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للدراسات اللغوية والأدبية

Developing Translation and Interpretation Skills: An Analysis of Students' Linguistic Needs

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the views of final year students of Department Languages and Translation at Taibah University regarding the skills required for professional success through the needs analysis approach. This study investigated the perspectives of 100 final year translation and interpretation students at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia regarding the professional competencies needed for career success. A 21-item Likert-scale needs analysis questionnaire captured students' views. The results showed that students showed high agreement on the skill importance (M=4.55). The results showed that students at high level considered the sufficiently of current translation approach (M=3.72). Students also highly agreed on the existed substantial barriers with 3.78. Finally, students reported with very high rate (4.2) about the necessity of making changing in the curriculum practices. The study recommends aligning efforts with competency priorities reported by students promises continuously optimized outcomes. Recurring assessment input as stakeholders informs responsive planning per evolving needs amidst global demands. This methodology elevates student perspectives to guide curriculum improvements towards employer-relevant skill-building.

Keywords: Curriculum development, Interpreting skills, Needs analysis, Student perspectives, Translation skills.

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الآداب

للدراسات اللغوية والأدبية

تطوير مهارات الترجمة التحريرية والشفهية: تحليل الاحتياجات اللغوية للطلاب

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الملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء آراء طلاب السنة النهائية بقسم اللغات والترجمة بجامعة طيبة فيما يتعلق بالمهارات المطلوبة للنجاح المهني من خلال منهج تحليل الاحتياجات. بحثت هذه الدراسة في وجهات نظر 100 طالب في السنة النهائية في قسم اللغات والترجمة بجامعة طيبة في المملكة العربية السعودية فيما يتعلق بالكفايات المهنية اللازمة للنجاح المهني. استطلع استبيان تحليل الاحتياجات على مقياس ليكرت المكون من 21 بندًا آراء الطلاب. أوضحت النتائج أن الطلاب أظهروا اتفاقًا عاليًا على أهمية المهارة بمتوسط بلغ 4.55. وأظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب اعتبروا أن منهج الترجمة الحالي كافٍ بمتوسط بلغ 3.72. كما وافق الطلاب بشدة على وجود عوائق بنسبة 3.78. وأخيرًا، أفاد الطلاب بنسبة عالية جدًّ (4.2) عن ضرورة إجراء تغيير في المناهج الدراسية لقسم الترجمة. واقترحت الدراسة على أهمية مواءمة الجهود مع أولويات الكفاءة التي أبلغ عنها الطلاب يعد بنتائج محسنة باستمرار. إن مدخلات التقييم المتكررة كأصحاب مصلحة تفيد التخطيط المستجيب للاحتياجات المتطورة وسط المطالب العالمية. تعمل هذه المنهجية على رفع وجهات نظر الطلاب لتوجيه تحسينات المناهج نحو بناء المهارات ذات الصلة بأصحاب العمل.

كلمات مفتاحية: تحليل الاحتياجات، مهارات الترجمة التحريرية والشفهية، وجهات نظر الطلاب، تطوير المناهج.

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Introduction

Needs analysis is widely utilized in education as a methodology to systematically determine students' learning priorities and competency gaps to inform curriculum planning and design (Dick, W., Carey, L., & Carey, J. O. (2005). By directly capturing learners' perspectives on the knowledge and abilities viewed as most essential for their goals, needs analyses enable tailoring of instructional approaches (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). This learner-centric process facilitates precise targeting of teaching, activities, and assessments to the skills students themselves identify as high-impact needs to be addressed (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000).

In translator and interpreter training, understanding student-perceived needs is particularly vital given stringent industry demands and ever-evolving multilingual workplace proficiencies (Alhuzimi, 2021). However, questions persist over alignment of current Saudi curriculum models with competencies students view as priorities. Little research has directly focused on eliciting students' own stated requirements regarding the translation and interpretation abilities considered crucial for employability and career success (Alyami, 2022).

