

RESEARCH ARTICLE



**TRANSLATION COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH–ARABIC IMPERATIVE SENTENCE
TRANSLATION: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

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ABSTRACT



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This study investigates university teachers' perceptions of the linguistic and pedagogical difficulties associated with translating imperative sentences between English and Arabic. Particular attention is given to the formal and structural characteristics of imperatives, their logical and functional aspects, the relationship between syntax and semantics, and pedagogical approaches to imperative translation. The study adopted a convergent mixed-methods design. Data were collected from 20 university teachers with experience in translation and linguistics through a questionnaire comprising 15 closed-ended Likert-scale items and three open-ended questions. Quantitative responses were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, while the open-ended responses were analysed thematically. The findings indicate that teachers regard structural and grammatical awareness as an important foundation for imperative translation but emphasize that accurate translation also requires attention to communicative function, contextual meaning, pragmatic interpretation, and cross-linguistic differences. Teachers identified issues such as subject omission, differences in English and Arabic morphology and syntax, politeness, contextual interpretation, and cultural conventions as important areas of difficulty. The findings also reveal strong teacher support for feedback, classroom discussion, collaborative correction, contrastive analysis, and contextualized translation practice. Overall, the study highlights the need for an integrated approach to imperative translation instruction that combines linguistic knowledge with pragmatic, contextual, cultural, and strategic competence. The findings contribute to the development of more effective approaches to teaching English–Arabic imperative translation in Saudi higher education.

Keywords: *Imperative Sentences; English–Arabic Translation; Translation Competence; EFL Learners; Teachers' Perceptions; Pragmatic Competence; Translation Pedagogy.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Translation is a complex linguistic and communicative process that involves transferring meaning from a source language into a target language while maintaining linguistic accuracy and communicative intent. Successful translation therefore extends beyond the substitution of words and grammatical structures and requires sensitivity to contextual, cultural, and pragmatic meaning (Nida & Taber, 1969; Newmark, 1988; Nord, 2005). These requirements become particularly significant when translating grammatical forms whose interpretation depends on both linguistic structure and communicative purpose.

Imperative sentences provide an important example of this complexity. Although imperatives are commonly associated with commands, they may also express requests, advice, warnings, instructions, invitations, and other directive functions. Their interpretation consequently depends not only on grammatical form but also on speaker intention, context, interpersonal relationships, and cultural conventions. In English and Arabic, these functions are realized through linguistic systems that differ in morphology, syntax, and pragmatic conventions. Such differences may create challenges for learners translating between the two languages.

For Saudi EFL learners, English–Arabic translation presents additional challenges because differences between the two linguistic systems may contribute to cross-linguistic interference. The translation of imperative sentences is particularly sensitive to these differences because English and Arabic employ different mechanisms for expressing grammatical information and communicative force. Accurate translation, therefore, requires learners to

coordinate structural knowledge with semantic, pragmatic, and strategic resources.

Previous research has documented a range of translation difficulties among Saudi EFL learners, including grammatical, lexical, pragmatic, and strategic problems. However, comparatively limited attention has been given to imperative sentences as a distinct grammatical and communicative category, particularly in the Saudi university context. This gap is important because teachers' professional experience can provide valuable insight into recurring student difficulties and into the instructional practices that may help address them.

Teachers' perspectives are particularly relevant to translation pedagogy because instructors observe students' translation choices across repeated classroom tasks and can identify patterns that may not be fully captured through performance measures alone. Their perceptions can also provide evidence concerning the relative importance of structural awareness, functional interpretation, syntax–semantics relationships, and pedagogical intervention. In the present study, these perspectives are examined through four domains: formal and structural characteristics of imperatives; logical and functional aspects; the syntax–semantics relationship; and translation and pedagogical treatment.

Accordingly, this study investigates university teachers' perceptions of the difficulties associated with translating imperative sentences between English and Arabic. It examines the pedagogical practices they consider useful for improving students' translation competence. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative



questionnaire responses with qualitative responses to open-ended questions. The qualitative component focuses specifically on teachers' observations of students' linguistic and syntactic difficulties, the role of logical-form awareness in translation teaching, and effective instructional practices.

The study contributes to English–Arabic translation pedagogy by bringing teachers' professional perspectives into the discussion of imperative translation. It also applies the multidimensional concept of translation competence associated with the PACTE model to a specific grammatical and communicative category. By examining teachers' perceptions across structural, functional, semantic, pragmatic, and pedagogical dimensions, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive basis for developing instruction that moves beyond grammatical form toward contextualized and functionally appropriate translation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Translation is a complex linguistic and communicative process involving the transfer of meaning from a source language into a target language while maintaining linguistic accuracy and communicative purpose. Effective translation requires more than the substitution of words or grammatical structures; it also involves attention to cultural, pragmatic, and contextual factors (Nida & Taber, 1969; Newmark, 1988; Nord, 2005).

These considerations are particularly important in the translation of imperative sentences. Although imperatives are commonly associated with

commands, they may also express requests, advice, warnings, instructions, invitations, encouragement, and other directive functions. Their interpretation, therefore, depends on grammatical form as well as context, speaker intention, interpersonal relationships, and cultural conventions. English and Arabic realize imperative meanings through different morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic systems, creating potential difficulties for EFL learners.

Previous research has documented grammatical, lexical, pragmatic, and strategic difficulties among Arab and Saudi EFL learners. However, comparatively little research has examined imperative sentences as a distinct grammatical and communicative category or investigated teachers' perceptions of the difficulties associated with their translation. The present review, therefore, focuses on the theoretical and empirical issues most directly relevant to teachers' perceptions of imperative translation and its pedagogical treatment.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.1 TRANSLATION COMPETENCE AND FUNCTIONAL APPROACHES

Translation competence involves the ability to understand a source text, construct an appropriate target text, and make informed decisions concerning linguistic and communicative equivalence. Nida and Taber (1969) emphasized the importance of dynamic equivalence and argued that translation should reproduce meaning and communicative effect rather than merely transfer individual linguistic forms. This principle is particularly relevant to imperative translation because the same grammatical form may perform different functions in different contexts.



