



Article

Bidirectional Translation of Promotional Tourism Materials: Challenges and Strategies

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A B S T R A C T

In today's globalized world, the effective translation of promotional tourism materials plays a crucial role in bridging cultural and linguistic gaps, thereby enhancing tourist experiences and supporting the growth of the tourism sector. Within this line, this study investigated the translator trainees' performance on bidirectional translation of tourism-related texts. A sample of 24 Saudi postgraduates specializing in translation participated in the study. They were tasked with translating two promotional tourism texts—one from the Visitsaudi website and the other from the Visittheusa website—representing typical features of both Arabic and English tourist discourse. The trainees' translations were assessed quantitatively and qualitatively in two scenarios: (a) translating from English to Arabic, and (b) the reverse based on three criteria: accuracy, style and clarity. The findings revealed significant challenges in both translation directions, particularly in maintaining style and clarity. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test identified statistically significant differences between the two translation directions, underscoring the inherent challenges in L1 to L2 translation ($z = -2.372, p = .018, r = 0.48$). The qualitative analysis further indicated that the trainees predominantly employed source-text (ST) oriented strategies, impacting negatively the style, clarity, and accuracy of the target texts (TTs). The trainees' reliance on source-text (ST) oriented strategies resulted in translations that did not adapt to the linguistic and cultural nuances of the target language, which negatively impacted the quality of the target texts (TTs). The study concludes with recommendations for improving the trainees' bidirectional translation skills in tourism translation.

I. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO¹) defines tourism as the activity of individuals traveling to and spending time in places outside their usual environment for leisure, business, or other purposes. The term also encompasses the management of visitors through various services, including travel agencies, passenger transportation, vehicle rental, lodging, food and beverage, entertainment, and conferences (Woodward-Smith, 2019). Promotional tourism materials, a critical tool for tourism agencies, aim to attract international visitors by showcasing the

unique features and attractions of a place, such as its culture, history, and natural beauty. Translating these materials effectively require translators who can not only navigate the linguistic nuances of the source and target languages (SL and TL), but also possess a thorough understanding of the audience, genre, and product (Sulaiman 2020; Sulaiman and Wilson, 2019). The promotional tourist discourse serves informative, persuasive, and argumentative functions, aiming to present essential facts creatively and influence the audience (Muñoz, 2011, 2007; Munday, 2018).

This study explores English-Arabic-English tourism translation, focusing on the landscape of

¹ <https://www.unwto.org/>

the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The importance of the tourism sector has recently increased, as highlighted by the Saudi Vision 2030 (Qassem and Sahari, 2023). This initiative plays a vital role in diversifying the country's income sources (Alangari, 2022). In this context, the Ministry of Tourism and tourism agencies have developed websites to promote the Kingdom's tourist products. The translation quality of these websites depends on the translators' skills. Typically, tourism agencies hire graduates from translation training programs due to their relevant specialization and expertise. Several Saudi universities offer programs that prepare trainees to translate several types of texts between English and Arabic, meeting the needs of the labour market (Qassem and Sahari, 2023). Against this backdrop, this study seeks to assess the translator trainees' performance on bi-directional translation of tourist texts, aiming to uncover their strengths and weaknesses in both direct translation (L2 to L1) and inverse translation (L1 to L2). By undertaking this analysis, the study contributes to assessment of understanding the dynamics of performance inherent in these bi-directional translation tasks.

Translation bidirectionality refers to the transfer of content between languages in two directions: from L1 to L2, known as inverse translation (IT), and from L2 to L1, known as direct translation (DT) (Beeby, 1998). This concept is central to various models of translation competencies, as underscored by scholars such as Horcas-Rufián and Kelly (2020) and (PACTE, 2017, 2011, 2003). Its significance becomes particularly evident in the context of tourism translation, where the process involves not only rendering linguistic elements, but also cultural, traditional, geographical, and marketing features of a destination. Tourism translation, categorized under Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), is influenced by factors like knowledge of the product, place, and audience. Moreover, the practice of tourism translation is crucial for transforming this knowledge into a skill (Vandepitte, 2008).

Bidirectionality has been a research area in translation studies across various genres and topics, including general, political, and post-editing (Wang, 2021; Pavlović and Jensen, 2009; Whyatt et al., 2021; Heeb, 2016; Alves et al., 2009). These studies have reported conflicting results regarding the problematic nature of direct and inverse translation. The field of tourism translation

is inherently interdisciplinary, extending beyond linguistics to incorporate insights from geography, history, economics, and marketing (Agorni, 2012). While some research indicates that inverse translation poses more challenges than direct translation, other studies claim the opposite or suggest that they are equally difficult (Alves et al., 2009; Heeb, 2016). The perceived difficulty may hinge on factors such as the translators' linguistic and cultural competence and their familiarity with the text type. In the realm of tourism translation, certain studies highlight the problematic nature of translation without differentiating between direct and inverse translation (Carvalho et al., 2023; Qassem et al., 2021; Turzynski-Azimi, 2020; Linčir, 2019; Sulaiman and Wilson, 2019; Malenkina and Ivanov, 2018; Albir and Pavani, 2018; Sulaiman, 2018; Napu, 2016; Hogg et al., 2014). To date, no study has specifically addressed the differences between direct and inverse translation in tourism translation, particularly regarding the textual complexity faced by trainees. Given the conflicting findings in studies on translation metaphors, the use of online sources, and translation processes, this study aims to provide empirical data on bidirectionality in translation of promotional tourist materials, measuring trainees' performance on both direct and inverse translations.

In tourism translation, there is a significant demand for a comprehensive theoretical framework capable of addressing the complexities involved in translating tourist texts. Tourism texts exhibit a wide array of features, making it insufficient to rely on a single translation theory, as each tends to focus narrowly on specific aspects of the translation process. By adopting an integrated approach that synthesizes multiple relevant theories, the intricate nature of these texts can be more thoroughly addressed (Qassem and Sahari, 2023). Linguistic approaches, while assist at the lexical and phraseological levels, often fail to capture important textual subtleties in promotional content. This gap is addressed by text-linguistic methods, such as Reiss's text-type classification, which considers both internal and external features of the text (Reiss, 2000). Meanwhile, functionalist approaches like Skopos theory emphasize the purpose of the translation, guiding translators to align their strategies with the text's communicative function (Reiss and Vermeer, 1984). However, these theories, despite their effectiveness, remain

incomplete for addressing the multifaceted nature of tourist texts. Such texts require attention not only to text type and function, but also to cultural sensitivity, politeness, and marketability. Cultural mediation, therefore, becomes essential, with translators acting as vital intermediaries between languages and cultures. This role demands more than linguistic equivalence; it requires selecting language that resonates with the target audience culturally and emotionally (Baker, 2011).