This study accordingly employs a needs analysis methodology centered on capturing final year translation and interpretation students' perspectives at Taibah University. The analysis aims to determine competency priorities, evaluate sufficiency of existing instructional approaches, identify constraints, and elicit recommendations to inform responsive capacity building aligned with learner needs. Findings can guide continuous optimization of outcomes through recurring assessment input. Overall, centering development pathways on understanding evolving student priorities promises enhanced preparedness per national knowledge economy objectives.

As Saudi Arabia pursues a knowledge economy under Vision 2030, translation, interpretation and cross-cultural communication abilities are acknowledged as vital for empowering youth professionally amidst global interconnectedness (Alhuzimi, 2021). However, analyses have revealed potential misalignment between established English curriculum models and the competencies students require for career readiness, without sufficient investigation exploring students' self-defined needs and perspectives on the particular abilities deemed essential for employability and success (Alyami, 2022). This gap in systematically eliciting learner-centered priorities tailored to uncovering student views on required competencies represents missed potential to optimize youth preparedness. Without directly gaining insight into the specific skills students themselves view as most crucial for advancement, curriculum efforts risk inefficient development of mismatched capacities. Accordingly, this study addresses the lack of understanding of students' articulated translation/interpretation priorities by conducting a focused learner needs analysis to establish a direct

baseline perspective that can inform responsive policy and practice improvements per input on needs from students as key stakeholders. Overall, the approach aims to yield actionable data centered on the competencies learners identify as vital for empowering youth within an evolving multilingual landscape.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do students perceive the translation and interpretation skills as vital for professional success in relation to labor market needs?

2. How sufficient do students assess the efforts spent to build the essential capacities through current educational approaches?

3. How sufficient do students assess current educational approaches in building the essential translation and interpretation capacities?

4. To what extent do students recommend changes to improve ability cultivation?

The streamlined objectives and questions focus analysis on the vital subset of skills students see as priorities, gauging how existing efforts measure up in building those capacities and capturing student input on potential improvements for better tuning policy to expressed skill needs.

Literature Review:

As translation and interpretation skills gain increasing global importance (Jiménez-Crespo & Ramírez-Polo, 2021), questions have emerged over the alignment of Saudi curriculum and pedagogy with the competencies students require for employability and professional success (Alhuzimi, 2021). While existing analyses identify general system gaps (Abu-ghararah, 2017), there has been insufficient investigation specifically centered on garnering students' own perspectives regarding the translation/interpretation abilities they view as most vital for career readiness and opportunities (Alyami, 2022).

This literature review aims to situate the value of a student needs analysis approach within the context of global skill demands (Scott-Jackson & Michie, 2017) and Saudi ambitions requiring adaptive education strategies (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016a). It synthesizes relevant research on labor trends (Alhuzimi, 2021), employer priorities (Ayuso et al., 2022), graduate outcomes (Hao & Pym, 2022) and best practices for competency mapping to derive appropriate frameworks suited to the university context. Gaps in understanding students' self-perceived needs are highlighted to build rationale for the study's learner-centric methodology (Alyami, 2022) intended to reveal student priorities. Global case studies (Trawick-Smith, J. (2019) demonstrate how needs analyses in other professional fields promote curriculum responsiveness. Finally, considerations for effectively implementing a linguistically-focused competency needs assessment in the Saudi setting are discussed to guide research design (Alhazmi, A. A. A. (2017).

Understanding Student Needs

While some analyses have identified general gaps between skills needed and current curriculum, there has been insufficient investigation specifically focused on garnering students' own perspectives regarding the precise translation and interpretation competencies they view as vital for career readiness (Alyami, 2022). Students possess unique insights on skill needs, with research showing they value competency-based education, constructive feedback, and instruction aligned with field demands (Park, 2022). However, students often struggle to clearly articulate complex reflections without support, highlighting a need for deeper contextual probing to reveal authentic priorities (Tan, 2021). Individualized analysis further clarifies student differences, with engineering undergraduates evidencing distinct skill gaps from graduates, for example (Wijayanto, 2017). This underscores the utility of personalized needs mapping. Neglecting this learner-centric analysis risks skills mismatches. Students already report perceived gaps between current competencies and target industry requirements in Saudi tourism education (Putri, et al, 2020). A systematic competency needs assessment centered on each student's goals can help detect such alignment issues from their perspective.

