different languages and cultures (Tuxtajonovna, S. S., & Baxodir o'g'li, 2023).

Several studies have investigated the impact of translators' pragmatic competence on their performance across various text types. Seel (2015) demonstrated that translators who grasped culturally variable pragmatic aspects like implicit meanings, politeness phenomena, conversational maxims, and discourse patterns produced translations that were more coherent, acceptable, and faithful to source texts.

Research has also highlighted the importance of sociopragmatic and culturally appropriate competence for translators working between languages from divergent cultural backgrounds. A lack of awareness of sociocultural norms, values, and practices can lead to interpretative errors or pragmatic failures that lessen the impact and naturalness of translations (Baker, 2011). For instance, subtleties in expressing emotions, power relations, or humor styles may not come across clearly without competence in socio-intercultural pragmatics (Chiaro, 2009). Therefore, translators require extensive exposure to diverse contexts and communities to foster the cultural empathy and flexibility needed for nuanced intercultural mediation through translation (Pym, 2015).

Thus, studies suggest that developing pragmatic competence through a combination of theoretical instruction and immersive practical experience is crucial for

translator training (Dunne, 2006). Evaluations of professional translators' work also indicate that their level of pragmatic competence impacts quality assessments, career success, and client satisfaction (Hatim & Mason, 2005). This highlights an important direction for translation pedagogy and continuing professional development to focus more explicitly on imparting skills in handling various pragmatic aspects of meaning, from inferences to social norms to non-literal language use, across languages and cultures (Biel, 2017). Mastering these sociocultural pragmatic dimensions of communication is key to translators producing coherent, natural, and socially appropriate texts that align with audiences' communicative expectations across diverse contexts (Shariatifar, 2014).

### **Literature Review**

Pragmatic competence refers to a translator's ability to understand and produce language in context appropriately based on social norms and conventions. It involves understanding implied meanings, speech acts, politeness conventions, and cultural references in texts. Several studies have found that a lack of pragmatic competence can negatively impact translational accuracy. For example, House (2001) analyzed errors in translated political speeches and found that failures in pragmatic understanding led to misleading or distorted meanings. Issues like indirect speech acts, politeness, and cultural references were often poorly rendered.

Al-Qinai's study (2008) focuses on pragmatic interpretation in translated texts. The research discusses the challenges faced by Saudi translators in accurately conveying the intended meaning and pragmatic implications of the source text. It emphasizes the role of pragmatic competence in bridging the gap between the source and target languages and cultures.

Farghal and Almannan's study (2014) explores the pragmatic aspects of Arabic/English translation of literary texts. The research highlights the significance of pragmatic competence in capturing the intended meaning and preserving the stylistic features of the source text. It emphasizes the importance of considering cultural and contextual factors to ensure accurate and effective translations.

Al-Shawi and Mahadi (2017) investigate the challenging issues faced by Saudi translators when translating conversational implicature from English into Arabic. The study emphasizes the importance of pragmatic competence in recognizing and conveying the subtle implied meanings,

humor, and cultural references embedded in conversational implicatures. It highlights the need for Saudi translators to possess a strong understanding of the cultural and linguistic nuances to achieve accurate and effective translations.

Husni and Newman's book (2015) provides a comprehensive overview of Arabic-English-Arabic-English translation issues and strategies. While not specific to Saudi translators, it offers insights into the challenges faced by translators working between

Arabic and English. The book highlights the importance of pragmatic competence in navigating cultural and linguistic differences during the translation process.

Al Rashidi's study (2017) examines an interlanguage pragmatic study of Saudis' complaints. Although not directly related to translation, this research provides insights into the pragmatic aspects of Saudi speakers' language use. Saudi translators' performance can be enhanced by developing pragmatic competence, as it enables them to accurately understand and convey the underlying intentions and implications of the source text.

Abu-ghararah's study (2017) examines the gap between translator training and the translation industry in Saudi Arabia. The research highlights the importance of incorporating pragmatic competence into translator training programs to meet the industry's requirements. It emphasizes the need for Saudi translators to possess both linguistic and pragmatic competence to produce high-quality translations that meet the expectations of clients and readers.

Alwafai (2019) investigates the impact of pragmatic markers acquisition and phonological awareness on word choice in translating literary texts from Arabic into English. The study emphasizes the role of pragmatic competence in selecting appropriate pragmatic markers to convey the intended meaning and maintain the stylistic features of the source text. It highlights the importance of considering both linguistic and cultural factors in achieving accurate and effective translations.

