



Mapping the Norms of Translating Culture in the Saudi Context: A Quantitative/Qualitative Approach

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to map the norms of translating cultural references in the Saudi context. It also examines the impact of social changes on Saudi targets' comprehension and approval of western cultural references. The research is based on Toury's Norms (1995). A questionnaire is employed which allows the quantification of data and increases the likelihood that outcomes can be generalised. In this sense, Toury asserts that a norm is generalised when a phenomenon is more frequent. On the other hand, when it is less frequent, it is overlooked as a general norm and considered as rather resembling a minor group of people (1995, pp. 65-69). The findings suggest that translator's lean towards applying source-oriented strategies when rendering cultural references. The study also highlights the contributing social factors that led to this notion.

Keywords: Translation norms, social changes, professional translators, Saudi context

INTRODUCTION

Gideon Toury proposes that norms can be examined in two ways: regularity of behaviour declared in textual sources and extratextual formulations in the form of statements by the agents involved in the translation process, including translators, editors, publishers and others (Toury, 1995, p. 65). Additionally, Brownlie surmises that "in investigating norms, the researcher would be interested in statements about what actors consider to be approved behaviour" (Brownlie, 1999, p. 16). This is deduced through interviews, questionnaires or focus groups. Therefore, this paper will attempt to yield data that stand as statements from the actors of the governing norms.

While questionnaires are not common in translation studies, they have been utilised to extract the perceptions of the relevant factors such as translators, publishers and recipients of the translations. They are implemented for several purposes, including evaluating an outcome, enquiring on different aspects such as translator satisfaction, publisher requirements, client demands and others. A relevant study is that of David Katan (2017), who conducted a study on 1000 translators through an online survey. The reason for distributing the survey online was to reach as many translators as possible. The survey commenced with practical information about the translators such as

translation training, main genre and languages. However, the bulk of the study was in relation to perceptions and attitudes of the translators about the translation profession, with the focus on exploring translators' habitus and drawing comparisons with academic assumptions. Furthermore, the data pointed to the profound responsibility of translators towards the ST and very little towards the receiving target.

Toury's norms

In general, Toury maintains that translation is norm-governed. He defines norms as "the general values or ideas shared by a certain community as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate into specific performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to specific situations providing they are not (yet) formulated as laws" (Toury G., 1995, p. 51), and believes that norms are intersubjective factors that guide actions.

Each culture has its norms which are subject to society and time. These norms are designated as such through the society's general assent. Some norms have more power, and therefore resemble rules, while other norms are less powerful and as a result can be characterised as idiosyncratic. Accordingly, the border which marks the strength of these norms is relative and bound to change over time. Toury classified norms into three sets: initial, preliminary and operational. Initial norms refer to the translator's subjectivity toward either the norms of the source culture or to those of the target culture. If the source culture is selected, the translation would be adequate whereas if the target culture is selected the outcome will be acceptable. Toury accepts that in the translation process there might be instances of compromise between the two poles, yet any decision is counted as adequate versus acceptable (Toury G., 1995, pp. 56-57), (Munday J., 2016). He argues that in order to decide whether to conform to the norms of the source culture or the target culture, the translator ought to utilise the concept of initial norms to classify the choice. Like Toury, Hermans maintains that "since translation operates in and on existing discourses while fashioning new texts after models belonging to other discourses, individual cultures or groups may develop different attitudes with regard to these potentially disruptive new arrivals" (1999, p. 89). Although Hermans agrees with Toury on this particular point, he disagrees with Toury's complex substitutes of adequacy/acceptability, describing them as "hopelessly confusing" and suggesting that the problems are conceptual and terminological. In Herman's analysis, an "adequate translation" will be "a reconstruction of all the pertinent textual relationships of the source text" which is a "utopian enterprise" since the only adequate translation is, he assumes, the original text. Hermans recommends a solution for the confusion caused by Toury's initial norm. He recommends thinking of the contextual factors and not only of the initial norms as two poles "depending on how the source text is viewed, whether it or similar texts have been translated before, whether the translation is made for import or export, by a speaker of which language, for what audience or purpose, and so on" (1999, p. 77).

Preliminary norms refer to translation policy as they regulate the material that should be translated, from which languages and by which authors. These are also responsible for allowing or rejecting the presence of mediating language between the original ST and the

translation. In other words, the translation being rendered directly from an original ST or a translated one. Preliminary norms also play a role in determining genres.

The third type of norm is operational norms, which refer to the actual choices made by translators. These determine what is to be retained or changed in the rendering of the ST. This type of norm is subdivided into metrical and textual-linguistic norms. Metrical norms concern the addition of footnotes and the deletion or relocation of passages, and textual-linguistic norms refer to the specific selection of words and phrases.

Furthermore, the investigation of norms is not an easy task due to the specificity of norms in different cultures, so it is fair to say that there is no general worldwide conception of norms. In order to analyse translation norms, Toury suggests two approaches: the first is textual analysis and the second is analysis of the principal actors in the translation process (translators or/and publishers). Overall, Toury advises that research into norms in Translation Studies ought not to be to determine distinct norms, but rather to detect the relations between the norms (Toury G. , 1995, p. 66).

METHOD

The methodology of any study is mostly determined by its nature and objective. Hence, it is essential to employ the appropriate method to achieve the proposed aim. Compatibly, the questionnaire in this current study serves several purposes. The first is to obtain statements by the main actors in the translation industry in Saudi Arabia to determine the norms of translating culture. These statements will act as the necessary verbal consents Toury, Chesterman and Brownlie demand when determining translation norms. Chesterman put forward that “a researcher who wishes to propose that a given norm N exists therefore needs to produce as much evidence of normative force as possible, and to link this plausibly with evidence of observed regularities. Both kinds of evidence are necessary; neither suffices on its own.” (Chesterman, 2006, p. 17). Thus, the statements in the form of a questionnaire will stand as supportive evidence of the norms governing the translation of cultural references in Saudi Arabia. The second main purpose is to determine the presence or absence of social factors that affect the translation of culture and to elicit the degree to which existing factors impact on translation. A third significant purpose is to explore the characteristics of the translation industry. The information obtained from the first part of the questionnaire, which consists of demographic information and characteristics of the respondents, mirrors the current state of translation within the Saudi context.

Although the targets of the questionnaire are from an Arabic-speaking country, the questionnaire is conducted in English, as the fact they are translators negates the need for a version in both languages. However, if the sample had not been specialists in this domain, with a high language proficiency, it would have been necessary to provide both an Arabic and an English version.

The questionnaire is mainly quantitative in nature although it possesses some qualitative aspects by allowing respondents to comment on some elements and to further explicate their answers.

The questionnaire was distributed online via a link sent through direct email, Telegram groups, Twitter accounts and WhatsApp groups. Using the internet in this way helped with the wide dissemination of the questionnaire, which is likely to increase the response rate. A large number of translators in Saudi Arabia use their Twitter accounts for professional reasons including displaying their experience, affiliations, and translated works. This means of communication enhanced the targeting of the correct sample for the study.

242 respondents attempted to respond to the questionnaire. Of these, 197 completed it while 45 did not. 136 responses were excluded because they did not fall within the specific criteria set by the researcher. These criteria play a fundamental role in extracting the responses of the specific sample intended in this research. Questions 1, 4, 5, 8 and 9 were employed as filters for the respondents. Question 1 enquired about nationality, and 22 respondents who were non-Saudis were excluded. The remaining 175 went through the age group filter: the responses of individuals under the age of 21 were not considered, so 4 respondents were excluded at this stage. Another relevant filter was work experience in the field of translation. Respondents with less than two years of experience were not qualified to meet the criteria, accordingly, 76 responses were eliminated. A final filter was the languages the translator worked within. Although Arabic / English was indicated in the cover letter, 1 respondent specified translating Spanish to Arabic and was therefore excluded. The responses of the remaining 94 respondents were analysed.

The questionnaire required responses to all questions and participants were permitted to select more than one answer when indicated. However, a number of the questions were based on a Likert scale, which is employed to measure latent elements that are not directly observable such as attitudes. Furthermore, participants' comments were welcomed and space was left for further remarks, suggestions or information about the open-ended questions. This allowed for both qualitative and quantitative analyses.

The first section of the questionnaire dealt with demographic information including age, nationality, years of experience, and type of translation training. The target sample consisted of Saudi translators with experience in the field whose main direction of translation is English into Arabic. This part of the questionnaire served the objective of specifying the nationality of the participants, which was required to be Saudi, the participants' main direction of translation. Since time is a crucial component for the present research, detailed information about the respondents was required. The second section of the questionnaire explored the translators' attitudes towards translating cultural references, their motivations and the relationship between chosen strategies and external factors such as administrative publication procedures and norms. The final section explored and identified the translators' perceptions on the effect of social change on translation. This served the objective of extracting verbal consent, which Toury strongly advocates in determining norms, and highlighted the professionals' insights surrounding changes in translation norms and their effect on translating culture for the specific target.