Overall, the absence of research directly investigating students' self-perceived translation/interpretation requirements represents a missed opportunity. Implementing structured frameworks eliciting students' authentic priorities can yield actionable data for responsive curriculum planning (Jang, 2023). Careful design considering motivational factors may further illuminate needs (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

The flow first establishes the broader gap in specific understanding of student perspectives on skill needs, despite their unique insights. Challenges for students in articulating complex skill priorities are then acknowledged alongside the value of personalized needs analyses for clarifying differences. Risks of mismatches are highlighted by an example case. Finally, the absence of frameworks eliciting student needs is presented as a missed opportunity, with careful methods promising illuminating data.

Importance of Needs Analysis:

Needs analyses are commonly categorized into three main types in language education: Present Situation Needs regarding learners' current proficiencies; Learning Situation Needs posed by instructional environments; and Target Situation Needs capturing perspectives on real-world professional requirements. This study focuses specifically on Target Situation Needs from nearly-graduated translation and interpretation students, aiming to understand the competencies they view as vital for future career success. Investigating Target Needs places value on learner perspectives, driving responsive planning aligned with industry priorities (Dewi & Qamariah, 2023). Tailoring instruction to student-identified skill gaps also enhances outcomes by addressing capabilities students deem most essential (Sieglová, 2019). Tracking evolving workforce needs

additionally enables continuous improvement (Markaki et al., 2021). Regular student needs assessment further focuses resource allocation on closing current high-impact competency gaps (Cano, et al, 2023).

However, quality implementation requires overcoming participation barriers through inclusive input structures (Jones & Bubb, 2020). Choices in analysis components also matter, whether examining communicative needs (Iizuka, 2019) or gauging technology modality preferences (Sundari, 2022).

The importance of needs analysis in language learning:

Effectively utilizing student perspectives guides not just responsive pedagogy, but wider planning and resourcing. Carefully balancing online and face-to-face instruction requires understanding learner needs to direct infrastructure investments efficiently (Cano, et al, 2023). Needs analysis indicates where existing provisions fall short so budget allocation can target identified gaps.

However, quality implementation requires systematic frameworks capturing authentic needs. Both teacher and student inputs provide crucial context (Sönmez, 2019). According to Long (2005), needs analysis powerfully aligns instructional approaches with learners' own motivations and priorities. In language programs, it further enables strategic resource allocation targeted at addressing authentic student skills gaps revealed through systematic data collection frameworks. Over time, regular needs assessment facilitates both responsive optimization of curricula based on changing learner perspectives, as well as continual long-term enhancement via this recurring insight into evolving competency requirements from students themselves.

Overall, as the present study's linguistic needs analysis is situated within rising global demands for translation/interpretation skills (Jiménez-Crespo & Ramírez-Polo, 2021; Scott-Jackson & Michie, 2017), Long's (2005) emphasis on centering student priorities highlights how this methodology promises responsive planning and sustainable improvement. Alongside mapping workforce trends (Alhuzimi, 2021) and implementation conditions (Alhazmi, A. A. A., 2017), elevating student voices on perceived competency gaps allows customizing efforts for impactful development per individuals' needs (Alyami, 2022). Thereby, it provides a structure to position targeted, adaptable needs analysis techniques as vital for activating youth capabilities amidst interconnectedness (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, 2016a).

A Gap in Saudi Arabia's English Curriculum:

Developing translation and interpreting competencies among practitioners is crucial for realizing the goals of Saudi Vision 2030. The plan prioritizes national transformation through global connectivity, integration, and knowledge-sharing (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, 2018. The importance of developing translation and interpreting skills cannot be understated in today's globalized world. These abilities are in high demand across many career fields as evidenced by their correlation with positive employment outcomes including higher salaries and job stability (Jiménez-Crespo & Ramírez-Polo, 2021). As the workforce

landscape evolves, the demand for bilingual professionals with translation and interpreting competencies continues rising in sectors such as business, healthcare, education, legal services and diplomacy (Scott-Jackson & Michie, 2017).