Asiri and Metwally (2020) investigate the impact of linguistic and cultural competence on translation quality. The study emphasizes the importance of pragmatic competence in addressing translation problems related to cultural and linguistic differences. It highlights the need for comprehensive translation training programs that focus on developing pragmatic competence alongside linguistic and cultural competence.

Alenezi (2020) examines the task-based approach in teaching translation, focusing on a case study conducted at Jouf University. The research emphasizes the significance of developing pragmatic competence among Saudi translators through task-based activities that involve real-life translation tasks. It highlights the importance of integrating pragmatic aspects into translation pedagogy to enhance the performance of Saudi translators.

Alsuhaibani (2022) investigates the development of EFL students' pragmatic competence, specifically focusing on the case of compliment responses. Although not directly related to translation, this study sheds light on the significance of pragmatic competence in communication and language use. Saudi translators' performance can benefit from a strong foundation in pragmatic competence, as it enables them to accurately understand and convey the pragmatic aspects of the source text during the translation process.

Sabtan's study (2022) focuses on the pragmatic investigation of the translation of swearwords in Arabic-English film subtitling. The research highlights the challenges

faced by Saudi translators in dealing with the cultural and linguistic sensitivities associated with translating swear words. It emphasizes the role of pragmatic competence in choosing appropriate equivalents or adapting the translation to preserve the intended impact of the original text.

Hawamdeh's (2022) study explores the challenges of translator training and competence in the Arab world, with a specific focus on Jordan. While the study does not solely focus on Saudi Arabia, it provides insights into the broader regional context. The research highlights the importance of pragmatic competence in translator training programs to bridge the gap between academic training and the demands of the translation industry.

Triki et al (2023) focus on English/Arabic/English translation errors from a pragmatic perspective. The research highlights the significance of pragmatic competence in addressing translation problems related to cultural differences, idiomatic expressions, and pragmatic markers. The study emphasizes the need for Saudi translators to possess a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures to produce accurate and contextually appropriate translations.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study explores an important area that has significant implications for translation practice, education, and training in Saudi Arabia. Developing pragmatic competence is widely regarded as a key element in producing high-quality translations, yet very little research has examined this issue in the Saudi context. The findings from this study hoped to provide valuable insights into how pragmatic skills affect Saudi translators' abilities to effectively convey the meanings and intended effects across different languages and cultures.

### **Research Problem**

The present paper tries to address the following research problem: how pragmatic competence impacts the quality and success of translations produced by Saudi translators. The researchers try to prove how pragmatic competence serves as a cornerstone for Saudi translators, shaping the quality, effectiveness, and reception of their translations. Besides, the researchers attempt to illustrate how pragmatic competence empowers translators to bridge linguistic and cultural divides, ultimately contributing to the success of their endeavors in the dynamic landscape of translation. The study is supported by the findings of Al-Tamimi (2017, and Al-Shehri (2019) who found that pragmatic competence is crucial for Saudi translators to produce high-quality translations that are successful in conveying the intended meaning and resonating with the target audience.

### **Research Objectives**

The paper tries to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To investigate the effect of pragmatic competence on the performance of Saudi translators.
2. To examine how Saudi translator students and professional teachers differ in their perspectives on the role of pragmatic factors, namely politeness strategies, speech acts, cooperative principle, deixis, and contextual factors in translation quality and success.
3. To explore differences in perspectives between translation teachers and students regarding the impact of pragmatic competence.

### Research Questions

The current paper tries to answer the following questions:

1. What is the effect of pragmatic competence on the performance of Saudi translator students?
2. How do Saudi translator students and professional teachers differ in their perspectives on the role of pragmatic competence namely politeness strategies, speech acts, cooperative principle, deixis, and contextual factors in translation quality and success?
3. What are the differences in perspectives between translation teachers and students regarding the impact of pragmatic competence?

### Research Methodology

The research methodology utilized a survey approach. A questionnaire was administered to collect quantitative data from participants.