The questionnaire was published on the website SurveyMonkey.com and distributed online via email to translators in direct or indirect acquaintance with the researcher. It

was also distributed through social media to a number of translation organisations and individuals. This means of distributing the questionnaire was chosen because it is a fast way of reaching distant participants, or as Saldanha and O'Brien describe them, the "hidden population" (2013, p. 166) This was important due to the fact that the researcher is located in the United Kingdom while the intended sample is located, mainly, in Saudi Arabia. Online questionnaires expand the number of participants due to the active use of online communication and decreases the time required to distribute and respond. Another main advantage of this means of delivery is that the margin of error is significantly reduced since participants enter their responses directly into a system which avoids the risk of human error inherent in entering responses manually. Although some may view the distance between the researcher and respondents as a deficiency in relation to lack of response, it can also be argued that this factor minimises power relations which might reflect on the responses. In addition, technical advantages allowed the researcher to receive daily updates on the response rate.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The findings are presented in three sections corresponding to the three main parts, and the three objectives of the questionnaire; demographics and characteristics of the translators, the translators' attitudes towards translating culture, and translating culture through time: identifying change and cause.

Demographics and Characteristics of the Respondents

The first part of the questionnaire is concerned with demographic information and other characteristics of the participants. This section is significant because it filters the responses in order to isolate the specific sample of this study. It also provides important data that has not been explored in relation to translation in the Saudi context. Table 1 (below) summarises the data gathered from the first part of the questionnaire, which provides insight into characteristics such as nationality, gender, age, years of experience and others.

Table 1. Demographic and Personal Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics		Number of participants	Percentage
Nationality	<i>Saudi</i>	94	100
	<i>Non-Saudi</i>	0	0
Gender	<i>Female</i>	56	60
	<i>Male</i>	38	40
Location	<i>Central Region</i>	51	54
	<i>Western Region</i>	21	22
	<i>Eastern Region</i>	9	10
	<i>Southern Region</i>	9	10
	<i>Northern Region</i>	2	2
	<i>Other</i>	2	2
Age	<i>21-29</i>	38	40.4
	<i>30-39</i>	38	40.4
	<i>40-49</i>	14	14.8
	<i>50-59</i>	3	3.1
	<i>Over 60</i>	1	1

Years of experience	2-5	39	41.4
	5-10	34	36.1
	10-15	13	13.8
	15-20	5	5.3
	Over 20	3	3.1
Type of training	<i>Bachelor in Translation</i>	44	47
	<i>Master in Translation</i>	34	36
	<i>PhD in Translation</i>	13	14
	<i>Diploma</i>	3	3
	<i>Certified training</i>	11	12
	<i>Self-training</i>	36	38
	<i>None</i>	1	1
Main direction in translation	<i>Other</i>	7	7
	<i>Both Directions</i>	58	62
	<i>English to Arabic</i>	34	36
	<i>Arabic to English</i>	2	2
Your target Market	<i>Other</i>	0	0
	<i>Saudi</i>	39	41.4
	<i>Arab with particular interest in Saudi</i>	21	22.3
	<i>Arab</i>	26	27.6
	<i>Non-Arab</i>	4	4.2
The area of translation	<i>Other</i>	4	4.2
	<i>General</i>	64	68
	<i>Scientific</i>	33	35
	<i>Literature</i>	31	33
	<i>Medical</i>	27	29
	<i>Religious</i>	26	28
	<i>Commercial</i>	25	27
	<i>Legal</i>	20	21
	<i>Audio-visual</i>	17	18
	<i>Interpreting</i>	17	18
Translation Practice	<i>Other</i>	12	13
	<i>Freelance</i>	51	54
	<i>In-house</i>	44	47
	<i>Teach translation</i>	34	36
	<i>Interpreter</i>	15	16
The choice of what to translate depends on	<i>Other</i>	3	3
	<i>Own preference</i>	70	74
	<i>Client</i>	44	47
	<i>Audience</i>	16	17
	<i>Author</i>	14	15
Originality of the ST you translate	<i>Publisher</i>	13	14
	<i>Other</i>	6	6
	<i>Original English / Arabic texts</i>	86	91
	<i>Texts translated from another language into English / Arabic</i>	4	4
	<i>Other</i>	4	4

Q 1,2,3: Nationality, Gender and Location

The questionnaire indicates that all respondents considered in the analysis were Saudis. The attitude of Saudi translators is the objective of the questionnaire so nationality was a key criterion. In terms of the gender of respondents, the considerable majority of 60%

were female and the remaining 40% were male. It is worth mentioning that there are no statistics indicating the number of translators in Saudi Arabia, information that would be useful to enable comparisons of gender responses via a sampling frame. However, the research was conducted by a female in a country where gender segregation is, by some means, still a standard of everyday life. On this, Alhazmi and Nyland assert “in Saudi Arabia, gender segregation is a cultural practice that occurs across all public and private domains” (2013). This could help explain the high percentage of female respondents.

The current location of the translators illustrates most of them are located in the central (54%) and western (22%) regions. This can be explained by reference to the high population of these regions: Riyadh, for example, the capital city of Saudi Arabia, is located in the central region. The population of Riyadh alone, according to the Saudi General Authority of Statistics¹ was more than 5 million in 2018. Mainly Saudi Ministries and governmental bodies are located in this city, which accounts for the high population. Likewise, the western region also has its own significance. It contains a high population of over 6 million due to the presence of the two holy mosques located in the cities of Mecca and Medina. Millions of visitors and pilgrims come to these holy cities from across the world, which contributes to generating translation jobs. Adding to this significance, the country’s main port, in the city of Jeddah, is located in the western region. The significance of these two regions explains the relatively high number of translators for them in this sample. The lower percentages of respondents from other regions supports this, with the eastern and southern regions accounting for 10% of the population each and the northern region accounting for only 2%. The remaining 2% who selected the option *Other* reported that they currently live outside Saudi Arabia.

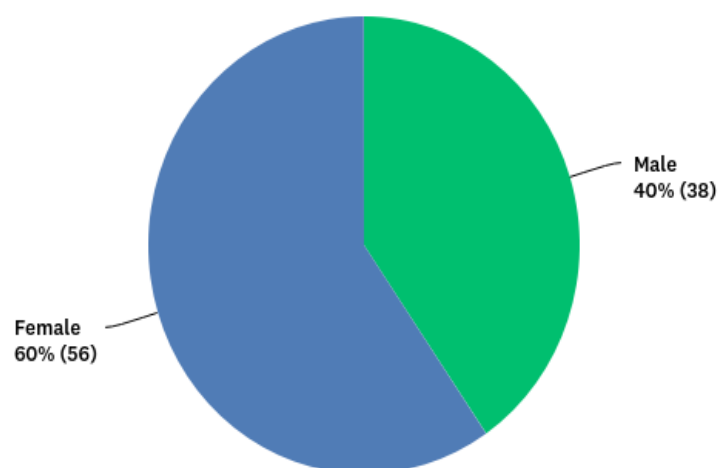


Figure 1. Gender

¹ Stats.gov.sa

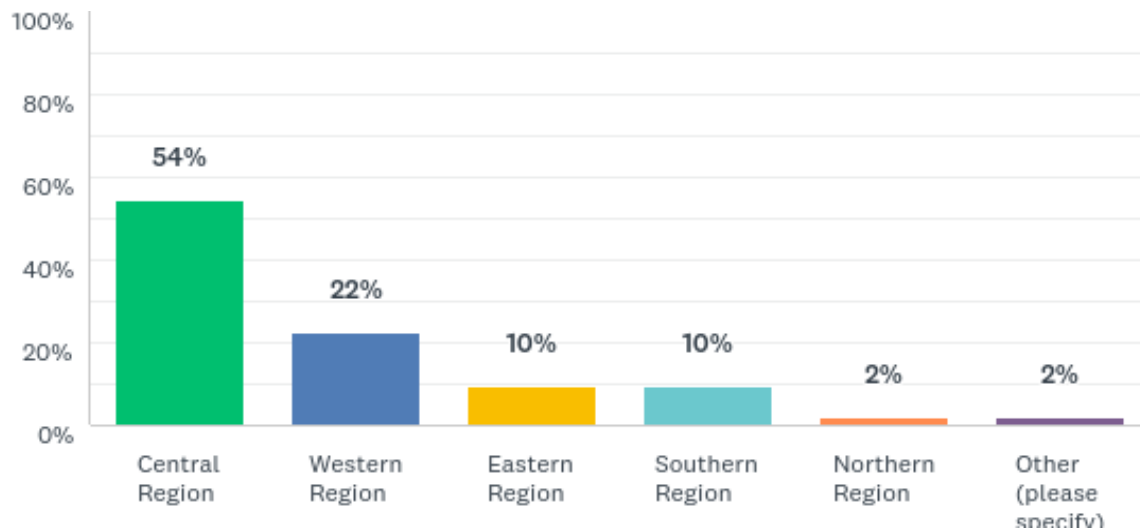


Figure 2. Location

Q 4,5: Age and Experience

Respondents between 21 and 29 years of age accounted for 40.4% of the sample, and a further 40.4% were between 30 and 39. The Saudi Statistics Authority combines these two age groups and refers to them as 'youth'. Therefore, in reporting the responses, they have been combined here, meaning that respondents between 21 and 39 made up the vast majority of 80%. This high percentage can be attributed to two factors. First, the high proportion of youth in the Saudi population: according to the Statistics Authority, people aged between 20 and 39 account for one-third of the overall population. Second, the profession of translation is relatively new in Saudi Arabia, which explains the high percentage of young participants and the much lower proportion of older ones. In this study, 3.1% of respondents were 50-59 and only 1% were over 60.