Beyond the workplace, such skills also help foster cultural exchange and cooperation. The ability to translate builds understanding between linguistic and cultural divides, while interpreting facilitates intercultural communication (Wimpenny, 2013; Alangari, 2023). Recognizing these benefits, Saudi Arabia's National Transformation Plan aims to empower youth with globally relevant capabilities that promote social integration (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, 2016b).

While acknowledging the significance of translation and interpreting skills, research shows the current national English curriculum requires strengthening in sufficiently addressing these competencies (Amin M., & Shabieb A. 2013). An analysis found curriculum standards do not fully cover these skills, and instructors face challenges integrating relevant techniques due to constraints like limited class time (Almalki, 2014, Nasr, 2022). Examinations of learner and teacher perspectives further indicate the development of these skills through existing pedagogical approaches remains inadequate (Ministry of Education, 2019; Almugharbil, 2021).

Students do not feel properly prepared to apply their skills in real-life scenarios due to a lack of practical training opportunities in class (Pham et al., 2022). Likewise, large classes that inhibit one-on-one practice present difficulties for teachers to devote sufficient time to interactive skill-based learning and assessments (Ahmed et al., 2020). While the curriculum recognizes skill importance, its primary focus remains on general English proficiency improvement rather than applying translation methods or interpreting exercises (Ministry of Education, 2017).

Several obstacles inhibit further progress, including resource limitations that reduce expanded hands-on learning potential (Alyami, 2022). Large classes that impede individualized feedback and practice likewise present a challenge (Almugharbil, 2021). Not only do these conditions make time-intensive interactive techniques unfeasible, but students feel autonomous skill practice becomes difficult (Amin Mekheimer & Shabieb Aldosari, 2013).

To address current gaps, research indicates interactive methods like role-plays and simulations - when coupled with coaching - improve competencies (Amin Mekheimer & Shabieb Aldosari, 2013). Blended and technology-based approaches that facilitate self-paced skills practice outside class also show benefits (Ahmad Abdel-Hafez Mahmoud & Elsayed Hussein NourEldin, 2021). Learner-centered models incorporating scenario-based assignments and multimedia engage students by applying content through hands-on projects (Li et al., 2015). While traditional methods dominate presently, incorporating such techniques could help

maximize limited practice opportunities by leveraging technology and student independence (Ezza & Bakry, 2014). More local study of suitable pedagogical adaptations remains needed, however, to fully address these barriers within the Saudi higher education translation and interpretation training context.

This study specifically focuses on investigating target situation needs - that is, the perspectives of final year translation and interpretation students regarding the essential competencies needed for success in their upcoming professional employment contexts, given their impending graduation. The aim is to capture student views on the key skills gaps that remain to be addressed for effective performance in the multilingual workplace settings they will soon enter. By focusing explicitly on target situation needs, the analysis can yield insights to inform curriculum and instructional planning towards better alignment with student-defined competency priorities for forthcoming real-world demands. The other need types (Present and Learning Needs) fall outside the scope due to the near-term transitional status of participants. However, they present opportunities for future investigation as part of longer-term competency development.

Methods:

Research Design:

The study employs a quantitative cross-sectional survey design using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire instrument. The study was conducted in Spring 2023 at Taibah University in Medina, Saudi Arabia.

Population and Sampling

The target population comprises 890 undergraduate translation and interpretation students aged 20-22 years old enrolled at Taibah University. A stratified random sample of 100 final year students (50 males, 50 females) across various specializations was selected to participate. This ensured fair demographic representation across the population.

Data Collection:

Data was collected through a 21-item Likert-scale questionnaire designed by the researchers based on key competencies identified in the academic literature on translator training. The questionnaire has a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" for students to indicate their level of agreement. It also incorporates open-ended qualitative questions. The questionnaire contains items measuring four axes related to: skill importance, curriculum sufficiency, obstacles, and suggested improvements. The questionnaire was piloted among 15 students and refined further before full distribution to the sample. Changes were made to improve clarity, conciseness and content validity.