Given the interdisciplinary nature of tourism translation, insights from fields like marketing and tourism should be incorporated to form a more comprehensive framework (Fennell, 2021). Theories of tourist communication stress the need for clear, accessible language to engage tourists effectively, while Brown and Levinson's politeness theory highlights the importance of creating a welcoming and friendly tone (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Integrating these theories into translator training is critical, as it equips future translators with the skills needed to convey messages, cultural nuances, and immersive experiences effectively, ensuring successful communication in the tourism translation. (Figure 1).

Building on these theoretical foundations, numerous studies have explored various facets of tourism translation, contributing to a richer understanding of the field. These studies have examined translation strategies, interdisciplinary collaborations, cultural considerations, knowledge translation frameworks, pedagogical approaches, translation quality, and stylistic variations in tourist genres across languages. Turzynski-Azimi (2020), Linčir (2019), and Malenkina and Ivanov (2018) examined translation strategies

specific to tourism, emphasizing the need for effective conveyance of persuasive elements in official tourism materials. Valdeón (2009,2015) underscored the interdisciplinary nature of tourism translation, calling for collaborative efforts among specialists from various fields. Sulaiman and Wilsons' extensive research (2019,2018) explored the cultural dimensions of tourism translation, proposing models that aim to shape positive perceptions of destinations by including cultural nuances.

Fennell (2021) proposed a knowledge translation framework tailored to tourism, known as the "knowledge creation and action cycle," which offered a structured method for disseminating knowledge effectively within the tourism industry. Zhang and Yang (2020), Qassem et al. (2021), and Tang-Taye and Standing (2016) emphasized the importance of maintaining high-quality translation standards in tourism discourse. Sulaiman (2020) discussed the stylistic differences between tourist genres in various languages, highlighting the need for translators to adapt their styles accordingly. Finally, Albir and Pavani (2018) explored the design of educational modules on tourism translation that prepare future translators to tackle the unique challenges of tourism materials effectively.

The issue of translation quality is debatable among translation theorists. The debate often centres on whether ST approaches or TT approaches should be prioritized. Recently, there has been a shift in Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) towards ensuring that translations meet predefined specifications (Karoubi, 2016). It is recognized that each text demands a unique type of assessment influenced by various factors

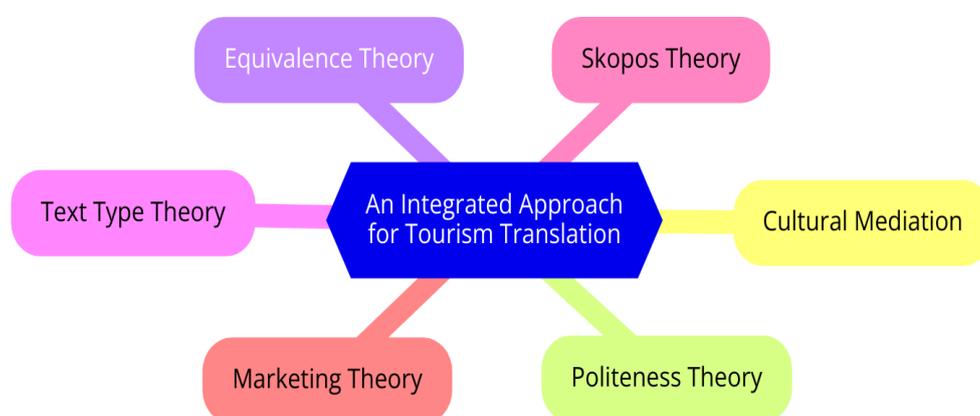


Fig. 1. An Integrated Approach for tourism translation
(Adapted Qassem and Sahari, 2023)

such as the context, text type, text function, and the client's requirements. Several studies have attempted to offer evaluation criteria for tourism translation (Sanning, 2010; Pierini, 2007; Sulaiman and Wilson, 2019). Sulaiman and Wilson (2018) underscore the significance of selecting language, cultural references, idiomatic expressions, technical terminology, and industry-specific jargon that are aligned with the target audience's expectations, while ensuring fidelity to the original message. Sanning (2010) emphasizes the importance of adopting a tone, style, and register that are appropriate for the target audience, alongside structuring sentences in a manner that is both grammatically correct and appropriately concise. Pierini (2007) stresses the need for clear and precise communication, ensuring that the intended message, tone, and style of the original text are faithfully conveyed in the target language.

Based on these studies, the authors have elicited precise criteria to assess translator trainees' performance on translating tourist texts. The assessment focuses on three main dimensions: accuracy, style, clarity. The assessment of tourist text translations hinges on three critical dimensions: accuracy, style, and clarity. Accuracy ensures the translation remains faithful to the original, preserving factual details and cultural nuances without distortion. Style assesses the translation's ability to replicate the original text's tone, register, and emotional resonance, aiming to engage the target audience with appropriate cultural references and stylistic choices. Clarity is essential for effective communication, particularly in tourist texts designed to inform and guide readers. This dimension evaluates the translation's ability to convey the original message in a clear, coherent, and accessible manner. It involves examining sentence structure, terminology, and the overall organization of the text to ensure that readers can easily understand and follow the information presented. See Appendix 1 for details.

Drawing from Vinay and Darbelnet's classification of translation strategies, the authors evaluated how translator trainees applied these strategies to translate text 1 and text 2 from and to English and Arabic (1995). They outlined two translation strategies: direct and oblique. They further classified these strategies into specific procedures. This strategy includes three procedures: borrowing, calque, and literal

translation. Borrowing is the process of directly transferring a word from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) to compensate for a semantic gap in the TL. The second procedure, calque, involves borrowing an expression from the SL and translating it literally into the TL, which can result in either a lexical or structural calque. Literal translation, in contrast, is a word-for-word rendering of the SL text into the TL while ensuring that the translation remains grammatically correct and idiomatically appropriate (Munday, 2018).