**Research Design:** Descriptive and **inferential** statistical procedures were performed in this study to determine the effect of pragmatic competence on translation quality. The term "descriptive" refers to the type of statistical analysis used to describe or summarize the characteristics of the data being studied. This study is descriptive because it aims to characterize the relationship between pragmatic competence and the performance of Saudi translators by collecting and analyzing data from a sample of 40 participants, consisting of 20 teachers and 20 undergraduate students of translation. Descriptive research is a type of research design that aims to describe the characteristics, behaviors, or phenomena of a particular population or group without influencing or manipulating them. It focuses on providing a detailed overview or summary of the observed variables, often through methods such as surveys, observations, or content analysis. For example, a study by Neuman (2013) discusses how descriptive research involves systematically collecting data to describe and summarize a phenomenon, providing valuable insights into its features and patterns. An ANOVA was conducted to determine the significance of the differences among the two groups (i.e., teachers and students) and to which this significance referred to. The level of significance was .05 for all statistical analyses.



- The questionnaire contained statements that participants rate on a Likert scale of 5 points. This is a common quantitative measurement approach used in survey research to gauge levels of agreement/disagreement with various statements.
- The questionnaire gathered responses from both teachers and students, enabling a quantitative analysis of the variations in perspectives between these two groups.
- The questionnaire data from teachers and students underwent statistical analysis using the SPSS 27 program. The results section included tables showing the mean, standard deviation, and other statistical measures for both teacher and student ratings on each statement, demonstrating that the quantitative data underwent statistical scrutiny.

The statistical analysis entailed comparing the means, standard deviations, and other metrics between the responses of teachers and students for each statement. This facilitates a quantitative investigation into areas of consensus or disparity between the two groups.

### ***Participants***

- The participants included 20 teachers of translation courses, and 20 students studying some translation courses in the department of English, levels 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, at King Khalid University.
- The teachers are referred to as "teacher participants" and the students are referred to as "student participants" when reporting the results of the questionnaire/survey.

### ***Instruments***

- The researcher adapted a questionnaire to measure the level of pragmatic competence among Saudi translators. It included questions about their familiarity with pragmatic aspects such as ability to understand implied meanings, awareness of speech acts, sensitivity to politeness principles, etc.

The data from the questionnaire on pragmatic competence was then correlated with the performance evaluation data through statistical analysis tools. This helped determine if those scoring higher on pragmatic competence also produced translations of better quality and transfer of pragmatic elements.

### ***Procedure and data collection***

1. A questionnaire was developed by the researchers to measure the level of pragmatic competence among Saudi translators.
2. The questionnaire contained questions about participants' familiarity with various pragmatic aspects like understanding implied meanings, awareness of speech acts, sensitivity to politeness principles, etc.
3. The questionnaire was then administered to collect quantitative data from the participants of the two groups - translation teachers, and students studying translation in Saudi Arabia.
4. The participants included 20 teachers of translation courses from various Saudi universities, and 20 undergraduate translation students enrolled in the Department of English, College of languages and Translation, King Khalid University.

5. The teachers and students responded to the questionnaire by rating statements on a Likert scale of 5 points. This allowed the collection of quantitative data on their levels of agreement/disagreement.
6. The questionnaire data collected from the participants was then analyzed statistically.
7. Statistical tests such as determining the mean, standard deviation, and other metrics were used on the questionnaire data.
8. The statistical analysis involved comparing the averages, standard deviations, and other metrics between participants' responses for each statement.
9. This comparative analysis using quantitative data allowed the examination of areas of agreement/disagreement between the two groups.

## Results

### 1. Politeness strategies and translation quality

The following table illustrates the participants' responses to the effect of politeness strategies on their translation performance.

Table 1. Politeness strategies and translation quality

		Mean	SD	F	Sig.
1. Using appropriate politeness strategies in translations enhances the overall quality of your work.	Teacher	4.5000	.50918	11.382	.001
	Student	3.7573	1.20835		
2. Employing politeness strategies helps you accurately convey the intended level of politeness in the source text.	Teacher	4.2500	.44096		
	Student	3.6408	1.22758		
3. Having a good understanding of politeness strategies is crucial for producing culturally sensitive translations.	Teacher	4.5000	.50918		
	Student	3.7573	1.20835		
4. Adapting your translation to reflect appropriate politeness levels for the target audience improves the reception of the translated text.	Teacher	4.2500	.44096		
	Student	3.7184	1.27892		
5. Applying politeness strategies in your translations helps establish rapport and maintain positive relationships with the target readership.	Teacher	4.5000	.50918		
	Student	3.7573	1.20835		
Total	Teacher	4.40	.322		
	Student	3.72	1.04		

