

Research Article

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Translator Trainees' Performance on Arabic–English Promotional Materials

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Abstract: Due to linguistic and cultural variations between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL), the tourism industry may struggle to communicate effectively with tourists from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The translation industry could contribute significantly to the growth of the tourism industry by removing linguistic and cultural barriers, facing those with different cultural and language backgrounds. Given this issue, this study targets 27 postgraduates enrolled in translation training programs at Saudi universities with an average age of $M = 27.471$ ($SD = 4.8319$) and examine their performance on inverse translation (Arabic to English). The authors use a translation task, a tourism-based knowledge questionnaire, and a scale of difficulty to gather the data. Findings reveal shortcomings in the postgraduates' translation of the promotional translation material and adherence to the source text style. The participants' responses to the questionnaire show a lack of know-what and know-how in tourism translation. Training in tourism translation and the design of tourism translation courses should be based on the interdisciplinary nature of the field in order to adequately prepare translator trainees for the tourism translation industry.

Keywords: promotional tourism material, reverse translation, performance, perception

Introduction

Saudi Arabia has witnessed a dramatic increase in tourism over the past few years. The country enjoys a rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and vibrant cities, which make it an international destination for visitors worldwide. The tourism industry is one of the goals of the recent Saudi National Transformation Program Vision 2030, intended to promote significant growth in the tourism sector and aiming to diversify the country's sources of income (Alangari 83). One of the most stunning landscapes in Saudi Arabia is the Aseer region, to which the Ministry of Tourism pays great attention. In order to promote Aseer as an international destination for tourists all over the world, the Aseer Development Authority launched the Aseer Development strategy, embarking on several infrastructure projects that will make it (Aseer) an embodiment of modern cities, "featuring authenticity and natural beauty" (Aseer Regional Development Authority 2022).¹

Tourism translation is an expanding sector within the language services industry, specializing in the translation of various types of texts pertaining to the tourism sector. This includes, but is not limited to, brochures, websites, tourist guides, advertisements, catalogs, and other related materials (Hurtado Albir and Pavani 25; Qassem et al. 1). The term *tourism promotional materials* (TPMs) encompasses a diverse range

¹ <https://www.asda.gov.sa/en/about-asda/>.

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of media including brochures, leaflets, posters, flyers, postcards, and websites, all of which are utilized to strengthen the marketing and sales of tourism products (Sulaiman and Wilson 633).

In the tourism sector, the translation industry is a demanding one, so translators should be qualified to offer quality translations aligned with the target language (TL) visitors' expectations and culture. The Saudi government has taken steps to ensure that tourists can access quality translation services. The Ministry of Tourism created bilingual and multilingual websites offering information about the landscapes, historical places, and tourism services. Education plays a significant role in the training of qualified and competent translators. Hence, Saudi universities' open translation programs in many regions must be designed according to the needs of the labor market. The authors recruited participants from Saudi universities to gauge the translator trainees' performance in the translation of promotional tourism materials, focusing on the inverse translation (Arabic-to-English) of such materials.

Literature Review

This section explores the conceptual and empirical literature on the topic, covering the theoretical framework of the study, i.e., TPMs, English vs Arabic tourist texts, translation procedures and processes, translators' skills, and assessment of the quality of tourism translation.

Theoretical Framework

Throughout its development, the domain of translation studies has seen changes in terms of theoretical approaches which have generally depended on "the dominant philosophy of the time and/or the underlying conceptions of the nature of translation and the intended use of the translated text" (Schäffner 5). Among the approaches that have influenced the development of translation studies are "linguistic approaches" (Jakobson, 233; Nida 30), "text linguistic approaches" (Reiss 48–88), and "functional approaches" (Reiss and Vermeer 1; Nord 25). Linguistic theories predominantly emphasize the structured interconnections among linguistic units within language systems, often disregarding the practical implementation of these units in particular contexts (Schäffner 5). Therefore, translation scholars shift to text linguistic and functional approaches which focus on text types (Reiss 48–88), and propose of the translation (Nord 25; Reiss and Vermeer 1).

In the field of tourism translation, there is a need for theories that help to address the challenges and complexities of translating tourism-related content. The linguistic approach proposes "formal equivalence" and "dynamic equivalence," which could assist translators at a syntactic and lexical level, but do not consider the textual level, which is crucial in tourism translation. Text-linguistic approaches offer insights into tourism translation via Reiss' classification of text types (Reiss 48–88) according to their main function (i.e., informative, expressive, and operative texts). Reiss' model is based on the intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic features of the text (1971/2000). The intra-linguistic features include semantic equivalence, lexical equivalence, and grammatical and stylistic features, while extra-linguistic factors include the context, subject field or domain time, place, culture, receiver, sender, and affective implications.

As an extension of text-linguistic approaches, functionalist approaches (Nord 25; Reiss and Vermeer 1) focus on the functions and purposes of translated texts (Oyali 52). In tourism translation, this approach considers the various functions that tourism texts serve: providing information, persuading the readers, or promoting a product. Translators should adapt their translation strategies accordingly to achieve the desired communicative functions in the TL. Functionalist advocates generally believe that the function of a text in the target culture determines the method of translation (Oyali 52). The Skopos theory, a functional approach developed by Vermeer, emphasizes the importance of the purpose or "skopos" of translation (Reiss and Vermeer 1). According to this theory, the translator's primary focus should be on the target audience and the specific communicative function the translation serves. Translators should meet the expectations and needs of the target audience by taking cultural appropriateness and linguistic conventions into consideration. In

the context of tourism translation, the “skopos” may be to inform, persuade, or entertain. The translator’s task is to select the translation strategies that are most likely to achieve the purpose of the translation. The theory proposes that the intended function or purpose of the target text (TT) is determined by the communicative needs of the clients (Karoubi 253). This approach is appropriate to tourism translation in that it considers the various functions that tourism texts serve, such as providing information, persuading, or promoting.

