The impact of translation training and expectations of the Saudi translation market: A comparative analysis of translation competence between undergraduate students and professional translators

Shatha Abdullah AlShaye[1*]   **Nora Majed BinSultan**[2]
Email: salshaye@ksu.edu.sa   Email: noalsultan@ksu.edu.sa

[1&2] Department of English Language, King Saud University, KSA

Abstract

This study investigates the influence of translation training programmes on translation competence (TC). It explores workplace requirements, reflecting the overall situation in the Saudi translation market. A mixed-method approach was adopted to compare the performance of undergraduate translation students to that of professional translators. TC is examined in relation to three main components: language proficiency, knowledge of the subject area, and knowledge of the translation process. The results emphasise the influence of programme design on learning outcomes and assert the importance of post-graduate translation training programmes in offering professional learning experiences that simulate the changing reality in the local market. The results suggest that specialised training programs, effectively connecting academic knowledge gained in BA translation programmes to practical professional prospects, should follow the completion of such programmes. Advanced coordination is thus encouraged between academic institutions and the job market, including regular and consistent reports presenting tasks, positions, and areas of employment required by the market. Such reports requested by academic institutions are essential for redesigning academic programmes and guiding future translators throughout their careers.

Keywords: Saudi translation market, translation competence, translation studies, translation training

1. Introduction

With the increasing demand for translation services, there is a remarkable need for a new generation of educated and trained translators. Translation training is an area of interest in the translation industry, as it contributes to the acquisition and development of translators' competence. However, it is considered an under-researched area in translation studies (TS), with little research focusing on the requirements of the job market and the need for highly qualified translators. This study focuses on the importance of translation training for specialised translators in the Saudi context, as it plays a vital role in meeting the requirements of the Saudi translation market. This study also examines the level of translation competence (TC) possessed by both undergraduate translation students and professional translators. It highlights the impact of post-graduate training programmes on translators' competence and the accuracy of their translations by comparing the performance of two groups: highly qualified translators who have completed a post-graduate translation training programme and undergraduate students specialised in English language and translation. Previous studies (see Yan et al., 2018; Salamah, 2021; Al-Batineh & Bilali, 2017) addressed TC from a solely theoretical perspective. Such studies review literature related to the concepts of training and competence without making actual comparisons reflecting the extent to which competence influences translators' performance. TC has either been examined in relation to a particular genre or studied without considering other important empirical aspects like translators' performance. This study thus attempts to bridge gaps in the literature by implementing corpus-based research analysing translation products and translators' performance.

In Arabic-speaking countries, translation has played a vital role in transmitting knowledge since the pre-Islamic era. According to Baker and Hanna (2009, p. 328), "[t]he rise of Islam in the seventh century is the most important event in the history of the Arab peoples; it changed the political, cultural and linguistic map of the area forever." During the initial decades of the 1800s, Arab political and intellectual leaders employed translation to foster national identity. Within this timeframe, numerous Arabic-speaking nations like Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and

Saudi Arabia adopted translation initiatives and sponsored scholarships for translation education and training in Western nations. For example, al-Tahtawi founded the School of Languages in Egypt (Horbačauskienė et al., 2017). The thriving business and economic landscape in Saudi Arabia led to a significant surge in translation demand in the region, creating abundant job prospects for skilled translators (Fatani, 2009). In pursuit of Saudi Vision 2030, there is a high demand for translators in specialised fields like law, tourism, politics, and technology. Further, many multinational businesses are establishing their Middle East and North Africa (MENA) headquarters in the kingdom and an increasing number of international tourists are visiting the country, which also highlights the need for professional specialised translators.

2. Research questions

This study aims to address the following questions:

1. How does translation competence play a key role in the translation of specialised texts?
2. To what extent are specialised translation training programmes essential to achieving translation competence in the Saudi market?
3. What are the expectations of the Saudi market regarding translators' abilities and skills?

3. Translation training

Training and development refer to educational activities within a company or an institution created to enhance employees' knowledge and skills. These programmes provide information and guidance on improving performance in particular tasks. Translator training is a sub-branch of translation aid, which reflects a short-term activity, while translation development is considered a proactive process meant for professionals (Munday, 2016). Translator education recognises students' needs to develop a broad spectrum of interpersonal skills and attitudes. Further, translator training provides trainees with the most needed linguistic skills to produce an acceptable translation product. Translation training aims to develop professional skills and translation competence in the field.