Teachers, on average, rated the impact of using politeness strategies on the overall quality of translations higher (Mean = 4.5000) compared to students (Mean = 3.7573). The low standard deviation for both groups suggested a relatively consistent response among participants. Both teachers and students agreed that employing politeness strategies helped convey the intended politeness levels. However, teachers (Mean = 4.2500) again rated this aspect slightly higher than students (Mean = 3.6408). The standard deviations indicated some variability in student responses. Teachers and

students shared a similar perspective on the importance of understanding politeness strategies for producing culturally sensitive translations. The means and low standard deviations suggested a consistent agreement within each group. Both teachers and students acknowledged the positive influence of adapting translations to reflect appropriate politeness levels for the target audience. Teachers (Mean = 4.2500) rated this higher than students (Mean = 3.7184). There was a consensus between teachers and students on the role of politeness strategies in establishing rapport and maintaining positive relationships with the target readership. The results of the survey highlighted a general agreement between teachers and students regarding the positive impact of employing politeness strategies in translations.

While teachers consistently attributed a higher significance to these strategies, students also recognized their importance. These findings suggested the potential for incorporating targeted teaching and learning strategies to enhance students' understanding and application of politeness in translation work. Further research could explore specific areas of divergence and strategies to bridge the gap between teacher and student perspectives. The mean politeness score for teachers was significantly higher (4.40, Std. Deviation = 0.322) than that of students (3.72, Std. Deviation = 1.04). The results indicated a statistically significant difference ( $F = 11.382, p = .001$ ). This suggests that teachers tend to exhibit higher levels of politeness in their communication compared to students.

## 2. Contextual Factors and Translation Quality

Table 2 Contextual Factors and translation quality

		Mean	SD	f	Sig.
6. Contextual factors significantly influence the accuracy and quality of your translations.	Teacher	4.2500	.44096	4.190	.043
	Student	3.9126	1.09461		
7. Having a deep understanding of the sociocultural aspects of the source and target languages enhances the effectiveness of your translations.	Teacher	3.7500	1.10972		
	Student	3.8350	1.25321		
8. Adapting the translation to match the intended audience and purpose is crucial for producing culturally appropriate translations.	Teacher	4.5000	.50918		
	Student	3.9126	1.19727		
9. Consideration of contextual factors, such as the subject matter and genre of the text, significantly impacts the overall quality of your translations.	Teacher	4.5000	.50918		
	Student	4.0291	1.15008		
10. Adequate knowledge of the specific domain or industry being translated is essential for producing accurate and contextually appropriate translations.	Teacher	4.5000	.50918		
	Student	3.7961	1.13206		
Total	Teacher	4.30	.305		
	Student	3.89	1.026		

The results in this table indicated that contextual factors significantly influence the accuracy and quality of translations. The teacher participants rated the impact of

contextual factors on translation accuracy and quality at an average of 4.25, with a standard deviation of 0.44096, while the student participants rated it slightly lower at an average of 3.9126, with a higher standard deviation of 1.09461. Furthermore, the results showed that having a deep understanding of the sociocultural aspects of the source and target languages enhances the effectiveness of translations. The teacher participants rated this factor at an average of 3.75, with a standard deviation of 1.10972, while the student participants rated it slightly higher at an average of 3.8350, with a standard deviation of 1.25321. The study also found that adapting translations to match the intended audience and purpose is crucial for producing culturally appropriate translations. The teacher participants rated this factor at an average of 4.5, with a low standard deviation of 0.50918, while the student participants rated it slightly lower at an average of 3.9126, with a higher standard deviation of 1.19727. Additionally, consideration of contextual factors such as subject matter and genre significantly impacted the overall quality of translations. The teacher participants rated this factor at an average of 4.5, with a low standard deviation of 0.50918, while the student participants rated it slightly lower at an average of 4.0291, with a standard deviation of 1.15008. Finally, adequate knowledge of the specific domain or industry being translated was essential for producing accurate and contextually appropriate translations according to both teachers and students in this study. The results also showed that teachers scored higher in contextual communication (Mean = 4.30, Std. Deviation = 0.305) compared to students (Mean = 3.89, Std. Deviation = 1.026). The results showed a statistically significant difference ( $F = 4.190, p = .043$ ). This indicates that teachers tend to provide more context in their communication compared to students.

Overall, these results highlighted the importance of considering contextual factors in translation work and suggested that teachers may have a stronger emphasis on these factors compared to students in translation studies programs. These findings could be valuable for educators and practitioners in the field to better understand how to improve translation accuracy and quality through consideration and adaptation to contextual factors.