Baker (254) raises the issue of culture in translation, addressing translation “as a tool of language mediation across cultures.” Accordingly, the translator should be aware of the cultural differences between the source and target cultures, and use the language that is appropriate for the target audience. In tourism translation, translators must be linguistic mediators between languages and cultural mediators between different cultures, which requires both comprehensive linguistic knowledge and broad knowledge of cultures (Muñoz 42).

Due to the interdisciplinarity of tourism translation, researchers and translation practitioners should draw on theories from the marketing and tourism domains. The tourist communication theory examines the characteristics of communication in the tourism context. It emphasizes the importance of clear and accessible language to effectively communicate with tourists. Translators should use strategies such as simplification, using plain language, and providing relevant information to facilitate comprehension and meet the needs of tourists (Fennell 1). The politeness theory, proposed by Brown and Levinson (1), examines the role of politeness in communication (Baker 254). In tourism translation, maintaining a positive and respectful tone is crucial for the creation of a welcoming and hospitable impression. Translators should consider cultural norms and use strategies to ensure that the translated text aligns with the politeness conventions of the target culture (Baker 254). By including these theoretical principles in tourism translation courses and training, translator trainees can navigate the complexities of tourism translation and effectively convey to target audiences the intended messages, cultural nuances, and experiences, enhancing the overall tourism experience for visitors. Several studies have investigated the issue of tourism translation from various perspectives (translation strategies, cultural challenges, design of teaching a course on tourism translation, and tourism knowledge translation framework). (Sulaiman 503, 1054) and Sulaiman and Wilson (503, 1054) focused on the cultural issues of tourism translation and proposed a translation model for the translation of tourism that focuses on the global vision of the TT and fosters favorable destination images in the minds of potential tourists. Hurtado Albir and Pavani (27) created a tourism translation teaching unit for a group of Italian students enrolled in a Spanish-to-Italian general translation course. They provided information on the acquisition of various translation sub-competences as well as the effectiveness of the assessment rubrics. Fennell (1) conducted a conceptual study on developing the tourism knowledge translation framework, offering a possible solution to the absence of integrated theoretical account of tourism translation. He proposed two main domains (knowledge creation and action cycle) which are applied to the current over-tourism situation in Corsica.

Regarding English–Arabic translation, Alangari (83), Al-Fahad (1), and Qassem et al. (1) investigated tourism translation from different perspectives (cultural mediation, cultural and stylistic differences between English and Arabic, and translation quality in English–Arabic–English translation). Using a descriptive approach, Alangari (83) examined the interventionist role of translators as cultural mediators in the Arabic–English translation of culture-specific items in Saudi-related tourism articles. She found that exoticization and explanation strategies can render culture-specific items in tourism texts, namely in regard to traditions and food. Al-Fahad (1) investigated the cultural and stylistic differences between English and Arabic travel brochures. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, the researcher discovered significant differences in the distribution of vocabulary in English and Arabic. He found that Arabic texts use complex structures and frequently contain more coordinated sentences than texts in English. Qassem et al. (1) investigated the quality of translations in English–Arabic–English translations of tourist texts, reporting poor translation quality, which was attributed to the students’ incorrect utilization of translation procedures, including omission, transliteration, and literal translation. A review of the empirical literature on tourism translation revealed very few studies on the topic, especially in terms of Arabic–English translation. Accordingly, drawing on the conceptual and empirical literature mentioned earlier, this study attempts to offer an integrated account on translator trainees’ performance and knowledge in the translation of TPMs, as well as their perception of the difficulty of the translation task.

TPMs

Printed TPMs were the most common means of targeting tourists. However, the rapid development of promotional tourism websites has replaced the printed materials (Sulaiman and Wilson 633). Tourism websites have become the preferred source of information for tourists due to their easy accessibility, rich content, and various services (Sulaiman and Wilson 633; Sulaiman and Wilson 49–66). Online TPMs can be delivered and accessed by potential tourists instantly with the click of a button (Fotiadis et al. 210). The Web has become the virtual world for most people, so the language of the Web greatly influences our preferences and decisions (Franklin 277). A tourism website is defined as a multi-semiotic entity consisting of interactive resources, both verbal utterances and non-verbal signs, to fulfill a set of communicative functions (Skibitska 735). This study focuses on verbal utterances since they are the main focus of translation training. The function of promotional translation materials (PTMs) is to introduce readers to picturesque locations, provide them with information about those locations, and urge them to visit such places. According to Newmark (41–52), PTMs provide vocative, expressive, and informative functions; hence, the translator should consider the accuracy of the information, the language style, and the degree of interactivity. He and Su (508) argue that one of the distinctive features of a tourism website is the use of multiple verbal and non-verbal elements to convey information better and achieve communicative purposes.

English vs Arabic Tourist Texts

English and Arabic belong to different families of languages in the sense that Arabic belongs to the Semitic family while English belongs to the Indo-European family. Anglophone societies and Arabs live in areas that differ in terms of ecology, geography, social traditions, and religion, contributing to differences between Arabic and English (Qassem and Vijayasarathi 57). Since English culture is individualistic, communication tends to be direct and explicit, with a low-context communication style. (Alexander et al. 351). Most of the information in a low-context culture is explicit. On the other hand, Arabic culture is collective and has a high-context style since most of the information is conveyed implicitly, so communication is characterized by implicit and indirect verbal expressions (Al-Fahad 1). In the Anglophone culture, emphasis is given to the content of communication rather than the way the message is conveyed (Sulaiman 503). In contrast, in Arabic culture, great attention is paid to the way that the message is delivered. In writing, Arabic writers are expected to follow conventions of Arabic politeness. Furthermore, orality is a prominent feature of English tourism texts, manifested in a dialogic oral style characterized by the imperative voice, interpersonal reference, interjections, and an informal tone (He and Su 508; Gandin 325). However, Arabic PTMs contain formal, literal expressions, coordinated sentences, figurative language, complex structures, and long sentences (Dickins et al. 277; Al-Fahad 1; Qassem et al. 1). In Arabic, the main focus is on the history, architecture, art, and history of a place, whereas English tourism texts tend to contain more practical information (Dickins et al. 277; Qassem et al. 1). The notion of personal indulgence is a prominent feature of the English individualist culture and is evident in PTMs. Conversely, the Arabic culture is collectivist, meaning that one's desires and pleasures should align with societal norms and religious dogma.

