
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Successful Translators: Essential Skills, Cultural Competence, and the Impact of Translation Technology

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| ABSTRACT

Although substantial research has examined translation equivalence, cultural transfer, and translation strategies, comparatively little attention has been paid to the translator as the central agent in the translation process. This study investigates the characteristics and competencies required for producing successful translators in various fields, including legal, scientific, medical, literary, and journalistic translation. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative and qualitative data. A questionnaire was administered to fifty undergraduate translation students to explore their perceptions of the factors contributing to translator success, including reading practices, cultural competence, creativity, and the use of translation technology and Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools. In addition, interviews were conducted with university professors and professional translators to obtain expert perspectives on translator development. The findings reveal that linguistic proficiency, continuous reading, cultural awareness, practical training, subject-matter knowledge, and technological competence are among the most influential factors in preparing future translators. The study further demonstrates that knowledge of both source and target cultures, together with the effective use of translation technology, contributes significantly to translation quality. The paper concludes with recommendations for translator education and future research.

| KEYWORDS

Translator competence, cultural knowledge, translation technology, CAT tools, creativity, translator training

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 10 August 2026

PUBLISHED: 27 September 2026

DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2026.9.10.5

1. Introduction

Translation has been a significant human activity throughout history. It has played a vital role in facilitating communication among people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and continues to be one of the most important means of transferring knowledge, ideas, and culture across societies (Bassnett, 2014; House, 2015; Pym, 2010). Throughout history, translation has contributed to the exchange of scientific knowledge, philosophical thought, religious texts, literary works, and technological innovations among different civilisations. As a result, translation has become an essential instrument for communication, cultural exchange, and international cooperation.

Translation is far more than the transfer of words from one language to another. It involves conveying meaning, culture, intention, and context. Successful translation requires the translator to bridge linguistic and cultural differences and communicate messages in ways that are meaningful and appropriate for the target audience (Nida & Taber, 1969; Newmark, 1988; House, 2015; Venuti, 2018). For this reason, translation may be described as the process of transferring a world of ideas into another world of understanding. It is a complex activity that requires linguistic knowledge, cultural awareness, critical thinking, research skills, and professional judgement.

This raises an important question: what lies behind the process of translation? Is learning a foreign language alongside one's native language sufficient to become a successful translator? Although bilingualism is undoubtedly important, the findings of

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translation research suggest that successful translation requires much more than knowledge of two languages. Translators are expected to understand cultural contexts, analyse texts critically, conduct research, solve linguistic and terminological problems, and make informed decisions appropriate to the purpose and audience of the translation (Kelly, 2005; PACTE, 2003; Prieto Ramos, 2024).

The importance of translation becomes evident when considering its role in facilitating communication between people who do not share the same language. Not everyone has the opportunity, ability, or time to learn another language. Consequently, translation serves as a bridge connecting speakers of different languages and cultures and enabling the exchange of ideas, information, and knowledge. Through this mediating role, translation promotes mutual understanding and contributes to social, cultural, academic, and economic development (Bassnett, 2014; House, 2016).

Historically, translation has played a crucial role in the development of civilisations. One of the most prominent examples is the translation movement in Toledo, Spain, during the twelfth century. Raymond, Archbishop of Toledo between 1130 and 1150 A.D., established a centre of translation that aimed to make Arabic philosophical and scientific works available to Europe. Through the efforts of translators working in Toledo, a considerable body of Greek and Arabic knowledge was transmitted to the Latin-speaking world, contributing significantly to intellectual development in medieval Europe.

Similarly, the transmission of Hellenistic, Western, and Arabic philosophy was made possible through translation. Translation enabled knowledge to move across linguistic and geographical boundaries and served as a means of preserving and disseminating human intellectual achievements. Translation and interpreting are therefore not modern disciplines; rather, they are professions with a long and distinguished history rooted in the need for communication among people speaking different languages.

Translation also played an important role in Asia. In China, interpreters participated actively in Buddhist translation forums during the early centuries A.D. These forums functioned as centres for translating Buddhist scriptures into Chinese and facilitated the transmission of religious, philosophical, and cultural knowledge. Interpreters served as intermediaries between Buddhist scholars and local audiences and contributed significantly to the spread of Buddhism in China (Baker, 2020).

Similarly, throughout the Ottoman period and later in the Arab world, translators and interpreters contributed substantially to educational, military, scientific, and administrative development. In Turkey, interpreters were employed in institutions such as the School of Military Engineering during the eighteenth century to facilitate communication with foreign experts and instructors. Similar practices were adopted in Egypt during the period of Muhammad Ali, when modern educational institutions relied on translation and interpreting to access foreign knowledge and expertise (Baker, 1997).

Translation studies as an academic discipline have also attracted considerable scholarly attention. Spivak (2000) highlights the long historical development of translation while drawing attention to the challenges and responsibilities associated with the translator's role. Likewise, Delisle and Woodsworth's *Translators through History* has contributed to documenting the significant role translators have played throughout human history (St. André, 2020).

The rapid development of globalisation, international communication, and digital technology has created new opportunities and challenges for translators. Contemporary translators are expected to work with a wide variety of texts and specialized domains, including legal, scientific, medical, literary, business, journalistic, and technical translation. In addition, recent developments in Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools, machine translation, and artificial intelligence have transformed translation practice and introduced new competencies that translators must acquire (Kenny, 2022; Prieto Ramos, 2024).

Despite technological advances, however, human translators continue to play a central role in ensuring translation quality. Cultural awareness, contextual understanding, critical thinking, creativity, and professional judgement remain essential elements of successful translation. Modern technology may assist translators in increasing efficiency and productivity, but it cannot fully replace the human ability to interpret meaning and mediate between cultures (Kenny, 2022; Budimir, 2025).

Consequently, the question of what makes a successful translator has become increasingly important. Understanding the qualities, skills, and competencies required by successful translators can contribute to improving translator education, enhancing professional development, and preparing future translators for the challenges of an increasingly globalized and technology-driven profession.

1.1 Rationale of the Study

A translator is a professional who transfers texts from one language into another while preserving meaning, context, purpose, and communicative effect. The translator's task extends beyond finding linguistic equivalents; it involves understanding both source and target languages and cultures and making appropriate decisions that result in effective communication. Translators frequently work with various text types, including legal documents, scientific texts, technical manuals, literary works, media content, and business communication. Therefore, they require a combination of linguistic competence, subject-matter expertise, cultural knowledge, research skills, and technological literacy.

The present study is motivated by the increasing need for highly qualified translators who are capable of working effectively in diverse translation contexts. Globalisation, technological advancement, and the growing demand for multilingual communication have increased the need for translators who possess both traditional and contemporary translation competences. Producing successful translators is therefore essential not only for meeting local market needs but also for enabling translators to participate successfully in regional and international translation markets, including freelance and remote work environments.

To achieve this goal, translator education programmes must identify and develop the characteristics that contribute to translator success. Understanding the factors that influence translator competence can assist educators, trainers, curriculum designers, and students in preparing future translators who are capable of adapting to different translation situations and responding effectively to professional challenges.

1.2 Research Objectives

The current study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Identify the key characteristics that contribute to the development of successful translators.
2. Examine the skills and competencies required in different translation fields, including legal, scientific, medical, literary, and journalistic translation.
3. Investigate the role of cultural knowledge in producing high-quality translations.
4. Explore the impact of translation technology and AI-assisted tools on translator competence.
5. Provide recommendations for translator education and professional development.

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, this study addresses the following research questions.

1.3 Research Questions

This study aims to address the following research questions.

1. What skills and competencies are perceived as essential for becoming successful translators in legal, scientific, literary, and journalistic fields?
2. How do participants perceive the role of cultural knowledge in developing future translators?
3. How do university professors and translation practitioners perceive the role of translation technology, including CAT tools, machine translation, and artificial intelligence, in the development of future translators?

