

The Saudi Arabia 2030 Strategy: Translation Reception and Translator Readiness

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Abstract : One of the aims of the recently implemented Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 strategy is focused on strengthening education, entertainment, and tourism to attract international visitors to the country. To promote and increase the tourism sector, tourism translation can serve the tourism industry by translating various materials that promote the country's tourism such as brochures, catalogues, and websites. In order to achieve the goal of enhancing tourism in Saudi Arabia, promotional texts related to tourism and Saudi culture will need to be translated into English and addressed to non-Arabic-speaking potential tourists. This research aims to measure student readiness to be professional translators who can introduce and promote Saudi Arabia to non-Arabic-speaking tourists. The study will also evaluate students' abilities to promote and convey Saudi culture to non-Arabic tourists by translating tourism texts. Translating tourism materials demands considerable effort and specific translation skills to capture tourists' interest and encourage visits. Numerous scholars have explored challenges in translating tourism promotional materials, focusing on translation methods, cultural issues, course design, and necessary knowledge for tourism translation. Based on these insights, experts recommend that translators prioritize audience expectations, cultural appropriateness, and linguistic conventions while revising course syllabi to include practical skills. This research aims to assess students' readiness to become professional translators aligned with Vision 2030 tourism goals. To accomplish this, in the first stage of the project, twenty students from two Saudi Arabian Universities who have completed at least two years of Translation Studies were invited to translate two tourism texts of 300 words each. These tourism texts contain information about famous tourist sights and traditional food in Saudi Arabia and contained cultural terms and heritage information. The students then completed a questionnaire about the challenges of the text and the process of their translation, and then participated in a semi-structured interview. In the second stage of the project, the students' translations will be evaluated by a qualified National Accreditation Authority of Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) examiner applying the NAATI rubrics. Finally, these translations will be read and assessed by fifteen to twenty native and near-native readers of English, who will evaluate the quality of the translations based on their understanding and perception of these texts. Results analysed to date suggest that a number of student translators faced challenges such as choosing a suitable translation method, omitting some key terms or words during the translation process, and managing their time, all of which may indicate a lack of practice in translating texts of this nature and lack of awareness regarding translation strategies most suitable for the genre.

Keywords : Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, translation, tourism, reader reception, culture, heritage, translator training/competencies

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