Translation Procedures and Processes

Translation procedures should prioritize a macro level of language, encompassing aspects such as theme, medium, formality, text type, and the overall function of communication, among others. This approach goes beyond mere lexical, semantic, and syntactic equivalence in tourism translation. In other words, the translator should consider the context, subject field, location, culture, as well as the affective implications for both the sender and receiver of the message (Reiss 48–88). When translating tourist materials, adopting a macro top-down prospective approach is appropriate as it focuses on the vocative function of the promotional texts (i.e., persuading readers to visit a particular place). This approach places less emphasis on micro-linguistic elements such as lexical, semantic, and syntactic units (Sulaiman and Wilson 633).

The translation's objective is to persuade a new audience that the destination can meet their needs, wants, and expectations; this is done by using the original material as a springboard rather than finding linguistic equivalents for the source text (ST) in the TL. According to the language of tourism is intended to persuade, charm, woo, and seduce millions of people, converting them from potential to actual clientele (*ibid.*, p. 2). Many researchers suggest that translators should adhere to the conventions of PTMs in the TL to ensure a successful message reception. Specifically, the stylistic conventions of TPTs in the TL should prevail in the translation of tourist ST to guarantee the success of communication (Kelly 33–42).

The procedure the translator needs to follow during the translation process involves bottom-up text analysis (examining and coding the ST), contrastive analysis (comparing linguistic and cultural elements), reformulation (materializing the TT), and re-editing (correcting and revising the TT) (Federici 17–44). The translation process has three main stages: reading, drafting, and revision. In the reading stage, the translator grasps the main idea of the text and the intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic features of the ST, identifying the differences and similarities between ST and TT. In the drafting process, the author formulates the TT taking into consideration the ST analysis (Nord 25). During the revision process, the author revises the content and style of the text to ensure that the communicative function of the TT is achieved.

Translator Prerequisites

To effectively translate PTMs, translators should possess declarative knowledge (know what) and procedural expertise (know-how) (Qassem and Vijayasarithi 57). Translators need three kinds of knowledge: knowledge of the audience, knowledge of genre conventions, and knowledge of the product being promoted. As mentioned, translations for the tourism industry should consider the target audience's culture, goals, needs, and expectations, and how that culture views tourism (Sulaiman and Wilson 633). Understanding the differences between the TT audience and the ST audience is also necessary. The application of good translation strategies requires an understanding of the differences between the two audiences (Sulaiman and Wilson 633). The second type of genre knowledge is knowledge of the language's linguistic processes and norms. Translation strategies are effective only when the translator knows the target audience and how they differ from the ST audience (Sulaiman and Wilson 633). The second type of knowledge concerns genre conventions. It is essential for the translator to know the strategies and conventions of the language of tourism promotion in the TL. A good command and understanding of the terminology used for this particular genre differentiate the "specialist" from the "general practitioner." This type of knowledge can be called procedural knowledge. Knowledge of the strategies and conventions can be explored by studying the TPMs produced originally in the TL for the target culture (parallel texts). Parallel texts expose translators to the macro-linguistic and micro-linguistic features of the ST and TT. By comparing parallel texts, translators may be able to render a more effective translation. The third type of knowledge relates to the translator's comprehensive knowledge of the product being promoted (i.e., tourism destination, product, attraction, or experience), enabling the translator to promote the said product in ways that appeal to the target audience. This type of declarative and procedural knowledge ensures that the PTM draws attention, maintains interest, sparks a desire for the product, and results in a positive action on the part of the consumer. In other words, the objectives of PTMs can be achieved by adhering to the AIDA principles of advertising: Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (Sulaiman and Wilson 49–66).

Quality of Tourism Translations

The quality of tourist genre translation has received criticism in several studies (Qassem et al. 1; Hurtado Albir and Pavani 25; Sulaiman and Wilson 503, 1054, 633; Skibitska 735; Napu 46). Linguistic and cultural differences between the SL and TL significantly impede the achievement of a quality rendition. Sumberg (329) suggests that the inadequate quality of translated TPMs may be due to an approach that prioritizes linguistic characteristics. The language of tourism is different in that it reflects all levels of language. This is due to the interdisciplinary nature of tourism which comprises geography, history, economics, marketing, and other

domains (Agorni 253). Accordingly, the assessment of translation quality should take into account the interdisciplinary nature of translation, including an appropriate use of language and style for the TT audience, culture, register and sentence structure, industry jargon, and clarity (see details in Appendix 1). Within this context, the aim of this study is to evaluate the translator trainees' performance in translating an Arabic PTM into English. The quality of the translations will be assessed using three performance indicators: accuracy, style, and clarity (Sulaiman 2020; Qassem 1). These indicators are appropriate for the translation assessment of tourist texts because they gauge the macro and micro linguistic levels of tourist texts. This issue has received little research attention both locally and internationally.

Research Questions

Drawing on conceptual and empirical literature, this study investigates the Saudi postgraduate's performance in L2 to L1 translations (Arabic to English) of PTMs, evaluating their level of knowledge in terms of tourism translation. Additionally, it investigates their perception of the difficulty of Arabic–English translation of PTMs, and the extent to which they use online resources when rendering translations. The following research questions will guide the study and address its objectives.