2. Literature Review

Translation is a complex process that requires the translator to consider a wide range of linguistic, cultural, professional, and technological factors. The translator should be aware of translation strategies such as domestication and foreignization, in addition to text types and their characteristics. Obeidat and Mahadi (2019) emphasize the importance of selecting appropriate translation strategies according to the nature and purpose of the text. Similarly, Farghal and Shunnaq (1992, p.203) point out that competence in general translation does not necessarily qualify a translator to deal with specialized texts. They state that:

"It should not be taken for granted that a competent translator of general materials is of necessity a competent translator of legal texts because there are many subtleties relating to syntax, layout and tenor that are peculiar to legal texts."

This literature review sheds light on the importance of translation, translator competence, cultural knowledge, translation technology, and the characteristics that contribute to producing successful future translators.

2.1. Importance of Translation

Translation plays a vital role in modern societies and serves many important functions. First, translation facilitates communication among people who speak different languages and belong to different cultures. It acts as a mediator between individuals, institutions, and nations and contributes greatly to international business and cooperation, particularly in today's globalized

world (Bassnett, 2014; House, 2015). Through this mediating role, translation promotes interaction across linguistic and cultural boundaries and supports global communication (Chesterman, 2006; Pym, 2010).

Second, translation serves as a gateway to information. Through translation, people can access knowledge, scientific discoveries, literature, and educational resources that may not be available in their native languages. In this regard, translation facilitates the dissemination of specialized knowledge and enables the transfer of meaning and information across languages (Nida & Taber, 1969; Newmark, 1988). Moreover, translation contributes significantly to the circulation of information and the expansion of access to knowledge in multilingual societies (House, 2016).

Third, translation contributes to cultural exchange. Through translation, literary works, films, artistic productions, and cultural artifacts can be exchanged, appreciated, and understood by people from different cultural backgrounds. As a result, translation fosters intercultural dialogue and promotes a deeper understanding of cultural diversity (Bassnett, 2014; Venuti, 2018). Furthermore, translation is not merely a linguistic activity but also a cultural and social practice that facilitates intercultural engagement and exchange (Tymoczko, 2006).

Fourth, translation promotes diplomatic relationships and international cooperation. Effective communication between countries often depends on accurate translation, which can strengthen diplomatic ties, reduce misunderstandings, and facilitate mutual understanding among nations (Pym, 2010; Bielsa, 2010). Consequently, translation is widely recognised as an essential means of communication, knowledge transfer, cultural exchange, and international collaboration in the contemporary world. As a result of the diverse functions of translation, translators themselves often become flexible-minded individuals who are capable of navigating different linguistic and cultural systems.

2.2. Linguistic Competence and Translator Development

Linguistic proficiency should come first. The current paper advocates Heyderova's stance (2025) that linguistic proficiency forms the backbone of effective translation. Likewise, Tursunovich (2022) argues that linguistic proficiency enables translators to preserve the essence and integrity of the source text, which is critical for maintaining meaning and tone. This view is consistent with the literature on translation competence, which identifies linguistic competence as a fundamental prerequisite for successful translation (Nida & Taber, 1969; Newmark, 1988; PACTE, 2003). Recent studies continue to confirm that linguistic competence remains at the core of professional translator performance and translation competence development (Peng et al., 2023; Ramírez-Polo & Vargas-Sierra, 2023).

The translator should master the target language to a level comparable to that of the native language. One factor that contributes significantly to language mastery is living, studying, or working in the target-language country. Such experiences provide the translator with a strong foundation and a deeper understanding of both languages. Exposure to authentic linguistic and cultural environments enhances communicative competence and improves translators' ability to produce natural and accurate target texts (Baker, 2018; House, 2015). Contemporary research similarly emphasizes the importance of authentic language exposure in developing translation competence and professional expertise (Peng et al., 2023).

Linguistic proficiency has a significant role in preparing aspiring translators. Language can be viewed as the translator's primary tool. If translation is considered a game, language is the instrument through which the translator controls and directs the game. Similarly, translation may be compared to preparing a dish. A skilled translator knows how to combine linguistic ingredients to produce a final product that is meaningful and appealing. Translation scholars have consistently emphasized that linguistic competence forms the basis upon which other translation sub-competences are developed (Kelly, 2005; PACTE, 2003). More recent research has reinforced this view by demonstrating that linguistic competence underpins technological, strategic, professional, and ethical competences in translator education (Ramírez-Polo & Vargas-Sierra, 2023; Peng et al., 2023).

A successful translator should also possess the ability to understand, analyse, and write effectively in both languages. This ability is developed through prolonged practice in translating into and from the source and target languages. Translation competence is not acquired instantly but develops through systematic practice and experience that strengthen analytical, interpretative, and writing skills (Kiraly, 2000; EMT Expert Group, 2017). Recent studies have likewise shown that continuous practice and structured learning significantly improve translation competence and professional performance (Zhu, 2023; Peng et al., 2023).

Reading also plays a crucial role in translator development. The translator is a passionate and curious reader. The question often arises: Is it translation that creates a good reader, or is it a good reader who produces good translation? Regardless of the answer, extensive reading remains essential. Regular reading exposes translators to diverse linguistic structures, registers, styles, and cultural perspectives, thereby enriching their linguistic and textual competence (Newmark, 1988; Venuti, 2018).

For example, if a translator is required to translate a text about the British Parliament, it is important to understand not only the language of the text but also the British government, British culture, historical developments of Parliament, and its relationship with other governments. This illustrates the importance of extralinguistic knowledge and subject-matter expertise in translation, which are widely regarded as integral components of translation competence (Kelly, 2005; PACTE, 2005).

Al-Mukharriq (1993) emphasizes that translation theory cannot be separated from practice. She notes that the translation process involves five major stages:

- Reading through the text to be translated.
- Reading about the subject matter.
- Producing a draft translation.
- Putting the draft aside for a period of time.
- Revising, checking, and editing the translation.

Professional translators frequently engage in documentary research and consultation of reference materials to ensure accuracy, appropriateness, and quality in their translations (Gouadec, 2007; Pym, 2010). Furthermore, translators should recognize that translation is time-consuming and requires patience, continuous reading, and ongoing research.

Training also contributes significantly to translator development. Intensive training programs, such as student exchange opportunities and professional workshops, allow translators to improve their language skills, increase subject-matter knowledge, and gain experience with different translation techniques. Research in translator education has demonstrated that structured training enhances both translation competence and professional readiness (Király, 2000; EMT Expert Group, 2017). More recent studies indicate that training also enhances technological competence, employability, adaptability, and professional confidence (Zhu, 2023; Rothwell et al., 2025).

Training helps translators develop language proficiency, knowledge of different subject areas, translation strategies and techniques, cultural competence, ethical awareness, technological skills, and lifelong learning habits. The translator who continuously trains and practices becomes more confident and more capable of handling different translation situations (Kelly, 2005; PACTE, 2003). Recent research further confirms that ongoing training plays a crucial role in developing the professional, technological, and ethical competences required in contemporary translation practice (Ramírez-Polo & Vargas-Sierra, 2023; Zhu, 2023; Rothwell et al., 2025).

2.3. Cultural Knowledge and Translation Quality

Linguistic proficiency alone is not sufficient for producing high-quality translations. It should go hand in hand with cultural knowledge. Translation scholars have long emphasized that translation involves both linguistic transfer and cultural mediation (Nida & Taber, 1969; Bassnett, 2014). More recent research likewise confirms that successful translation requires a deep understanding of cultural contexts and meanings beyond the linguistic level (Sun, 2022; Ozturk, 2024).

The translator should possess knowledge of both source and target cultures in order to produce a text that reads naturally and effectively. Ideally, the target text should appear as though it were originally written in the target language rather than translated from another language. This notion is consistent with the view that translators function as intercultural mediators who bridge different linguistic and cultural systems (House, 2015; Venuti, 2018; Olk, 2009).