Another characteristic influenced by how new the profession of translation is in Saudi Arabia is work experience. The respondents placed themselves according to their experience into one of five slots. 41.4% reported 2-5 years of experience, 36.1% had 5-10 years, 13.8% had 10-15 years and 5.3% had 15-20 years. The lowest proportion of respondents reported having more than 20 years experience, at only 3.1%. Notably, the gradual decrease in years of experience corresponds to the ages of respondents. Generally speaking, respondents with 2-10 years of experience in the field of translation made up the majority of the participants.

Q 6: Translation Training

The kind of translation training the respondents underwent was reported as follows: the majority held a Bachelor's degree in translation (47%). A similar percentage were self-trained (38%) and holders of a Master's degree in translation closely followed (36%). 14% had obtained a PhD in the field, 12% had certified training and 3% held a diploma. 1% reported not having undergone any translation training. The recent orientation towards cultural interaction has led to the establishment of colleges and departments of translation within Saudi universities. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that there are

32 public universities, 9 private universities and 21 private colleges in Saudi Arabia. Of the total 41 universities, 18 offer programmes in translation, according to the Saudi Ministry of Education²: 16 offer Bachelor's degrees in translation, 5 offer Master's degrees in translation and 1 offers a PhD degree in this specialisation. Only 3 institutions offer the diploma qualification. It is significant to point out that a main contributor to qualifying translators is the Saudi Ministry of Education scholarship programme, which has played an important role in qualifying and presenting translators to the Saudi market as it also offers scholarships to those pursuing further studies in translation.

The percentage of respondents with certified training was relatively low compared to other types of training, but this could be due to the lack of institutions providing it. Nevertheless, there have recently been a number of seminars and workshops presented by qualified translators in specific fields like medical and legal translation, yet this kind of training does not count for a high ratio. Of the respondents, 7% declared that they had some other kind of training including a Bachelor's degree in English, a Master's degree in English Literature and a PhD in Medicine (for clarification, all medical degrees at Saudi universities are taught in English). Therefore, these qualifications presumably permitted these participants to undertake translation tasks.

Q 7: Main Direction in Translation

Initially, 'main direction' refers to the 'directionality of the translators' translation practice. Beeby Lonsdale describes "directionality" as translation from a foreign language into a mother tongue or vice versa (1998, p. 63). Table 1 (above) shows that the main direction of translation leans towards both directions (62%). However, 36% reported translating into their native language whereas very few (2%) reported the opposite. The significance of the high percentage of directionality into Arabic asserts Newmark's point of view that "translat(ing) into your language of habitual use [...] is the only way you can translate naturally, accurately and with maximum effectiveness" (Newmark, 1988, p. 3). Therefore, it was important to inquire about the direction of translation in order to rationalise the translators' attitudes in translating culture from English into Arabic within the Saudi context.

²<https://www.moe.gov.sa/ar/news/Documents/Dalil-t.pdf>

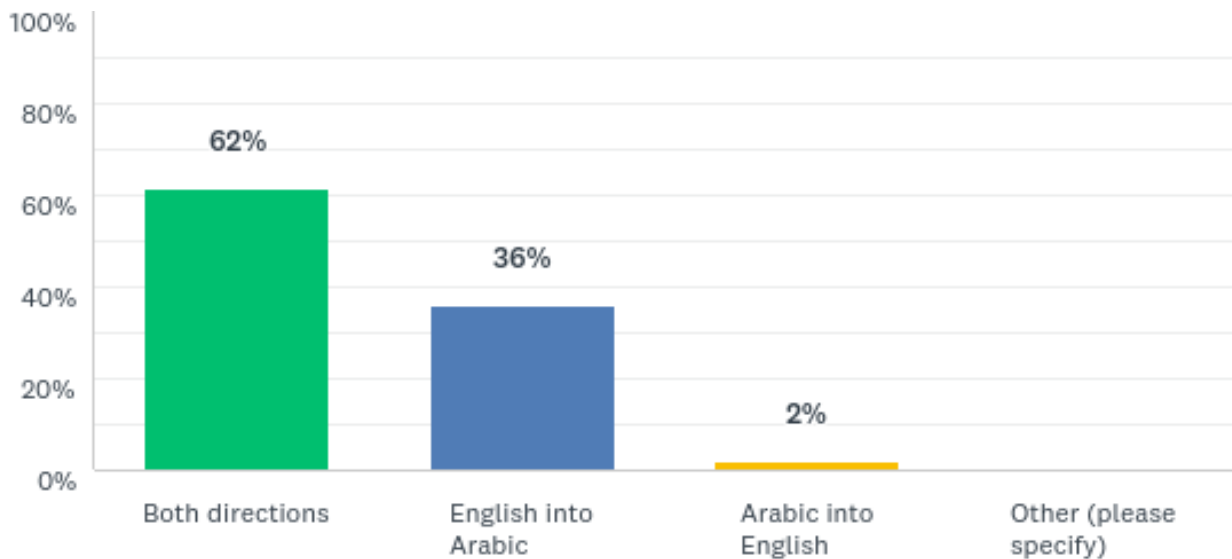


Figure 3. Main Direction of Translation

Q 8: Target Market

Respondents who considered the Saudi market as their target represented 41.4% while 27.6% targeted the Arab market in general and 22.3% targeted Arab markets with a particular interest in the Saudi market. Only 4.2% reported their target to be a non-Arab market, so almost two-thirds of the respondents reported their target to be the Saudi market, solely or otherwise. This high ratio of translators who are familiar and directly connected to the Saudi market lends weight to their insights. On the other hand, a very low rate reported their target market was non-Arab, bringing us back to the notion of directionality mentioned earlier, whereby respondents' main direction of translation was Arabic to English. By and large, it could be argued that the preponderant target the respondents selected can be of virtue of their recognition of the peculiarities identified in different target markets.

Q 9. Area of Translation

In the domain and modes of translation, the respondents had the option to select more than one. The answers are distributed as illustrated Figure 4 (below).