1. To what extent are postgraduates able to translate tourism texts from Arabic into English with accuracy, appropriate style, and clarity?
2. According to the translator trainees, what is the level of difficulty of the text they are required to translate?
3. To what extent are translator trainees aware of the knowledge and skills required for tourism translation?
4. Do the translator trainees use online resources when translating the Arabic PTM into English?
5. Is there a correlation between the students' performance and the students' perception of translation difficulty?

Methodology

The study applied both quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the performance of translator trainees in the Arabic–English translation of PTMs, namely a tourist text. It examined their declarative and procedural knowledge of tourism translation, their perception of the difficulty, and their utilization of online resources during the translation process. Furthermore, the study determined whether a correlation exists between the trainees' performance and their perception of the text difficulty.

The authors utilized a translation task, a knowledge-based questionnaire, scale of difficulty, and short-binary questions to achieve the objectives of the study. The translation task and the questionnaire were refereed by two specialists in translation studies to ensure that they are appropriate for the objectives of the study and the level of the participants' translation competence. By having the translation task and the questionnaire refereed by these specialists, the study aims to enhance the validity and reliability of the data collected. The specialists' evaluation ensures that the tools used in the study are appropriate and capable of measuring the participants' translation performance accurately.

The authors tested the normality of the distribution of the data, using a Shapiro–Wilk test before choosing specific statistical tests. For the performance variable, it was found that the data were normally distributed ($W = 0.963$, $p\text{-value} < 0.438$), so the mean and standard deviations were used to measure the trainees' performance to show the typical central values of the data and their approximation to the mean. For the scale of difficulty, it was found that there is a skewedness in the data based on Shapiro–Wilk test ($W = 0.834$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$); hence, a nonparametric test was used (median with the interquartile range) to measure the degree of the text difficulty based on the students' perceptions. Finally, the normality test was used to measure the five-point Likert scale in the tourism-based-knowledge questionnaire and discover any skewness in the data. The median is better than the mean as an indicator of the skewness of data (Mellinger and Hanson 163) (Table 1).

Participants recorded their responses on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Finally, the authors measured the extent to which translator trainees used translation resources (monolingual dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, search engines).

Table 1: Tests of normality

	Shapiro–Wilk		
	Statistic	<i>N</i>	Sig.
Statement 1	0.759	27	0.000
Statement 2	0.838	27	0.001
Statement 3	0.883	27	0.006
Statement 4	0.888	27	0.007
Statement 5	0.841	27	0.001
Statement 6	0.853	27	0.001
Statement 7	0.841	27	0.001
Statement 8	0.869	27	0.003
Statement 9	0.842	27	0.001
Statement 10	0.806	27	0.000

The qualitative data included a comparison of the ST with TT in terms of the structure and use of metaphor and subordinate and coordinate clauses.

Participants

The sample comprised postgraduates ($N = 27$), specializing in translation studies at several Saudi universities, and with an average age of 27.471 ($SD = 4.8319$). The translation training program in the Department of English offers various types of translation courses to improve students' translation skills and knowledge, introducing them to specialized courses in different fields of translation (scientific, legal, journalistic, military, and medical). The following criteria were applied by the researchers when selecting suitable study participants:

- The participants got IELTS certificate (the minimum degree is 6), which is required for admission to the Master's Program at Saudi universities.
- The participants are in the last year of their MA programs.
- Participation in the study is voluntary.

The MA translation training program in the Department of English offers various types of courses on translation to improve students' translation skills and knowledge. Table 2 shows the list of available translation courses in one of the Saudi Universities (Table 2).

Table 2: Courses in MA programs

Translation and Text Analysis
General Translation
Translation of Islamic Texts
Translation of Scientific Texts
Research Methods
Arabic Rhetoric
Cultural Issues in Translation
Research Methods
Research Methods
Arabic Dictionaries
Translation of Legal Texts
Simultaneous Interpretation
Arabicization
Economic and Media Translation
Translation Project
Research Methods

The participants were required to sign an informed consent statement prior to taking part in the experiment which involved the translation of one text from L2 to L1.

Translation Task

For the translation task, participants were required to translate from Arabic into English a piece of text about tourism in Abha (one of the stunning landscapes in Saudi Arabia) taken from the VisitSaudi website, an official multilingual website established by the Saudi Tourism Authority. The website introduces visitors to historic places, stunning landscapes, and tourism services in Saudi Arabia. The purpose of having the students translate the text was to evaluate their level of competency when required to translate tourism materials from Arabic to English (reverse translation). The characteristics of the text were typical of Arabic PTMs – the language was formal, the sentences were long and complex, and figurative language was frequently used. The translation task is provided in Appendix 2.

A difficulty scale supplemented the translation task to discover the trainees' perception of the difficulty of undertaking inverse translation of tourism materials, that is the specific tourist text. Furthermore, the students were asked whether they used monolingual or bilingual dictionaries and search engines to translate the text. Students were also asked to complete a tourism knowledge-based questionnaire to reveal the extent to which they were aware of declarative and procedural knowledge associated with the translation of TPMs.

Assessment of the Students' Translations

In this study, the researchers developed rubrics for evaluating the translations of Arabic tourist texts into English by the participants. The rubrics were based on the works of Sulaiman (2020) and Qassem et al. (1) and focused on three key indicators: accuracy, style, and clarity. Each indicator was further divided into sub-indicators, and scores were assigned based on the performance of the participants in each sub-indicator. For instance, the first indicator comprised four sub-indicators (Appendix 1). If a participant failed to meet any of these sub-indicators, a score of zero was given. It's worth noting that this rubric, along with its scoring system, was reviewed by two translation study specialists. Table 3 presents the rubrics utilized for the assessment. See Appendix 1 for more details about the indicators of the rubric.