The oblique translation strategy takes a nuanced approach that allows for flexibility in conveying meaning while considering the linguistic and cultural differences between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). This strategy comprises four key translation procedures: transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. Transposition involves replacing a word class in the SL with another in the TL without altering the original message's meaning. Modulation goes a step further by changing the viewpoint or perspective of the SL, introducing variation in the message's form. Equivalence aims to create a similar situation or effect in the TL through different stylistic or structural means. Lastly, adaptation is used when a situation type in the SL has no direct equivalent in the TL culture, which requires substantial adjustments to ensure that the message fits appropriately within the target context (Munday, 2018).

By reviewing both theoretical and empirical literature of bidirectional translation and translation of tourist texts, this study aims to examine the translator trainees' performance on bidirectional translation of tourist texts, which are manifested in the following research questions:

1. To what degree could the translator trainees translate tourist texts from English to Arabic and vice versa?
2. Is there a measurable difference in the performance of translator trainees when doing direct translation (from L2 to L1) compared to inverse translation (from L1 to L2), and if so, is this difference statistically significant?
3. Which strategies do the translator trainees predominantly employ when translating tourist texts from English to Arabic and vice versa?

II. METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a comparative observational design, requiring each participant to complete a bidirectional translation task to assess their performance on L1-to-L2 and L2-to-L1 translations. The authors aimed to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in participants' performance when doing direct versus inverse tourism translation. Specifically, the performance of a single group of participants was measured under two conditions: (a) Arabic-English translation and (b) English-Arabic translation of tourist texts. The authors conducted a dual-mode analysis of the data, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, with the qualitative data serving to supplement the quantitative data. The quantitative data were assessed based on three performance indicators: accuracy, clarity, and style. Given the small sample size and data skewness, the nonparametric Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was employed (Mellinger and Hanson, 2017). The qualitative data, i.e., the participants' translations, were analysed, using Vinay and Darbelnet's model of translation strategy classification (1995).

Settings and participants

This study utilized purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. 24 participants with a mean age of 27 (SD=4.3) were recruited from Saudi universities based on specific characteristics that aligned with the study's objectives. The authors established the following selection criteria to identify suitable candidates: (a) a minimum IELTS score of 6, in accordance with the enrolment requirements for master's programs at Saudi universities; (b) enrolment in the final year of the MA program; (c) provision of informed consent to participate in the experiment; and (d) being native speakers of Arabic. The task involved translating two texts—one from English to Arabic and the other from Arabic to English. These criteria ensured that participants possessed advanced translation skills, which are essential for translating tourist texts.

Participants were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. After this assurance, they provided their consent to participate. To ensure confidentiality, anonymity was upheld. Furthermore, the participants were informed that

the collected data would be used exclusively for research purposes.

Based on Wright (2005), the translation task was developed using Google Forms, which allows for the creation of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. In the Google Form, we introduced the participants to the study, outlined the criteria for their selection, and detailed the research ethics adhered to by the authors. The link to the form was then sent to postgraduates across various locations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia via emails, Telegram, and WhatsApp, facilitating the targeting of participants at Saudi universities.

Data collection and analysis

This study involved two translation tasks, each comprising a distinct text. One text was presented in English (L2), while the other was in Arabic (L1). The first text was on Abha as tourist destination, a picturesque region in Saudi Arabia. The text was sourced from the website of the Ministry of tourism (VisitSaudi—an official multilingual platform). This passage acquaints readers with historical landmarks, scenic vistas, and tourism services throughout the country. The text contains several linguistic features commonly associated with Arabic promotional translation materials, characterized by their formal tone, lengthy sentence structures, incorporation of figurative language, coordination clauses, and complex structures (Qassem and Sahari, 2023). The second text was taken from VisitUSA, the official tourism website in the USA. The text comprises five sentences totalling 79 words and 464 characters, including spaces. It has characteristics typical of English promotional tourism materials: informality, concise sentences, imperativeness, explicitness, and indulgence.

The authors developed rubrics based on some relevant studies (Qassem and Sahari, 2023; Sulaiman and Wilson, 2018; Sanning, 2010; Pierini, 2007; Muñoz, 2011) for evaluating the translations of Arabic and English tourist texts, focusing on accuracy, style, and clarity. Each dimension had specific sub-indicators for detailed assessment, with participants receiving scores for their performance on each. A score of zero was given for any unmet sub-indicator criteria. The rubrics and scoring system were rigorously reviewed by two translation studies experts. The study emphasized the importance of appropriateness in using these metrics for evaluation. See Appendix 1.

Two expert raters assessed the participants' translations of the Arabic tourist text into English and the English text into Arabic, using a rubric consisting of three criteria: accuracy, style, and clarity. Both raters hold PhD degrees—one in Translation Studies and the other in Applied Linguistics—and are professional translators with experience in both fields. Furthermore, they are native Arabic speakers with extensive work in US and UK English, given their roles as freelance translators and academics. The raters were instructed to evaluate the appropriateness of the students' bidirectional translations, considering the genre of the text (promotional tourist materials), the target audience, and the cultural nuances of both English and Arabic. To assess the level of agreement between the raters' evaluations, the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) was calculated. The analysis showed a high degree of agreement between the first and second raters for Text 1 (ICC = .949, 95% confidence interval = .891 to .976, $p < .001$) and for Text 2 (ICC = .972, 95% confidence interval = .926 to .990, $p < .01$).

The authors applied the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, a nonparametric statistical method, to compare each translator's performance in both English-to-Arabic and Arabic-to-English translations. This test is particularly appropriate for small sample sizes and non-normal data distributions, as it evaluates differences in performance and translation processes in direct translation (DT) and inverse translation (IT) (Mellinger and Hanson, 2017). A Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to assess data normality, revealing significant deviations for both direct translation ($W = .833$, $p < .001$) and inverse translation ($W = .903$, $p < .025$). In addition to the quantitative analysis, qualitative data were also incorporated, examining the students' translation strategies, thereby providing a holistic evaluation of their performance in translating tourist texts.

III. RESULTS

The findings in this section are organized according to quantitative and qualitative data.