Translation training can take several forms. A great deal is learned in workplaces. According to Pym (2012), most employees working in translation centres are likely to be untrained. There is an increasing need for specialised training courses that offer translators the up-to-date knowledge and skills they require to meet market demands. Such courses may be designed to incorporate emerging translation technologies, specialised terminology within specific domains, project management principles, or targeted communication skills. Recent studies (e.g., Pan et al., 2022) have considered translator training and learning focusing on the development of language processing technology; however, further research is required to tackle the impact of post-graduate translation training programmes on TC and their ability to meet the requirements of the translation market.

Although Nida (1981) claims that some of the best translators are not trained, translation requires continuous practice to meet market requirements. Given the growing demand for translation training, many studies have focused on pedagogical gaps in translation training, including teaching, assessment methods, and curriculum design, rather than highlighting its necessity in increasing translator competence (see Massey et al., 2019; Salamah, 2021). This reflects the need for a deep investigation of the impact of translation training programmes in meeting market demands, particularly in Saudi Arabia, which is the focus of this study.

4. Overview of translation training at the institutional level

In Arabic-speaking countries, translation training is currently provided by independent institutions and university departments. Numerous institutions offer comprehensive translation training programmes, notable examples being the Translation and Interpreting Institute at Hamad bin Khalifa University in Qatar, the English-Arabic Translation Program at Yarmouk University in Jordan, the Translation Programmes at Ain Shams University, Assiut University and Cairo University in Egypt, the King Fahd School of Translation in Morocco, the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, and esteemed institutions like the Lebanese American University and Saint Joseph University in Lebanon. Nevertheless, there remains a lack of constant development in training

programmes. According to Atari (2012, p. 104), translation training in Arab universities lacks the essence of true translation practice. Key deficiencies include the absence of a standardized ideology for training among instructors, insufficient evaluation of trainees' bilingual proficiency, and a disconnection between academic translation training and the practical expectations of the workplace. ElKarnichi (2017) found that translation training programmes require focusing on professional competences, such as managing translation activities.

5. Market demands in Saudi Arabia

Training institutions in the Saudi context include the King Abdullah Institute for Translation and Arabisation, the Translation Programmes at Effat University, King Abdulaziz University, King Saud University, and Umm Al-Qura University. Saudi Arabia has made substantial contributions to the field of translation. An example of distinguished translation work and a prominent institution in Saudi Arabia is the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Award for Translation, which promotes cultural exchange and advances intellectual interactions. Fatani (2009, p. 2) asserts that "the entry of Saudi Arabia into the World Trade Organisation […] has made translating and interpreting services a rapidly growing area in Saudi Arabia with excellent employment opportunities for trained interpreters." The demand for professional translators has increased due to several factors, including the influx of non-Arabic-speaking pilgrims that visit Saudi Arabia annually for Hajj. Furthermore, communication demands include Saudi Vision 2030, which has increased the need for translation services and training in many fields such as tourism, artificial intelligence, and sports. Translation market demands should be considered when assessing the effects of translation training programmes. Abu-ghararah (2017) pointed out a significant gap between academic training and the demands of the translation market in Saudi Arabia and suggested that training programmes be designed based on market requirements. Kościałkowska-Okońska (2019) argued that the role of translation training in professional contexts is unclear and emphasised that instructors are a key component in the translation training process. The need for translation training programmes in the Saudi context has opened

doors for evaluations of such programmes. It also emphasizes the significance of stakeholders' perceptions regarding training programmes and their effectiveness in aligning with the demands of professional translation practice within the Saudi job market.

6. Translation training in a specialised field

When considering the translation process, experience and knowledge should be considered, bearing in mind the performance of untrained translators (i.e., translators with BA degrees) compared to that of professional ones. Translation training programmes designed for specialised translators play an important role in enhancing experience in translation practice. There is a constant need for well-trained translators in the field of politics; translators of political texts work as mediators in international events, including conferences and delegations. Further, according to Molanazar and Kamyab (2015, p. 285), "technical writing, editing, knowledge of information technology, writing summary and text analysis are among skills that now translators are suggested to be equipped with, especially in translating political and journalistic texts." Thus, knowledge of political contexts is essential to meet market demands. Therefore, the need for intensive translation training in these contexts creates a deeper understanding of the source text (ST) and its political context. It also raises translators' awareness of current market demands and enriches their political knowledge, resulting in accurate target texts (TTs).

Specialised translators are an integral part of the tasks conducted by Saudi governmental bodies and institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, and Human Rights Commission. With Saudi Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia aims to build integrated models for providing high-quality and efficient governmental and local services. Professional translators play a vital role in enhancing these services. Exploring translation training programmes should start from investigating TC by providing a description of professional specialised translators in the market.