Table 3: Indicators and scores for performance ratings of translations

Accuracy		Style		Clarity	
Definition	Score	Definition	Score	Definition	Score
Four indicators of accuracy are maintained	4	Three indicators of style are maintained	3	Three indicators of clarity are maintained	3
Three indicators of accuracy are maintained	3	Two indicators of style are maintained	2	Two indicators of clarity are maintained	2
Two indicators of accuracy are maintained	2	One indicator of style is maintained	1	One indicator of clarity is maintained	1
One indicator of accuracy is maintained	1	None of the indicators of style is maintained	0	None of the indicators of clarity is maintained	0
None of the indicators of accuracy is maintained	0				

Inter-Rater Reliability

Two raters rated the students' translations of the Arabic PTMs into English according to three indicators (accuracy, style, and clarity). The interclass coefficient was used to show the degree of the raters' agreement regarding the students' assessment, revealing fair agreement between the raters $\kappa = 0.292$ (95% CI, 0.135 to 0.450), $p < 0.001$.

Results

The results pertaining to each research question are reported in this section, beginning with quantitative data and followed by qualitative data.

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis includes the median and ranges, percentages, and Spearman correlation. The median and ranges were used to measure the trainees' performance, their perception of text difficulty, and their level of knowledge about the translation of PTMs.

Students' Performance

The first question was “To what extent were postgraduates able to translate tourism texts from Arabic into English in terms of accuracy, style, and clarity?” It was found that the trainees' performance was low, evidenced by the mean and median scores manifested in the mean score ($M = 6.2130$, $SD = 1.13871$) and median scores ($Mdn = 6.2500$). The authors also measured the median as it represents the center of the data (Mellinger and Hanson 163) (Table 4).

Table 4: Students' performance

Score	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
	27	6.2130	6.2500	1.13871	4.75

Students' Perception of the Level of Difficulty

The translator trainees' rating of the level of the difficulty of text translation was $Mdn = 3$, $N = 27$, indicating that the students perceived the text translation to be difficult “to some extent” (i.e., somewhat difficult), which may show the participants' lack of awareness of the difficulty of the text and what is required from a tourism text with a communicative function (i.e., to attract the TT readership and convince tourists to visit the place). The participants' mean performance score was six out of ten, although they saw the text as being only “somewhat difficult” (Table 5).

Table 5: Perceived level of translation difficulty

	Median	Range	<i>N</i>
Perceived level of translation difficulty	3.000	3.0	27

Correlation Between Translator Trainees' Perceptions and their Performance

Due to the skewness of the data, the researchers used Spearman's ρ to calculate the correlation between translator trainees' performance and their perception (Mellinger and Hanson 163), but found no correlation ($r = 0.220$, $P = \leq 0.270$, $N = 22$), as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Correlations between the trainees' performance and their perceptions

Spearman's ρ	N	Correlation coefficient	Sig. (two-tailed)
	27	0.220	0.270

Translator Trainees' Knowledge of PTM Translation

The trainees' responses to the questionnaire revealed some awareness of the requirements of translating tourism texts, but four statements revealed the participants' lack of awareness of the translation of promotional materials (4, 5, 7, 8). The trainees' responses to the fourth statement indicated their neutrality (Mdn = 3, $N = 27$). Their responses to the fourth statement "The foreignization strategy (making the text conform to the ST) is the right strategy for translating PTMs" were neutral, which contradicted their responses to the third statement where they agreed on the effectiveness of a domestication strategy. Their responses to the fifth statement "Translators of tourism texts should first consider the equivalents among languages" showed their agreement (Mdn = 4, $N=27$), indicating their lack of knowledge of what tourism translation requires.

The students' responses to the seventh statement "In English culture, the emphasis is given to the content of communication rather than to the way the message is conveyed" showed a lack of awareness of the content-focused feature of the English culture (Mdn = 3, $N = 27$), since they chose the neutral option. Similarly, the trainees' responses indicated their lack of awareness of the Arabic culture that focuses on the way that a message is conveyed, rather than on the content of the communication (Mdn = 3, $N = 27$). The remaining responses to the rest of the statements (1, 2, 6, 9, 10) showed agreement with the statement, indicating awareness of some features and requirements of tourism translation (i.e., purpose of tourism translation, some peculiar feature of tourism translation, interdisciplinary feature of tourism translation, function of tourism translation). Table 7 shows the statistical results for the trainees' level of knowledge.

Table 7: Translator trainees' level of knowledge of tourism translation

Statements	N	Median	Range
1. Tourism translation aims to convert readers to visitors	27	4.0000	4.00
2. Translating TPMs different from translating general texts	27	4.0000	4.00
3. Domestication strategy (making the text conform to TL readers' expectations) is the right strategy to use when translating PTMs	27	4.0000	4.00
4. The foreignization strategy (making the text conform to the ST) is the right strategy for translating PTMs	27	3.0000	4.00
5. Translators of tourists should first consider the equivalents among languages	27	4.0000	4.00
6. Knowledge of geography, economics, psychology, and anthropology is required for tourism translators	27	4.0000	4.00
7. In English culture, the emphasis is given to the content of communication rather than to the way the message is conveyed	27	3.0000	4.00
8. In Arabic culture, the emphasis is given to how the message is conveyed rather than the content of the communication	27	3.0000	4.00
9. TPMs are defined as a form of advertising	27	4.0000	4.00
10. Tourism texts should attract Attention, maintain Interest, increase Desire, and get Action) from the visitors	27	4.0000	4.00

Use of Translation Resources

According to the findings, the trainees used search engines more than bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, sometimes consulting online memory dictionaries, encyclopedia, forums, etc. to check the accuracy of their translation. The monolingual dictionary is the least-used resource, possibly due to its limitations in translating Arabic to English. Search engines can help the students with translations if they are used correctly, especially

when translating lexical and phraseological items such as collocations and metaphors. Table 8 lists the online resources used by students.