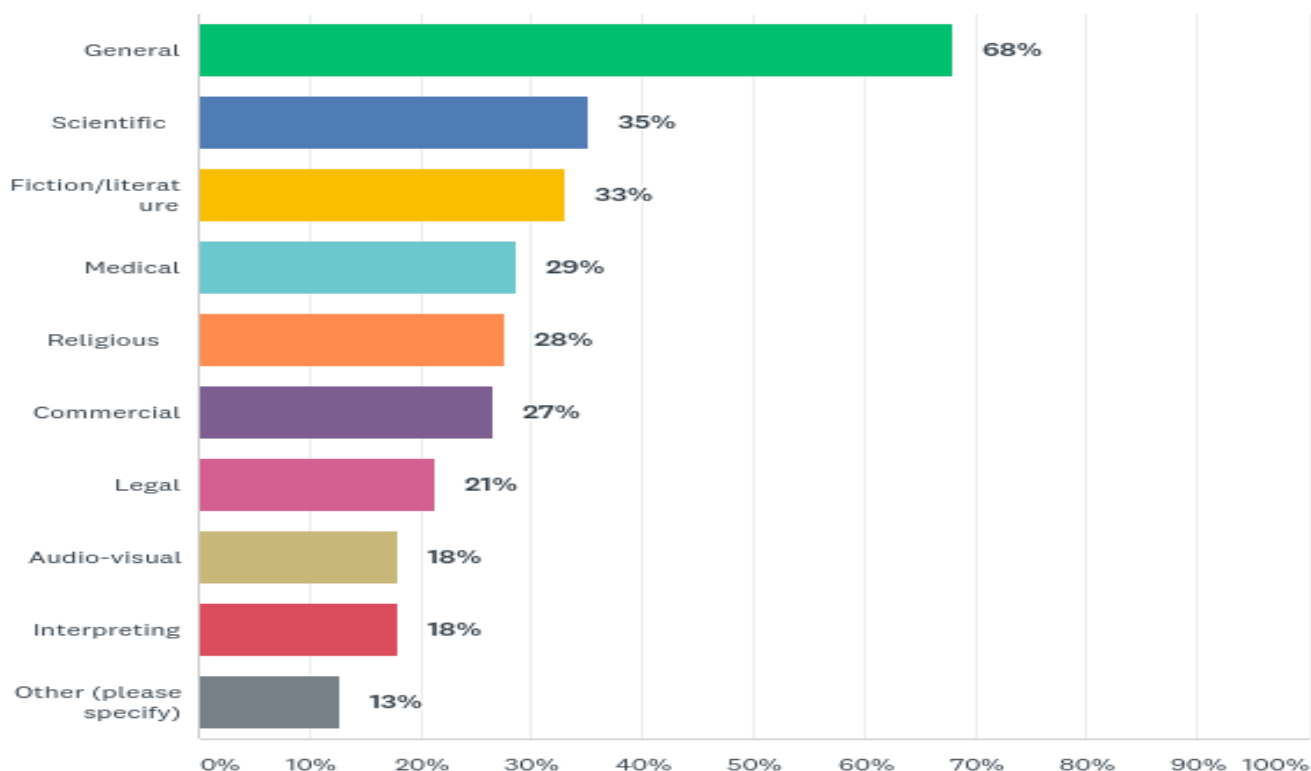


Figure 4. Area of Translation

It is clear that the area of general translation was the highest type chosen by the participants (68%). After this was the scientific (35%) and literary (33%) genres, and medical, religious and commercial translation accounted for 29%, 28% and 27% respectively. Legal translation accounted for 21% while both audio-visual and interpreting made up 18% of the responses each. The low percentage of audio-visual and interpreting can be attributed in general to the lack of such specialised training programs in Saudi Arabia where the translation degrees offered by the Ministry of Education are mostly concerned with written translation even though some programmes offer courses on simultaneous and consecutive interpreting and audio-visual translation. However, neither genre is the core of any programme offered in Saudi universities. The other areas indicated by the participants were mainly military, technical and political translation.

Q 10. Translation Practice

54% of the respondents reported that they worked as freelancers. This can be attributed to the possibility of being a freelance translator while occupying a full-time job in the private or public sectors, in translation or otherwise. Based on the responses gathered from this question, a high percentage of respondents reported working in academia teaching translation at university level as well as being freelancers.

An important aspect concerning freelancing is the major step approached by the Saudi Ministry of Labour and Social Development whereby from October 2017, freelancers were able to hold a freelancing licence. The importance of this initiative is that it regulates the profession, adds reliability and proficiency and enables the license holder to benefit

from funding opportunities offered by the Ministry³. Moreover, it encourages tentative translators who had been hesitant to work as freelancers due to the ambiguity of its state to begin freelancing more securely. 47% of the respondents reported that they worked in-house. In-house translation jobs are spread across a wide spectrum: almost every Ministry has a translation department or division, and the presence of translation jobs in the private sector is evident, although there is a lack of detailed information about the workplaces that most require translators. Following translation job vacancies gives a slight indication of the wide orientation of the translation profession in the public and private sectors. 36% of the respondents reported that they teach translation while 16% work as interpreters. Respondents who selected the *Other* option account for 3%, one of whom specified having previous experience in translation in both the private and public sectors. Another specified that s/he is currently a researcher in translation.

Q 11. Choice of What to Translate

A question about the choice of material that the translator works with aimed to obtain a clear idea about who is responsible for the selection of the ST. According to respondents (who had the chance to select more than one answer), the choice mainly depends on the translator's own preference (74%). However, a significant proportion (47%) declared that it was the client who chose what they translated. The three next were audience suggestion, author request and publisher with proportions of 17%, 15% and 14% respectively. 6% specified *Other*, which were teaching significance and work requirement.

Q 12. Originality of the Source Text

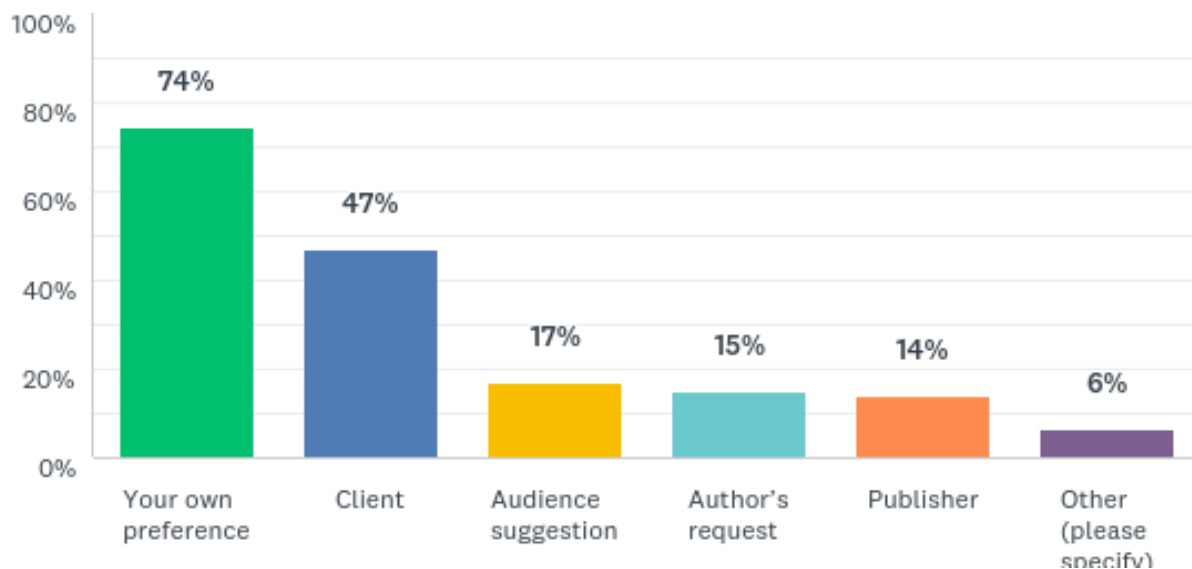


Figure 5. Choice of What to Translate

³<https://freelance.910ths.sa/>

A substantial percentage of the respondents (91%) reported the STs they translate were mainly original English / Arabic texts written by authors. Only 4%, stated that they translated from a mediating text, and the same percentage (4%) reported both. The importance of this element is its relevance to one of the main theoretical frameworks in this research, Toury's norms. The originality of the ST is characterised under preliminary norms which are responsible for translation policies, including the acceptance or refusal of a mediating language.

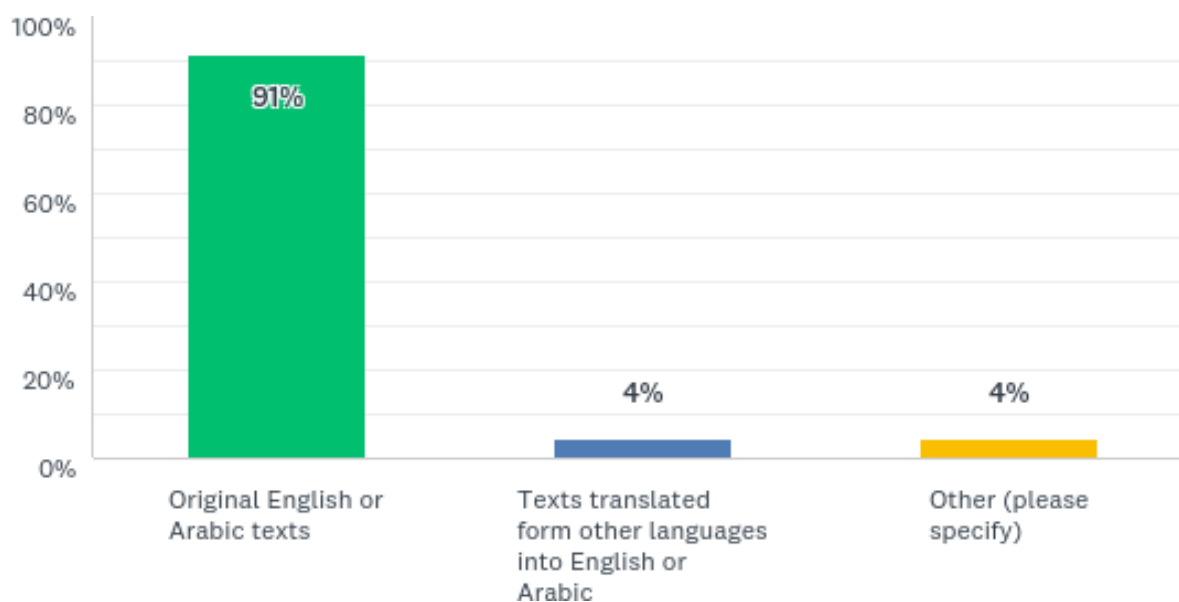


Figure 6. Originality of the Source Text

Translators' Attitude Towards Translating Culture

The second part of the questionnaire is concerned with translators' attitudes towards translating cultural references. Q13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 asked the respondents to rate their agreement with statements related to the translation of culture, with the answers based on a Likert scale. The responses are shown in Table 2 (below).