Cultural awareness enables translators to understand customs, beliefs, values, traditions, and social practices that shape language use. Translators should have knowledge of multicultural, cross-cultural, and intercultural communities. Such knowledge helps them avoid misunderstandings and cultural misrepresentations. Cultural competence has been identified as a key component of translation competence because cultural references, social norms, and value systems are often embedded in language and influence meaning (Kelly, 2005; PACTE, 2005; Metwally, 2020; Ozturk, 2024).

One important way of developing cultural competence is through travelling. Travelling allows translators to immerse themselves in foreign cultures and experience traditions, social customs, cuisine, arts, and daily linguistic practices firsthand. Such direct exposure enables translators to develop intercultural awareness and gain a richer understanding of how language functions within specific cultural settings (Byram, 1997; Olk, 2009).

Living in a target-language environment also enhances language proficiency by exposing translators to colloquialisms, regional varieties, accents, and culture-specific expressions that may not be learned through textbooks alone. Authentic cultural and

linguistic exposure help translators develop the sensitivity needed to recognize subtle meanings and culturally bound expressions in both source and target texts (Baker, 2018; House, 2015).

Traveling also provides opportunities for professional networking. Translators who participate in conferences, workshops, or training programs abroad can exchange ideas with colleagues from different cultures and gain valuable professional insights. Such interactions contribute to professional growth by expanding translators' intercultural competence and awareness of diverse translation practices (EMT Expert Group, 2017; Zhu, 2023).

Ultimately, exposure to other cultures contributes positively to both linguistic and professional development and helps translators produce higher-quality translations. Studies of translator competence consistently demonstrate that cultural knowledge and intercultural competence have a direct impact on translation quality and the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication (PACTE, 2005; Metwally, 2020; Ozturk, 2024).

Translators, however, should bear in mind that they are not only language communicators, but also cross-cultural communicators. Sun (2022) adds to that, literary translators must convey not only linguistic meaning, but also cultural values, emotions and aesthetic effects. Sun's article supports the current study's emphasis on cultural competence as a fundamental component of translator success. This view is supported by contemporary scholarship, which regards translators as cultural mediators responsible for negotiating meaning across linguistic and cultural boundaries (Venuti, 2018; Hashemi, 2025).

2.4. Translation Technology and Artificial Intelligence

Recent developments in technology have transformed the translation profession. Modern translators are expected to possess technological competence in addition to linguistic and cultural skills (PACTE Group, 2017; O'Brien, 2012; Prieto Ramos, 2024). Artificial Intelligence can be viewed as an assistant in translation rather than a fully proficient translator. Translators must keep pace with developments in AI, neural machine translation, and other technological innovations while maintaining a commitment to lifelong learning (Bowker & Buitrago Ciro, 2019; Kenny, 2022; Prieto Ramos, 2024).

Although AI systems may excel in speed and productivity, human translators remain indispensable for ensuring accuracy, cultural appropriateness, contextual understanding, and creativity (Toral, 2020; Kenny, 2022; Budimir, 2025). Producing excellent translations requires a combination of human linguistic expertise, research skills, technological competence, knowledge of source and target cultures, and creative thinking (PACTE Group, 2017; Hurtado Albir, 2017; Prieto Ramos, 2024). Therefore, the future translator should be an expert in language, culture, and technology.

Knowledge of technology includes familiarity with computers, Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools, Artificial Intelligence applications, and the ability to determine what information generated by these tools can be accepted or rejected (O'Brien, 2012; Bowker & Buitrago Ciro, 2019; European Commission, 2022). Continuous training allows translators to remain up to date with technological developments and adapt to the changing requirements of the translation profession (European Commission, 2022; Prieto Ramos, 2024).

2.5. Characteristics of Successful Translators

A successful translator is one who combines linguistic competence, cultural awareness, professional ethics, subject-matter expertise, motivation, and continuous learning. Contemporary models of translation competence emphasize that professional translators need not only excellent command of languages but also strategic, instrumental, and intercultural competences that enable them to perform effectively in diverse translation contexts (PACTE Group, 2017; European Commission, 2022; Prieto Ramos, 2024).

2.5.1. Ethical Characteristics

Ethics should occupy a central position in translation practice. Professional ethics guide translators in their interactions with texts, clients, and readers and contribute to the credibility and quality of translation services. Honesty, trustworthiness, faithfulness, and confidentiality are among the most important ethical principles recognised in translation studies and professional codes of conduct (Chesterman, 2018; Pym, 2012; Bennett, 2021).

Honesty requires translators to transfer the message faithfully without making unnecessary additions, omissions, or distortions. The translator's role is to communicate the intended meaning of the source text as accurately as possible while respecting the communicative purpose of the translation (Chesterman, 2018; Bennett, 2021).

Trustworthiness is demonstrated through professional conduct, including meeting agreed deadlines, maintaining constructive relationships with clients, and delivering work that fulfills professional standards. Trust has long been regarded as a fundamental

component of translator ethics because clients rely on translators to handle information responsibly and competently (Pym, 2012; Bennett, 2021).

Faithfulness, according to Shiyab (2006), refers to the closeness and accuracy of the translated text in preserving the meaning of the source text. This principle is closely related to the traditional ethical concept of fidelity, which has historically occupied a central place in discussions of translation quality and professional responsibility (Chesterman, 2018; Nord, 1997).

Confidentiality requires translators to protect any information entrusted to them regardless of its field or subject matter. Professional translators are often exposed to sensitive legal, medical, business, or personal documents, and maintaining confidentiality is therefore an essential ethical obligation recognised by professional translation associations worldwide (Bennett, 2021).

2.5.2. Professional and Linguistic Characteristics

Successful translators should possess a strong command of both the source and target languages, engage continuously in translation practice, develop expertise in specialized subject areas, obtain professional certifications where possible, understand both the language and the context of the text, remain motivated and passionate about their work, develop translation plans and strategies, and build confidence through practice and experience. These characteristics correspond to the linguistic, strategic, professional, and instrumental competences identified in major translation competence frameworks (PACTE Group, 2017; Hurtado Albir, 2017; European Commission, 2022).

A strong command of the source and target languages enables translators to understand subtle linguistic nuances and produce clear, natural, and accurate target texts. Equally important is the ability to analyse texts, identify translation problems, and apply appropriate strategies to solve them. Continuous practice helps translators refine these abilities and develop confidence in their decision-making processes (PACTE Group, 2017; Kelly, 2005).

Subject-matter expertise is particularly important because translators frequently work with specialized texts containing technical terminology and domain-specific concepts. For instance, a translator dealing with automotive texts should possess at least a basic understanding of mechanical engineering concepts. Such knowledge facilitates the translation process, improves terminological accuracy, and increases translators' confidence. Specialized knowledge has consistently been recognised as a key factor contributing to translation quality and professional performance (PACTE Group, 2017; Prieto Ramos, 2024).

Professional translators should also be capable of developing translation plans and selecting appropriate strategies according to the purpose, audience, and context of the translation task. Motivation, dedication, and commitment to quality further contribute to successful performance and professional growth (Kelly, 2005; Prieto Ramos, 2024).

Above all, successful translators are lifelong learners who continuously read, research, practice, and improve their skills. Continuous professional development enables translators to adapt to technological innovations, changing market demands, and evolving professional requirements. Through continuous learning, translators maintain their competitiveness and ensure the consistent production of accurate, effective, and high-quality translations (European Commission, 2022; Prieto Ramos, 2024; PACTE Group, 2017).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. The integration of questionnaire data and interview responses allows for a comprehensive investigation of the factors contributing to translator success.

3.2 Participants

The questionnaire was administered to 50 Bahraini Arab university students. All participants were native speakers of Arabic, although some also spoke Arabic and Farsi due to their Persian family origins. Participants had acquired Arabic through formal schooling from an early age and had studied English as a foreign language throughout their school education. At the university level, all participants were majoring in English Language and Literature and minoring in Translation. The students were in their fourth year of study, with most aged between 21 and 22 years, while only a small number were above the age of 23. As senior undergraduate students with substantial exposure to both English language studies and translation courses, the participants were considered well positioned to express informed views on the factors contributing to translator development.