Trainees' Performance on direct and inverse translation

The first question investigated the extent of postgraduates' performance on translating tourism promotional texts in direct translation (English to Arabic) and inverse translation (Arabic to English)

translation. The analysis revealed that performance was low in both directions, with median scores of 7.0000 for direct translation and 6.0000 for inverse translation, out of a maximum score of 10. Further examination into specific performance indicators—style and clarity—underscored the challenges faced, where style achieved median scores of 2.0000 in direct translation and 1.0000 in inverse translation. Similarly, clarity in both translation directions recorded median scores of 2.0000, indicating a consistent trend of lower performance levels. See Table 1.

Table 1. Trainees' Performance on direct and inverse translation

	Direct Translation	Inverse Translation
	Median	Median
Cumulative performance	7.0000	6.0000
Accuracy	3.0000	3.0000
Style	2.0000	1.0000
Clarity	2.0000	2.0000

The second question 'Is there a measurable difference in the performance of translator trainees when conducting direct translation (from L2 to L1) compared to inverse translation (from L1 to L2), and if so, is this difference statistically significant?' consists of two parts. The first part of the second question examined the variance in performance between direct and reverse translations. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed that the participants generally performed better in direct translation (DT) compared to inverse translation (IT) across key metrics like cumulative performance, style, and clarity. Most trainees showed improved outcomes in DT, with many scoring the same in DT and IT for accuracy, suggesting direct translation might leverage native language proficiency more effectively. However, the high number of identical scores in accuracy indicates that translation direction may not significantly impact quality, highlighting the complex influence of individual skills and task challenges on translation performance. See Table 2.

The second part of the second inquiry examined if there are statistically significant differences between direct and inverse translations. Utilizing the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, statistically significant differences were observed, indicating that inverse translation requires more effort than direct translation, particularly in cumulative

Table 2. Negative and Positive Ranks

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
DT – IT cumulative Performance	Negative Ranks	4	6.88	27.50
	Positive Ranks	13	9.65	125.50
	Ties	7		
	Total	24		
DT – IT Accuracy	Negative Ranks	3	3.00	9.00
	Positive Ranks	2	3.00	6.00
	Ties	19		
	Total	24		
DT-IT Style	Negative Ranks	2	6.50	13.00
	Positive Ranks	11	7.09	78.00
	Ties	11		
	Total	24		
DT-IT Clarity	Negative Ranks	1	5.50	5.50
	Positive Ranks	10	6.05	60.50
	Ties	13		
	Total	24		

Table 3. Trainees' performance differences between DT and IT

Translation performance	Z	P-value	R
Cumulative Performance in DT and IT	-2.372	.018	0.48
Accuracy in DT and IT	-.447	.655	0.09
Style in DT and IT	-2.500	.012	0.5
Clarity in DT and IT	-2.673	.008	0.5

performance ($z = -2.372$, $p < .05$, $r = 0.48$), showcasing a considerable effect size. Regarding performance metrics, significant differences were found in favor of inverse translation for both style ($z = -2.500$, $p < .05$, $r = 0.5$) and clarity ($z = -2.673$, $p < .05$, $r = 0.5$), each with a large effect size. Nevertheless, the accuracy component did not exhibit any statistically significant disparities ($z = -.447$, $p > .05$, $r = 0.09$). Refer to table 4 for detailed information. See Table 3.

Bidirectional Translations strategies

This section answers the third question 'Which strategies do the postgraduates predominantly employ when translating tourist from and to English and Arabic?' It was found that most participants followed ST-translation strategies, which Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) refer to as 'direct' translation'. The section below describes in detail the translators' use of translation strategies. The results are organized according to the bidirectionality (L1 to L2 and L2 to L1).

Reverse translation (L1 to L2)

The analysis of the participants' translations indicated that they predominantly utilized direct translation, which was particularly evident in their rendition of lengthy Arabic sentences into English. They did not conform to the English sentence structure when translating the Arabic tourist text into English, which can lead to the creation of what is known as a "run-on sentence." The ST comprised three sentences, which were translated into English exactly as they appeared in the original.

When translating the title 'اكتشف ألبها بحواسك' 'الخمس', most translators opted for a literal translation procedure, rendering the title without making any adjustments to conform to the stylistic norms of English tourism texts. At a phraseological level, the translators' use of translation procedures ranged from literal to calque, borrowing, etc. It was found that the translators preferred to use direct translation procedures such as borrowing, calque, and literal translation Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). See Table 4.

Table 4. Students' use of translation procedures for L1 to L2

Translation Procedure	Lexical Unit	Students' Translations
Literal Translation	تمتلك	Has/possess
	معانقة السحاب	Embracing the clouds
	تنتقل عبر أزمنة	Travels through times
	مشاهدة القلاع والقصور المشيدة	Witnessing the castles and palaces constructed
	المسكون بالفنون	Inhabited by arts
	استخلاص الألوان الزاهية من الأشجار والحجارة	Extract bright colors from trees and stones
	تعبير عن الإنسان والمكان	Expresses the human being and the place
Transposition + Literal	التجول بين قممها الجبلية	Wander among its mountain peaks
Modulation + Literal	مترعاً بالدهشة والانبهار	Filled with amazement and fascination
Equivalence (Idiomatic Expression)	بيئتها البكر	Pristine environment
	وتنوعها الثري	Rich diversity
	الفنون التجريدية	Abstract arts
Calque	مناورات الضباب	Maneuvers of fog
Borrowing + Literal Translation	بفن القَطّ العسيري	With the art of Al-Qatt Al-Asiri
	أيقونة عالمية	Global icon

