

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ENHANCING SAUDI INTERPRETERS' TRANSLATION PROFICIENCY IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

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## Abstract

This study examines the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing the translation proficiency of Saudi interpreters in the tourism sector. It aims to explore how interpreters use AI-based tools in their work, examine their perceptions of the effect of AI on their translation proficiency, and identify the benefits and challenges of using these tools. It investigates whether interpreters' educational level and professional experience influence their views. Data were collected through a questionnaire covering AI tool use, translation proficiency, and professional practice. The findings show that Saudi interpreters display a highly positive attitude toward AI integration in tourism (Overall  $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ). The participants also reported that AI can support their translation proficiency by helping them deal with tourism terminology, improve language choices, and address different interpreting tasks. In addition, the findings indicate that AI can support professional practice by helping interpreters prepare for tasks and deal with challenging situations. It is utilized least effectively during extreme time-pressure tasks ( $M = 3.66$ ) and structured pre-assignment preparation ( $M = 3.48$ ). The study also found that educational level did not lead to major differences in participants' views, while professional experience affected some of their perceptions. The findings suggest that AI-based tools can provide useful support for Saudi interpreters and may contribute to improving their translation proficiency and professional practice in the tourism sector. Finally, this study recommends providing specialized AI training for live interpreting in the tourism sector, using models that combine AI support with human interpreters, and designing different workflows to support interpreters in tourism translation.

**Keywords:** Artificial intelligence (AI); Tourism sector; Live interpreting; Human–AI Collaboration; Tourism translation.

## 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Context

Tourism is an important part of economic and social development. Its growth has increased contact between people from different countries and cultures. When tourists visit a new country, they need to communicate with local people and understand information about places, history, culture, hotels, transportation, food, and other services. This makes translation and interpreting an important part of the tourism industry. Without effective communication, tourists may find it difficult to understand the places they visit or the services available to them. Tourism translation, therefore, is not simply a matter of changing words from one language into another. It also involves presenting information in a clear and suitable way for people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The need for effective tourism translation has become more important with the growth of tourism websites, online information, advertisements, and digital content. Tourism materials are often designed to attract visitors

and create a positive image of a destination. For this reason, the language used in these materials needs to be carefully translated and adapted to the intended audience. Gloria (2007) points out that tourism websites can present particular translation and localization problems because information prepared for one group of visitors may not have the same meaning or effect when presented to another group. This highlights the importance of considering the audience, purpose, and cultural context when translating tourism-related information.

Translation also helps make tourism more accessible to people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Visitors need to understand not only practical information but also the culture and identity of the places they visit. Translation can help make this information available to international visitors and can support communication between tourists and local communities. In this sense, translation can contribute to a more positive tourism experience by reducing language barriers and helping visitors understand local culture (Agorni, 2016).

Culture is particularly important in tourism because destinations are often promoted through their history, traditions, food, customs, and local identity. The way these elements are presented in another language can influence how international visitors understand a destination. Translation must therefore communicate the original message while making cultural information understandable to people who may have very different backgrounds (Yu, 2021). In this respect, Agorni (2018) emphasizes the importance of cultural representation in tourism discourse, showing that translation can influence the way a destination and its culture are presented to visitors. This is especially relevant to countries that are developing their tourism sectors and seeking to attract visitors from different parts of the world.

Saudi Arabia is one such country. In recent years, tourism has gained increasing importance in the Kingdom as part of its wider economic and social development. The opening of new tourism destinations and the increasing number of international visitors have created a greater need for effective communication between visitors and local communities. Tourism information is now available through websites, social media, online reviews, advertisements, and other digital platforms. Such information can influence tourists' views and decisions about destinations. For example, Alhemimah (2019) shows the importance of online reviews in Saudi consumers' decisions when choosing tourism destinations. This highlights the wider importance of clear and reliable tourism information in shaping people's perceptions of places.

The development of tourism has also increased the demand for professional translators and interpreters who can deal with different languages and situations (Escaleira, 2016). Interpreters working in tourism may be required to communicate information about cultural sites, historical places, events, hotels, restaurants, transportation, and other services. They may also need to deal with unfamiliar terms, different accents, cultural references, and questions from tourists. These situations require more than general language knowledge. Interpreters need to understand the context and communicate the intended meaning clearly and naturally.

At the same time, technology has become increasingly connected with translation work. Digital translation tools can help translators deal with large amounts of tourism-related information and can provide possible translations in a short time. The relationship between tourism translation and machine translation has also received attention as translation technology continues to develop. Patrizia and Martin (2022) show how tourism translation can be connected with language data and machine translation, suggesting that technological tools can provide useful support for translators. However, technology does not remove the need for human judgment, particularly when translation involves culture, context, and meaning.

### **1.2 Problem Statement**

In Saudi Arabia, the use of machine translation in tourism has also become an area of interest. (Alhaj, 2024) examined the impact of machine translation on tourism translation from the perspectives of translators and experts in Saudi Arabia. The growing use of such tools suggests that technology can become part of the translator's working process. However, the quality of the final translation still depends on the ability of translators to evaluate, correct, and adapt the output according to the context and the needs of tourists.