The interview participants consisted of university professors and professional translators with more than ten years of experience in translation teaching and practice. The university professors had extensive experience in translator education and translation

research, while the professional translators had practical experience in a variety of translation fields. The inclusion of both groups was intended to provide academic and professional perspectives on the characteristics and competencies required for successful translators. Their experience enabled them to offer informed views on translator competence, cultural knowledge, professional development, and the role of translation technology in contemporary translation practice.

3.3 Research Instruments

3.3.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of twelve closed-ended statements as shown in Table 1 examining:

1. linguistic competence,
2. reading habits,
3. cultural knowledge and exposure (e.g., travel experience),
4. translation practice,
5. technology use.

Table 1 Questionnaire Distributed to Translation Senior Students about Successful Translators

Item No.	Statement	Construct Measured
1	The translator plays an important role in the text he/she translates.	Translator Role and Professional Awareness
2	Reading can be a great help to the translator.	Reading Habits and Translator Development
3	Knowledge of the subject matter helps in translating the text.	Subject-Matter Expertise
4	Reading about the article in Arabic and English before the translation process can be helpful to the translator.	Background Research and Preparation
5	Knowledge of the target language culture helps in the translation process.	Cultural Competence
6	The use of dictionaries only is the most effective method of translation.	Use of Translation Resources
7	Practising translation helps the translator in his/her profession.	Translation Practice and Skill Development
8	The translator should read in the source language only.	Reading Preferences
9	The translator should read in the target language only.	Reading Preferences
10	The translator should read in the source and target languages.	Bilingual Reading Competence
11	Travelling helps in the translation process.	Cultural Exposure and Intercultural Experience
12	Working as a translator while undergoing translation courses is useful.	Professional Experience and Translator Training

The questionnaire consisted of twelve Likert-scale statements (Table 1) designed to investigate students' perceptions of the factors contributing to the translator's success. The items examined five major dimensions: translator competence and professional development, reading and research skills, cultural knowledge and exposure and use of translation resources. Translation technology was explored through the semi-structured interviews rather than through the questionnaire.

Respondents indicated their level of agreement using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The questionnaire was administered to fifty senior university translation students.

3.3.2. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with translation scholars and professional practitioners. Table 2 illustrates the semi-structured interview questions used in the study.

Table 2 Semi-structured interview questions

Section	Focus Area	Interview Questions
Section 1	Skills and Competencies for Translators	1. What essential skills are crucial for translators in fields such as legal, scientific, medical, and literary translation? 2. How important is subject-matter expertise in ensuring translation effectiveness and quality?
Section 2	Cultural Knowledge in Translation	3. How does cultural knowledge enhance the translation process? 4. What role does cultural immersion play in developing translation skills?
Section 3	Technology Tools in Translation	5. What translation technology tools do you find most beneficial for students? 6. How has Artificial Intelligence (AI) impacted the skills required of future translators?
Closing Question	Professional Advice	7. What key advice would you give to aspiring translators?

The interview protocol consisted of seven semi-structured questions organized into three main sections. The first section investigated the skills and competencies required for successful translators, particularly in specialized fields. The second section explored the role of cultural knowledge and cultural immersion in translation. The third section examined participants' views on translation technology, including CAT tools and Artificial Intelligence. The interviews concluded with an open-ended question inviting participants to provide professional advice to aspiring translators. The interview structure was designed to address the study's three research questions concerning translator competence, cultural awareness, and the impact of technology on future translators.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, particularly percentage calculations, while qualitative interview responses were examined through thematic analysis. The findings from both methods were subsequently integrated to achieve data triangulation, strengthen the validity of the results, and address the study's research questions comprehensively.

4. Findings

This section reports on the results of the questionnaire and the interviews. The results include quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative data (interviews), allowing for triangulation of results.

4.1. Results of the Questionnaire

The results of the questionnaire are organized based on measured constructs. These include 1) translator competence and professional skills, 2) reading and knowledge acquisition, 3) cultural knowledge and intercultural competence and 4) translation technology.

4.1.1. Translator Competence and Professional Skills

The findings demonstrate a strong consensus among participants regarding the importance of translator competence and professional skills in achieving successful translation. As shown in Table 3, 96% of respondents agreed that the translator plays an important role in the text he or she translates. This high level of agreement suggests that students perceive translators as active participants in the translation process who make linguistic and communicative decisions rather than merely transferring words from one language to another. Participants also attached considerable importance to subject-matter expertise. Nearly all respondents (98%) agreed that knowledge of the subject matter assists translators in producing effective translations (Table 3). This finding indicates that students recognize the importance of specialized knowledge for translators working in legal, scientific, literary, and journalistic contexts.

Table 3: Students' Perceptions of Translator Competence and Professional Skills (N = 50)

Item	Agree (%)
The translator plays an important role in the text he/she translates	96
Knowledge of the subject matter helps in translating the text	98
Practising translation helps the translator in his/her profession	94
Working as a translator while studying translation courses is useful	82
Dictionaries only are the most effective method of translation	22

Practical experience emerged as another important dimension of translator competence. As illustrated in Table 3, 94% of respondents agreed that practicing translation contributes to professional development, while 82% agreed that working as a translator while pursuing translation studies is beneficial. These findings suggest that students view practical engagement with translation tasks as an essential means of developing professional competence and preparing for future employment. In contrast, participants generally rejected the notion that dictionaries alone constitute the most effective translation method. Only 22% agreed with this statement, whereas the majority either disagreed or selected a neutral response (Table 3). This result reflects an awareness that translation involves a wide range of linguistic, cognitive, and research skills that extend beyond the simple use of dictionaries.

4.1.2. Reading and Knowledge Acquisition

Reading was identified as one of the most important factors contributing to translator development. As presented in Table 4, 96% of respondents agreed that reading can be a great help to translators. This finding suggests that students perceive reading as an effective means of expanding vocabulary, strengthening language proficiency, and increasing knowledge of various topics relevant to translation.

Table 4: Students' Perceptions of Reading and Knowledge Acquisition (N = 50)

Item	Agree (%)
Reading can be a great help to the translator	96
Reading about a topic in Arabic and English before translation is helpful	94
Translators should read in the source language only	8
Translators should read in the target language only	6
Translators should read in both source and target languages	86

Similarly, 94% of respondents agreed that reading about a topic in both Arabic and English before undertaking a translation task is beneficial. This result indicates that students value preparatory research and recognize its contribution to producing informed and accurate translations. Participants also expressed clear opinions regarding language exposure. While only 8% agreed that translators should read exclusively in the source language and 6% agreed that they should read exclusively in the target language, a substantial majority (86%) agreed that translators should read in both languages. As shown in Figure 1, respondents overwhelmingly favored bilingual reading practices over monolingual exposure. This finding suggests that students consider reading in both languages an essential component of translator development and professional growth.