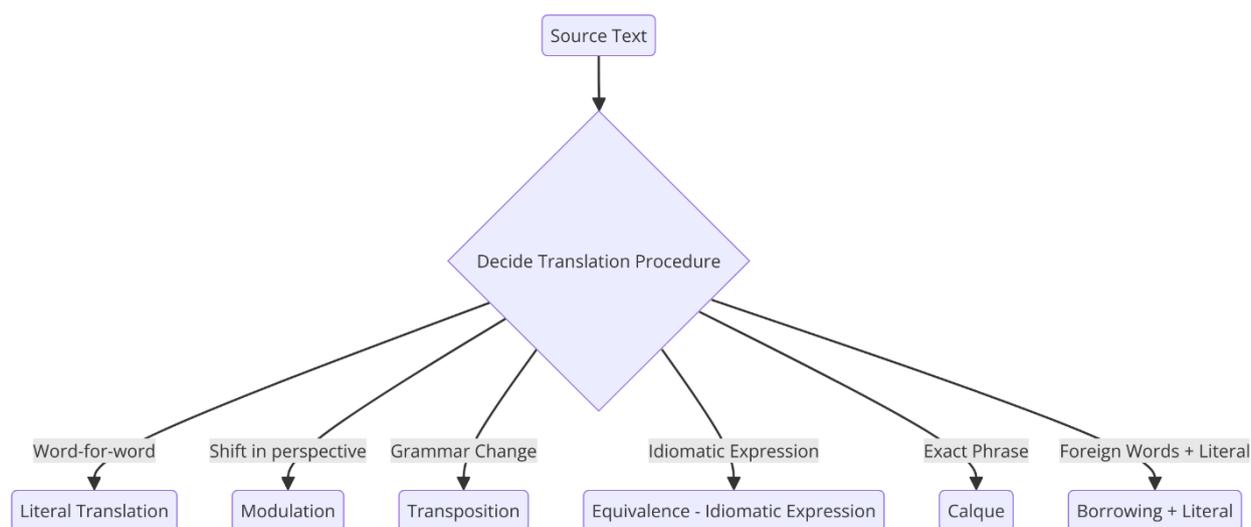


Fig. 2. Translation procedures in inverse translation (Arabic to English)

Figure 2. outlines the decision-making process for selecting a translation procedure when translating the Arabic text into English. It highlights various strategies, including literal translation (word-for-word), modulation (perspective shift), transposition (grammar changes), equivalence (idiomatic expressions), calque (exact phrases), and borrowing (foreign words with literal translation).

Literal Translation

Literal translation is one of the most frequent translation procedures in translating text 1 from

Arabic to English. The procedure retains the original structure and meaning, though it can lead to awkwardness in the translated expressions. The trainees relied heavily on literal translation, as seen in phrases such as 'معانقة السحاب', 'تمتلك', and 'المسكون بالفنون'. For example, translating the phrase 'معانقة السحاب' as "embracing the clouds" can be evocative, but it may sound odd if not properly contextualized. This translation preserved the metaphorical style of the source text (ST) in the target text (TT) without considering the stylistic differences between English and Arabic. The translation of "مسكون"

”بالفنون” into “inhibited by arts” fails to convey the connotative meaning of the term ‘مسكون’ in the target text.

Modulation

The Arabic phrase ‘مترعا بالدهشة والانبهار’ carries a certain emotional weight and imagery that does not exist in English, so the students changed its imagery and, therefore, its emotive impact. The choice of words like “filled” or “overgrown” in English captures similar emotions but uses different imagery that is more familiar and impactful in English. While “مترعا” is directly translated to “filled,” and “overgrown” in the second translation, it adds a different nuance, suggesting something more organic and lush. The words “wonder” and “awe” or “amazement” and “fascination” in English are chosen because they resonate well with English-speaking audiences. These words are commonly used to describe a state of being profoundly impressed or moved, which aligns with the sentiment expressed in the original Arabic.

Transposition

The translation of the Arabic phrase “التجول بين قممها الجبلية” as “wander among its mountain peaks” or “roaming between its mountains tops,” is a clear example of the strategy of changing grammatical structure for the sake of fluency in the target language. This strategy is crucial in translation as it ensures that the translated sentence not only retains the original meaning but also aligns with the syntactical norms and natural flow of the target language. In this case, the original Arabic phrase is structured in a way that is typical of the Arabic language, but a direct translation might sound awkward or unnatural in English. By translating it as “wander among its mountain peaks”, the sentence is adjusted to fit English linguistic patterns. This adjustment includes the choice of verbs and the prepositions which ensure that the sense of casually walking or moving around in a mountainous area is effectively captured. Similarly, the alternative translation “roaming between its mountain tops” also conveys the same meaning but with a slightly different emphasis, providing another example of how translation can subtly shift structures and word choices to maintain meaning while considering the linguistic characteristics of the TL. Both translations exemplify how the adept handling of grammatical structures can result in a smooth, natural-sounding English sentence that

faithfully reflects the original Arabic sentiment.

Calque (Loan Translation)

The translation of “مناورات الضباب” as “maneuvers of fog” or “tactics of fog” is an interesting example of using calques in translation. A Calque is a procedure where each element of a phrase is directly translated, often introducing new expressions in the target language that closely mirror the structure of the source language. In this instance, the Arabic phrase is translated quite literally into English. While “maneuvers of fog” and “tactics of fog” are direct translations, they retain the Arabic syntax, which might sound somewhat unusual or poetic in English. This procedure, while preserving the original structure, can sometimes result in phrases that sound less natural in the target language. However, it can also add a certain charm or uniqueness to the translation, offering an expression that is not typically found in the target language but is still intriguing and evocative. The choice between a more natural-sounding translation and a calque can depend on the context and the desired impact of the translation. In this case, while the direct translation might sound unconventional in English, it also lends a certain creativity to the phrase, reflecting the often nuanced and artistic nature of translation.