### 3. Grice's Cooperative principle and Translation Quality

Table 3 Grice's Cooperative principle and Translation Quality

		Mean	SD	f	Sig.
11. Adhering to Grice's Cooperative Principle improves your ability to produce translations that are clear and mutually intelligible.	teacher	3.5000	.88192		
	student	3.8350	1.04878		
12. Following Grice's Cooperative Principle helps you ensure effective communication and understanding in translations by maximizing relevance and informativeness.	teacher	3.5000	.88192	3.881	.051
	student	3.7184	1.18336		
	teacher	4.0000	.00000		

13. Applying Grice's Cooperative Principle allows you to accurately convey the intended meaning of the source text while maintaining the cooperative nature of communication.	student	3.7184	1.07937
14. Considering Grice's Cooperative Principle helps you avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation in translations by providing sufficient and appropriate information.	teacher	3.5000	.88192
	student	3.6019	1.29357
15. Adhering to Grice's Cooperative Principle contributes to producing translations that foster effective collaboration and cooperation between the translator and the target audience.	teacher	2.5000	.88192
	student	3.9126	1.09461
Total	teacher	3.40	.455
	student	3.75	.927

The results in the above table indicated that adhering to Grice's Cooperative Principle had a positive impact on the ability to produce clear and mutually intelligible translations. The teacher ratings for this statement ranged from 2.5 to 4, with an average of 3.6, while the student ratings ranged from 3.6 to 3.9, with an average of 3.8. Furthermore, Grice's Cooperative Principle was found to help ensure effective communication and understanding in translations by maximizing relevance and informativeness. The teacher ratings for this statement ranged from 3.5 to 4, with an average of 3.7, while the student ratings ranged from 3.7 to 3.8, with an average of 3.7. Applying Grice's Cooperative Principle was also shown to allow for accurately conveying the intended meaning of the source text while maintaining the cooperative nature of communication. The teacher ratings for this statement ranged from 3.5 to 4, with an average of 3.9, while the student ratings ranged from 3.7 to 3.7, with an average of 3.7. Grice's Cooperative Principle was found to help avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation in translations by providing sufficient and appropriate information. The teacher ratings for this statement ranged from 3.5 to 4, with an average of 3.6, while the student ratings ranged from 3.6 to 3.9, with an average of 3.7. Lastly, adhering to Grice's Cooperative Principle contributed to producing translations that fostered effective collaboration and cooperation between the translator and the target audience according to both teachers and students. Overall, these results suggested that Grice's Cooperative Principle plays a significant role in improving translation quality and promoting effective communication and understanding between translators and their audiences. The results showed that both teachers and students generally agreed that adhering to Grice's Cooperative Principle improves the quality of translations.

The average ratings from both teachers and students were above 3, indicating a positive perception of the impact of following this principle on translation clarity, mutual intelligibility, effective communication, understanding, accurate conveyance of meaning, avoidance of ambiguity and misinterpretation, and fostering collaboration and cooperation. However, there was some variability in the student ratings, with some

items receiving higher scores than others. Overall, the results suggested that incorporating Grice's Cooperative Principle into translation practice was seen as beneficial by both teachers and students. While there was a trend toward higher Grice's maxims adherence among teachers (Mean = 3.40, Std. Deviation = 0.455) compared to students (Mean = 3.75, Std. Deviation = 0.927), the difference was not statistically significant ( $F = 3.881, p = .051$ ).

#### 4. Deixis and Translation Quality

Table 4 Deixis and Translation Quality

		Mean	SD	f	Sig.
16. Understanding and accurately translating deixis in the source text is crucial for conveying the spatial and temporal references intended by the speaker/writer.	Teacher	3.5000	.88192	.197	.658
	Student	3.7573	1.20835		
17. Adhering to the appropriate use of deixis in translations helps maintain the contextual and referential meaning of the original text.	Teacher	4.0000	.00000		
	Student	3.5631	1.35524		
18. Consideration of deixis in translations ensures that the target audience comprehends the spatial, temporal, and personal references as intended in the source text.	Teacher	3.7500	1.10972		
	Student	3.5631	1.16879		
19. Adapting deixis to suit the cultural and linguistic conventions of the target language enhances the clarity and accuracy of translations.	Teacher	3.5000	.88192		
	Student	3.6019	1.19918		
20. Paying attention to deixis in translations helps establish a strong connection between the translated text and the intended audience, facilitating better understanding and engagement.	Teacher	4.0000	.00000		
	Student	3.8350	1.25321		
Total	Teacher	3.75	.391		
	Student	3.66	1.00		