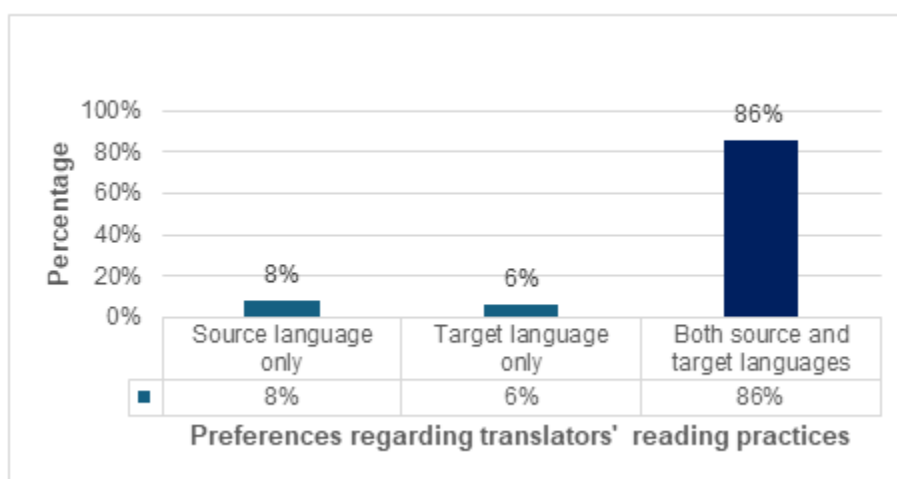


Figure 1: Preferences regarding translators' reading practices

4.1.3. Cultural Knowledge and Intercultural Competence

The findings reveal that students perceive cultural knowledge as a central component of translator competence. As reported in Table 5, 94% of respondents agreed that knowledge of the target-language culture helps in the translation process. This high level of agreement demonstrates students' awareness of the close relationship between language and culture and their recognition that successful translation requires cultural as well as linguistic competence.

The result suggests that students consider knowledge of cultural values, traditions, communicative norms, and references essential for producing translations that accurately convey meaning across languages and cultures. These findings support the view that intercultural competence is an integral aspect of professional translator development.

Table 5: Students' Perceptions of Cultural Knowledge (N = 50)

Item	Agree (%)
Knowledge of the target-language culture helps in the translation process	94
Travelling helps in the translation process	60

Participants also acknowledged the potential value of direct cultural exposure. As illustrated in Figure 2, 60% agreed that travelling helps in the translation process. Although this percentage is lower than that reported for cultural knowledge, it nevertheless indicates that many students perceive firsthand cultural experiences as beneficial for enhancing translation competence.

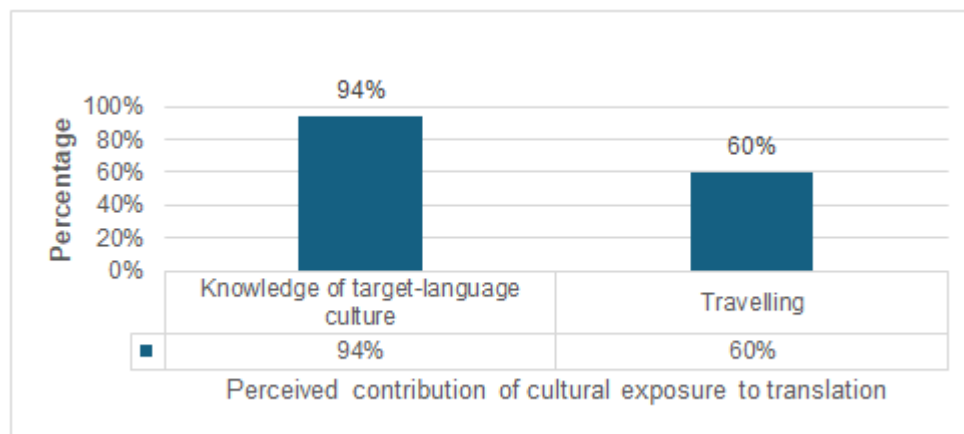


Figure 2: Perceived Contribution of Cultural Exposure to Translation

4.1.4. Translation Technology

One of the limitations of the current study concerns not incorporating questions measuring students' perceptions of translation technology, including computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, machine translation, or artificial intelligence applications. Consequently, the collected data do not allow conclusions to be drawn regarding the effectiveness of such technologies in enhancing students' translation skills. Future research should therefore incorporate variables related to CAT tools, machine translation systems, and AI-assisted translation to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of technology in translator development.

Overall, the findings suggest that students view successful translation as a multifaceted process that requires the integration of linguistic competence, subject-matter expertise, cultural awareness, extensive reading, and practical experience. Moreover, the results indicate that students perceive successful translators as individuals who combine professional competence with continuous learning, cultural understanding, and practical experience.

4.2. Results of Interviews

This subsection reports on the results of the interviews conducted with translation university professors and translation practitioners. Below is a thematic analysis organized around four themes: (1) Translator Competence and Subject-Matter Expertise, (2) Reading, Research, and Lifelong Learning, (3) Cultural Knowledge and Cultural Immersion, and (4) Translation Technology and Artificial Intelligence.

4.2.1 Thematic Analysis of University Professors' and Practitioners' Perspectives

To provide a deeper understanding of the characteristics that contribute to successful future translators, the interview data from university professors and professional translators were analysed thematically. The analysis revealed substantial agreement between the two groups regarding the importance of translator competence, cultural awareness, and translation technology. However, differences emerged in the emphasis placed on particular aspects of translator development. While university

professors tended to discuss translation from pedagogical and theoretical perspectives, practitioners emphasized workplace realities and industry requirements.

Theme 1: Translator Competence and Subject-Matter Expertise

Both university professors and practitioners regarded translator competence as a multidimensional construct involving linguistic proficiency, subject-matter knowledge, and research skills. The university professors highlighted the academic foundations of translator competence, emphasizing mastery of source and target languages, terminological precision, research skills, and specialist knowledge. One professor noted that translators in legal and scientific fields require "a compound of linguistic, subject-matter, and research skills," while another emphasized patience, meticulousness, and repeated reading of both source and target texts. Professors also stressed that translators should be familiar with legal systems, scientific methodologies, and specialized terminology to ensure accuracy and avoid misinterpretation. As one participant observed, competence in general translation does not necessarily imply competence in specialized translation.

Similarly, practitioners emphasized the importance of domain-specific knowledge and terminological accuracy. One practitioner argued that subject-matter expertise is "the defining factor that separates an adequate translation from an exceptional one," while another stressed that translators must be well versed in legal materials, scientific literature, and technical jargon. Practitioners repeatedly emphasized precision in terminology, wording, and interpretation, particularly when translating specialized texts in which inaccuracies may have serious consequences.

A further area of agreement concerned research competence. Professors referred to the importance of consulting authoritative references, multilingual databases, and specialized resources, whereas practitioners emphasized the need for translators to become expert researchers capable of locating reliable information through dictionaries, glossaries, and academic publications. These findings suggest that translator competence is not limited to linguistic proficiency but also involves specialist knowledge and the ability to conduct effective research.

Theme 2: Reading, Research, and Lifelong Learning

Reading and research emerged as another central theme across all interviews. Both university professors and practitioners viewed these activities as essential for developing translation competence and maintaining professional standards.

The university professors emphasized reading as a means of enhancing language proficiency, cultural awareness, and subject knowledge. One participant advised aspiring translators to "read extensively in both cultures" because exposure to authentic texts contributes to idiomatic fluency and cultural competence. Another stressed the importance of exposure to high-quality writing in both Arabic and English, while a third encouraged translators to read about translation strategies and engage in continuous practice.

Practitioners expressed similar views. One participant acknowledged that no translator can know every specialized term and therefore emphasized the importance of becoming an expert researcher. Another recommended reading original sources in both languages, while others stressed lifelong learning and continuous professional development. One practitioner advised aspiring translators to become experts in a chosen specialization and continuously update their knowledge to keep pace with developments in language and industry. The findings therefore demonstrate a shared belief that successful translators are lifelong learners who continually expand their linguistic, cultural, and professional knowledge through reading and research.

Theme 3: Cultural Knowledge and Cultural Immersion

Cultural competence constituted one of the strongest areas of agreement between university professors and practitioners. The university professors emphasized the role of culture in preserving meaning, tone, and communicative intent. One participant explained that cultural knowledge enables translators to identify culturally bound expressions, idioms, and references and to replace them with appropriate equivalents in the target language. Another stated that culture contributes to the naturalness of language and helps translators understand connotations that may otherwise be overlooked. Furthermore, professors emphasized that cultural immersion develops pragmatic competence, idiomatic fluency, genre awareness, and intercultural understanding.