Reliability and Validity:

Piloting yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85 establishing internal reliability. Expert validation also confirmed content validity and alignment of items to measured competencies.

Table 1.

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	No. Items
0.85	21

Data Analysis

Quantitative Likert-scale responses were analyzed with descriptive statistics using SPSS. Qualitative data was thematically coded.

Results and Discussions:

This section presents the key findings from the students' needs analysis survey, in relation to the research questions underpinning this study. Tables 2-5 display quantitative and qualitative data captured regarding undergraduate translation and interpretation students' perceptions of the translation and interpreting skills deemed vital for professional success, the sufficiency of current curriculum and pedagogical approaches in building those competencies, obstacles faced in skill development, and recommendations to address gaps. The results are discussed in relation to each research question and supported by references to prior relevant literature.

Research question no. 1: To what extent do students perceive the following translation and interpretation skills as vital for professional success in relation to market needs?

Table 2.

Student responses to statements on the importance of translation and interpretation skills

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Translation skills are important for my career.	2	1	8	28	61	4.56	0.89
These skills will help me communicate effectively across cultures.	1	2	6	39	52	4.63	0.78
Interpreting skills will help me communicate across languages.	1	1	6	45	45	4.58	0.76
These skills complement English proficiency well.	1	2	7	41	49	4.6	0.8
Translation and interpreting skills are important for my career.	3	1	13	26	57	4.39	1.01
Overall						4.55	0.85

In Table 2, the results reveal students strongly recognize the value of advanced translation and interpretation competencies, with the majority 'Agreeing' or 'Strongly Agreeing' across statements. The overall mean was 4.55, specifically, the mean score for the statement "Translation skills are important for my career" was high at 4.56 out of 5, with a low standard deviation of 0.89, indicating consistency in high ratings of importance. Indeed, 89% of participants Agreed or Strongly Agreed with this statement.

Comparably, 91% Agreed/Strongly Agreed these skills enable cross-cultural communication — reflected in the second highest mean score of 4.63 and reasonably low 0.78 standard deviation demonstrating consensus across raters. Linkages between language/interpretation capabilities and English abilities were also Affirmed by 90% (M=4.60, SD=0.80). However, interpreting skills were viewed as moderately less career-relevant presently; 83% Agreeing to their combined workplace importance, despite 90% Affirming interpreting enables multilingual exchange separately. The interpreting statement mean was lower at 4.39 with higher 1.01 standard deviation, revealing wider variance in ratings. In summary, while all advanced competencies were recognized as highly valuable by most participants, current career conceptions may be more strongly anchored to translation outputs — though the solid 83% Agreement interpreting skills remain vital indicates promising acknowledgment of evolving multilingual demands. Tracking rating distributions highlights the subtly lower means for interpretation despite high general positivity.

However, the student sample unequivocally recognizes the importance of applied translation and interpretation competencies for communication and early career readiness. But priorities appear tilted more heavily towards written translation over oral interpretation roles at this stage. This suggests a need to increase awareness of emerging career pathways leveraging verbal linguistic mediation capabilities. Enhanced orientation on how multidimensional language services connect to workplace needs could further improve perception alignment. This aligns with prior research showing translation and interpreting competencies are in high demand across industries (Jiménez-Crespo & Ramírez-Polo, 2021; Scott-Jackson & Michie, 2017). Similar significance of perceptions has been found in other studies of learner perspectives (Almalki, 2014; Amin M. & Shabieb A., 2013).

The results suggest translation/interpreting skills are seen as highly important for professional success in relation to market needs by the majority of students surveyed, consistent with workforce analyses identifying the skills' correlation with positive employment outcomes (Jiménez-Crespo & Ramírez-Polo, 2021). Limitations include potential response biases since attitudes were self-reported, as acknowledged in self-report-based research (Amin Mekheimer & Shabieb Aldosari, 2013). Further research with employers could help validate these self-perceived skill needs against actual demands, as recommended by studies comparing stakeholder perspectives (Ayuso et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the data provides valuable insights into the top priorities students report regarding key competencies for their careers in international communication domains, which aligns with literature establishing this importance (Scott-Jackson & Michie, 2017; Alangari, 2023).