Table 2. Results of Q13-17, relating to the translation of culture

Statement	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
13 <i>The translator must be aware of the target culture</i>	79	84	14	15	1	1	0	0	0	0
14 <i>Elements of the western culture are received differently in different Arabic speaking countries</i>	38	40.4	46	48.9	6	6.3	4	4.2	0	0
15 <i>When translating for the Saudi reader you present the unfamiliar elements of</i>	12	12.7	41	43.6	29	30.8	12	12.7	0	0

<i>the western culture found in the text</i>											
16	<i>When translating for the Saudi target you alter the translation to fit the Saudi culture</i>	13	14	34	36	27	29	15	16	5	5
17	<i>There is a difference in translating cultural references for the Saudi target between the past and the present</i>	23	24.4	50	53.1	19	20.2	2	2.1	0	0

It can be seen that almost all respondents agreed that the translator must be aware of the target culture, with the majority (84%) strongly agreeing, 15% agreeing and only 1% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Disagreement with this statement stands at 0%. This response rate accords with Evan-Zohar's 1978 polysystem theory, which postulates the target culture as the main determinant of the translator's decisions. Evan-Zohar advocates that translations are part of the literary system of the target culture to which they are introduced and are hence subject to the same norms (Even-Zohar, I. & Toury, G., 1981). Respondents' realisation of the distinctive characteristics of the different Arabic speaking countries in dealing with foreign cultural elements is evident in their responses to Q14. Accordingly, since the translators operate within Saudi culture, they agree with the notion of the peculiarity of the Saudi culture. The respondents again overwhelmingly agreed to the statement in this question (89.3%), with 40.4% strongly agreeing. 6.3% reported they neither agreed nor disagreed while the lowest proportion (4.2%) disagreed. Q15 and Q16 aimed to identify and extract a statement from the respondents about the procedure undertaken when translating cultural references. These two questions are main identifiers of translators' preference either to lean towards the target culture (foreignization) or the source culture (domestication). Responses to Q15 reflect a desire to abide by source culture norms, with 12.7% strongly agreeing and 43.6% agreeing while a minority of 13% disagreed and none strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 30.8% were not sure, which led them to choose the option of neither agree nor disagree. However, Q16 aimed to identify the bias towards the target culture. 14% of the respondents strongly agreed to altering cultural references in the ST to fit Saudi culture, 36% agreed and few disagreed (16%) or strongly disagreed (5%), with the remaining 29% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. From these, it is clear that there is a close ratio between translators who adhere to the norms of the source culture and those who adhere to the target culture, although adhering to the source norms is marginally outbalanced. From the results obtained, it can be determined that translators operating within the Saudi literary system do not strictly and categorically abide by the norms of one of the target cultures. A division in this realm is obvious in the responses presented in the questionnaire with a slight leaning towards foreignizing cultural references. When the respondents were asked to rate their agreement to the existence of differences in translating cultural elements between the past and present in Q17, the data yielded shows significant strong agreement (24%) with this notion and an even greater proportion of agreement (53.1%), the latter proportion accounting for more than half of

the respondents. Those who were not sure accounted for 20.2%, but very few respondents disagreed (2.1%) and none strongly disagreed.

The remaining questions in this section are Q18, 19 and 20. In Q18, the respondents were asked to choose the reason that translators' style in translating culture has changed. An illustration of the results is shown in Table 3 (below).

Table 3. Translators' style in translating culture

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES		
Experience (2)		66%	62	
Social changes in the receiving culture (the Saudi) (3)		66%	62	
Audience awareness of the western culture (4)		62%	58	
Translation training/ education (1)		48%	45	
No change (5)		4%	4	
Other (please specify) (6)		2%	2	
Total Respondents: 94				
BASIC STATISTICS				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	6.00	3.00	2.66	1.15

A closer look at the data indicates the highest response was experience and social change at equal rates of 66%. Audience awareness of Western culture followed this relatively closely with 62%, and 48% reported that translation training had an impact on changing the translator's style. 4% of the respondents did not recognise any change in their style in terms of translating cultural references. The participants were encouraged to specify other reasons in the event that they selected the option Other. This produced two significant answers, accounting for 2%. The first explained that there had been a change in the translator's ideas and beliefs about culture, and the other stated: "translators have to be brave and depend on experience and the assumption of what the client wants. This is due to the lack of awareness amongst most clients regarding matters of translation". He/she stands with the idea of improvising according to the situation.

Q19 asked respondents to choose who they consider responsible for dictating the guidelines and determining the procedures of translating cultural references. Four options were set and a fifth was an open-ended option. As illustrated in Table 4 (below), the choices are arranged in descending order. The first was the translator's own ideology, which was the option chosen by 50% of the respondents. Then comes client guidelines as the choice of 43%, and then any kind of authority including academic instructors, job employees and others, which accounted for 41%. The least responsible according to the respondents, with 31%, is the publisher.

Table 4. Director of translation guidelines

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES		
Your own ideology (4)		50%		47
Client (2)		43%		40
Any kind of authority (3)		41%		39
Publisher (1)		33%		31
Other (please specify) (5)		4%		4
Total Respondents: 94				
BASIC STATISTICS				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	5.00	3.00	2.71	1.15

The final question in this part of the questionnaire is Q20 in which the respondents were asked to report who they think has the most freedom in translating cultural references: freelance translators, in-house translators, interpreters, audio-visual translators or others. More than half the participants - 56% - believe that freelancers enjoy the highest degree of freedom in the process of translation, with the other options moderately close together, with 16% responding in-house translators, 13% interpreters, and 10% audio-visual translators. The responses of the remaining 5%, who chose *Other*, stated that it depends on the context/situation, and that degrees of freedom can change with time.

Translating Culture Through Time: Identifying Change and Cause

The third and final part of the questionnaire, divided into three questions, enquires about the effect of social changes on translation in Saudi Arabia. Initially, Q21 and Q22 are constructed as follows, based on a Likert scale:

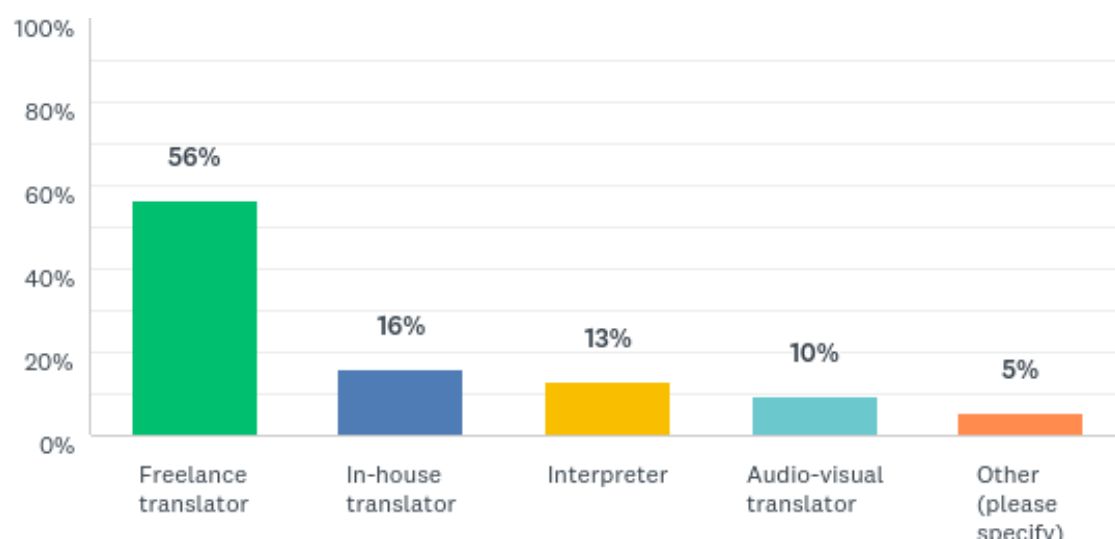
**Figure 7.** Freedom in translating culture

Table 5. Translating culture

	Statement	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
21	<i>The Saudi audience are more aware of Western culture now than they were in the past</i>	52	55.3	32	34	7	7.4	3	3.1	0	0
22	<i>Changes in the Saudi society helped change the Saudi individual's comprehension of Western culture</i>	37	39	47	50	10	11	0	0	0	0

The importance of these questions lies in the fact that norms have an unstable nature. Toury asserts norms are “unstable, changing entities; not because of any intrinsic flaw but by their very nature as norms. At times, norms change rather quickly; at other times, they are more enduring and the process may take longer” (1995, p. 62). This necessitated clarifying their specific meaning at the beginning of the study in order to grasp the atmosphere surrounding them. Another objective that is met in this section of the questionnaire is the declaration of change in target audience perception and translators’ recognition of a corresponding reaction in terms of rendering cultural references in translation.