7. Translation Competence

Until the 1980s, TC was under-examined in the translation education literature (Albir, 2017; Kiraly, 2015). According to Alves et al. (2001, p. 46), "the literature on Translation Studies lacks a consistent description of the abilities and skills required from a professional translator." Moreover, various researchers have presented different interpretations of TC: Kiraly (1995) viewed TC as translator competence, Wilss (1996) examined it from a Chomskyan standpoint, relating it to what he labelled as translation performance. Chesterman (1998) and Nord (2005) referred to it as transfer competence, while Neubert (2000) termed it translational competence. Schäffner (2000) defines TC as the understanding of all relevant elements in creating a TT that effectively serves its purpose for the intended audience. TC is commonly seen as proficiency in a minimum of two languages and typically involves at least two sub-competencies. The Process in the Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation (PACTE) (2003, p. 43) posits that TC encompasses "the fundamental system of knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for effective translation." These discrepancies in views among scholars stem from the intricate nature of translation, including context, culture, and circumstances.

At the fundamental level, TC refers to "the knowledge and the skills the translator must possess in order to carry out a translation" (Bell, 1991, p. 43). TC goes further than rewriting the ST in the target language (TL). Although TL expertise is an essential requirement for any translator, translation involves other vital skills to generate professional results. According to Constanza (2002), learning to translate involves the acquisition of translation skills, the development of translation techniques, and the adoption of translation strategies that enable the translator to translate a text effectively. Translators must understand contextual issues surrounding the ST and reproduce them in the TL.

Neubert (2000) states that any attempt to define competence must consider the complexity of translation demands. Salinas (2007) argues that student translators should focus on developing linguistic proficiency, cultural understanding, research methodologies, and effective translation strategies. In addition, students aiming to become translators should also

gain interpersonal skills, learn time management, understand quality assurance principles, grasp project management, and nurture autonomy. Considering basic translation skills, Abdellah (2010, p. 18) recommends "reading comprehension, researching, analysing, and composing." Such skills must be mastered to ensure that translation graduates are aware of market needs and possess necessary knowledge.

Scholars interested in examining TC have made continuous attempts to develop TC models and have generally agreed that it consists of sub-components. However, they have disagreed on the nature of these sub-competences (Göpferich, 2009; Kelly 2005). The most popular TC models are the PACTE model (2003), Göpferich's model (2009), and the European Master's in Translation (EMT) model (2017).

The PACTE group (2003) formulated a model of TC grounded in empirical evidence. They initially proposed a comprehensive model encompassing primary competences, including communicative competence in two languages, extra-linguistic competence, psycho-physiological competence, and instrumental-professional competence. Building upon the PACTE model (2003), Göpferich (2009) further refined a TC model, outlining six competencies: communicative competence in at least two languages, domain competence, tools and research competence, translation routine activation competence, psychomotor competence, and strategic competence.

Another notable model is Kelly's competence model (2005), which differs from the PACTE TC model (2003) by comprising seven components: communicative and textual competence in at least two languages and cultures, cultural and intercultural competence, subject area competence, professional and instrumental competence, strategic competence, interpersonal competence, and psycho-physiological competence. In addition to linguistic, cultural, textual, and subjective competence, Schäffner (2000) suggested a TC model that includes transfer and research competence.

EMT is a reference framework established for training programmes in translation and interpreting within the European Union (EU)

(Chodkiewicz, 2012). This development was prompted by the escalating demand for translation services of superior quality. The project produced the 'Wheel of Competence' which includes essential elements such as translation service provision, language competence, intercultural competence, information mining competence, thematic competence, and technological competence (EMT Expert Group, 2009). The model also takes into account "the research outcomes on translation and translator competence reported by the translation studies community and the changes that have affected the language service industry." (EMT, 2017, p. 3).

While the specific components may differ, these TC models typically align on the sub-competencies associated with language proficiency, subject area knowledge, and understanding of the translation process. Thus, this study examines TC in relation to these three components. Language proficiency will be examined by assessing the translators' ability to understand and utilise the source language (SL) and TL. The other two components – knowledge of the subject area and translation process – will be investigated by testing the translators' comprehension and production of political contexts. Considering translators' performance will shed light on the influence of translation training programmes on their competence. Designing translation training programmes based on market demands is essential as it ensures that aspiring translators are equipped with the relevant skills and expertise, which will be investigated in the following sections.