The recent development of artificial intelligence has taken translation technology a step further. AI-based tools can provide quick language support, help users understand unfamiliar expressions, suggest possible translations, and assist with different types of language tasks (Al-Kadery & Almotiry, 2025). For tourism interpreters, such tools may be useful before and during interpreting activities. They may help interpreters prepare for tourism-related topics, deal with specialized vocabulary, and respond more confidently to different communication situations. At the same time, their use raises questions about accuracy, cultural meaning, professional judgment, and the extent to which AI can improve interpreters' skills.

Although technology is increasingly present in translation, there is still a need to understand its role in the actual work of Saudi interpreters in the tourism sector. In particular, more attention is needed to how AI-based tools may contribute to interpreters' translation proficiency and professional performance. Therefore, this study examines the role of AI-based tools in tourism interpreting. It seeks to explore how Saudi interpreters use these tools and how they perceive the tools' contribution to their translation proficiency and professional practice. The study may also provide useful insights into the opportunities and challenges of using AI in the growing Saudi tourism sector.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

This study is important because AI has become more common in tourism translation and interpreting (Gupta et al., 2025). It may help Saudi interpreters understand how AI tools can support their work and improve their translation proficiency. The findings may also help universities, tourism organizations, and policymakers plan better training and use AI more effectively in tourism interpreting. Furthermore, the study may provide useful information for future research on AI and tourism interpreting in Saudi Arabia.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The study aims to:

1. Investigate the extent to which Saudi interpreters use AI-based tools in tourism-related interpreting.
2. Examine Saudi interpreters' perceptions of the role of AI-based tools in improving their translation proficiency in the tourism sector.
3. Identify the main benefits and challenges Saudi interpreters experience when using AI-based tools in tourism interpreting.
4. Explore the contribution of AI-based tools to the professional performance of Saudi interpreters in the tourism sector.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do Saudi interpreters use AI-based tools in tourism-related interpreting?
2. What are Saudi interpreters' perceptions of the role of AI-based tools in improving their translation proficiency in the tourism sector?
3. What are the main benefits, challenges, and overall professional contributions experienced by Saudi interpreters when using AI-based tools in tourism interpreting?
4. Are there statistically significant differences in interpreters' usage, perceived proficiency, and professional impact of AI tools based on their level of education (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate) and years of experience (1–5 years, 6–10 years, 11–15 years, more than 15 years)?

## **2. Literature Review**

Several studies have addressed tourism translation and interpreting. These studies have examined different issues, including language, culture, translation quality, tourism communication, and the role of interpreters. More recent studies have also considered the use of technology, machine translation, and artificial intelligence in tourism (Napu, 2026). The following discussion is divided into three main areas: 1. tourism translation and

interpreting, 2. technology and machine translation in tourism, and 3. AI, translation proficiency, and professional practice.

### ***2.1 Tourism Translation and Interpreting***

Tourism translation is different from many other types of translation because it often deals with culture, history, places, traditions, and local customs. Kelly (1998) explains that tourism texts have their own features and that translators need to consider the purpose of the text, the target readers, and the cultural differences between the two languages. This means that tourism translation is not simply a matter of translating individual words. The translator must ensure that the information is understandable and suitable for the target audience.

Interpretation is also an important part of tourism communication. Jamieson (2006) explains that interpretation helps visitors understand destinations, local communities, history, and culture. It can therefore make the tourism experience easier and more meaningful for visitors. In this situation, the interpreter must communicate information clearly while also considering the background of the tourists.

Gloria (2007) focuses on tourism websites and the challenges of localization. Tourism websites provide information about destinations, but they also seek to attract visitors. As a result, information may need to be adapted for different audiences rather than translated word-for-word. This is important because an expression that works well for one group of tourists may not have the same meaning or effect for another group.

In a similar way, Hogg et al. (2014) demonstrate that tourists understand destinations through different types of information and experiences. Language is only one part of this process. Cultural information, signs, images, and the actual experience of a place can also affect how tourists understand it. For this reason, translation and interpretation can influence the way visitors see and experience a destination.

Sulaiman (2016) also points out that tourism promotion should not be treated as ordinary translation. Tourism promotional texts are usually written to attract visitors and create a positive image of a destination. A direct translation may therefore not communicate the same message to the target audience. The translator needs to understand the purpose of the original message and express it in a suitable way.

The cultural side of tourism translation is further discussed by Mityagina et al. (2017), who examine tourism branding texts. Their study shows that translation can affect the image of a destination because names, descriptions, slogans, and cultural references all contribute to how a place is presented to visitors. This makes cultural knowledge an important part of tourism translation.

Sulaiman and Wilson (2019) provide a wider discussion of the relationship between translation and tourism. They explain that translation is used in many parts of tourism, including websites, advertising, brochures, signs, and communication with visitors. Translation and interpreting therefore help connect tourists with destinations and local communities.

Another important issue is tourism terminology. Sobirova (2020) examines the translation of tourism terms and shows that some terms may be difficult to translate because a suitable equivalent may not always exist in another language. This can be a problem for interpreters who have to deal with specialized terms during direct communication.

Cultural expressions can create similar problems. Pratama et al. (2021) examine culture-specific terms in tourism promotional texts and show the difficulties involved in transferring cultural meanings into another language. Sodiq et al. (2020) also examine the translation of cultural issues in a religious tourism brochure. Both studies show that cultural information needs careful treatment because a direct translation may not always communicate the original meaning.