Borrowing

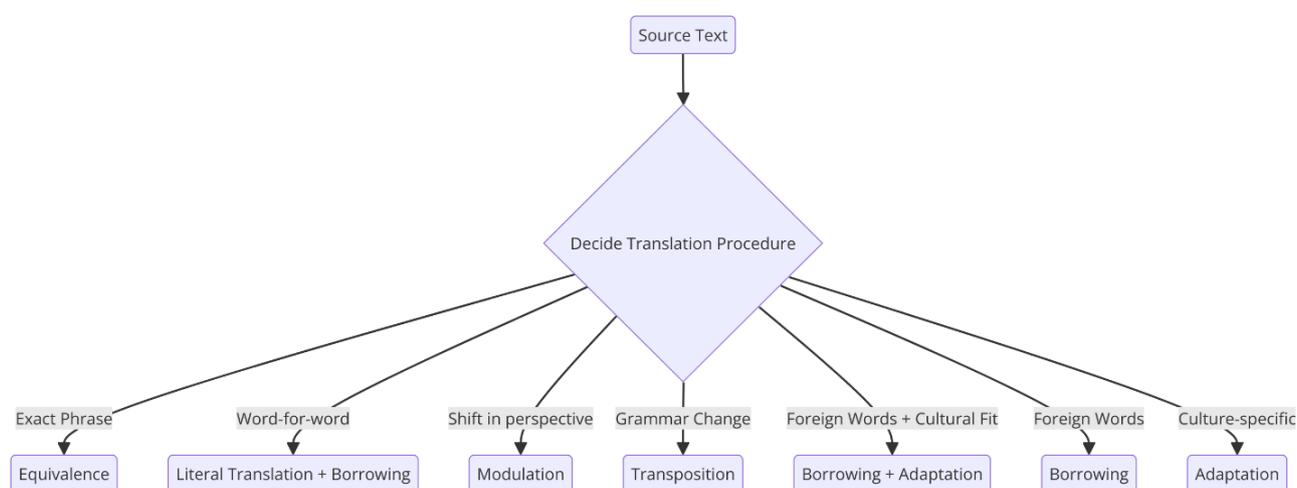
In translation, borrowing is a procedure where specific words or phrases from the source language are directly used in the target language, which is particularly effective for culturally unique terms or proper nouns without direct equivalents. This approach ensures the preservation of the cultural essence of the original text. An example is the translation of “بفن القَطِّ العسيري” into English as “with the art of Al-Qatt Al-Asiri” or “using Al-Qatt Art”. In this instance, “Al-Qatt Al-Asiri”, a term denoting a specific traditional art form, is directly borrowed, maintaining the cultural specificity and richness of the original Arabic phrase. This technique not only ensures a faithful translation, but also enriches the target language, fostering a deeper cultural understanding between diverse audiences.

Direct translation (L2 to L1)

In translating from English to Arabic, the translators adhered to a direct translation strategy. At the syntactic level, they preserved the English sentence pattern in Arabic. The ST includes four

Table 5. Students' use of translation procedures for L2 to L1

Translation procedures	Lexical Unit	Students' translations
Equivalence	Spoil yourself	دلل نفسك
Literal Translation + Borrowing	Beverly Hills' boutiques	مجموعة بيفرلي هيلز
	South Coast Plaza Costa Mesa	ساوث كوست التجاري
	Michelin-starred chefs	الطهاة الحاصلون على نجمة ميشلان
Modulation	Escape into bliss	يهبك التمتع بالهدوء
	Slip into haute couture styles	انغمس في موضة الأزياء الراقية
Transposition+ adaptation	Slip into haute couture styles	اكتشاف أنماط الأزياء الراقية
	Luxurious spa or a serene wellness	بزيارة منتجع صحي فاخر أو مكان استجمام هادئ
Borrowing + Adaptation	Beverly Hills' boutiques	في إحدى بوتيكات بيفرلي هيلز التي تقدم آخر وأرقى صيحات الموضة
Borrowing	Thomas Keller at The French Laundry	توماس كيلير في مطعم فرينش لاندري في يونتفيل
	Wolfgang Puck at Spago	ولفجانج باك في سباج
	Thomas Keller at The French Laundry	توماس كيلير في المصبغة الفرنسية
Adaptation	Take a VIP tour	تجربة راقية فريدة من نوعها لكبار الشخصيات
	Spoil yourself	كافئ نفسك، رفه نفسك تجارب لا تضاهي وغير متوقعة في مجال الترويج

**Fig. 3. Translation procedures in direct translation (English to Arabic)**

sentences that are retained in Arabic with the same number and structure. However, when translating the title “indulgence”, most participants omitted the translation. However, there were creative translations such as “كسفن للدد” and “ةي هافرل ا” that captured the core meaning of the title. At a phraseological level, the translators tended to use ST translation strategies, referred to as ‘direct translation’ by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). See Table 5.

Figure. 4 highlights procedures for translating English tourist texts into Arabic with cultural and linguistic accuracy. Equivalence ensures clarity for common phrases, while literal translation with borrowing works for straightforward content but may require modulation for cultural relevance. Grammar adjustments like transposition ensure natural flow in Arabic. Borrowing and adaptation are vital for culture-specific terms, balancing fidelity to the original text with cultural sensitivity. These

strategies make the translated material appealing and engaging for Arabic-speaking audiences.

Equivalence

The translation of “Spoil yourself” to “دلل نفسك” (Pamper yourself) in Arabic is a good example of how equivalence can effectively convey clear and direct messages, as often needed in commands or slogans. The phrase “دلل نفسك” conveys the indulgent and luxurious connotations of the English phrase, especially in a marketing or tourism context.

Modulation

The translation of “Escape into bliss” as “يهبك” (Grants you the enjoyment of tranquility) in Arabic is an example of the modulation procedure. This procedure involves changing the perspective or tone of the original phrase to make it more culturally relevant to the target audience. In this example, the translation shifts from the original’s imperative tone to a more descriptive and inviting expression. This approach is particularly effective in resonating with Arabic-speaking audiences, as it aligns more closely with the language’s stylistic and cultural preferences. In the case of “Escape into bliss”, while the translated phrase elegantly conveys a sense of tranquility, it might lose some of the active, dynamic quality of the original English phrase. This highlights the nuanced art of translation, where achieving the right balance between cultural adaptation and fidelity to the original is key.

Transposition

In the translation of “Slip into haute couture styles” to “تجول وجرب متعة التسوق الخيالية لأرقى الماركات” (Wander and try the fantastic shopping pleasure of the finest international brands), we see an example of transposition procedure. Transposition involves adjusting the grammatical structure to better suit the norms of the target language. In this case, the translation not only adapts the structure, but also introduces new action and experiential elements such as wandering and trying, which are not explicitly present in the original phrase. This procedure enhances engagement and makes the translation more appealing and contextually appropriate for the target audience. However, it also carries a risk. By adding elements and nuances that are absent in the original, the translation may inadvertently alter the

message or tone and introduce redundancy.

Borrowing and literal translation

Borrowing, on the other hand, keeps specific words or phrases unchanged, as seen in the translation of “Thomas Keller at The French Laundry in Yountville” to “توماس كيلر في مطعم فرينش” (Like Thomas Keller at the French Laundry in Yountville). This procedure is often used for proper nouns, brand names, or terms lacking direct translations, ensuring that cultural or factual specificity is respected. However, the overuse of borrowing can make a text feel disjointed or less culturally integrated, especially if the audience is not familiar with the borrowed terms.