In Q21, translators are asked to rate the following statement: *The Saudi audience are more aware of Western culture now than they were in the past*. Evidently, there has been a change in Saudi perceptions of Western cultures. The responses indicate a more relaxed attitude towards translating Western cultural references than was shown in the past. Of the total respondents, 89.3% agreed with the statement, with more than half of these (55.3%) strongly agreeing with it. This gives significant weight to the approval of the statement as, on the other hand, only 3.1% disagreed and nobody reported a strong disagreement. A small number of respondents (7.4%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

In this second part, respondents rated on a Likert scale their agreement with the following statement: *Changes in Saudi Society helped change the Saudi individual's comprehension of Western culture*. The data appears to suggest a major agreement of 89%, with 39% of these strongly agreeing. 11% were not sure and no respondent reported any degree of disagreement.

The final question in this part, and in the questionnaire as a whole, asks the respondents to rate seven elements of social change concerning their effect in familiarising the Saudi audience with Western culture. This part is of substantial significance because it evidences the social changes that are most responsible for the targets’ change of perception. The seven social factors that were examined in this study are: Dialogue with other religions and openness to other societies, Easy access to the internet, Change in the media and direct interaction with other cultures through social media, Globalisation and economic interaction, Travelling for tourism and / or education purposes, The Saudi

2030 Vision and Change in translation curriculum at University / training level. These seven factors were specifically identified based on an informal survey conducted by the researcher in which responses mainly revolved around these seven factors. For the sake of the discussion, the order of the social factors will be arranged in accordance with the result of their rating by the translators.

The highest rating is given to *Easy access to the internet* with an agreement ratio of 95.6%. Of this high percentage, 64.8% strongly agreed that this factor has had a major effect on familiarising the Saudi audience with Western culture. The consideration of this is presumably due to the vital role of the internet in communication worldwide. The International Network was presented to the Saudi public in 1999 (Determann, 2012, p. 284) and since then its user base has grown each year. According to the Saudi Communication and Information Technology Commission, in 2017 the number of internet users in Saudi Arabia reached 24.1 million from the total population of 33 million, an increase of 54.1% since 2012.

The internet has played an important role in almost every aspect of daily life. Recently, there has been an orientation towards digitalising several public and private domains including the health and education sectors, but there are interesting figures on individual use of the internet. In a study conducted by the Communication and Information Technology Commission to determine individuals' use of the internet in Saudi Arabia, it was found that browsing was the main activity followed by communication, obtaining information, entertainment, education, downloading and, finally, business⁴. This supports the outcome of the current questionnaire: access to the internet has made it easy for people to experience aspects of life they may never have otherwise had the opportunity to experience.

⁴http://www.citc.gov.sa/ar/mediacenter/citcinthedia/Pages/PR_MED_113.aspx

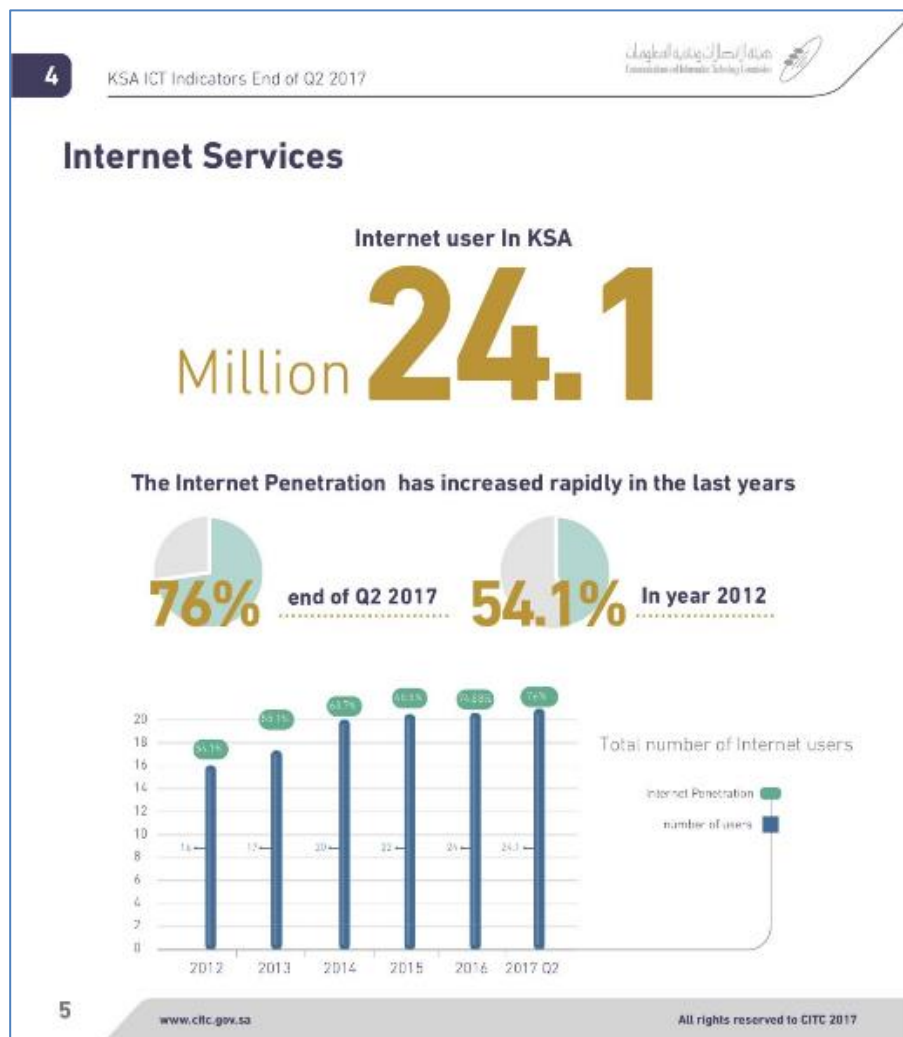


Figure 8. Number of internet users in Saudi Arabia

This leads us to discuss *Change in the media*, the second highest rated factor in familiarising the Saudi audience with Western culture. 90.4% of the respondents agreed that it is a contributing factor, with almost half of them strongly agreeing.

Social media is very actively used in Saudi Arabia. Social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and WhatsApp have contributed to the direct interaction of Saudis with the rest of the world. Figure 9 (below) illustrates the number and percentage of users of each media. While social media may appeal to all ages, it mainly interests young people and they account for most of the users. As two-thirds of the Saudi population are young people, this accounts for the high number of social media users.