Translation quality is another concern. Qassem et al. (2021) examine the quality of English-Arabic tourist texts and emphasize the importance of accurate and suitable translation. In addition, Kefala (2020) examines translated tourism advertising and shows that meaning is closely related to the purpose of the message, the

context, and the target audience. These studies show that successful tourism translation requires attention to language, culture, context, and audience.

## ***2.2 Technology and Machine Translation in Tourism***

The development of technology has changed the way translation is carried out. Translators can now use digital tools to search for information, verify linguistic quality, and process large amounts of material. These changes have also affected tourism translation, where information is often presented in more than one language.

Patrizia and Martin (2022) examine the relationship between tourism translation, language data, and machine translation. Their study shows how machine translation has become connected with tourism translation. The use of such technology can help with tourism-related texts and provide quick language solutions. However, tourism translation still requires attention to the type of information being translated and the context in which it is used.

The use of machine translation is also relevant to the Saudi tourism sector. Alhaj (2024) examines machine translation from the perspectives of translators and experts in Saudi Arabia and focuses specifically on its role in tourism translation. The study is important because it shows that translation technology is becoming part of the changing translation environment in Saudi Arabia.

The development of technology has continued with the use of AI in tourism communication. Zhang et al. (2024) compare AI-generated tourism interpretation content with content produced by professionals. Their study shows that AI now produces tourism-related interpretation content. This development represents a further step from traditional translation tools toward newer forms of technology that can generate language content.

Other studies also show the growing importance of digital communication in tourism (Maci & Spinzi, 2025). Tourism information is increasingly available through websites and other digital sources, while translation technologies can make this information accessible to speakers of different languages. However, the use of technology does not change the basic need for clear and suitable tourism communication.

## ***2.3 Interpreters' Translation Proficiency and Professional Practice***

While previous studies have examined technology in tourism translation and interpretation, less attention has been given to the interpreters themselves, particularly their translation proficiency and professional practice. This is important because an interpreter does not simply transfer words from one language to another. Interpreters need to understand the speaker's message, reformulate ideas clearly, maintain the meaning of the original message, and respond appropriately to the situation.

The studies on tourism interpreting help explain these demands. Jamieson (2006) describes interpretation as an important part of tourism because it helps visitors understand destinations, cultures, and local information. Similarly, Sibian and Untaru (2023) discuss the role of interpretation in tourism and its connection with sustainable tourism development. Lee et al. (2023) also examine interpretation services in ecotourism and show their importance in the experience of visitors. These studies underline the importance of good interpreting in tourism, but they do not examine how AI tools may affect interpreters' skills.

The cultural side of tourism communication is another important issue. Kelly (1998) explains that cultural distance can create difficulties in tourism translation, while Pratama et al. (2021) and Sodiq et al. (2020) discuss problems related to cultural words and expressions. For interpreters, these issues can be challenging because they often need to make decisions quickly while communicating with tourists. This makes cultural knowledge and appropriate language choices important parts of professional interpreting (Hu, 2025; Maci, 2025).

The available research on AI provides some useful starting points, but it does not fully answer these questions. Zhang et al. (2024), for example, compare AI-generated tourism interpretation content with

professional content. Their study is relevant because it connects AI directly with tourism interpretation. However, it does not focus on the experiences of Saudi interpreters or on whether interpreters believe that AI improves their own interpreting skills.

Similarly, Alhaj (2024) examines machine translation in Saudi tourism translation, but the focus is on machine translation rather than the wider use of AI-based tools by Saudi interpreters. Therefore, the existing studies provide useful information about technology and tourism, but they give limited attention to the perceptions and experiences of professional interpreters.

This leaves several questions that need further investigation. For example, it is not clear how often Saudi interpreters use AI-based tools in their work, what they use these tools for, or whether they believe that AI helps them improve their translation proficiency. It is also necessary to understand whether interpreters see AI as useful for their professional development and what difficulties they face when using it.

Therefore, the present study focuses on these areas. It examines the use of AI-based tools, their perceived effect on translation proficiency, and their benefits and challenges in professional interpreting practice. By focusing on Saudi interpreters working in the tourism sector, the study aims to provide information that is not sufficiently covered in the existing research.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study uses a descriptive survey design to explore the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing the translation proficiency of Saudi interpreters in the tourism sector. A questionnaire was used to collect information about the participants' use of AI-based tools, their views about these tools, and the benefits and challenges they face when using them in tourism-related interpreting.

#### 3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were 61 Saudi interpreters working in or experienced in tourism-related interpreting. They were selected because of their knowledge and experience in translation and interpreting and their relevance to the topic of the study. Participation was voluntary, and the participants were informed about the purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire.

#### 3.3 Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used as the main instrument for collecting the data. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part collected demographic information about the participants, such as gender, age, educational level, years of interpreting experience, and experience in tourism interpreting. The second part consisted of 30 statements divided into three sections, with 10 statements in each section. The statements focused on the use of AI-based tools in tourism interpreting, their role in translation proficiency, and the benefits and challenges of using these tools. The participants responded to the statements using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*.

#### 3.4 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the statements were reviewed to make sure that they were clear, relevant, and related to the research objectives and questions. The questionnaire was also reviewed by specialists in translation and language studies. Their comments were considered, and necessary changes were made before distributing the final version of the questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was checked using Cronbach's alpha to determine the internal consistency of the items (98.4%).