Practitioners expressed similar views regarding the importance of cultural knowledge. One participant illustrated this point by explaining that expressions such as "break a leg" cannot be translated literally because their communicative purpose differs from their literal meaning. Another highlighted the importance of cultural understanding in advertising and branding, where translators frequently need to reproduce the intended impact of a message rather than transfer individual words. Practitioners also emphasized the role of cultural knowledge in preserving humour, symbolism, emotional meaning, and social conventions.

Regarding cultural immersion, both groups agreed that direct engagement with the target culture contributes significantly to translation quality. While professors emphasized immersion as a means of developing intercultural competence, practitioners stressed that there is "no substitute for living" a culture. According to the interviewees, immersion enables translators to understand humour, idiomatic expressions, social norms, and communicative conventions more naturally and accurately. Although some participants noted that cultural adaptation plays a more prominent role in literary and marketing translation than in highly specialized scientific or legal texts, the overall findings indicate that cultural knowledge remains an essential component of translator competence across translation domains.

Theme 4: Translation Technology and Artificial Intelligence

The interview findings indicate a broad consensus regarding the growing importance of translation technology within the profession. Among the university professors, Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools were frequently identified as valuable resources for terminology management, consistency, and productivity. Participants referred to tools such as SDL Trados Studio, MemoQ, Wordfast, terminology databases, translation memories, and glossary-management systems as important components of translator training. Professors emphasized that these tools assist students in maintaining terminological consistency and improving research efficiency. Practitioners shared this view and generally regarded CAT tools as indispensable in contemporary translation practice. One practitioner described CAT tools as the "centrepieces of a translator's toolkit," while others emphasized the value of translation memories, terminology databases, and collaborative translation platforms for improving efficiency and maintaining quality standards.

Artificial Intelligence also emerged as a major issue in the interviews. Both university professors and practitioners acknowledged that AI has transformed translation practice by accelerating drafting, terminology retrieval, and information processing. However, both groups emphasized that AI-generated translations cannot replace human expertise. Participants repeatedly noted that AI often struggles with contextual nuances, stylistic appropriateness, and cultural meaning.

Consequently, post-editing emerged as a key competency for future translators. Interviewees agreed that translators must increasingly develop skills in evaluating, revising, and improving machine-generated translations. As one participant noted, AI may facilitate translation, but human intervention remains essential to ensure accuracy and quality. These findings suggest that the role of the translator is evolving from that of a language converter to that of a language specialist and quality controller.

4.2.2 Summary of Similarities and Differences Between the Perceptions of University Professors and Translation Practitioners

Overall, the findings reveal a high degree of convergence between university professors and practitioners as illustrated in Figure 3. Both groups agreed that successful translators require strong linguistic competence, subject-matter expertise, research skills, cultural awareness, and technological literacy. Both also recognised the growing importance of AI and post-editing skills within the translation profession.

However, important differences were observed in emphasis. University professors focused primarily on theoretical foundations, educational development, and competence acquisition. Their discussions frequently emphasized language mastery, intercultural competence, translation strategies, and the pedagogical role of technology in translator education. Practitioners, in contrast, emphasized professional realities, efficiency, quality assurance, terminology management, and market requirements. Their comments reflected a stronger focus on workplace expectations, real-world translation challenges, productivity tools, and client-oriented performance.

Despite these differences, both groups identified subject-matter expertise, cultural competence, research ability, translation technologies, and continuous professional development as essential characteristics of successful translators. The findings therefore suggest that successful future translators require a balanced combination of academic knowledge, professional experience, intercultural awareness, research competence, and technological expertise.

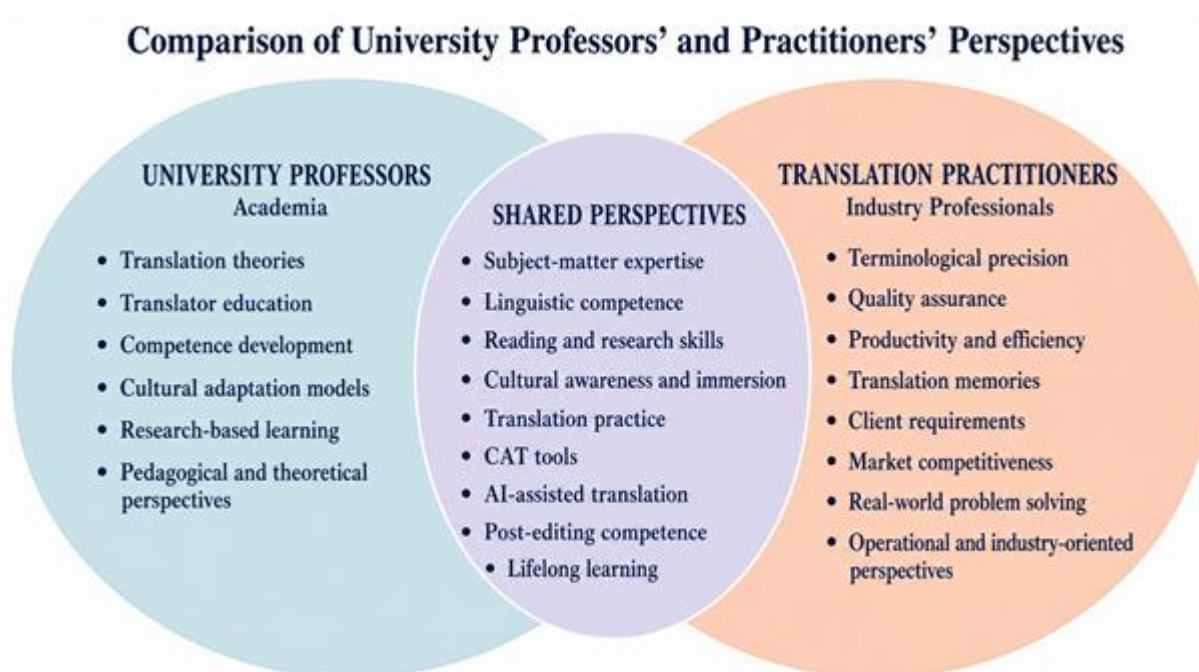


Figure 3: Venn Diagram of Similarities and Differences in Perceptions of Translation University Professors and Translation Practitioners

5. Discussion

The present study aimed at identifying the characteristics that contribute to the development of successful future translators from the perspectives of translation students, university professors, and translation practitioners. The findings demonstrate a high degree of agreement regarding the importance of linguistic competence, subject-matter expertise, reading habits, cultural knowledge, continuous learning, and technological literacy. The discussion that follows interprets these findings in relation to both foundational and contemporary scholarship in translation studies.

5.1. Translator Competence and Professional Skills

One of the most significant findings of the study concerns the importance of translator competence and professional skills. The questionnaire results revealed that most students viewed translator competence as a fundamental factor in successful translation. Most participants agreed that translators play an important role in the texts they translate, while almost all respondents emphasized the importance of subject-matter knowledge. These findings were further supported by the interview data, where both university professors and professional translators stressed that successful translation depends on linguistic proficiency, research ability, and specialist knowledge.

These findings are consistent with both foundational and contemporary perspectives on translation competence. Nida and Taber (1969) argue that successful translation requires the translator to reproduce meaning naturally and accurately for the target audience rather than merely transferring linguistic forms. Similarly, Catford (1965) emphasizes that translation involves understanding linguistic systems and making appropriate shifts between source and target languages, while Newmark (1988) highlights the importance of linguistic competence, textual understanding, and subject-matter knowledge in the translation process.

The importance of specialist expertise identified in the present study is also supported by Farghal and Shunnaq (1992), who found that translation students experienced considerable difficulties when translating legal texts because of limited familiarity with legal terminology, syntax, layout, and discourse conventions. Their study concluded that competence in general translation does not necessarily qualify translators to handle specialized texts successfully. This observation closely mirrors the views expressed by both professors and practitioners in the current study, who emphasized that translators working in legal, scientific, and technical fields require specialized knowledge in addition to linguistic skills.