8. Competence and translation market demands

Although several studies have examined TC in Arabic-speaking countries, it remains under-researched in the Saudi context. In 2017, Al-Batineh and Bilali conducted a survey focusing on graduate and undergraduate translation programmes and translation job descriptions. They investigated how well the curricula of translation programmes in Arabic-speaking countries match the requirements of the job market. Their survey encompassed nineteen translation bachelor's degrees and thirty-two master's degrees in seventeen Arabic-speaking countries, including Saudi Arabia. They also examined fifty job descriptions for both full-time and

freelance translation positions, adopting Kelly's competence model (2005).

Their findings revealed that undergraduate translation programmes emphasized language development (i.e., bilingual sub-competence), considering it a crucial tool for students to establish a robust linguistic foundation before delving into translation training (Al-Batineh & Bilali, 2017). The priority on language proficiency was followed by subject area competence, aligning with PACTE's (2003) extra-linguistic sub-competence. In comparison to undergraduate translation programmes, Al-Batineh and Bilali noted that master's-level programmes place a greater emphasis on professional practice, while dedicating comparatively less attention to language development. In their analysis of job descriptions, they identified a high demand for professional and instrumental competence, with 50% of the requirements in job descriptions falling within this category. However, language proficiency was ranked second, along with subject area competence. Based on their findings, Al-Batineh and Bilali concluded that translation training programmes should be tailored to address the specific demands of the translation job market. Their research highlighted a noticeable gap between existing translation training programmes and the actual requirements of the market, underscoring the necessity for the development of specialised training programmes that align with industry needs.

Khoury (2016) conducted a study examining the translation competence of both undergraduate and post-graduate translation programmes in Jordan. The aim was to investigate how instructors and employers perceive the competence of translation graduates. That study revealed a consensus among employers and translation instructors that translation graduates often do not possess several of the sub-competencies outlined in the PACTE TC model (2003). Notably, about half of the instructors expressed the belief that students lacked the motivation to pursue translation as a profession. Conversely, over 60% of employers felt that graduates indeed possessed the required motivation to engage in the field of translation.

In another study by Alshargabi (2019), the performance of professional translators in both public and private sectors in Yemen was examined. The

objective was to understand professional translators' perspectives regarding the types of competencies that should be emphasized through undergraduate translation programmes. The survey encompassed six categories: bilingual competence, translation competence, cultural competence, strategic competence, instrumental competence, and psychophysiological components. The findings indicated that professional translators highly prioritized bilingual competence, translation competence, cultural competence, and strategic competence compared to the other components. This led to the conclusion that translation programmes in Yemen should take into account the specific translation competencies valued by the job market. Alshargabi emphasized the importance of consistent coordination between translation programmes and the evolving demands of the job market. In contrast, this research focuses on employers' perceptions regarding the professional job requirements.

In a related study, Abu-ghararah (2017) examined the demands of the translation industry in Saudi Arabia. The research highlighted that the country's elevated international standing has amplified the need for high-quality translation services, a need being addressed by academic institutions. Abu-ghararah identified fourteen areas for improvement within the Saudi translation context. Some of these areas pertain to language proficiency and communicative competence, while others are specifically linked to research and computer skills. Abu-ghararah emphasized that these areas should be taken into account when shaping the outcomes of translation programmes. That study concluded that there is a gap between the offerings of translation programmes and the actual requirements of the translation industry in Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, Alenezi (2015) investigated the requirements of undergraduate translation students across three universities in Saudi Arabia and evaluated the expectations of the translation job market. That study involved a survey of 156 final-year undergraduate translation students from King Saud University, Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, and Effat University, as well as 35 translation instructors from the same universities, and 50 translators in the Saudi job market. In

addition to the survey, that study analyzed plans of the three Bachelor of Arts programmes. The questionnaires were designed to gather insights on various aspects, including satisfaction with teaching approaches and study materials, the perceived importance of different courses, and the overall preparedness of translators. He found that faculty members were more satisfied with the materials and teaching approaches than students. Moreover, students, instructors, and translators agreed on the importance of developing linguistic competence in both SL and TL. Alenezi's findings revealed that the three translation programmes did not adequately fulfil the needs of students. His research identified a significant disparity between the outcomes of BA programmes and the demands of the job market. This gap was attributed to several factors, including an inadequate focus on theoretical aspects, along with issues such as insufficient facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and the absence of internship modules in certain programmes. Although Alenezi's discussion was linked to students' needs for TC, he did not specifically reference or utilize a particular TC model in his study. The focus was more on the alignment of the translation programmes with the requirements and expectations of students and the job market rather than a detailed analysis using a specific TC framework.