### 3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed electronically to 61 Saudi interpreters. Before completing the questionnaire, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were asked to participate voluntarily. They were also informed that their responses would be used only for research purposes. After the questionnaires were completed, the responses were collected and prepared for analysis.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate descriptive statistical methods. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to describe the participants' responses to the questionnaire items. The results were then organized according to the three sections of the questionnaire and discussed in relation to the four research questions. The findings were used to identify patterns in the participants' use of AI-based tools, their views about their role in translation proficiency, and the benefits and challenges associated with their use in tourism interpreting.

## 4. Results

This section presents the empirical findings obtained from the survey instrument administered to  $N = 61$  Saudi interpreters operating within the tourism sector. The instrument consisted of 30 items divided evenly across three structural domains: Part 1: Extent of AI Tool Usage (Q1–Q10), Part 2: AI and Translation Proficiency (Q11–Q20), and Part 3: AI and Professional Practice (Q21–Q30). To interpret the means ( $M$ ) and standard deviations ( $SD$ ), standard 5-point Likert scale interval boundaries were established as follows: 1.00–1.80: Very Low Extent / Strongly Disagree; 1.81–2.60: Low Extent / Disagree; 2.61–3.40: Moderate Extent / Neutral; 3.41–4.20: High Extent / Agree; 4.21–5.00: Very High Extent / Strongly Agree.

### 4.1 Results for Research Question 1: To what extent do Saudi interpreters use AI-based tools in tourism-related interpreting?

The descriptive analysis for items Q1 through Q10 reveals a high overall extent of AI tool usage among Saudi tourism interpreters, as reflected by an overall domain mean of  $M = 3.88$  ( $SD = 1.04$ ).

**Table 1:** Means, Standard Deviations, Levels, and Ranks for Part 1 (Extent of Usage)

| Item    | Question Statement                                                                                       | Mean (M) | Std. Dev. (SD) | Rank |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|------|
| Q10     | I find AI-based tools practical for supporting my tourism interpreting work.                             | 4.02     | 1.01           | 1    |
| Q6      | AI-based tools help me understand cultural references that arise in tourism-related communication.       | 4        | 0.93           | 2    |
| Q5      | I use AI-based tools to check the accuracy of my translations before delivering them.                    | 3.97     | 1.06           | 3    |
| Q9      | I use AI-based tools to review and improve my interpretation after completing an assignment.             | 3.95     | 1.02           | 4    |
| Q7      | I use AI-based tools to check the pronunciation of unfamiliar names, places, and tourism-related terms.  | 3.93     | 1.12           | 5    |
| Q2      | I regularly use AI-based tools when performing translation or interpreting tasks related to tourism.     | 3.89     | 1.07           | 6    |
| Q4      | I use AI-based tools to compare different translation options before selecting the most appropriate one. | 3.88     | 1.01           | 7    |
| Q3      | I use AI-based tools to understand unfamiliar tourism-related terms and expressions.                     | 3.85     | 1.03           | 8    |
| Q8      | AI-based tools help me identify potential ambiguities in tourism-related messages.                       | 3.84     | 1.13           | 9    |
| Q1      | AI-based translation tools help me prepare for tourism-related interpreting assignments.                 | 3.48     | 1.03           | 10   |
| Overall | Composite Domain Baseline (Part 1)                                                                       | 3.88     | 1.04           |      |

As shown in Table 1, item Q10 scored highest ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ), indicating widespread recognition of the overall practical utility of AI tools in daily operations. This was closely followed by item Q6 ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ), which underscores the role of AI tools in deciphering complex cultural references during tourist

encounters. Interpreters also reported substantial engagement with AI tools for pre-delivery accuracy verification (Q5,  $M = 3.97$ ) and post-assignment reflective review (Q9,  $M = 3.95$ ). While pre-assignment preparation (Q1,  $M = 3.48$ ) registered as the lowest mean in Part 1, it nevertheless signifies a strong adoption level.

#### **4.2 Results for Research Question 2: What are Saudi interpreters' perceptions of the role of AI-based tools in improving their translation proficiency in the tourism sector?**

The statistical analysis for Part 2 demonstrates strong positive agreement among participants regarding the impact of AI tools on their linguistic performance and interpreting proficiency, yielding an overall domain mean of  $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ .

**Table 2:** Means, Standard Deviations, Levels, and Ranks for Part 2 (Translation Proficiency)

| Item    | Questionnaire Item Description                                                           | Mean (M) | Std. Dev. (SD) | Rank |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|------|
| Q13     | Using AI-based tools enhances the clarity of my reformulation in the target language.    | 4.07     | 0.95           | 1    |
| Q12     | AI-based tools help me maintain coherence when interpreting lengthy messages.            | 4.05     | 1.01           | 2    |
| Q14     | AI-based tools improve performance when interpreting syntactically complex sentences.    | 4.03     | 1.08           | 3    |
| Q17     | Using AI-based tools enhances accuracy when conveying the speaker's intended tone.       | 4.02     | 0.96           | 4    |
| Q15     | Using AI-based tools strengthens the naturalness of my target-language output.           | 4        | 0.89           | 5    |
| Q19     | Using AI-based tools increases my confidence when delivering accurate interpretations.   | 4        | 0.95           | 5    |
| Q20     | Using AI-based tools contributes to greater fluency in tourism interpreting performance. | 3.97     | 0.98           | 7    |
| Q16     | AI-based tools help me maintain an appropriate level of formality when interpreting.     | 3.95     | 0.99           | 8    |
| Q18     | AI-based tools improve my handling of culturally specific meanings in tourism.           | 3.93     | 0.89           | 9    |
| Q11     | Using AI tools improves my ability to convey the meaning of spoken messages accurately.  | 3.79     | 1.08           | 10   |
| Overall | Composite Domain Baseline (Part 2)                                                       | 3.98     | 0.98           |      |