Table 8: Student use of online resources

Resource	No. of students using the resource	%
Monolingual dictionaries	3	11
Bilingual dictionaries	16	59.3
Search engines	18	66.7

Qualitative Analysis

As mentioned, in terms of qualitative data, the student's performance was assessed according to three indicators: accuracy, style, and clarity. The postgraduates did well in regard to accuracy and clarity, but had significant difficulty in rendering the ST style into the TL. They rendered the ST features without considering the TT readership. For example, the Arabic text contained two sentences. When translating the whole text, the trainees followed the same structure of the ST (long sentences, declarative sentences, coordinated sentences, formality, indirectness), instead of using the structure of the TT. The structure of English tourist text is characterized by short sentences, directness achieved through the use of the imperative, informal tone, colloquialisms, and simple sentence structure. The students rendered the two long Arabic sentences into English by using one short sentence and two long sentences. They made no attempt to divide the long sentences into shorter sentences so as to follow the conventions used when writing promotional materials in English. The ST consisted of 104 words, while the TT had 144; when the TT was back-translated, the text had three sentences of 112 words, indicating over-translation. Table 9 gives examples of the participants' translations.

Table 9: Examples of participants' translations

109 ابدأ باكتشاف أبها بحواسك الخمس	Start discovering Abha with your five senses 151	Back translation
تمتلك مدينة أبها موقعًا مثاليًا في جنوب غربى السعودية، على ارتفاع 2200م بين قمم جبال السروات، حيث يمنحك موقعها فرصة معاينة السحاب، والتجول بين قممها الجبلية، مترعًا بالدهشة والانبهار، فيما تنتقل عبر أزمنة تتجاوز مئات السنين، عند مشاهدة القلاع والقصور المشيدة من مكونات بيئتها البكر ومع مناورات الضباب وظهوره حتى فى فصل الصيف، لن يمنحك ذلك من اكتشاف سهولها ومنحدراتها وتنوعها الثرى، والتعرف عن كثب على مجتمعها المسكون بالفنون، وكيف تمكنت النساء هنا، منذ مئات السنين، من استخلاص الألوان الزاهية من الأشجار والحجارة، لإعدهن صياغة المساحات وتزيين ديكورات منازلهن بفن القَطِّ العسيري، أحد الفنون التجريدية، الذي تحول إلى أيقونة عالمية تعبر عن الإنسان والمكان	Abha City has an ideal location in southwestern Saudi Arabia. It is 2,200 m high among the tops of the Sarawat Mountains, where its location allows you to hug the clouds and wander among their mountainous top, relishing amazement and fascination while traveling back for hundreds of years, watching castles and mansions constructed from the components of its pristine environment. With fog maneuvers and its appearance even in the summer, this will not prevent you from discovering its plains, slopes, and rich diversity and learning more closely about its community that is rich with art and how, hundreds of years ago, women here were able to extract bright colors from trees and stones, reformulating spaces and decorating their home decorations with the art of Al-Qatt Al-Asiri, one of the abstract arts, which has been transformed into a global icon that expresses man and place	مدينة أبها تمتلك موقعًا مثاليًا في جنوب غرب المملكة العربية السعودية. إنها تبلغ ارتفاع 2200 متر بين قمم جبال السروات، حيث موقعها يتيح لك موقعها أن تحتضن السحب وتنتقل بين قممها الجبلية، مستمتعًا بالدهشة والوله أثناء السفر إلى الورا لمئات السنين، ومشاهدة القلاع والقصور التي بنيت من مكونات بيئتها البكر. مع مناورات الضباب وظهوره حتى فى الصيف، هذا لن يمنحك من اكتشاف سهولها ومنحدراتها وتنوعها الغنى والتعلم أكثر عن قرب عن مجتمعها الغنى بالفن وكيف منذ مئات السنين كانت النساء قادرة هنا من استخراج الألوان الزاهية من الأشجار والأحجار وإعادة تشكيل المساحات وتزيين ديكورات منازلهم بفن القط العسيري، أحد الفنون التجريدية الذي تم تحويله إلى أيقونة عالمية تعبر عن الرجل والمكان

Translation of the Title

The trainees' translation of the title was literal. Twenty-six participants translated the title literally without any attempt to make changes to adhere to the style of English tourist text. The postgraduates' use of literal translation might not receive a response or reaction from the TT readers. For example, the participants did not consider the TT collocation in translating the title "Start discovering Abha with your five senses" since "explore or discover" do not collocate with "senses," as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Students' translations of metaphors

ST title	Students' translations	Suggested translations	Back translation
ابداً باكتشاف أبها بحواسك الخمس	Start discovering Abha with your five senses	Feel Aba with your five senses	ابداً باكتشاف أبها بحواسك الخمسحواسك، حواسك الخمس
	Discover Abha with your five senses	Enjoy Aba to the fullest	اكتشف أبها بحواسك الخمس
	Explore Abha with your five senses	Indulge yourself with the wonder of Abha	استكشف أبها بحواسك الخمس

Translation of Metaphorical Expressions

When translating metaphorical expressions, the translator trainees applied a literal translation, which may decrease the stylistic effect of the TT on TL readers. The translations maintained the style of the ST metaphor in the TT without any attempt to consider the stylistic differences between English and Arabic. Moreover, some trainees deleted the metaphor and, instead, paraphrased its meaning when rendering the TT. Some examples of the trainees' translations are given in Table 11.