The findings further support contemporary competence models. PACTE (2003, 2005) conceptualizes translation competence as a multidimensional construct that includes linguistic, extralinguistic, instrumental, strategic, and psycho-physiological competences. Similarly, Kelly (2005) maintains that professional translators require a combination of language proficiency, thematic expertise, research skills, and professional competence. The emphasis placed by participants on terminology management, specialist knowledge, and research ability corresponds closely to these competence frameworks.

The findings also demonstrated the importance of practice and professional experience. Students believed that translation practice contributes significantly to professional development and that working as a translator while studying is beneficial. These findings support Kiraly's (2000) social constructivist approach to translator education, which views competence as developing through authentic practice and interaction with real translation tasks. They also align with Toury's (1995) view that translation competence develops through repeated exposure to translational norms and professional practice.

The importance of practice identified in the current study also reflects the translation process as mentioned in Al-Mukharriq (1993). This process involves reading the source text, researching the subject matter, producing a draft translation, allowing time for reflection, and subsequently revising and editing the final version. The emphasis placed by participants on practice, revision, and research supports this model and highlights the relationship between theory and practice in translator development.

The rejection of the view that dictionaries alone constitute the most effective translation method is equally significant. Only a small proportion of respondents supported this idea. This finding suggests that students understand translation as a complex cognitive and communicative activity rather than a process of lexical substitution. Such a view is consistent with Nida and Taber's (1969) emphasis on dynamic equivalence and Newmark's (1988) argument that translators must consider context, communicative purpose, and audience expectations. It is also consistent with Gouadec's (2007) description of translators as information specialists who rely on multiple resources and research strategies in their professional practice.

5.2. Reading, Research, and Knowledge Acquisition

Reading emerged as another central factor influencing translator development. Questionnaire findings demonstrated that students strongly believe reading contributes positively to translation performance. Participants also expressed a clear preference for reading in both source and target languages rather than restricting themselves to one language.

The interview findings reinforced these results. University professors and practitioners consistently emphasized extensive reading, research, and lifelong learning as essential characteristics of successful translators. Participants argued that reading expands vocabulary, improves stylistic awareness, enhances cultural knowledge, and increases familiarity with specialized subject areas.

These findings support Newmark's (1988) view that translators should be active readers who continually develop their linguistic and textual knowledge. Likewise, Nida and Taber (1969) argue that effective translation begins with a thorough understanding of the source text and its communicative function. Before transferring meaning, translators must first interpret and comprehend the source text accurately. Larson (1984) similarly views comprehension as a fundamental stage of the translation process that requires both linguistic and contextual understanding.

The finding that respondents strongly supported reading in both Arabic and English is particularly noteworthy. This suggests that students recognize the importance of maintaining competence in both linguistic systems. Exposure to authentic texts in both languages contributes to lexical development, stylistic flexibility, and awareness of discourse conventions. This finding supports Baker's (2018) argument that extensive exposure to authentic language use helps translators acquire a deeper understanding of collocations, idiomatic expressions, and textual patterns.

The findings also support Gouadec's (2007) observation that professional translators spend a considerable amount of time conducting documentary research and consulting reference materials. This is reflected in the questionnaire results, where most students agreed that reading about a topic in both Arabic and English before translating is beneficial. Such behaviour demonstrates an awareness of the importance of preparation and research in ensuring translation quality.

Furthermore, the emphasis on lifelong learning is consistent with both classical and contemporary scholarship. From Newmark (1988) to the EMT Expert Group (2017), translation scholars have repeatedly emphasized that translators must continually update their linguistic, cultural, and professional knowledge to meet the changing demands of the profession.

5.3. Cultural Knowledge and Intercultural Competence

The findings strongly indicate that cultural competence is considered an essential element of successful translation. Most students agreed that knowledge of the target-language culture contributes significantly to translation effectiveness. Interview participants similarly emphasized the importance of understanding cultural references, social norms, communicative conventions, symbolism, humour, and culturally bound expressions.

These findings are consistent with the long-established view that translation is not merely a linguistic activity but also a cultural one. Nida and Taber (1969) emphasize the importance of cultural context in achieving equivalent responses among target readers, while Bassnett (2014) argues that language and culture are inseparable. Similarly, House (2015) conceptualizes translation as a form of intercultural communication, and Venuti (2018) highlights the translator's role in negotiating cultural differences between source and target communities.

The importance of cultural knowledge identified by the participants is further supported by Obeidat and Mahadi (2019), who examined the translation of Arabic religious-cultural collocations into English. Their study demonstrated that translators frequently employ domestication strategies when translating culturally specific expressions to make them more accessible to target-language readers. The researchers concluded that successful translators must possess sufficient cultural knowledge to decide when domestication or foreignization is most appropriate.

Examples from Obeidat and Mahadi's study illustrate the complexity of culturally bound translation. Expressions such as *بسم الله* were translated as "In the name of God", while religious-cultural collocations such as *صلاة الصبح* required translators to make decisions regarding the preservation or adaptation of cultural meaning for English-speaking audiences. Similarly, other religious-cultural expressions drawn from Arabic literary texts presented challenges because their meanings were closely linked to Islamic culture and could not be conveyed adequately through literal translation alone.

The practitioners' discussion of expressions such as "break a leg" further supports these observations. Such examples demonstrate that literal translation may preserve linguistic form but fail to convey communicative intent, cultural meaning, or pragmatic function. This finding aligns closely with Venuti's (2018) argument that translators must act as cultural mediators rather than simple language converters.

The findings regarding travelling and cultural immersion further reinforce previous literature. Byram (1997) argues that intercultural competence develops through direct engagement with other cultures and their communicative practices. Similarly, Oik (2009) maintains that intercultural competence contributes directly to translation quality. The interviewees repeatedly emphasized that living within a target-language culture provides opportunities to understand humour, idiomatic language, social conventions, and communicative behaviour that may not be acquired through formal instruction alone. Overall, the findings confirm that cultural competence is essential for successful translation and that linguistic knowledge alone is insufficient for dealing effectively with culturally embedded meanings.

5.4. Translation Technology and Artificial Intelligence

Although the questionnaire did not include items measuring perceptions of translation technology, the interview findings revealed strong agreement regarding the growing importance of technological competence in translation. Both university professors and practitioners emphasized the value of CAT tools, terminology-management systems, translation memories, and artificial intelligence applications in contemporary translation practice.

These findings reflect the evolution of translation competence models over time. Earlier scholars such as Catford (1965), Nida and Taber (1969), and Newmark (1988) naturally focused on linguistic and communicative aspects of translation because contemporary translation technologies had not yet emerged. In contrast, recent competence frameworks place increasing emphasis on technological competence. PACTE Group (2017), the EMT Expert Group (2017), and the European Commission (2022) all identify technology as an important component of professional translation competence.

The technologies mentioned by participants, including SDL Trados Studio, MemoQ, Wordfast, translation memories, terminology databases, and glossary-management systems, correspond closely to what PACTE Group (2017) describes as instrumental competence. These tools enable translators to improve consistency, productivity, terminology management, and overall translation quality.

The findings also revealed a balanced perspective regarding artificial intelligence. Participants recognised the advantages of AI in accelerating translation processes, supporting terminology retrieval, and improving research efficiency. At the same time, they

repeatedly emphasized that AI cannot replace human translators. Concerns relating to contextual interpretation, stylistic appropriateness, cultural meaning, and translation quality appeared throughout the interviews.

These observations are consistent with Kenny's (2022) position that machine translation should be viewed as an assistive technology rather than a replacement for human expertise. They also support Prieto Ramos's (2024) argument that emerging technologies increase the importance of technological competence while simultaneously reinforcing the need for human professional judgement.