As outlined in Table 2, the highest-rated item in Part 2 was Q13 ( $M = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ), signifying that interpreters strongly attribute enhanced clarity of target language reformulation to AI tool utilization. Furthermore, AI tools were recognized for helping maintain discourse coherence during lengthy speeches (Q12,  $M = 4.05$ ) and assisting in processing syntactically intricate sentences (Q14,  $M = 4.03$ ). Respondents also indicated high levels of agreement regarding tone accuracy (Q17,  $M = 4.02$ ), output naturalness (Q15,  $M = 4.00$ ), and delivery confidence (Q19,  $M = 4.00$ ).

#### **4.3 Results for Research Question 3: What are the main benefits, challenges, and overall professional contributions experienced by Saudi interpreters when using AI-based tools in tourism interpreting?**

Part 3 of the questionnaire evaluated the broad operational benefits, professional practice modifications, and institutional requirements associated with AI tools. The overall domain mean for Part 3 was  $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ , representing the highest subscale average in the study.

**Table 3:** Means, Standard Deviations, Levels, and Ranks for Part 3 (Professional Practice)

| Item    | Questionnaire Item Description                                                                  | Mean (M) | Std. Dev. (SD) | Rank |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|------|
| Q29     | AI tools support continuous learning and professional development among interpreters.           | 4.11     | 1.02           | 1    |
| Q27     | AI tools encourage me to evaluate and improve my professional interpreting practices.           | 4.08     | 0.99           | 2    |
| Q24     | I believe Saudi interpreters need adequate training to use AI translation tools effectively.    | 4.05     | 0.99           | 3    |
| Q26     | Effective AI integration can enhance overall professional interpreting quality in Saudi Arabia. | 4.05     | 0.99           | 3    |
| Q30     | AI tools reduce mental effort required to manage demanding tourism interpreting tasks.          | 4.05     | 0.99           | 3    |
| Q28     | Using AI tools has changed the way I approach problem-solving during assignments.               | 4.02     | 1.05           | 6    |
| Q25     | Human interpreters remain essential despite the increasing use of AI translation tools.         | 4.02     | 1.07           | 7    |
| Q23     | AI tools help me provide better services to tourists from different linguistic backgrounds.     | 3.97     | 0.97           | 8    |
| Q22     | The use of AI-based tools encourages me to develop new professional skills.                     | 3.95     | 0.97           | 9    |
| Q21     | AI-based tools help me manage translation tasks when working under time pressure.               | 3.66     | 1.06           | 10   |
| Overall | Composite Domain Baseline (Part 3)                                                              | 4        | 1.01           |      |

Table 3 reveals that item Q29 achieved the highest mean across the entire 30-item instrument ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ), proving that Saudi interpreters strongly view AI as an essential instrument for continuous learning and professional growth. Furthermore, participants acknowledged that AI fosters reflective self-evaluation (Q27,  $M = 4.08$ ), reduces cognitive fatigue during demanding assignments (Q30,  $M = 4.05$ ), and enhances overall service delivery standards within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Q26,  $M = 4.05$ ). Concurrently, two critical operational factors emerged: a strong consensus on the necessity for specialized institutional training (Q24,  $M = 4.05$ ) and an unyielding affirmation that human expert judgment remains irreplaceable (Q25,  $M = 4.02$ ). Managing translation tasks under intense real-time pressure (Q21,  $M = 3.66$ ) recorded the lowest mean in Part 3, highlighting a prominent operational constraint in live interpreting environments.

#### **4.4 Results for Research Question 4: Are there statistically significant differences in interpreters' usage, perceived proficiency, and professional impact of AI tools based on their level of education (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate) and years of experience (1–5, 6–10, 11–15, >15 years)? (Comparative Analysis / Demographic Aims):**

To address Research Question (4) regarding potential differences in AI tool integration across academic qualifications and years of experience, a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The test evaluated whether participants' level of education (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate) and years of experience (1–5 years, 6–10 years, 11–15 years, more than 15 years) significantly influenced their scores across the three main survey domains: Extent of Usage, Translation Proficiency, and Professional Practice. The threshold for statistical significance was set at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

**Table 4: ANOVA (Significant differences in interpreters' usage, perceived proficiency, and professional practice of AI tools based on their level of education (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate))**

|                         |                | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.         |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|--------------|
| ExtentofUsage           | Between Groups | 0.192          | 2  | 0.096       | 0.113 | <b>0.893</b> |
|                         | Within Groups  | 49.051         | 58 | 0.846       |       |              |
|                         | Total          | 49.242         | 60 |             |       |              |
| Translation Proficiency | Between Groups | 0.031          | 2  | 0.016       | 0.021 | <b>0.979</b> |
|                         | Within Groups  | 42.385         | 58 | 0.731       |       |              |
|                         | Total          | 42.416         | 60 |             |       |              |
| Professional Practice   | Between Groups | 0.003          | 2  | 0.002       | 0.002 | <b>0.998</b> |
|                         | Within Groups  | 46.974         | 58 | 0.81        |       |              |
|                         | Total          | 46.977         | 60 |             |       |              |