Table 11: Trainees' translations of metaphors

ST metaphor	Frequent translations	Back translation
معانقة السحاب	Hugging clouds, embracing the clouds, embracing the sky like a hug, o'reach the clouds, flow on the clouds, to be in the midst of the clouds	يحتضن الغيوم، يعانق الغيوم، تعانق السماء بالحضن، تصل إلى الغيوم، تتدفق على الغيوم، لتكون في وسط الغيوم.
مترجاً بالدهشة والانبهار	full of enjoyment and surprising, amazingly, filled with astonishment and amazement, with amazement and fascination, as charm and fascination fill your heart	ملينة بالمتعة والمفاجأة، بشكل مذهش، ملينة بالدهشة والذهول، بالدهشة والفتنة، كما يملأ قلبك الوله والفتنة.
مناورات الضباب	fog maneuvers, the maneuvers of the fog, fog looming, fog can fall at any time, experiencing fog	المناورات الضبابية، مناورات الضباب، الضباب يلوح، الضباب يمكن أن يسقط في أي وقت، يواجه الضباب
بيئتها البكر	virgin environment, pristine environment, natural sources, resources of Abha's natural habitat, components of its environment	بيئة عذراء، البيئة البكر، المصادر الطبيعية، موارد موطن أبها الطبيعي، مكونات بيئتها
المسكون بالفنون	inhabited arts, inhabited by the arts	الفنون المأهولة، المسكونة بالفنون

Use of Coordinate and Subordinate Clauses

In the ST, coordinate clauses occur frequently, using "wa" in the sentence, which is a distinctive feature of Arabic writing. The trainees rendered these coordinate clauses literally as they are in the TT. In regard to subordinate clauses, the trainees did not attempt to simplify the complex structures of the ST, but rendered them literally. In some cases, they deleted some part of the subordinate clauses, resulting in translation loss. Several examples of coordinate and subordinate clauses are shown in Tables 12 and 13.

Table 12: Use of coordinate clauses

Coordinate clauses	Students' translations	Back translations
والتجول بين قممها الجبلية	<u>and</u> wander among their mountainous top	ويتجول بين قممها الجبلية
ومع مناورات الضباب	<u>With</u> fog maneuvers	مع مناورات ضبابية
ويظهره حتى في فصل الصيف	<u>and</u> its appearance even in the summer	ويظهره حتى في فصل الصيف
، ومتحدراتها وتنوعها الثري	<u>Slopes and</u> rich diversity	متحدراتها والتنوع الغنى
والتعرف على	<u>and</u> learning more closely	والتعلم
وكيف تمكنت النساء ،	<u>and</u> how women were able	..وكيف كانت النساء
وتزيين ديكورات منازلهن	<u>and</u> decorating their home	وتزيين منازلهن

Table 13: Use of subordinate clauses

Subordinate clauses	Trainees' translations	Back translation
حيث يمنحك موقعها فرصة معاينة السحاب	where its location allows you	حيث يسمح لك موقعه
فيما تنتقل عبر أزمنة تتجاوز مئات السنين ،	while traveling back for hundreds of years	أثناء السفر إلى الوراء لمئات السنين
عند مشاهدة القلاع والقصور المشيدة	watching castles and mansions constructed	مشاهدة القلاع والقصور التي شيدت
ليُعدن صياغة المساحات	reformulating spaces	يعيد صياغة المساحات

Discussion

This study investigated postgraduate translator trainees' performance, perception, and knowledge of the translation of promotional tourism materials using a translation task, a scale of difficulty, and a tourism translation knowledge-based questionnaire. The students' translations were rated in terms of accuracy, style, and clarity. The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to offer a clear image of the students' performance in translating a TPT from Arabic to English. Overall, the researchers found that the translations were poor, the participants had little declarative and procedural knowledge of tourism translation. Also, there was no significant correlation between the trainees' performance and their perception of text difficulty. The participants' perceptions of the difficulty of the task showed their lack of understanding of the complexities of translating tourism texts. The next section discusses the main findings.

Postgraduates' Performance on Arabic–English Translation of the Tourist Test

The participants followed the style of the Arabic text in their translations, manifested in the use of long sentences, complex structures, literal translations of metaphor, and inappropriate use of collocation. The mean of the students' scores for the translation task showed poor performance in tourism translation. This finding aligns with those of Qassem et al. (1) who found that students' translations of the Arabic text as a descriptive text lacked vocative functions. They attributed it to the ST structure, on the one hand, and the lack of knowledge and skills in tourism translation, on the other hand. Similarly, Hartati (380) and Muñoz (42) found that their participants did not achieve nativeness in their translations. Muñoz (42) attributed this problem to "interference and non-adherence to the stylistic conventions established for PTMs in English."

Translators should work as mediators (Muñoz 42; Giampieri 12; Al-Angary 82; Agorni 253; Kelly 33–42; Tonkin and Frank 17). In the trainees' translation, there was no adherence to the style of the TT conventions characterized by explicitness, directness, short sentences, and imperative voice. In this regard, Newmark (41–52) argues that PTMs have three functions: informative, expressive, and vocative. The students' translations achieved the informative functions and some features of the expressive functions. However, the vocative function was not achieved. Hence, Dickins et al. (277) recommended dividing long Arabic sentences into short sentences and deleting "wa" (i.e., an Arabic conjunction of coordination). In the students' translations, the

vocative functions of the PTMs were not considered although the text is intended to convince readers to visit the city (Sulaiman and Wilson 633). Sulaiman and Wilson (49–66) argue that the PTMs should achieve the following objectives: attract attention, maintain interest, increase desire, and get action from the visitors. The last objective is not achieved in the students' translations. The sub-standard quality of translated TPMs can be linked to the method that emphasizes linguistic aspects (Sumberg 329). The tourism translation text should take into account the interdisciplinary nature of tourism translation, making use of text linguistic approaches (Reiss 48–88), functional approaches (Nord 25; Reiss and Vermeer 1) (i.e., the Skopos theory), and Bakers' culture meditation (2011) in addition to making use of theories in the tourism and marketing domains (Fennell 1; Sulaiman and Wilson 633).

Perception of the Level of Difficulty

The students' perception of the difficulty of the task did not align with their performance. Several stylistic errors are found in the students' translation although they perceived that the text translation task was difficult only to "some extent." This finding indicates that the students focused on translating linguistic features without considering the style of the TT and the intended audience. The trainees' qualitative data revealed their adoption of literal translation, focusing on rendering the linguistic elements with no attempt to focus on the style. It is also found that there was no correlation between the trainees' performance and their perception, which might be due to the small sample selected for the study. These results align with those of Qassem et al. (1) who found that trainees were unaware of the difficulty of tourism translation.