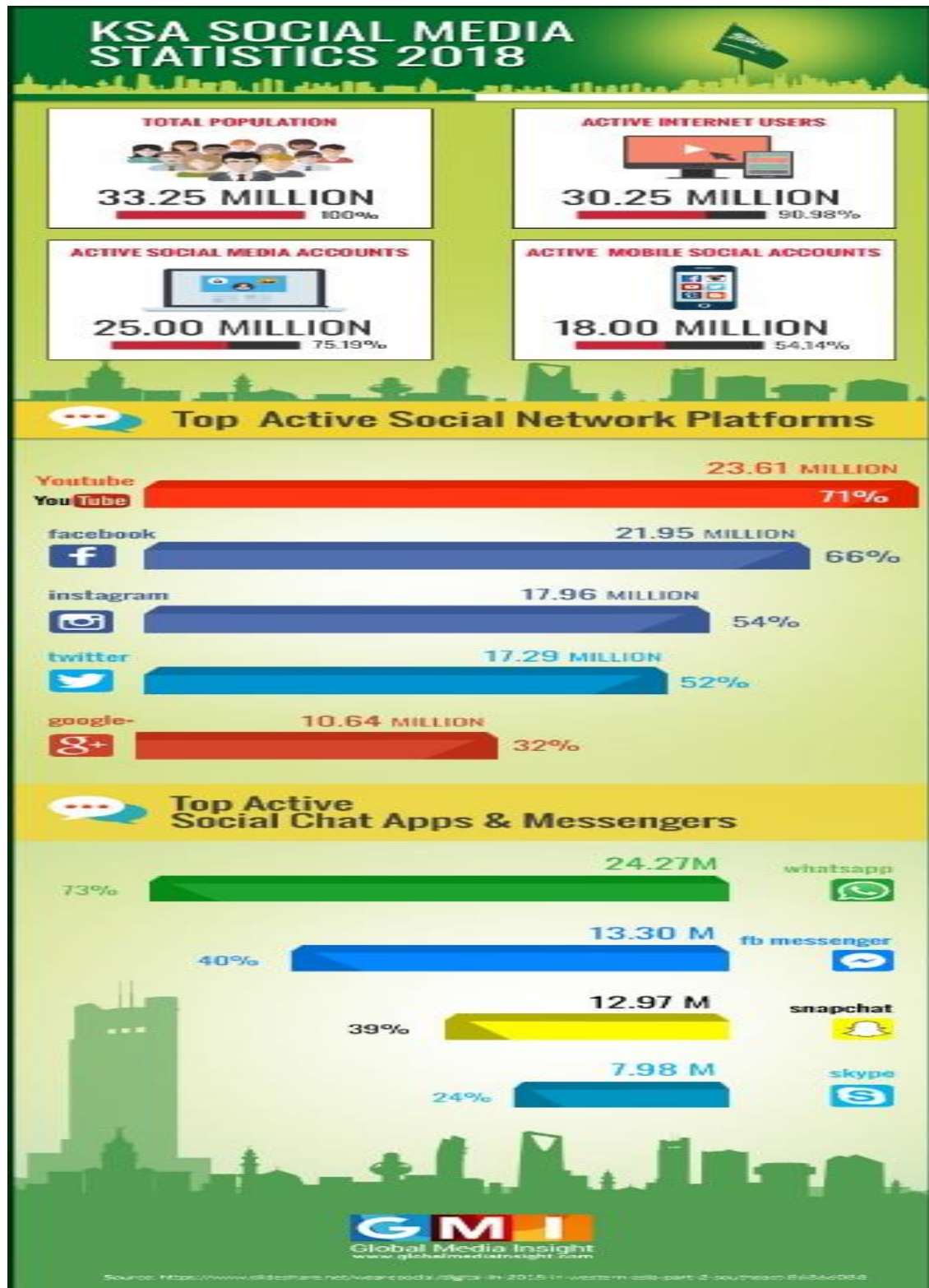


Figure 9. Social Media Statistics in Saudi Arabia according to GMI

The third aspect, *Travelling for tourism and / or education purposes* was rated only 1% lower than the previous factor, so it is clearly also considered an important factor contributing to the interaction of Saudis with the world. The two kinds of travel mentioned in the questionnaire can be treated separately. Firstly, travelling for tourism contributes to the cultural understanding of others and according to the Saudi Tourism Information and Research Centre, it is estimated that 6.2 million outbound tourism trips were made from Saudi Arabia in only the third quarter of 2018.⁵ Secondly, studying abroad plays a major role in enhancing travel and hence interaction with other cultures. The landscape of Saudi students studying abroad is presented in three categories: those enrolled in the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP) which started in 2005 and continues to this day; employer-sponsored scholarships whereby employers sponsor their employees' education by offering scholarships, and this applies to the staff of universities, the Ministry of Health and other governmental bodies; and self-sponsored scholarships whereby individuals travel and study abroad at their own expense. This category accounts for the lowest proportion of Saudi students studying abroad, according to Taylor and Albasri (2014). The majority are those enrolled in KASP, as shown in Figure 10 (below).

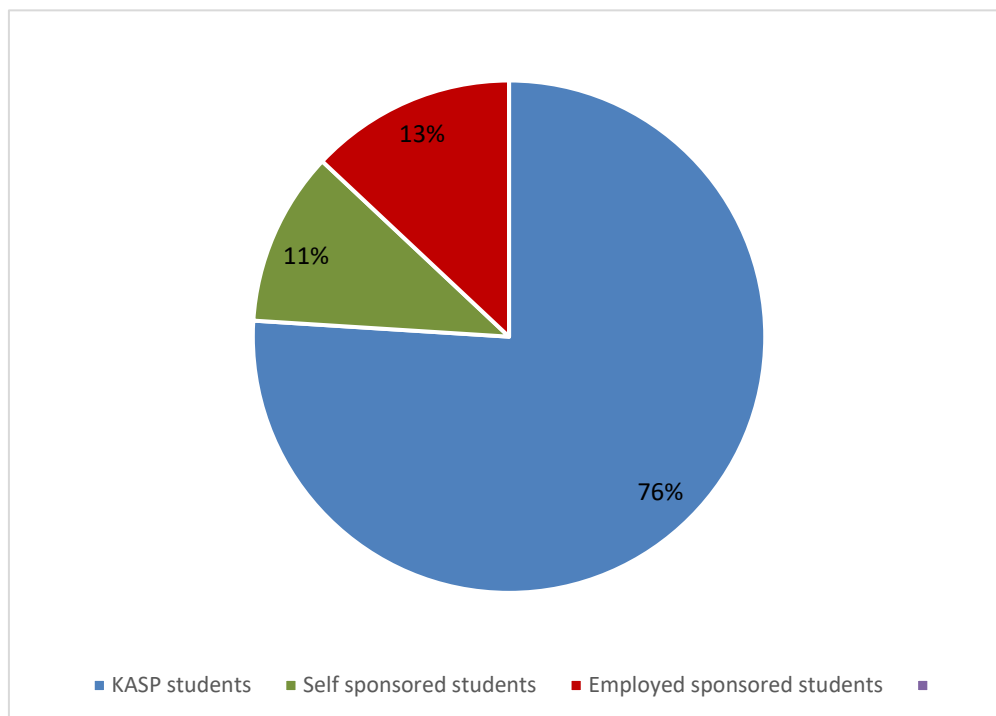


Figure 10. Saudi students abroad (Taylor & Albasri, 2014)

⁵ <http://www.mas.gov.sa/>

The fourth aspect is *Globalisation and economic interaction*. The results show that 30.8% strongly agreed that this is a factor contributing to familiarising Saudis with Western culture, 59.5% agreed and only 7.4% neither agreed nor disagreed. A tiny minority of 2.1% disagreed nobody strongly disagreed.

Data gathered for the fifth aspect, *Dialogue with other religions and openness to other societies*, shows that 17% strongly agreed and the majority (52.1%) agreed. Those who chose to neither agree nor disagree accounted for 26.6%, and only 4.2% disagreed, with no respondent reporting strong disagreement. Although this factor appears to be the fifth in ranking, the proportion of agreement is relatively high. Dialogue and interaction with other religions and societies has facilitated the establishment of two important governmental platforms in Saudi Arabia. The first is The National Dialogue, instituted in 2003, which later led to the establishment of the Cultural Discourse forum in 2009. The objective of these was to create a platform that regulates discussion of issues that give rise to debate and that foster differences within the Saudi society. This means of refining attitudes through the acceptance of others' outlooks most likely encourages openness to others on a wider scale. The second platform established which contributes to the exchange of thoughts and better understanding and acceptance of others is the International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, which was inaugurated in 2012 in partnership with Austria and Spain. The goal of this initiative was to promote international dialogue with a view to promoting global understanding and mutual respect of differences.

Sixth rated aspect is *The Saudi 2030 Vision*. The data shows that 19.1% strongly agreed about the influence of this, 35.1% agreed whereas a similar proportion of 35.1% neither agreed nor disagreed. On the other hand, a minority of 8.5% disagreed and only 2.1% strongly disagreed. This high degree of uncertainty can be attributed to the 2030 Vision being a relatively new initiative as it was only announced in 2016. Although many aspects of it are related in one way or another to interaction with the world, the direct connection with translation might not be immediately clear as it is generally understood to be related to economic issues, even though every aspect of this questionnaire has direct or indirect links with it. Moreover, the Saudi 2030 Vision has recently been at the core of every aspect of governance in Saudi Arabia. Several projects that it has initiated are led by foreign experts and consultancy agencies in the fields of industry, economics, education, health and others, so translation is often required between the parties. This is even more intense in relation to the massive number of projects planned to achieve the potential outcomes of the 2030 Vision.

The final aspect is *Change in translation curriculum at university / training level*. 38.3% reported they neither agreed nor disagreed, which indicates the lack of a clear picture. It could also be attributed to ignorance of academia by those who do not work in it in specific fields. While strong agreement and agreement accounted for 14.8% and 29.7% respectively, disagreement and strong disagreement reported 10.6% and 6.3% respectively.