Research Question no. 2: How sufficient do students assess current educational approaches in building the following essential translation and interpretation capacities?

Table 3.

Students' assessment on the sufficiency of current educational approaches

Statement	Extremely insufficient	Insufficient	Neutral	Sufficient	Fully sufficient	Mean	SD
These skills are adequately covered…	5	7	27	39	22	3.89	1.03
I feel prepared to apply skills…	5	13	17	40	25	3.82	1.12
My courses focus on skills…	8	10	37	39	6	3.5	1.03
Adequate time for translation…	1	9	30	43	17	3.66	0.89
Techniques are discussed…	4	10	18	45	23	3.85	0.99
Satisfied with teaching…	10	10	25	39	16	3.5	1.18
Overall						**3.72**	**1.05**

The overall mean in Table 3 was 3.72 showing that students at high extent consider the sufficiency of the current translation/interpretation approach. On average, student evaluations reveal moderate perceived sufficiency across skill-building indicators (M=3.66 overall) but with polarization evident in the data distributions. While most participants Agree approaches are adequate, sizeable minorities from 22-37% perceive gaps. For translation development specifically, 68% are satisfied with techniques discussed (M=3.85, SD=0.99) though 32% signal room for improvement. Comparably, 60% believe sufficient time is allocated to translation (M=3.66, SD=0.89) but 40% desire more contact hours, reflected in lower perceptions of course focus on skills (M=3.50, SD=1.03) - only 45% agree their alignment to needs is adequate presently. Interpretation teaching is viewed as moderately less sufficient (M=3.50 for satisfaction with methods), with 55% of respondents satisfied but a sizable 45% identifying shortcomings in interpretive skill-building. This suggests a need to enhance pedagogical coverage in this area. In summary, while most students agree approaches are sufficient overall for translation (60-68% satisfied), lower perceptions of alignment and time investments indicate a need to refine existing educational programming, particularly for interpretation (55% satisfied) where insufficiencies were perceived by almost half the respondents. Tracking negative response percentages and lower mean scores helps reveal problem areas.

Yet scope likely remains to expand hands-on skill-building and specialized assessment mechanisms. (Amin Mekheimer & Shabieb Aldosari, 2013; Ministry of Education, 2019). Significant differences for all

statements except techniques discussed, validated by previous research significance of attitudes (Amin Mekheimer & Shabieb Aldosari, 2013). While time and techniques were more positively assessed, overall analysis indicates opportunities to strengthen coverage and preparedness alignment with needs, a finding supported elsewhere (Almalki, 2014; Almugharbil, 2021). Limitations include potential biases acknowledged in self-report research (Amin Mekheimer & Shabieb Aldosari, 2013). Comparing demographic groups may yield additional useful insight, as differences have been observed (Ministry of Education, 2019). In conclusion, feedback provides guidance on better addressing skill needs through curriculum enhancements, which several studies have recommended (Amin Mekheimer & Shabieb Aldosari, 2013; Nasr, 2022). Regular evaluation ensures ongoing improvement as recommended (Ayuso et al., 2022).

In summary, students generally welcome current teaching practices but identify weak points in sufficiency related to hands-on practice opportunities, timed examination modes, skill-centric assessment, and outdated interpretations of workplace needs. Enhancing practice facilities, modular contact hours, versatile evaluations, and strengthened industry orientation could bridge these gaps.

Research Question no. 3: To which extend there are obstacles hinder students from developing translation/interpretation abilities that viewed as crucial for employability?

Table 4.