Students' Use of Language Resources

The students' use of language resources revealed their awareness of the importance of utilizing language resources when translating. Most students relied on search engines, while monolingual dictionaries were the least popular. Search engines may be more helpful if the students use online memory dictionaries (e.g., Reverso Context) and translation forums, but students using language dictionaries may require help when translating some lexical and phraseological items. This finding does not align with Giampieri (12), who found that 90% of the students used monolingual or bilingual paper or online dictionaries such as the Cambridge, Collins, Garzanti, Hoepli, MacMillan, Merriam Webster, and Oxford. Conversely, this study aligns with one of the Giampieri's findings (2019) that more than 85% of the participants consulted websites or language platforms, including translation memories, encyclopedias, etc. If such resources are used well, they could help students with lexical and phraseological issues. However, the stylistic level depends on the student's declarative and procedural knowledge.

Students' Declarative and Procedural Knowledge of Tourism Translation

The students' responses to the questionnaire generally showed a lack of declarative and procedural knowledge of tourism translations, as they dealt with a text from the stand of its informative function only. The students' responses showed their lack of knowledge about the appropriate translation procedures for translating PTMs. The participants were hesitant about the effectiveness of foreignization in tourism translation. The second item on the questionnaire referred to the use of equivalence, and participants agreed that equivalence is the most critical factor in the translation of TPM. The students tended to deal with a text at a linguistic level, ignoring its intended effect and function (Muñoz 42; Giampieri 12). These responses align with the poor performance in translating the PTMs; the students focused on the linguistic aspect at the expense of the

stylistic one. There is a consensus among translation practitioners and theorists on the appropriateness of domestication when translating PTMs. The trainees need to go beyond equivalence, focusing on the macro top-down prospective approach that emphasizes the vocative function of the PTs (i.e., convincing the readers to visit the place), instead of micro-linguistic features. The results showed that participants had little if any awareness of the differences between the Arabic and English cultures. In the English culture, the focus is on content while in the Arabic culture, the focus is on the way that the message is conveyed rather than on the content of the communication.

Conclusions

The study investigated the performance of translator trainees on a translation task, as well as their knowledge and perception of tourism translation. Findings revealed low performance in tourism translation and the inability to adhere to the TT style. It also revealed a lack of knowledge of translation strategies and what is required when translating promotional materials. These findings show a need to include units on declarative knowledge (knowledge of the genre, product, and audience) and procedural knowledge (knowledge of translation strategies) in translation training programs. The students' translations and responses revealed a lack of knowledge underpinning the theory and practice of tourism translations. Tourism translation courses should focus on helping students develop declarative and procedural expertise, and should be designed according to the interdisciplinary nature of tourism translation, while implementing linguistic, textual linguistics, and functional approaches. The small sample size comprising relatively few students enrolled in MA translation training programs is one of the study's limitations, which can be addressed in future studies. Additionally, few participants could demonstrate readiness because the study was voluntary, and the assignment prompted students to translate and answer a question, which was a time-consuming and cumbersome task for some participants.

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Appendix 1

Definition of the indicators of performance and their weights

Table A1

Table A1: Rubric for assessment of translation of tourism texts

Indicators	Definitions	Weights
Accuracy	• Appropriate use of language for the target audience • Appropriate use of cultural references and idioms • Appropriate use of technical terms and industry jargon • Accuracy in conveying the original message	4
Style	• Use of appropriate tone and style for the target audience • Use of the appropriate register (formal/informal) • Use of appropriate sentence structure and length	3
Clarity	The clarity in conveying the original message The clarity in conveying the desired tone and style	3
Total	10	

Appendix 2

A. Questionnaire

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements
 1. Tourism translation aims to convert readers to visitors.
 2. Translating TPMs different from translating general texts.
 3. Domestication strategy (making the text conform to TL readers) is the right strategy in translating PTMs.
 4. The foreignization strategy (making the text conform to the ST) is the right strategy for translating PTMs.
 5. Translators of tourists should first consider the equivalents among languages.
 6. Knowledge of geography, economics, psychology, and anthropology is required for tourism translators.
 7. In English culture, the emphasis is given to the content of communication rather than to the way the message is conveyed.
 8. In Arabic culture, the emphasis is given to how the message is conveyed rather than the content of the communication.
 9. TPMs are defined as a form of advertising.
 10. Tourism texts should attract Attention, maintain Interest, increase desire, and get action) from the visitors.
- Did you use monolingual dictionaries in the process of translation?
- Did you use bilingual dictionaries in the process of translation?
- Did you use search engines in the process of translation?

B. Translation task

- Please translate the following text from Arabic into English.

ابداً باكتشاف أيها بحواسك الخمس
تمتلك مدينة أيها موقعاً مثاليًا في جنوب غربي السعودية، على ارتفاع 2200م بين قمم جبال السروات، حيث يمنحك موقعها فرصة معانقة السحاب، والتجول بين قممها الجبلية، مترعًا بالدهشة والانبهار، فيما تنتقل عبر أزمنة تتجاوز مئات السنين، عند مشاهدة القلاع والقصور المشيدة من مكونات بيئتها البكر ومع مناورات الضباب وظهوره حتى في فصل الصيف، لن يمنعك ذلك من اكتشاف سهولها ومنحدراتها وتنوعها الثري، والتعرف عن كثب على مجتمعها المسكون بالفنون، وكيف تمكنت النساء هنا، منذ مئات السنين، من استخلاص الألوان الزاهية من الأشجار والحجارة، ليُعدن صياغة المساحات وتزين ديكورات منازلهن بفن القَطِّ العسيري، أحد الفنون التجريدية، الذي تحول إلى أيقونة عالمية تعبر عن الإنسان والمكان

C. The trainee's perception of the level of difficulty of translating the tourist text

Rate the translation difficulty level of the text you have translated earlier.