Note: Significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$ ; df = degrees of freedom

The One-Way ANOVA revealed no statistically significant difference in the extent to which Saudi interpreters use AI-based tools based on their level of education ( $F = 0.113$ ,  $p = 0.893$ ). There was no statistically significant difference across educational qualifications regarding interpreters' perceptions of how AI tools improve their translation proficiency ( $F = 0.021$ ,  $p = 0.979$ ). The analysis showed no statistically significant difference among educational levels in terms of the perceived benefits, challenges, and overall professional contribution of AI tools ( $F = 0.002$ ,  $p = 0.998$ ). Because all p-values exceed the standard significance threshold ( $p > .05$ ), post-hoc pairwise comparison tests (such as Tukey's HSD) were not required.

The second part of the Research Question (4) addresses the differences in AI tool integration across the years of experience. To examine whether interpreters' professional experience influences their integration of AI-based tools, a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted across four experience groups: 1–5 years ( $n = 29$ ), 6–10 years ( $n = 19$ ), 11–15 years ( $n = 7$ ), and more than 15 years ( $n = 6$ ). When ANOVA indicated statistically significant overall differences ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), Tukey's HSD / Tukey's b post-hoc tests were performed to identify homogeneous subsets and pinpoint pairwise group differences.

**Table 5: ANOVA (Significant differences in interpreters' usage, perceived proficiency, and professional practice of AI tools based on years of experience (1–5, 6–10, 11–15, >15 years)).**

|                         |                | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F        | Sig.         |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|----------|--------------|
| Extent of Usage         | Between Groups | 6.223655       | 3  | 2.074552    | 2.748795 | <b>0.051</b> |
|                         | Within Groups  | 43.01864       | 57 | 0.754713    |          |              |
|                         | Total          | 49.2423        | 60 |             |          |              |
| Translation Proficiency | Between Groups | 6.207528       | 3  | 2.069176    | 3.257297 | <b>0.028</b> |
|                         | Within Groups  | 36.20887       | 57 | 0.635243    |          |              |
|                         | Total          | 42.41639       | 60 |             |          |              |
| Professional Practice   | Between Groups | 6.638844       | 3  | 2.212948    | 3.126986 | <b>0.033</b> |
|                         | Within Groups  | 40.33853       | 57 | 0.707694    |          |              |
|                         | Total          | 46.97738       | 60 |             |          |              |

Note: Significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$ ; df = degrees of freedom

The One-Way ANOVA revealed no statistically significant difference in the actual frequency and extent of AI tool usage among the four experience groups ( $F = 2.749$ ,  $p = 0.051$ ). Although the  $p$ -value approaches marginal significance, it exceeds the established alpha ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) cutoff.

Mean usage scores generally increased alongside years of experience: 1–5 years ( $M = 3.60$ ), 11–15 years ( $M = 3.96$ ), 6–10 years ( $M = 4.03$ ), and more than 15 years ( $M = 4.65$ ). Despite the higher descriptive mean

for senior interpreters ( $M = 4.65$ ), the overall difference across groups did not reach statistical significance at  $p < .05$ .

On the other hand, the *ANOVA* yielded a statistically significant difference across experience levels regarding perceived enhancements in translation proficiency ( $F = 3.257$ ,  $p = 0.028$ ).

**Table 6:** Post-Hoc Homogeneous Subsets for Translation Proficiency (Tukey Test)

| Years of Professional Interpreting Experience                                              | N  | Subset for alpha = |          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--------------------|----------|
|                                                                                            |    | 1                  | 2        |
| 1-5 years                                                                                  | 29 | 3.703448           |          |
| 6-10 years                                                                                 | 19 | 4.036842           | 4.036842 |
| 11-15 years                                                                                | 7  | 4.4                | 4.4      |
| more than15 years                                                                          | 6  |                    | 4.65     |
| Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.                                     |    |                    |          |
| a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 10.085.                                                |    |                    |          |
| b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error |    |                    |          |

Note: Group means within the same column form homogeneous subsets ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). *Harmonic mean sample size = 10.085*.

Tukey's post-hoc analysis established two distinct homogeneous subsets:

Subset 1 comprises early-career (1–5 years)  $M = 3.70$ , mid-career (6–10 years)  $M = 4.04$ , and experienced interpreters (11–15 years),  $M = 4.40$ .

Subset 2 comprises mid-career (6–10 years)  $M = 4.04$ , experienced (11–15 years)  $M = 4.40$ , and veteran interpreters (>15 years)  $M = 4.65$ . A significant pairwise divergence exists between early-career interpreters (1–5 years)  $M = 3.70$  and veteran interpreters (>15 years)  $M = 4.65$ , indicating that highly seasoned practitioners perceive significantly greater linguistic and delivery benefits from AI tools than novice practitioners.

A statistically significant difference was also confirmed for Part 3 ( $F = 3.127$ ,  $p = 0.033$ ).