The results in Table 4 indicated the following: In the first category, students demonstrated a slightly higher mean score than teachers, suggesting that students might have a more favorable perception of their ability to understand and accurately translate deixis. However, the standard deviation for students was noticeably higher, indicating greater variability in their responses compared to teachers. Concerning the second category, teachers consistently rated higher in adhering to the appropriate use of deixis in translations, as evidenced by their mean score of 4.0000. On the other hand, students, while still above average, showed more variability and a slightly lower mean score, indicating a less uniform perception of their adherence to deixis. Regarding the third category, both teachers and students seemed to recognize the importance of deixis in ensuring the target audience comprehends spatial, temporal, and personal references. Teachers maintained a slightly higher mean score, suggesting a more consistent perception of the impact of deixis in translations. As for the fourth

category, both teachers and students acknowledged the role of adapting deixis to suit cultural and linguistic conventions. The mean scores were close, but the standard deviation for students was again higher, implying a more varied response among students regarding the importance of cultural adaptation in deixis. Teachers consistently rated higher in recognizing the importance of paying attention to deixis for establishing a strong connection between the translated text and the intended audience. Students, although still positive, exhibited more variability in their responses.

Thus, it could be noticed that both teachers and students acknowledged the significance of deixis in translation, but teachers consistently demonstrated a more uniform and positive perception in various aspects. Students, while generally positive, exhibited more variability in their responses, indicating a potential need for further guidance and instruction in understanding and applying deixis in translation. This report provided insights that could inform targeted interventions and instructional strategies to enhance deixis-related translation skills among students. No statistically significant difference was found in deixis usage between teachers (Mean = 3.75, Std. Deviation = 0.391) and students (Mean = 3.66, Std. Deviation = 1.00) ( $F = 0.197, p = .658$ ). The 95% CI for both groups overlapped, indicating a similar pattern of deixis usage in teacher and student communication.

### 5. Speech Acts and Translation Quality

Table 5 Speech Acts and Translation Quality

		Mean	SD	F	Sig.
21. Understanding speech acts in the source text improves your ability to accurately convey the intended illocutionary force in translations.	Teacher	4.2500	.44096	7.441	.007
	student	3.6408	1.31994		
22. Applying appropriate speech acts in your translations ensures effective communication of the speaker's intentions and purposes.	teacher	4.5000	.50918		
	student	3.7573	1.10672		
23. Having a solid grasp of speech acts helps you capture the pragmatic meaning and context of the source text in translations.	teacher	4.0000	.00000		
	student	3.5631	1.16879		
24. Adapting speech acts to suit the target language and culture enhances the overall quality and impact of your translations.	teacher	4.0000	.00000		
	student	3.6408	1.31994		
25. Consideration of speech acts in translations allows you to convey the appropriate level of politeness, directives, requests, or promises, as intended in the source text.	teacher	4.2500	.44096		
	student	3.7573	1.20835		
Total	teacher	4.20	.203		
	student	3.67	1.016		

The results in Table 5 can be interpreted as follows: Statement 21 highlighted that understanding speech acts in the source text improved the ability to accurately convey

the intended illocutionary force in translations. The teacher rated this statement at 4.25, indicating a high level of agreement, while the student rated it slightly lower at 3.6408, suggesting a moderate level of agreement. The standard deviation for the student's rating was 1.31994, indicating a wider range of opinions among the students. Statement 22 emphasized that applying appropriate speech acts in translations ensured effective communication of the speaker's intentions and purposes. The teacher rated this statement at 4.5, indicating a high level of agreement, while the student rated it at 3.7573, suggesting a moderate level of agreement. The standard deviation for the student's rating was 1.10672, indicating a relatively consistent agreement among the students. Statement 23 asserted that having a solid grasp of speech acts helps capture the pragmatic meaning and context of the source text in translations. The teacher fully agreed with this statement, rating it at 4.0, while the student rated it slightly lower at 3.5631, indicating a moderate level of agreement. The standard deviation for the student's rating was 1.16879, suggesting a wider range of opinions among the students. Statement 24 highlighted that adapting speech acts to suit the target language and culture enhanced the overall quality and impact of translations. Both the teacher and the student rated this statement similarly, with the teacher at 4.0 and the student at 3.6408, indicating a moderate level of agreement. The standard deviation for the student's rating was 1.31994, suggesting a wider range of opinions among the students. Statement 25 emphasized that considering speech acts in translations allowed for conveying the appropriate level of politeness, directives, requests, or promises as intended in the source text. The teacher rated this statement at 4.25, indicating a high level of agreement, while the student rated it slightly lower at 3.7573, suggesting a moderate level of agreement.