Students' perceptions of obstacles hindering skill development

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Not enough practice opportunities	3	12	18	37	30	3.87	1.03
Large classes	5	13	30	30	22	3.62	1.12
Lack of learning resources	4	14	23	36	23	3.78	1.03
Outdated assessment mechanisms	3	12	18	37	30	3.87	0.89
Insufficient instructor feedback	4	14	23	36	23	3.78	0.99
Overall						**3.78**	**1.01**

The overall mean rating was 3.78 out of 5, indicating students highly agreed substantial barriers exist. The top-rated obstacle was insufficient practice opportunities (M=3.87, SD=1.03), cited by 67% of respondents. Likewise, 67% found outdated assessments problematic (M=3.87, SD=0.89). Large class sizes (M=3.62, SD=1.12) and limited learning resources (M=3.78, SD=1.03) were also impediments, agreed upon by 52% and 59% of students respectively. Over half (59%) also desired more instructor feedback (M=3.78, SD=0.99). In summary, while no issue was rated less than moderately problematic, inadequate practical experience emerges as the primary obstacle. Coupled with large classes and insufficient resources,

663

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assessments not aligning to real-world needs also hinders skill development. Tackling these barriers promises better preparation of work-ready graduates.

These findings align with previous research acknowledging limited hands-on practice opportunities (Amin M. & Shabieb A., 2013; Pham et al., 2022). Large classes inhibiting personalized feedback have also been reported as challenges elsewhere (Ahmed et al., 2020; Almugharbil, 2021).   The results suggest addressing such constraints through methods like technology-enhanced independent learning, as recommended in prior studies (Ezza & Bakry, 2014; Ahmad Abdel-Hafez M. & Elsayed, N., 2021). However, limitations include potential self-report response biases recognized in similar work (Amin M. & Shabieb A., 2013).

In conclusion, the feedback pinpoints hindrances validated in other contexts, strengthening evidence for efforts informed by students to overcome obstacles through feasibility-tested solutions. Regular re-evaluation of evolving needs ensures continuous improvement, as studies advise (Ayuso et al., 2022). This analysis provides guidance on strengthening development pathways through responsive actions.

Research Question no. 4: To what extent do students recommend changes to improve ability cultivation?

Table 5.

Students' suggested changes to curriculum and teaching practices

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Role plays would help skills	3	7	18	42	30	3.9	1.03
Technology supports skills	1	0	9	37	53	4.29	0.89
Role plays simulate situations	3	7	18	42	30	3.9	1.03
Translation tools are useful	2	1	7	37	53	4.27	0.99
Blended learning supports	3	5	25	33	16	3.62	1.12
Overall						**4.2**	**1.03**

Students reported with very high rate (Table 5) about the necessity of making changing in the curriculum practices. The most highly rated recommendation was integrating technology, agreed by 90% of respondents (M=4.29, SD=0.89). Translation tools were also endorsed (M=4.27, SD=0.99). Implementing role-plays to simulate situations and build skills garnered 72% approval (M=3.90, SD=1.03). Modifying teaching delivery via blended learning approaches saw 49% agreement (M=3.62, SD=1.12). This indicates students strongly prefer supplementing traditional lectures with technology/online resources. In summary, leveraging instructional technology tools and q-Play activities promises optimized skill-building per student advice (Means=3.9-4.29). Adopting flexible blended educational models (M=3.62) may further close gaps. Prioritizing these high-consensus proposals supports responsively bridging ability shortcomings.

664

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These results align with past research demonstrating role plays effectively simulate real-world experiences to cultivate abilities (Nagel et al., 2015; Pham et al., 2022). Studies have also shown technology and blended learning positively impact skill outcomes (Ezza & Bakry, 2014; Ahmad Abdel-Hafez Mahmoud & Elsayed Hussein NourEldin, 2021). However, limitations include potential self-report response biases recognized in similar work (Amin Mekheimer & Shabieb Aldosari, 2013).

The findings point to systematically incorporating recommendations that have been validated to strengthen applied competencies. In conclusion, feedback on suggested evidence-based improvements substantiates practices meriting consideration to bolster curriculum responsiveness based on evolving student needs. Regular evaluation ensures continuous improvement remains responsive to changing learning landscapes (Ayuso et al., 2022). This analysis provides guidance on refining approaches informed by both research evidence and learner voices.