Adaptation

Adaptation tailors content to fit the cultural context of the target audience. For instance, “Take a VIP tour” becomes “تجربة راقية فريدة من نوعها لكبار” (A unique upscale experience for VIPs), adding a touch of luxury and exclusivity more resonant in the Arabic context. While adaptation can make a phrase more appealing, it requires a delicate balance to avoid straying too far from the original message. Over-adaptation risks losing the essence of the original content.

IV. DISCUSSION

This research evaluates quantitatively and qualitatively the participants’ performance on translating tourism-related content, encompassing both direct and reverse translation exercises. A group of translator trainees undertook these tasks, with their translations evaluated on accuracy, clarity, and style. The outcomes indicated a notable deficiency in the translators’ ability to accurately translate tourism texts in both directions. However, the challenge was more pronounced in reverse translations, with lower scores in accuracy, style, and clarity. The qualitative data revealed that the participants tended to use direct translation strategy, which may have a negative effect on the accuracy, style and clarity of the TT. Comparing this study with previous research revealed that bidirectionality in tourism translation has not been addressed in earlier studies, making this study the first to investigate the subject according to the authors’ knowledge. The studies by Wang (2021), Pavlović and Jensen (2009), Whyatt, et al. (2021), Heeb (2016) and Alves, et al. (2009) have explored the cognitive and behavioral processes

of translators, focusing particularly on the effects of translation directionality—whether translating into one’s native language or a second language—on cognitive patterns and performance. These works employ various methodologies, including eye-tracking, keylogging, and retrospective protocols, to examine how translators engage with online resources, manage cognitive load, and form professional self-concepts. Together, they contribute to a growing understanding of how translation directionality influences decision-making and the overall translation process within professional contexts. As for the studies on tourism translation, most studies focus on analyzing translation strategies, translators’ performance, and the assessment of accuracy, style, and clarity (Wang, 2021; Pavlović and Jensen, 2009; Whyatt et al., 2021; Heeb, 2016; Alves et al., 2009). The main findings are analyzed further below.

The data analysis revealed that both the direct and inverse translation of tourism-related texts is challenging for postgraduates, evident in the median scores. When translating the Arabic text into English, the participants had difficulty maintaining the style and tone appropriate to the target audience. The students translated the sentences without any attempt to adhere to the features of the English language, which occurred when conveying the original messages to the TL readership. Similarly, in the English text about California, the students faced problems in translating several terms related to the place. The TT appears to be a descriptive text with no vocative functions. The translators made no attempt to modify the TT to incorporate the structure of Arabic tourism text. These results align with those of Zhang and Yang (2020), Tang-Taye and Standing (2016), Malenkina and Ivanov (2018), and Qassem, et al. (2021), who found low translation quality in the translations of tourism materials. Zhang and Yang (2020) attributed this low translation quality to translators’ lack of proficiency in the language and little or no cross-cultural awareness. Tang-Taye and Standing (2016) attributed low quality to translators’ ignorance of the differences between the peculiarities of SL and TL cultures. Qassem and Sahari (2023) attributed the low quality of translation to the lack of training in tourism translation. Malenkina and Ivanov (2018) attributed problems to translators’ negligence of tourists’ pre-trip expectations and knowledge. Hogg et al. (2014) argue that the norms

of the target community should not be ignored in the translation of tourism promotional materials. In translations of tourism texts, cultural sensitivity may be more important than linguistic accuracy (Hogg et al. (2014).

The translators’ performance exhibited deficiencies in their competence, specifically in strategic and extralinguistic competence in PACTE’s terminology (2017), as well as in language proficiency and intercultural understanding according to EMT’s framework (Wang, 2021). Deficiencies in language proficiency and intercultural understanding were manifested in differences in performance when translating from Arabic to English and from English to Arabic. Deficiencies in strategic competence are evidenced by the participants’ use of translation strategies, which showed a lack of awareness of the syntactic and stylistic differences between English and Arabic.

The study proposed an integrated approach to tourism translation by developing a comprehensive framework that incorporates several key theories: equivalence theory (Newmark, 1988), text type theory (Reiss, 2000), skopos theory (Reiss and Vermeer, 1984), tourism communication theory (Sulaiman & Wilson, 2018), politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), and cultural mediation (Baker, 2011). This framework addresses the diverse features of tourist texts, which possess unique contexts, cultures, functions, and linguistic characteristics. When translating these texts into the target language, translators must consider the differences in linguistic features, context, culture, and function between the source and target languages. Sulaiman and Wilson (2018) introduced the Cultural-Conceptual Translation (CCT) model, which underscores the importance of a culturally oriented functional approach for effective advertising translation. The CCT model focuses on two key factors—translation purpose and cultural conceptualization—essential for reconstructing favorable destination images in readers’ minds, ultimately converting them into tourists. Additionally, Hogg et al. (2014) suggest a multidimensional translation approach in tourism consumption to cater to the various features of tourist texts.

Results revealed statistically significant differences between direct and inverse translations

of tourism-related texts. It was found that inverse translation is more challenging than direct translation, manifested in cumulative performance on the two indicators: style and clarity. Although, against the accuracy criterion, there are some differences between the participants' performance on the two types of translation, these differences are not statistically significant. This is a novel finding since, to the best of authors' knowledge, in regard to directionality, this is the first study to investigate tourism-related translation. In contexts other than tourism, several studies investigated bidirectionality, reporting conflicting results (Wang, 2021; Pavlović and Jensen, 2009; Whyatt et al., 2021; Heeb, 2016; Alves et al., 2009). Results showed that some found inverse translation more challenging than direct translation, while others find the opposite. Heeb (2016) found that the students perceived direct translation and inverse translation as having the same level of difficulty. In the current study, the postgraduates found direct translation difficult, but inverse translation was even more challenging. Sayaheen and Darwish (2020) argue that the difficulty in bidirectionality may depend on the translator's competence in both languages and his/her cultural knowledge. What can be said here is that the level of difficulty depends on a trainee's competence and training, and the text type.

The findings showed that the postgraduates displayed comparable levels of accuracy in both English to Arabic and Arabic to English, as reflected by their median scores. Despite this similarity, challenges in maintaining accuracy persisted in both types of translations, especially concerning the correct application of technical terminology and industry-specific language. This issue could stem from an insufficient understanding of the marketed product. Suleiman and Wilson (2019) pointed out that translators working within the tourism sector need to possess three distinct kinds of knowledge: understanding of the product, awareness of the target audience, and familiarity with the genre.