	STRONGLY AGREE (1)	AGREE (2)	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (3)	DISAGREE (4)	STRONGLY DISAGREE (5)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Easy access to the Internet	64.89% 61	30.85% 29	3.19% 3	1.06% 1	0.00% 0	94	1.60
Change in media and the direct interaction with other cultures through Social media	43.62% 41	46.81% 44	7.45% 7	2.13% 2	0.00% 0	94	1.32
Travelling for tourism and/or education	41.49% 39	50.00% 47	7.45% 7	1.06% 1	0.00% 0	94	1.32
Globalization and Economic interaction	30.85% 29	59.57% 56	7.45% 7	2.13% 2	0.00% 0	94	1.19
Dialogue with other religions and openness to other societies	17.02% 16	52.13% 49	26.60% 25	4.26% 4	0.00% 0	94	0.82
The Saudi 2030 vision	19.15% 18	35.11% 33	35.11% 33	8.51% 8	2.13% 2	94	0.61
Change in translation curriculum at University/training level	14.89% 14	29.79% 28	38.30% 36	10.64% 10	6.38% 6	94	0.36

Table 6. Rating the Factors Contributing to Change

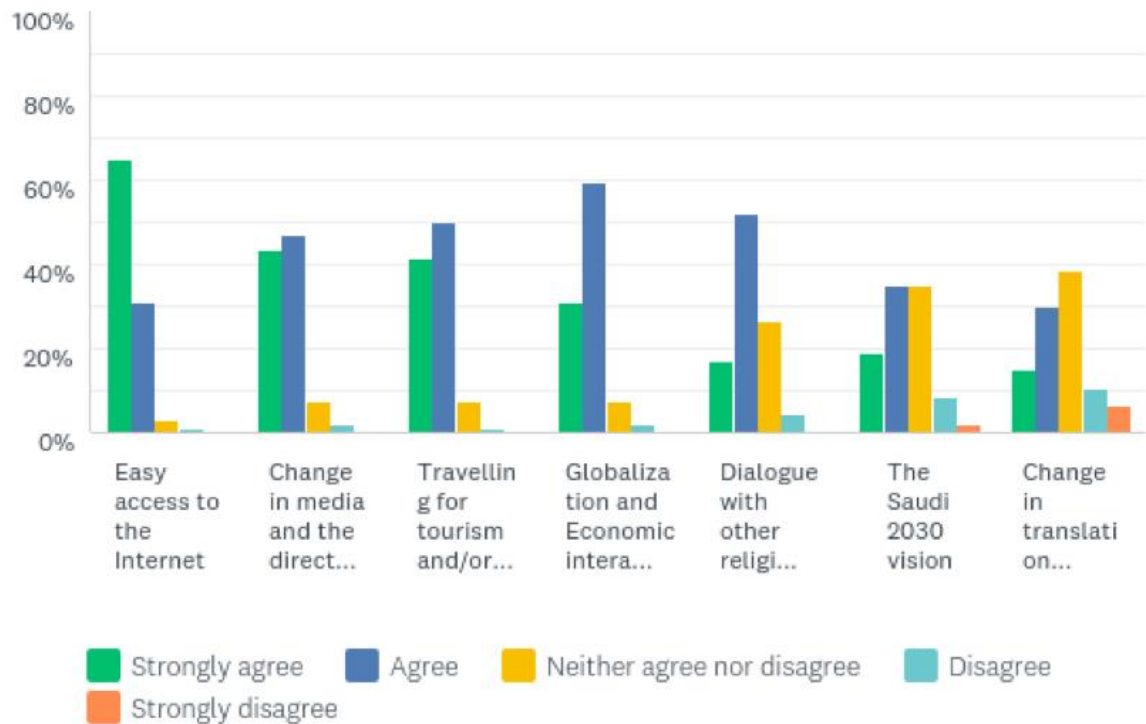


Figure 11. Rating the Factors Contributing to Change

DISCUSSION

The underlying argument warrants examination of Toury's three sets of norms. First, the initial norm is responsible for the adequacy and acceptability of the translation (Munday, 2016). Acceptability and adequacy of the translation are due either to adherence to the norms of the ST, applying a source-oriented approach, or complying with the norms of the TT, applying a target-oriented approach. In the questionnaire, this is represented in Q15 and Q16. The majority of respondents agreed to the statement: *When translating for the Saudi reader you present the unfamiliar elements of Western culture found in the text.* This statement asserts the initial norm of translation as leaning towards the source culture, in other words, the translators' tendency to foreignize the TT and his/her favouring of a more source-oriented approach.

The second set is the preliminary norm, which mainly focusses on translation policy, including the material chosen for translation, acceptance of mediating languages between the original ST and the translation, and determining the genres. These are addressed in Q9, Q11 and Q12. A close look at the data indicates the area of translation with the highest level of popularity among translators is general translation, followed by the scientific and literary by a very close margin, while the least popular is audio-visual. The data appears to suggest that translators who participated in the study mainly follow their own preference in deciding what to translate. These record a high figure of 74% which accords with the high ratio of translators working as freelancers, as opposed to in-house translators who are assigned translation tasks and therefore have limited choice of what to translate. The final point to be discussed in this type of norm is the originality of the ST, dealt with in Q12. The questionnaire data provides convincing evidence that the

translators who responded tend overwhelmingly to translate from an English or Arabic original ST (91%) and only 4% translate from a mediating language.

The final norm premise is the operational norm, which is concerned with the translators' choices. This norm contains two subdivisions: metrical and textual. By and large, this norm is best apparent in the analysis of actual translations through a ST- TT analysis.

The data suggests that the respondents were all but unanimous (99%) in agreement that translators must be aware of the target culture. Although there are a number whose domains are practical such as medical, scientific and legal translation, the majority nevertheless agreed that awareness of the target culture is vital. Going further, there was also a high ratio of agreement (77%) that there is a difference in translating culture for the Saudi target between the past and the present. Although it is largely technical language used in some of the aforementioned fields, the majority of participants still acknowledge the change. This may be because the respondents place themselves not only as translators who recognise elements situated in other fields of their profession but also as the audience of translations targeted at their culture.

Individuals seeking a translation career in Saudi Arabia are led to either the private or the public sector. Although the two might require similar tasks, they also differ in several ways, including hiring procedures (Fatani, 2009). For translation jobs in the public sector, the primary requirement is a degree in translation or a related area, and like all public sector jobs, are administered by the Ministry of Civil Services. The spectrum of translation jobs spreads across almost all public bodies and covers most genres. For instance, the Ministry of Health recruits translators on two continuums: in administrative bodies to translate documents, reports, contracts and other paperwork and in hospitals to interpret between medical professionals and patients. Translation jobs in the private sector, on the other hand, as Alshaikhi (2018) asserts, exist in two settings: organisations and translation agencies. He explains that private organisations undergo critical evaluation of translation job applicants so it is considered more demanding of high qualifications than the public sector. In translation agencies, translators take on written services from different domains including legal documents, academic papers and documents from different fields as well as other tasks that might include proofreading, editing and research projects. The translators' competence, in this setting, plays a significant role in the success or failure of the agency.

However, the lack of statistics remains a crucial component in maintaining the gap in, and ambiguity of, our knowledge of the profession. In relation to this, Abu-ghararah states that "the actual number of translators and interpreters in Saudi Arabia cannot be determined, due to the absence of an official commercial register documenting the field and also due to the lack of a single central register of approved professional translators, or to the lack of any regulation of translation activity" (2017, p. 112). The 2017 Saudi Ministry of Labour and Social Development freelance licence initiative is not merely for translators. Freelancers from different fields can benefit from this initiative. It is hence not considered a specialized translation - register in which number of translation activities could be extracted. The lack of a comprehensive body concerned with translation, which covers all translation domains in Saudi Arabia, is regarded as a

limitation in studies concerned with translation activities in the Saudi context and therefore will be the cause of research shortfalls.

An important aspect of this study is indicating the main factors that play a role in acquainting Saudis with Western culture. A point worth mentioning is the near unanimity of agreement with the seven factors, although to differing degrees. The *Strongly disagree* option was rarely selected throughout the rating section. However, of the seven factors, the most prevalent chosen by the main actors in the translation domain was easy access to the internet. This could be a worldwide phenomenon and not of relevance to Saudis only, but the high proportion of internet users in the country, concurrently with the population, makes it a ground-breaking factor. This outcome is in line with an interesting argument by Sharma, who states that “social media and the high-speed internet connects its natives to other people across the world, creating awareness, and a more progressive mindset” (Sharma, 2019, p. 130).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the questionnaire represented a picture of Saudi translation practice that has not been previously explored to this extent. The dominant atmosphere has been vague, but this study offers a preview on a wide range of issues in the translation sector including translators' stances and perceptions. The questionnaire used was divided into three parts, with each part aiming to yield data in relation to specific themes. The first part surveyed the demographic and personal characteristics of translators, and the results set the features and properties of the primary agents in the translation industry. The second part was concerned with the translators' attitudes towards translating culture. This part proposed statements intended to determine the norms of translating culture. The final part of the questionnaire was concerned with surveying the translators' ideas around the identification of change in translating culture and the causes of these changes. The final section in this part was a fundamental element in determining the social factors surrounding change and locating each factor on the scale of the strongest measure of effect.

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