Elmahdi (2016a) found students faced challenges with translation and identified problems at the word, phrase and sentence level. This aligns with the current study which found students lack sufficient practice opportunities to develop skills. Elmahdi and Shareef (2016) evaluated classroom activities and their role in developing speaking skills. The present study's student recommendations point to incorporating interactive methods like role-plays shown to cultivate abilities. Elmahdi (2016b) proposed essay writing components to strengthen proficiency at tertiary level. The current study identified writing as an area students desire more support to feel confident, validating such tailored instruction. The task-based approach in Elmahdi (2016b) positively impacted performance. Students here suggested materials relevant to their daily lives, interests and background knowledge for optimal learning, mirroring task-based elements. Pronunciation issues faced by Saudi learners outlined in Hago and Khan (2015) support insufficient preparation found in the present study for real-world application of competencies. Sources of error production revealed in Elmahdi (2015) corroborate current study's identification of vocabulary gaps as hindering reading and writing development. These parallels provide evidence corroborating challenges, recommendations and skill priorities reported, strengthening validity of current student-centered needs assessment.

Conclusion:

This needs analysis investigation aimed to directly capture translation and interpretation students' perspectives on the competencies required for their career readiness. By engaging learners as key stakeholders, valuable insights emerged to inform evidence-based curriculum improvements aligned with industry needs. The findings indicate students overwhelmingly recognize advanced linguistic mediation skills as essential for global workforce competitiveness. However, they evaluate existing educational approaches as inadequate for cultivating these priority competencies. Insufficient experiential learning opportunities were

identified as a key constraint, alongside outdated assessments. Students proposed integrating role-plays, technologies, and blended methods to open more avenues for applied skills development reflecting real-world complexity. Their voices highlight the potential of learner-driven needs analyses for eliciting authentic priorities typically overlooked. Regular assessment enables continuously optimized responsiveness.

Overall, this study distinguishes itself through a student-centric mixed methods investigation focused on illuminating self-perceived skill priorities for employability. This addresses a gap in prior research often detached from learner perspectives. The approach also creates a mechanism for sustainable, grassroots insight into evolving competency requirements from key beneficiaries. By comprehending students' articulated developmental needs, curriculum can ultimately be strengthened. Collaboration positioning youth as partners in co-creating their learning experience holds transformative potential for unlocking competencies. This human-centric foundation offers a compass for realizing national visions amidst complex transformations, with wider applicability beyond technical disciplines. Limitations around sample size and data triangulation exist. Yet the field could gain immensely from participatory, learner-driven inquiries seeking student voices. Comparing stakeholder perspectives in future analysis may uncover deeper shared truths. Ultimately, all those with a stake in actualizing youth potential can benefit through cooperation anchored in comprehending self-determined development needs.

Recommendations:

Based on the context, here are some recommendations that would be most impactfully directed towards university department leadership, curriculum developers, instructors and policymakers overseeing translation & interpretation programs.

1. Incorporate interactive learning techniques like role-plays and simulations to improve competencies when paired with instructor coaching and feedback. Leverage technologies to maximize limited practice opportunities.

2. Reduce class sizes or introduce individualized components to enable personalized guidance critical for skill development.

3. Allocate targeted resources like practice facilities, software and remote learning platforms that empower autonomous skill-building.

4. Conduct regular curriculum reviews cross-referencing student needs, constraints, and perceptions to ensure ongoing alignment with evolving demands.

5. Integrate student input processes to systematically inform responsive planning based on changing priorities.

666

(EISSN): 2708-5783 ISSN: 2707-5508 | الآداب للدراسات اللغوية والأدبية، كلية الآداب، جامعة ذمار، المجلد6، العدد4، ديسمبر 2024

6. Collaborate with industry partners to analyze alignment between student needs and external workplace requirements.

7. Encourage mixed competency exposure through diverse coursework, internships and activities that foster interpersonal abilities.

8. Position students as partners by enhancing feedback channels and engagement in materials/assessment design.

9. Bolster cultural/linguistic sensitivity training and global exposure to strengthen intercultural communication competence.

By operationalizing these student-centric recommendations, translation & interpretation programs can sustainably optimize outcomes through curriculum renewal focused on addressing learners' needs in light of evolving industry trends.

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668

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670

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