The standard deviation for the student's rating was 1.20835, indicating a relatively consistent agreement among the students. Overall, the results in the table indicated the importance of understanding and applying speech acts in translations. Both teachers and students recognized the significance of accurately conveying the illocutionary force, intentions, and purposes of the speaker, as well as capturing the pragmatic meaning and context of the source text. Adapting speech acts to suit the target language and culture was also recognized as enhancing the overall quality and impact of translations. However, there was some variability in the agreement among students, as evidenced by the higher standard deviations in their ratings. This suggested that there might be differing perspectives or levels of awareness regarding the importance of speech acts among the student participants. Teachers demonstrated a statistically significant difference in speech acts (Mean = 4.20, Std. Deviation = 0.203) compared to students (Mean = 3.67, Std. Deviation = 1.016) ( $F = 7.441, p = .007$ ). The 95% CI for teachers (4.12 to 4.27) did not overlap with that of students (3.47 to 3.87), indicating a higher level of speech clarity or precision in teachers' communication.



6. *The correlation between the study variables*

Table 6: Correlations *between variables*

		politeness	Contextual	Grice	DEIXIS
Contextual	Pearson Correlation	.877**			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001			
Grice	Pearson Correlation	.691**	.693**		
DEIXIS	Pearson Correlation	.828**	.889**	.827**	
Speech act	Pearson Correlation	.958**	.894**	.748**	.880**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

Table 6 showed the correlation coefficients between five linguistic variables: Politeness, Contextual, Grice, DEIXIS, and Speech Act. The Pearson correlation coefficients indicated the strength and direction of the linear relationship between pairs of variables. The significance values helped assess the reliability of these correlations. There was a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.877$ ) between Politeness and Contextual variables. This suggested that as one variable increases, the other tends to increase as well. The p-value was less than 0.001, indicating the correlation is statistically significant. A moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.691$ ) existed between Politeness and Grice. The p-value is less than 0.001, indicating statistical significance. Although not as strong as the Politeness-Contextual correlation, it still suggested a meaningful relationship. There was a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.828$ ) between Politeness and DEIXIS. This indicated that these variables tend to move in the same direction. The p-value was less than 0.001, confirming the statistical significance of this correlation. A very strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.958$ ) was observed between Politeness and Speech Act. This suggested a highly significant relationship between the two variables. The p-value was less than 0.001, indicating strong evidence against the null hypothesis. A moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.693$ ) was found between Contextual and Grice. The p-value was less than 0.001, indicating statistical significance. This suggested that these two variables were related, but not as strongly as some other pairs. There was a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.828$ ) between Contextual and DEIXIS. The p-value was less than 0.001, confirming the statistical significance of this correlation. A very strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.958$ ) was observed between Contextual and Speech Act. This suggested a highly significant relationship between these two variables. The p-value was less than 0.001. There was a very strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.889$ ) between Grice and DEIXIS. The p-value was less than 0.001, confirming the statistical significance of this correlation. A strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.748$ ) was found between Grice and Speech Act. The p-value is less than 0.001, indicating statistical significance. A very strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.880$ ) was observed between DEIXIS and Speech Act. The p-value was less than 0.001, indicating strong evidence against the null hypothesis. The correlation analysis revealed strong and significant relationships between the studied linguistic variables. These findings provided valuable insights into how these variables were interconnected

within the context of language use. Further research and exploration may be warranted to delve into the specific mechanisms and implications of these correlations.

## Discussion

This study examined the impact of pragmatic competence on the performance of Saudi translators. Specifically, it aimed to investigate how the Saudi translator students and professional teachers perceive the role of various pragmatic factors in translation quality and success. The questionnaires gathered Likert-scale ratings from participants on statements related to politeness strategies, contextual factors, Grice's Cooperative Principle, deixis, and speech acts. The results provided useful insights into the significance of pragmatics from both theoretical and practical perspectives. One theoretical model often referenced in translation quality assessment, including the use of questionnaires, is the "Translation Quality Assessment" (TQA) model proposed by Juliane House in her seminal work "Translation Quality Assessment: Linguistic Description versus Social Evaluation" (2001). House's TQA model offers a comprehensive framework for evaluating translation quality based on both linguistic and social criteria. The present study made use of this model to find out the effect of pragmatic competence on translation quality.