The findings can also be linked to recent research on machine translation limitations. Budimir (2025), for example, found that machine translation systems and large language models continue to face difficulties when translating culture-specific items and culturally embedded expressions. Such findings reinforce the interview participants' view that human translators remain essential for ensuring contextual accuracy and cultural appropriateness. Consequently, post-editing emerged as an increasingly important skill. Both university professors and practitioners agreed that translators must be capable of evaluating, revising, and improving machine-generated output. The findings therefore suggest that future translators must develop technological competence alongside critical thinking, cultural awareness, and linguistic expertise.

5.6. Characteristics of Successful Future Translators

Taken together, the questionnaire and interview findings suggest that successful future translators possess a combination of linguistic competence, subject-matter expertise, cultural awareness, research skills, technological literacy, and a commitment to lifelong learning. The findings indicate that translator competence is multidimensional and cannot be reduced to language proficiency alone.

This conclusion is strongly supported by previous studies. Early scholars such as Catford (1965), Nida and Taber (1969), and Newmark (1988) emphasized linguistic competence, accurate meaning transfer, and textual analysis as the foundations of successful translation. Subsequent scholars expanded these perspectives by highlighting the cultural, social, and communicative dimensions of translation. Toury (1995), Kelly (2005), House (2015), and Venuti (2018) all stress that successful translation requires more than language proficiency and involves cultural mediation, professional judgement, and awareness of audience needs.

The findings are also consistent with the observations of Farghal and Shunnaq (1992), who demonstrated that translators working with specialized texts require more than general language competence because specialized fields present unique linguistic and communicative challenges. Similarly, Obeidat and Mahadi (2019) showed that translators require cultural competence and strategic awareness when dealing with religious-cultural collocations and other culture-bound expressions.

Contemporary competence frameworks such as those proposed by PACTE Group (2017), the EMT Expert Group (2017), and Prieto Ramos (2024) further support the present findings by emphasizing the integration of linguistic, intercultural, strategic, professional, ethical, and technological competences. The interview findings also demonstrated substantial agreement between university professors and practitioners regarding the characteristics necessary for translator success. Although the two groups differed in emphasis, they ultimately identified similar core competences and professional requirements.

Overall, the study suggests that the successful translator of the future is not merely a bilingual individual but a highly skilled professional who combines language mastery, cultural understanding, specialist knowledge, research competence, technological expertise, professional ethics, and continuous learning. These competences collectively enable translators to respond effectively to the linguistic, cultural, professional, and technological challenges of contemporary translation practice and to produce accurate, effective, and culturally appropriate translations in an increasingly globalized world.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusion

This research has discussed the essential elements that contribute to the development of successful future translators. It has examined the skills and competencies that translators need in different fields of translation. The study has also shed light on the importance of linguistic proficiency, cultural knowledge, reading, research skills, practical experience, and translation technology in translator development.

The first research question sought to identify the specific skills and competencies that are essential for becoming competent and successful translators in various fields, including legal, scientific, literary, and journalistic translation. The findings revealed that successful translators require strong linguistic proficiency in both source and target languages, subject-matter expertise, research skills, extensive reading habits, practical training, professional ethics, and continuous learning. The results further demonstrated

that translator competence is multidimensional and extends beyond language proficiency alone. Participants emphasized the importance of specialization, terminological accuracy, and research competence when dealing with different translation fields. The findings therefore indicate that successful translators combine linguistic, professional, and subject-specific competences to produce accurate and effective translations.

The second research question examined the role of cultural knowledge in developing future translators. The findings demonstrated that cultural competence is a fundamental component of translator competence. Students, university professors, and professional translators agreed that knowledge of the target-language culture contributes significantly to translation quality and effectiveness. The findings also showed that understanding cultural references, customs, social conventions, humour, and culturally bound expressions helps translators convey meaning more accurately and naturally. Furthermore, participants emphasized that cultural immersion and exposure to other cultures contribute positively to the development of intercultural competence. The study therefore concludes that successful translators are not only language communicators but also cultural mediators who bridge linguistic and cultural differences.

The third research question investigated the role of translation technology, including CAT tools, machine translation, and artificial intelligence, in the development of future translators. Although the questionnaire did not include technology-related items, the interview findings highlighted the growing importance of technological competence in contemporary translation practice. University professors and translation practitioners agreed that CAT tools, translation memories, terminology databases, machine translation systems, and AI applications can enhance productivity, consistency, and efficiency. However, participants also emphasized that technology cannot replace human translators. Human judgement, creativity, critical thinking, contextual understanding, and cultural awareness remain essential for producing high-quality translations. The findings therefore suggest that future translators should develop technological competence alongside linguistic and cultural competence.

One of the most significant findings of the study concerns the role of reading in translator development. Translation students, university professors, translation practitioners, and translation researchers all agreed on reading as an important element in creating successful translators. Reading contributes to vocabulary development, linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, subject-matter knowledge, and professional growth. The findings indicate that successful translators should engage in extensive reading in both source and target languages as part of their continuous professional development.

Overall, the study identified the major factors that contribute to the development of successful future translators. The findings demonstrate that translator competence depends on a combination of linguistic proficiency, extensive reading, cultural awareness, professional ethics, subject-matter expertise, practical training, research competence, and technological literacy. While AI and CAT tools offer valuable support, human judgement, creativity, and intercultural competence remain fundamental to producing accurate and effective translations.

The researcher found the results to conform largely with the expectations established by the literature reviewed in the study. The findings provide answers to the research questions and contribute to a better understanding of the characteristics and competencies required for successful future translators. The outcomes of this study may assist translation educators, translation students, curriculum designers, and researchers in developing translator training programmes that better prepare future translators for the demands of the profession.

6.2. Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of the present study suggest several directions for future research. Future studies may investigate how translation students perceive the impact of globalisation, international business, and changing market demands on their future career opportunities and professional prospects in the translation industry. Such research may contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between translator education and the evolving needs of local and international translation markets.

Future researchers may also explore ethical considerations in translation practice. Particular attention could be given to the ethical dilemmas that future translators expect to encounter and the strategies they believe can help them address issues related to accuracy, confidentiality, faithfulness, professional responsibility, and the use of artificial intelligence in translation.

Another area that deserves further investigation is continuous professional development. Future studies may examine the extent to which students, educators, and professional translators value lifelong learning, continuing education, professional certification, and specialized training in maintaining translator competence and ensuring long-term professional success. Such studies may provide useful insights for translator-training programmes and curriculum development.

In addition, greater attention should be given to translation technology. Since the questionnaire used in the present study did not include technology-related items, future research may examine students' perceptions of CAT tools, machine translation, artificial intelligence applications, post-editing skills, and the integration of translation technologies into translation courses. Future studies may also investigate the effectiveness of regular practice with technological tools in enhancing translation competence and preparing students for the demands of contemporary translation practice.

In conclusion, the future of translation will continue to depend on the successful integration of language, culture, technology, and human expertise. While technological developments are transforming the profession at an unprecedented rate, the findings of this study suggest that the qualities that have always distinguished successful translators remain as important as ever: strong linguistic competence, cultural awareness, critical thinking, ethical responsibility, and a commitment to continuous learning. As the translation profession evolves, translators may increasingly rely on technology, but it is ultimately human knowledge, judgement, and intercultural understanding that give meaning to translation and enable communication across languages and cultures. As Nida and Taber (1969) remind us, translation is not merely the transfer of words, but the transfer of meaning, and it is this human ability to understand and communicate meaning that will continue to define successful translators in the future.

Ethical Statement

Participation in the study was voluntary. All participants were informed of the research purpose and their responses were treated confidentially.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Funding Statement

No external funding was received for this research.

Acknowledgment

Microsoft Copilot (AI tool) was utilized for assistance in conceptualizing ideas, and in editing and improving clarity and readability of the manuscript. The author is responsible for all intellectual aspects, data analysis, interpretation and conclusions.

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