**Table 7:** Mean Distributions for Professional Practice Across Experience Groups

| Years of Professional Interpreting Experience                                              | N  | Subset for alpha = |          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--------------------|----------|
|                                                                                            |    | 1                  | 2        |
| 1-5 years                                                                                  | 29 | 3.703448           |          |
| 6-10 years                                                                                 | 19 | 4.036842           | 4.036842 |
| 11-15 years                                                                                | 7  | 4.4                | 4.4      |
| more than15 years                                                                          | 6  |                    | 4.65     |
| Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.                                     |    |                    |          |
| a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 10.085.                                                |    |                    |          |
| b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error |    |                    |          |

The group means exhibit a linear upward trend alongside professional tenure. Interpreters with 11-15 years ( $M = 4.50$ ) and > 15 years ( $M = 4.58$ ) reported strong agreement regarding AI's positive impact on continuous learning, cognitive load reduction, and problem-solving, scoring significantly higher than practitioners with 1–5 years of experience ( $M = 3.69$ ).

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study offer empirical insights into how Saudi interpreters interact with, perceive, and integrate artificial intelligence technologies into tourism interpreting. The overall baseline means across all 30

questionnaire items ( $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) reflect a highly positive, technology-receptive landscape within the Saudi interpreting community.

### **5.1 Extent and Practical Application of AI Tools in Tourism**

The findings from research question (1) indicate that AI tools have progressed beyond speculative technology to become essential operational aids in Saudi Arabia's expanding tourism sector. The high rating for practical utility (**Q10**,  $M = 4.02$ ) and cultural reference translation (**Q6**,  $M = 4.00$ ) underscores the unique nature of tourism interpreting, which regularly presents localized idiomatic phrasing, historical terminology, and heritage concepts. In this environment, interpreters utilize AI as an instant diagnostic tool and verifier for unfamiliar names, geography, and terms (**Q7**,  $M = 3.93$ ). The relatively lower score for pre-assignment preparation (**Q1**,  $M = 3.48$ ) suggests that while interpreters rely heavily on AI for real-time and post-assignment verification, structured pre-event preparation workflows remain less formalized.

### **5.2 Perceived Impact on Translation Proficiency**

The results for research question (2) demonstrate that interpreters perceive AI tools as effective cognitive facilitators rather than passive electronic dictionaries. Interpreters strongly agreed that AI tools enhance target language reformulation clarity (**Q13**,  $M = 4.07$ ) and help preserve narrative coherence in lengthy utterances (**Q12**,  $M = 4.05$ ). Interpreting under live conditions places severe demands on working memory (Wang, 2024); the data indicate that AI assistance mitigates cognitive load during complex syntactic processing (**Q14**,  $M = 4.03$ ), thereby enabling practitioners to maintain a natural delivery tone (**Q17**,  $M = 4.02$ ) and output fluency (**Q19**,  $M = 4.00$ ).

### **5.3 Professional Evolution, Opportunities, and Constraints**

The analysis of Part 3 provides a dual perspective on the professional impact of AI. On the one hand, the exceptionally high score for continuous professional learning (**Q29**,  $M = 4.11$ ) demonstrates that Saudi interpreters view AI as a valuable tool for autonomous skill development. By encouraging self-evaluation (**Q27**,  $M = 4.08$ ) and altering traditional problem-solving approaches (**Q28**,  $M = 4.02$ ), AI integration is actively reshaping interpreting practice. Conversely, the study highlights critical operational constraints. The comparatively lower mean for managing tasks under extreme time pressure (**Q21**,  $M = 3.66$ ) illustrates the inherent latency and interface challenges associated with using AI tools during rapid, simultaneous, or consecutive live delivery. Furthermore, the strong insistence on human indispensability (**Q25**,  $M = 4.02$ ) coupled with the call for specialized AI training (**Q24**,  $M = 4.05$ ) indicates that interpreters seek structured, human-in-the-loop hybrid models. Human cultural nuance, emotional intelligence, and situational adaptability remain primary, while AI serves as a supportive technology.

### **5.4 Education level versus years of experience**

The statistical findings reveal an insightful trajectory: as interpreters gain more years of professional experience, their perceived value of AI tools for translation proficiency and professional practice increases significantly.

Novice interpreters (1–5 years) often concentrate heavily on basic cognitive management, linguistic decoding, and real-time anxiety. In contrast, veteran interpreters (>15 years) possess highly automated interpreting strategies. For senior professionals, AI tools function as powerful force multipliers that further streamline terminology verification, handle complex domain-specific discourse, and significantly reduce mental fatigue ( $M = 4.58$  versus  $M = 3.69$ ).

Seasoned interpreters (11–15 years and >15 years) evaluate AI output against extensive domain knowledge. This enables them to extract maximum utility from AI suggestions for tone refinement (Q17), reformulation (Q13), and cultural nuance (Q18). Novice interpreters, lacking deep professional experience, may view AI outputs more critically or cautiously.

The non-significant difference in general usage frequency ( $p = 0.051$ ) alongside significant differences in perceived proficiency ( $p = 0.028$ ) and professional impact ( $p = 0.033$ ) suggests that while all experience groups access AI tools regularly, experienced interpreters derive greater qualitative value from their application.

In summary, levels of education show no significant effect across any domain ( $p > 0.05$ ), demonstrating that academic qualification level does not dictate technology adoption in tourism interpreting. Years of experience serve as a statistically significant differentiator for perceived translation proficiency ( $p = 0.028$ ) and professional practice enhancement ( $p = 0.033$ ), indicating that practical workplace tenure heavily influences how effectively interpreters leverage AI tools.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in supporting the translation proficiency and professional practice of Saudi interpreters in the tourism sector. It focused on the extent to which interpreters use AI-based tools, their views of the effect of these tools on their translation proficiency, and the benefits and challenges they experience in their professional work. The study also examined whether educational level and years of experience affected their views.