Few studies have focused on the coordination between translation training programmes and market demands. Some employers are unaware of the competences and skills required of translators in the professional environment (Olvera-Lobo et al., 2005; Dongping & Jianhui, 2009; Li, 2000; Mackenzie, 2000; Sales & Pinto, 2011). Few comprehensive studies of this nature have been conducted in the Saudi context. Therefore, this study examines the influence of translation training programmes on translators' abilities to meet the requirements of the Saudi market and explores employers' expectations regarding the competences and skills required of their employees.

The literature reflects the importance of post-graduate translation training programmes for the improvement of translators' competences. Although students who have completed a BA translation programme are typically expected to be competent to translate professionally, the findings of the current study suggest that this assumption is not accurate. The following

discussion considers gaps in current BA translation programmes, highlighting the need for well-designed post-graduate translation training programmes that meet market demands.

9. Methodology

The literature on translation training has mainly focused on the impact of translation training on TC, lacking a deep examination of the role played by specialised translation training programmes and their influence on TC. Comprehensive examinations of the current situation in the Saudi job market are also lacking. Thus, this study adopts a mixed-method approach to address the importance of post-graduate translation training programmes in TC. A quantitative approach is used to evaluate participants' performance in rendering an English political text into Arabic. The evaluation took place by applying the analytical method of translation assessment followed by the Department of English Language and Translation (DELT). A qualitative approach was adopted to explore employers' expectations through two structured interviews. A mixed method approach through Likert-scale questionnaires was applied to investigate trainees' perceptions of a training programme they had completed to identify their satisfaction with the training programme offered by the DELT.

The participants included thirteen professional translators working in the translation department at the Ministry of Defence in Saudi Arabia and completed a post-graduate translation training programme at King Saud University (KSU) in addition to thirteen students in the fourth year of their undergraduate studies at DELT, KSU. The selection criteria were based on the fact that the translation department in the Ministry of Defence requested the training programme, which reflects the Saudi market's need for such programmes. The undergraduate sample was selected according to the criteria of providing a variety of scores (i.e. high, average, low) representing their actual performance. Such scores reflect the overall performance of undergraduates who had just completed a course specialising in political and media translation.

Both groups of participants were requested to translate an excerpt from a political text written in English, titled 'EU calls for quick resumption of Iran nuclear talks' taken from the local daily English newspaper, *Saudi Gazette* (2021). This text was selected due to its specialised language and terminology. Participants were asked to translate it into Arabic. The text in question consisted of 217 words, and participants were given 40 minutes to submit their translations. Participants were not allowed to discuss the ST or consult any useful resources. The TTs were given to an evaluator who was a faculty member at DELT specialised in translation who was experienced in applying the evaluation rubric to assess participants' performance out of 20. The insights of the evaluator were considered to obtain a comprehensive overview of the performance of all participants.

Figure 1: Methodological Approach

The interview method was chosen as a realistic approach to represent the Saudi market. The first interviewee, Felwa Al-Qahtani, was selected from a local entity to collect comprehensive information about the extent to which training programmes are essential to enhance translators' competence. She is a legal translator and head of technical committees,

who represents the Kingdom in an international committee specialising in Islamic translation.

Figure 1 summarises the methodological approach adopted to understand the impact of translation training programmes on TC.

10. Analysis and Discussion

To answer the first research question, a quantitative approach was applied to evaluate the participants' scores. The evaluator applied the analytical method discussed in the previous section to maintain a fair assessment. The score of each member in both groups was highlighted to compare their overall performance out of 20. The following table summarises the results and shows the variety of scores, presenting the degree of difference in the TTs.

Table 1: Participants' Translation Results

Group 1 Undergraduate Students	Group 2 Professional Translators
19	19.25
17	19.50
16.75	20
13.25	18.50
15	19
12.50	19.25
10	14.75
12	18.75
11	19
13	19.25
14	19
12.50	19.50
13.50	18.25

The performance of each participant in the two groups reflects that highly qualified translators who have completed a post-graduate translation training programme are more competent than undergraduate students. The average score of undergraduate students is 13.8, compared to the professional translators' score of 18.7, indicating a five-point variation between the results of participants in the two groups. This variance can be attributed to professional practice as well as the specialised programme

38

they completed. This sheds light on the huge impact of the training programme design, enriching participants' knowledge in the subject area.