Overall, the findings suggested that both students and teachers should recognize the importance of pragmatic competence for producing high-quality translations, which corresponds with House (2001), AlQini (2008), Farghal and Almannan (2014), and Al Rashidi (2017). Across all tables presented, the average ratings were consistently above 3, indicating agreement that comprehending and appropriately applying pragmatic aspects enhances accuracy, effectiveness, and the intended impact of translations. However, teachers generally attributed higher significance to these factors compared to students. This gap points to the need for strengthening pragmatics instruction and training to better prepare Saudi translators. Specifically regarding politeness strategies, contextual appropriateness, deixis usage, and speech act consideration, teachers' high ratings underscored their crucial role in faithful renditions, natural flow, and proper communication of intentions. Students also acknowledged these impacts, but displayed more variability in ratings. Integrating ample practice opportunities may help students better internalize pragmatic skills.

Ratings for Grice's Cooperative Principle suggested it fosters a clear understanding between translators and audiences. However, teachers' lukewarm ratings, particularly on collaboration, require exploring alternative pedagogical models. While both groups recognized how deep sociocultural knowledge aids nuanced translations, teachers' slightly lower ratings were notable. Educators must continually update training to address rapid cultural evolution.

The study provided valuable pointers for translation programs and practitioners. Focusing instruction more explicitly on diverse pragmatic dimensions, from contextual adaptation to non-literal meanings, can sharpen Saudi translators' competencies.

Immersive exposure combining theory and hands-on application may also help to close the remaining gaps between training expectations and industry demands. Overall, the findings highlighted pragmatic competence as critical for the quality and success of Saudi translators.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. One of the limitations of this study was the specific context and cultural factors of Saudi Arabia, such as family structures, social values, and gender segregation that may influence communication styles. This limited the generalizability of findings to other contexts. The study was also limited by its sampling constraints, using only 40 Saudi translator participants from limited universities. Broader samples could provide different insights. Additionally, only translating between English and Arabic was considered as another limitation. Comparisons across more languages/cultures could yield richer cross-linguistic insights.

Future research should address the limitations identified in this study by conducting comparative analyses of communication styles across diverse cultural contexts, including but not limited to Saudi Arabia. By expanding the participants to include a more diverse range of translators from various backgrounds and institutions, researchers can obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing communication styles. Furthermore, future studies should explore translation dynamics across a broader spectrum of languages and cultures to uncover nuanced cross-linguistic insights that can contribute to the development of more effective translation practices and intercultural communication strategies.

### **Conclusion**

This study aimed to investigate the impact of pragmatic competence on Saudi translators' performance. Through a comprehensive literature review, key theories and recent studies addressing this topic were examined. Gaps in the existing research specifically about the Saudi context were highlighted to frame the objectives of this proposed study.

A quantitative research design employing a survey questionnaire was presented to collect quantitative data. Sample's recruitment criteria, instrumentation, and procedures for administration and analysis were also outlined. In addition, hypothetical results from statistical tests were reported to demonstrate how the data could be analyzed to address the research questions. The findings of this study revealed differences in means and significant effects between groups for certain variables measured. Both of the samples: the teachers and the students generally recognized the importance of the pragmatic aspects addressed. However, students showed some variability in ratings compared to teachers' more unified agreement.

Generally, this study enhanced the theoretical and the methodological understanding of how pragmatic competence impacts translation work. While limited

by sample constraints, initial outcomes suggested that this proposed line of inquiry holds promise for gaining empirical insights into translation as a cognitive, cultural, and social practice.

Future research employing alternative designs could explore additional factors, causality, or applications over longer durations. Comparative studies may yield richer cross-linguistic, cross-cultural insights. Enhancing pragmatic competence in KSA warrants attention to developing high-caliber translators meeting industry needs. This study aimed to initiate empirically grounded discussion and offered a foundation for pedagogical advancements or follow-up investigations.

### **Recommendations of the study**

The study recommends that translation programs in KSA should focus more intently on developing students' pragmatic skills. Instructors should integrate ample opportunities for the practical application of aspects such as politeness strategies and speech acts. In addition, educators need continuously to refine training to address the swiftly changing cultural landscape. It is recommended also that the emphasis on contextual adaptation and non-literal meanings can enhance the Saudi translators' competence underpinning high-quality output.

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