The data analysis revealed that, against the style criterion, the students' performance was lower on the Arabic to English translation than on English to Arabic translation, which might be due to the features of the Arabic tourism text that needs modifications in order to adhere to the norms of English tourism texts. According to the results, the participants did not attempt to change the Arabic ST into English; most of their focus was not on

the linguistics. In English to Arabic translation, the students' task might be easier since the vocative function of the English text is clear. Besides, the students know the features of their mother tongue and the expectations of an Arabic readership, which may make the students' direct-translation task less difficult than an inverse translation. Similarly, maintaining clarity is more challenging in inverse translation than in direct translation, as evidenced by the statistically significant differences observed between the two in terms of the clarity criterion. The difficulty arises in conveying both the original message and the intended tone and style of the target text (TT) in both directions. However, the issue of clarity presents a considerable challenge in inverse translation.

Based on existing literature and our study's findings, the course design on tourism translation should prioritize bi-directional translation competence (L1 to L2 and L2 to L1). This ensures that future translators are well-prepared for the common industry practice requiring bi-directional translation. Furthermore, the design of these courses should be informed by multiple translation theories (e.g., linguistic theory, text linguistic theory, function theory, marketing theory, and politeness theory). By incorporating these fundamental frameworks in the course design, a strong foundation can be established for understanding the intricacies of translation. In addition, the course design should extend beyond translation studies and integrate theories from the field of tourism. This holistic approach is essential for creating a comprehensive curriculum that reflects the interdisciplinary nature of tourism translation. In short, the proposal for bi-directional translation competence, the integration of diverse translation theories, and the incorporation of principles from tourism necessitate a comprehensive redesign of tourism translation courses. This redesign could better equip future translators with the necessary skills to address the challenges of the industry. Muñoz (2011) emphasized the importance of including tourist translation in university curricula to ensure that translators are properly qualified to work in this specialized field.

The translators opted generally for direct translation strategy, which could lead to the loss of stylistic effect on TL readers and the clarity of meaning. As for translation procedures, the translators employed a range of procedures,

including literal translation, modulation, transposition, calque, borrowing, and adaptation, with a noticeable preference for literal translation. This source text (ST)-oriented approach, particularly evident in retaining the original structure in the target text (TT), ensured a high degree of fidelity but restricted the use of creative and culturally nuanced procedures.

Many translators demonstrated strong skills at the phraseological level, achieving accuracy, clarity, and stylistic appropriateness. They carefully considered both the ST's meaning and the expectations of the TT audience, effectively using procedures like adaptation, modulation, and transposition. Adaptation allowed the translation to align with the cultural and contextual expectations of the TT audience, while modulation provided a thoughtful reinterpretation of the ST. Transposition enhanced readability and engagement, reflecting the translators' understanding of the complexities involved in translation and their ability to balance accuracy with cultural relevance. At the textual level, the translators do not consider the structural and stylistic differences between the English Arabic, as evidenced on their reliance on direct translation strategy. The results of this study align with Turzynski-Azimi's (2020) findings of a predominant tendency toward source language-oriented procedures in Japanese tourism texts. Both studies suggest that while a strict adherence to the ST can ensure accuracy, but it limits the creative potential necessary for cultural adaptation. Qassem, et al. (2021) found that translator trainees faced difficulties in rendering the promotional tourist texts into the TL, among them are: formulating the main ideas of the ST, composing TT and communicating the TT to the target language. Muñoz (2011) found that cultural references and pragmatic features are among the difficulties of translating tourist texts. She concluded that professionalizing translation in this field is essential for improving quality and effectiveness.

V. CONCLUSION

This study compares trainees' performance on direct and inverse tourism translation tasks, offering both quantitative and qualitative data on their performance. The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on tourism translation, incorporating bidirectional translation into its scope. By examining both direct translations

(English to Arabic) and inverse translations (Arabic to English), this study aims to highlight the challenges faced by trainees in the translation training programs. To assess the translations, three performance criteria were employed: accuracy, style, and clarity. These criteria were selected to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of how well the trainees captured the intended meaning, maintained the original tone, and conveyed the message clearly to the target audience. The study reported low performance on English-to-Arabic and Arabic-to-English translation tasks, especially against the criteria of style and clarity. Furthermore, the translators' performance on inverse translation is lower than in direct translation, indicating that it is more challenging than direct translation. Some of this study's findings aligned with those of researchers studying bidirectionality in different contexts. Regarding course design and training, tourism-related translation is a particular type of translation that needs to be given attention in translation training programs. Furthermore, it is expected that better-quality translations will create a noticeable improvement in the tourism industry. One of the limitations of this study is the small sample; hence, the study could be replicated using a larger sample of participants to validate the findings. Additionally, the study examined only a specific type of tourist texts, so the findings might not apply to all types of tourism-related content. Therefore, further research is required to examine the translation of tourist texts using a broader range of tourist texts and a larger sample of both student and professional translators. Such studies are essential to identify the specific challenges these translators encounter in the translation process. By analysing a diverse array of tourist texts, future investigations could provide insights into whether the difficulties faced are primarily due to gaps in translation training programs or a lack of professional experience.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The authors received the ethical approval from the University of Bisha (58/44/11700) in compliance with the university's Ethics Committee requirements,

CREDIT AUTHOR STATEMENT

Mutahar Qassem: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing, Original Draft,

Writing, Review, Editing, and Visualization.

Yousef Sahari: Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Writing, Review, Editing.

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The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Appendix 1

Rubric for the assessment of the students' translation

Indicator	Definition	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4
Accuracy	Use of language, cultural references, idioms, technical terms, and industry jargon suitable for the target audience. Fidelity to the original message.	Not conveyed	Partially conveyed	Moderately conveyed	Almost conveyed	Precisely conveyed
Style	Adoption of tone, style, and register appropriate for the target audience. Appropriate sentence structure and length.	Not conveyed	Partially conveyed	Almost conveyed	Precisely conveyed	-
Clarity	Clear communication of the original message and intended tone and style.	Not conveyed	Partially conveyed	Almost conveyed	Precisely conveyed	-