It can also be pointed out that only one of the 13 undergraduate students managed to score higher than 18, compared to 12 out of 13 professional translators. However, the undergraduates' results indicated a variation that ranged from 10 to 19 out of 20 compared with the professionals' results. This discrepancy shows the influence of TC on participants' performance. This can also indicate the extent to which training programmes are important in enhancing TC and how a lack of knowledge in the subject area can constitute a challenge to translators. Professional translators' scores indicate that TC plays a significant role in the translation of political texts.

The evaluator pointed out that knowledge of the subject area played a key role in the scores of both groups. She stated that a deep knowledge of the political context was reflected in the accurate and well-structured TTs of the second group. However, a lack of specialised knowledge negatively affected the performance of the first group. The evaluator also attributed the results of the first group to a lack of practice and to issues related to knowledge of the translation process, including comprehension, style, and structure.

Participants' feedback was also considered to examine their satisfaction with their training programme. A post-training survey was distributed to trainees, who expressed their satisfaction with the programme design. Of the trainees, 92.4% agreed that the learning outcomes were accomplished by the end of the programme. All trainees agreed that the programme had developed their TC and enriched their political knowledge and translation skills required by the Saudi job market in general and the Ministry of Defence in particular. This also indicates the necessity of post-graduate specialised training programmes in achieving TC.

Exploring the current market demands from the employers' perspective provides a realistic overview of the situation in the field. In the Saudi job market, the public sector offers full-time job opportunities for professional translators, while the private sector tends to offer part-time opportunities

for freelancers. Therefore, this study focuses on employers' perceptions of government entities.

One of the largest translation centres is the Saudi Standards, Metrology, and Quality Organisation, which protects consumers' health and safety and develops standards and technical regulations to protect local markets. An interview was conducted with Felwa Al-Qahtani, a legal translator and head of technical committees in the organization. According to Al-Qahtani (2022), the translation centre in the organisation consists of two main departments, translating and auditing, and the head of each department holds a master's degree in translation. She continued that both translators and auditors are expected to hold a bachelor's degree in translation and should have professional knowledge and experience in technical or legal translation.

Al-Qahtani confirmed that linguistic knowledge of SL and TL is the most important type of competence for translators, followed by knowledge of the subject area. She highlighted translators' ability to translate specialised texts between Arabic and English in a variety of fields, including the professional translation of legal and technical texts. She indicated that intellectual competence, including responsibility, confidence, creativity, logic, memory, and reasoning, ranked third. Al-Qahtani also pointed out that instrumental competence, represented in the use of databases and computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, is an essential translation skill. She indicated that skills in computer-aided translation programmes and text editing were usually missing though they are crucial in reducing errors and maintaining consistency, resulting in effective time management. Understanding skills required of professional translators will decrease the gap between BA programmes and the job market and assist the design of professional training programmes.

According to Al-Qahtani (2022), employers in the Saudi market expect employees with a BA degree in translation to possess not only translation-related skills but also advanced communication skills. They should be able to adapt to changing and unstable work environments to professionally meet market requirements. Al-Qahtani asserted that translators must be flexible and be able to work and translate under pressure. Thus, training

programmes should continuously be developed in compliance with the unstable requirements of the professional environment. Such training programmes will enhance translators' problem-solving abilities and advance their communication skills, as they will regularly be required to consult specialists and work in teams, ultimately bridging the gap between BA translation programmes and market demand. Al-Qahtani (2022) pointed out that translators should also respect the entity's regulations, such as honesty and confidentiality, and understand that learning is a never-ending process.

The second interview was conducted with Amsha Almukhalfi (2022), who works in the translation department in the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Almukhalfi holds a master's degree in English literature and has previously worked in academia. The translation centre in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is concerned with translating political texts, legal documents, memorandums of understanding, autobiographies, and contracts. All employed translators hold bachelor's or master's degrees in translation and work in teams of 14 translators, the most competent of whom is the auditor. She indicated that no official orientation takes place at the beginning of a translator's employment period: translators and interpreters begin working immediately following the supervisor's guidance. However, Almukhalfi pointed out that the translation centre is currently organising simultaneous interpreting training programmes in cooperation with faculty members from different academic institutions.

Almukhalfi confirmed that research skills are the most important competence affecting translators' performance, followed by knowledge of the subject area. Errors are completely unacceptable in the translation of official political and legal documents. She stated that linguistic knowledge is ranked third, followed by intellectual knowledge. According to Almukhalfi, linguistic knowledge is the knowledge of Arabic as a rich language that has been negatively influenced by globalisation. She pointed out that translators should always pay special attention to their Standard Arabic, as they need to improve their vocabulary by continuously reading and writing in Arabic. Almukhalfi also asserted that knowledge of the

translation process is essential since translators should be aware of the complex linguistic structures formulating political and legal texts.