The findings show that Saudi interpreters have a positive view of AI-based tools and use them to support different parts of their work. The results indicate that interpreters already use AI as a practical tool in tourism interpreting, particularly for dealing with unfamiliar terms, cultural references, and tourism-related information. The participants also viewed AI as useful for improving different aspects of interpreting, such as reformulating ideas clearly, maintaining coherence, dealing with complex language, and producing natural target-language output.

The findings also indicate that AI can support interpreters beyond the immediate translation task. Participants saw it as useful for continuous learning, self-evaluation, problem-solving, and reducing some of the mental demands of interpreting. However, the results also make clear that AI cannot replace the human interpreter. Human judgment remains important, especially when dealing with cultural meaning, emotional aspects, context, and unexpected situations. The relatively lower perception of AI support under extreme time pressure also suggests that using these tools during live interpreting may still present some practical difficulties.

An important finding concerns professional experience. The results suggest that years of experience affected interpreters' perceptions of AI. More experienced interpreters reported greater benefits from AI in both translation proficiency and professional practice. In contrast, educational level did not produce significant differences. This suggests that practical experience may play a greater role than academic qualification in helping interpreters make effective use of AI tools.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made. First, Saudi universities should provide students of translation and interpreting with practical training in AI and computer-assisted interpreting tools. Such training should include the use of AI for terminology, preparation, and the development of specialized glossaries. Second, professional interpreters should be offered regular workshops that show them how to use AI tools effectively while checking and correcting their output. Third, AI developers should pay greater attention to Saudi dialects, local history, cultural references, and tourism terminology so that AI tools can provide more suitable results in the Saudi tourism context.

Additionally, interpreters should be encouraged to use AI as a supporting tool rather than as a replacement for their professional judgment. They should always check AI-generated information, particularly when cultural or historical information is involved. Future studies could examine AI use among interpreters in different Saudi tourism regions and investigate specific AI tools in greater detail. Finally, the study shows that AI has useful potential for Saudi tourism interpreters, but its value depends largely on how well professionals

are trained to use it and how effectively they combine technological support with their own knowledge and experience.

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## مقالة بحثية

## استكشاف دور الذكاء الاصطناعي في تعزيز كفاءة الترجمة لدى المترجمين الفوريين السعوديين في قطاع السياحة

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## المُلخَص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في دور الذكاء الاصطناعي (AI) في تعزيز كفاءة الترجمة لدى المترجمين الفوريين السعوديين في قطاع السياحة. وتهدف إلى استكشاف كيفية استخدام المترجمين الفوريين للأدوات القائمة على الذكاء الاصطناعي في عملهم، ودراسة تصوراتهم حول تأثير الذكاء الاصطناعي في كفاءتهم في الترجمة، وتحديد فوائد استخدام هذه الأدوات والتحديات المرتبطة بها. كما تبحث الدراسة فيما إذا كان المستوى التعليمي والخبرة المهنية للمترجمين الفوريين يؤثران في آرائهم. جمعت البيانات من خلال استبانة تناولت استخدام أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي، وكفاءة الترجمة، والممارسة المهنية. وأظهرت النتائج أن المترجمين الفوريين السعوديين لديهم اتجاه إيجابي بدرجة عالية نحو دمج الذكاء الاصطناعي في السياحة (المتوسط الكلي = 3.95، والانحراف المعياري = 1.01). كما أفاد المشاركون بأن الذكاء الاصطناعي يمكن أن يدعم كفاءتهم في الترجمة من خلال مساعدتهم في التعامل مع المصطلحات السياحية، وتحسين الاختيارات اللغوية، والتعامل مع مهام الترجمة الفورية المختلفة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تشير النتائج إلى أن الذكاء الاصطناعي يمكن أن يدعم الممارسة المهنية من خلال مساعدة المترجمين الفوريين على الاستعداد للمهام والتعامل مع المواقف الصعبة. وكان استخدامه الأقل فعالية في المهام التي تتطلب العمل تحت ضغط زمني شديد (المتوسط = 3.66) وفي التحضير المنظم قبل المهمة (المتوسط = 3.48). كما وجدت الدراسة أن المستوى التعليمي لم يؤدي إلى اختلافات كبيرة في آراء المشاركين، في حين أثرت الخبرة المهنية في بعض تصوراتهم. وتشير النتائج إلى أن الأدوات القائمة على الذكاء الاصطناعي يمكن أن توفر دعماً مفيداً للمترجمين الفوريين السعوديين، وقد تساهم في تحسين كفاءتهم في الترجمة وممارستهم المهنية في قطاع السياحة. وأخيراً، توصي هذه الدراسة بتقديم تدريب متخصص على استخدام الذكاء الاصطناعي في الترجمة الفورية المباشرة في قطاع السياحة، واستخدام نماذج تجمع بين دعم الذكاء الاصطناعي ودور المترجم البشري، وتصميم أساليب عمل مختلفة لدعم المترجمين في الترجمة السياحية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الذكاء الاصطناعي (AI)؛ قطاع السياحة؛ الترجمة الفورية المباشرة؛ التعاون بين الإنسان والذكاء الاصطناعي؛ الترجمة السياحية.

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