Apart from translation skills, Almukhalfi highlighted that translators and interpreters must be confident, alert, and manage to work under serious pressure. She also indicated a gap between what graduates cover in academic programmes and what they need to master in the workplace. Thus, Almukhalfi called for constant coordination between academic institutions and official public and private entities, which would result in adopting new elective modules focusing on different market requirements, depending on translators' plans for their future careers.

Thus, training should offer an up-to-date learning experience that meets the changing requirements of the job market. This calls for continuous coordination between academic institutions and the job market.

11. Conclusion

The current study focuses on the impact of translation training programmes on TC and their ability to meet the requirements of the Saudi translation market. This study also examined TC by comparing the performance of undergraduate translation students to that of professional translators. Our evaluation of TTs indicates that post-graduate translation training programmes contribute to enhancing TC. In the post-training surveys, which reflect trainees' satisfaction with the training programme, they indicated that it had a great influence on their TC and highlighted that the programme design had developed the expected learning outcomes. Thus, post-graduate training programmes should always act as mediators between BA translation programmes and the job market. This fact is also confirmed by the market representative, who asserted that training should always be consistent with market demands and that such programmes should also offer an up-to-date experience that cannot be acquired without further practice after BA studies. The results of this study suggest the necessity of planning new translation training programmes that specialise in the translation of technical and legal texts and call for sufficient coordination between post-graduate translation training programmes and the job market.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

Future studies should consider a larger sample from various Saudi entities to provide a comprehensive overview of the local translation market. Further, attempts were made to contact heads of other translation centres at various Saudi public and private entities, who unfortunately did not reply. Multinational entities in the Saudi market should be explored in future research to help in designing training programmes consistent with the requirements of the international translation market. Further studies should also cover a wide range of genres, such as economic, legal, and technical contexts. Additionally, the applied methodology can be adopted to explore possible gaps that exist in the local field of interpretation.

References

Abdellah, A. (2010). *Pedagogies of translation*. VDM Verlag Dr. Muller.

Abu-ghararah, B. (2017). The gap between translator training and the translation industry in Saudi Arabia. *AWEJ for Translation and Literary Studies, 1*(4), 107-118.

Al-Batineh, M., & Bilali, L. (2017). Translator training in the Arab world: Are curricula aligned with the language industry? *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer, 11*(2-3), 187–203.

Alenezi, A. (2015). *Development of translation curricula at undergraduate translation courses in Saudi universities: Exploring student needs and market demands.* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Leicester.

Alshargabi, E. (2019). A survey of the Yemeni translation market needs. *Journal of Social Studies, 25*(1), 113–131.

Alves, F., Gonçalves, J. L., & Rothe-Neves, R. (2001). In search of a definition of translation competence: The structure and development of an ongoing research project. *Quaderns. Revista de Traducció* [Notebooks. Journal of Translation], *6*: 46–49.

Atari, O. F. (2012). Impediments to translator training at Arab universities: Proposal for change. *AWEJ Arab World English Journal, 3*(1), 103-127.

Olvera-Lobo, M.D., Castro-Prieto, M.R., Quero-Gervilla, E., Muñoz-Martín, R., Muñoz-Raya, E., Murillo-Melero, M., Robinson, B., Senso, J.A., Vargas-Quesada, B. and Domínguez-López, C. (2005). Translator training and modern market demands. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, *13*(2), 132-14.

Baker, M., & Hanna, S. F. (2009). Arabic tradition. In M. Baker and G. Saldanha (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies*, (pp. 328-337). Routledge.

Bell, R. (1991). *Translation and translating: Theory and practice*. Longman.

Chesterman, A. (1998). *Contrastive functional analysis.* John Benjamins Publishing Co.

Chodkiewicz, M. (2012). The EMT framework of reference for competences applied to translation: Perceptions by professional and student translators. *The Journal of Specialised Translation, 17a*, 37-54.

Constanza, G. (2002). Teaching translation: Problems and solutions. *Translation Journal, 4*(3), 1-7.

Dongping, H., & Jianhui, W. (2009). Fuzzy thoughts of market demand oriented translation teaching and possible countermeasures. *Foreign Language World, 4*, 43-47.

El-Karnichi, F. (2017). *Exploring pedagogical and curricular practices in postgraduate and undergraduate translation programs in Qatar: Towards the development of a localized competency-based approach* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Université de Sherbrooke.

EMT. (2017). European master's in translation competence framework. https://commission.europa.eu/resources-partners/european-masters-translation-emt/european-masters-translation-emt-explained_en

EMT Expert Group. 2009. Competences for professional translators, experts in multilingual and multimedia communication. https://commission.europa.eu/resources-partners/european-masters-translation-emt/european-masters-translation-emt-explained_en

Fatani, A. (2009). The state of the translation industry in Saudi Arabia. *Translation Journal*, *13*(4), 1-8.

Göpferich, S. (2009). Towards a model of translation competence and its acquisition: The longitudinal study TransComp. In S. Göpferich, A. L. Jakobsen, & I. M. Mees (Eds.), *Behind the mind: Methods, models and results in translation process research* (pp. 11-38). Samfundslitteratur.

Horbačauskienė, J., Kasperavičienė, R. & Petronienė, S. (2017). Translation studies: Translator training vs. employers' expectations. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education 5*, 145-159.

House, J. (2016). *Translation as communication across languages and cultures*. Routledge.

Hurtado Albir, A. (2017). Translation and translation competence. In A. H. Albir (Ed.), *Researching translation competence by PACTE Group* (pp. 3-33). John Benjamins Publishing.

Kelly, D. (2005). *A handbook for translator trainers*. Routledge.

Khoury, O. (2016). *Investigating the translation competence of graduates of bachelor's degree programmes in Jordan.* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Aston University.

Kiraly, D. (1995). *Pathways to translation: Pedagogy and process.* The Kent State University Press.

Kiraly, D. (2015). Occasioning translator competence: Moving beyond social constructivism toward a postmodern alternative to instructionism. *Translation and Interpreting Studies, 10*(1), 8-32.

Kościałkowska-Okońska, E. (2019). Translation as a profession: Training the new generation. *New Insights into Translator Training*. https://www.intralinea.org/specials/article/2426

Li, D. (2000). Needs assessment in translation teaching: Making translator training more responsive to social needs. *Babel, 46*(4), 289-299.

Mackenzie, R. (2000). Positive thinking about quality in translator training in Finland. In A. Beeby, D. Ensinger, & M. Presas (Eds.), *Investigating translation* (pp. 213-221). John Benjamins.

Massey, G., Kiraly, D. & Ehrensberger-Dow, M. (2019). Training translator trainers: An introduction. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer, 13*(3), 211-215.

Molanazar, H., & Kamyab, S. (2015). Political and journalistic translation courses and the market demand in Iran. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences, 4*(2), 285-293.

Munday, J. (2016). *Introducing translation studies: Theories and applications*. Routledge.

Nida, E. (1981). Translators are born not made. *The Bible Translator*, *32*(4), 401-405.

Neubert, A. (2000). Competence in language, in languages, and in translation. In C. Schäffner & B. Adab (Eds.), *Developing translation competence* (pp. 3-18). John Benjamins Publishing.

Nord, C. (2005). *Text analysis in translation: Theory, methodology, and didactic application of a model for translation-oriented text analysis* (2nd ed.). Rodopi.

PACTE. (2003). Building a translation competence model. In F. Alves (Ed.), *Triangulating translation: Perspectives in process-oriented research* (pp. 43-66). John Benjamins Publishing.

Pan, J., Wong, B. T. M., &Wang, H. (2022). Navigating learner data in translator and interpreter training: Insights from the Chinese/English translation and interpreting learner corpus (CETILC). *Babel*, *68*(2), 236-266.

Pym, A. (2012). Training translators. In K. Malmkjaer & K. Windle (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of translation studies* (pp. 475-489). Oxford University Press.

Salamah, D. (2021). Translation competence and translator training: A review. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, *4*(3), 276-291.

Sales, D., & Pinto, M. (2011). The professional translator and information literacy: Perceptions and needs. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 43*(4): 246-260.

Salinas, M. (2007). How new technologies improve translation pedagogy. *Translator Education*, *11*(4). http://www.bokorlang.com/journal/42technology.htm

Saudi Gazette. (2021). EU calls for quick resumption of Iran nuclear talks. https://saudigazette.com.sa/article/611253/World/Europe/EU-calls-for-quick-resumption-of-Iran-nuclear-talks

Schäffner, C. (2000). Running before walking? Describing a translation program. In C. Schäffner & B. Adab (Eds.), *Developing translation competence* (pp. 146-156). John Benjamins.

Wilss, W. (1996). *Knowledge and skills in translator behavior*. John Benjamins Publishing.

Yan, J. X., J. Pan, & Wang, H. (2018). *Research on translator and interpreter training: A collective volume of bibliometric reviews and empirical studies on learners.* Springer Nature.