Newmark (1988) similarly distinguished between semantic and communicative approaches to translation, while Nord (2005) emphasized the importance of the purpose and communicative function of translation. These perspectives suggest that translators need to consider the intended function of the target text when selecting appropriate linguistic forms.

For imperative sentences, a functional approach is especially important because formal correspondence does not necessarily guarantee functional equivalence. A structurally accurate translation may still fail to convey the intended degree of politeness, authority, advice, warning, or encouragement.

2.1.2 GRAMMATICAL AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Grammatical competence provides the linguistic foundation for translation. It includes knowledge of morphology, syntax, sentence structure, agreement, and the grammatical resources available in both languages. However, grammatical competence alone does not ensure effective communication.

Communicative competence extends grammatical knowledge by incorporating the ability to interpret and use language appropriately in particular contexts. This is especially relevant to imperative translation because an imperative may express different communicative intentions depending on the situation. A translator must therefore recognize the intended directive function and reproduce it appropriately in the target language.

Within the present study, communicative competence is relevant to understanding teachers'

perceptions of students' difficulties because problems in imperative translation may arise when students recognize the grammatical form but fail to interpret its intended pragmatic force. The source literature similarly emphasizes the need to integrate grammatical knowledge with sociolinguistic and pragmatic awareness.

2.1.3 SPEECH ACT THEORY AND IMPERATIVES

Speech Act Theory provides an important perspective for understanding the communicative functions of imperative sentences. Austin (1962) and Searle (1975) distinguish speech acts according to what speakers accomplish through language. Imperatives commonly function as directive speech acts because they attempt to influence the hearer's behavior.

From this perspective, an imperative should not be interpreted solely according to its grammatical form. The same form may function as a command, request, suggestion, warning, advice, invitation, or instruction. Consequently, translation requires attention to the relationship between linguistic form and intended illocutionary force.

This perspective is particularly relevant to teachers' perceptions because it provides a theoretical basis for examining whether learners understand the meaning of imperatives at the functional and pragmatic levels, rather than merely identifying their grammatical structure.

2.1.4 CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS THEORY

Contrastive Analysis Theory, associated with Lado (1957), provides a framework for examining similarities and differences between languages and for predicting areas where cross-linguistic differences may create learning or translation difficulties. The



theory proposes that similarities between the first and second languages may facilitate learning, whereas significant structural differences may increase the likelihood of difficulty and negative transfer.

The theory is particularly relevant to English–Arabic imperative translation. English imperatives generally use the base form of the verb with an unexpressed second-person subject, whereas Arabic imperative forms involve richer morphological marking and reflect features such as gender and number. English and Arabic also differ in word order, verb morphology, agreement, and strategies for expressing politeness and indirectness.

Previous research supports the relevance of cross-linguistic differences to translation difficulties. Al-Qahtani (2016) reported structural difficulties among Saudi university students, while Betti and Basharah (2023) associated persistent grammatical and syntactic problems with negative transfer from Arabic.

Although Contrastive Analysis Theory cannot account for all translation difficulties, it remains useful for identifying predictable areas of structural and pragmatic contrast. The present study provides a basis for understanding teachers' perceptions of the difficulties posed by differences between English and Arabic imperative constructions.

2.1.5 PACTE MODEL OF TRANSLATION COMPETENCE

The PACTE model conceptualizes translation competence as a multidimensional construct involving interrelated components rather than grammatical knowledge alone. The model includes bilingual competence, extra-linguistic knowledge,

strategic competence, instrumental competence, and psycho-physiological components.

The model is particularly useful for the present study because imperative translation requires learners to coordinate several types of knowledge. They need to recognize grammatical structures, interpret communicative and pragmatic meaning, select appropriate lexical equivalents, and choose suitable translation strategies.

Accordingly, the PACTE model provides a broader theoretical basis for interpreting teachers' perceptions across the four domains examined in the questionnaire: formal and structural characteristics, logical and functional aspects, the syntax–semantics relationship, and translation and pedagogical treatment.

2.2 TRANSLATION PROBLEMS AND CROSS-LINGUISTIC DIFFERENCES

Translation problems may arise when linguistic systems differ in ways that make direct transfer inappropriate. In English–Arabic translation, these differences may be lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, or cultural.

Lexical problems include inappropriate word selection, literal translation, synonymy, polysemy, collocation, and context-dependent meaning. Syntactic problems may arise from differences in word order, grammatical relations, verb systems, agreement, and sentence formation.

These differences are particularly relevant to imperative sentences. English typically uses a bare verb form without an overt subject, whereas Arabic imperative forms are morphologically marked and encode distinctions that are not overtly expressed in



the English imperative. Translators must therefore identify an appropriate target-language form while preserving the intended directive force.

Pragmatic differences create an additional layer of difficulty. Imperatives may be softened or modified differently in English and Arabic. English may use expressions such as *please*, *would you*, *let's*, or *kindly*, whereas Arabic may employ lexical choices, honorific expressions, religious expressions, or indirect formulations. Maintaining pragmatic equivalence may therefore require a change in linguistic form while preserving the communicative function.

2.3 IMPERATIVE SENTENCES IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC

2.3.1 DEFINITION AND FUNCTIONS OF IMPERATIVES

Imperatives are grammatical constructions primarily associated with directive speech acts. Their functions include commands, requests, advice, warnings, instructions, invitations, suggestions, encouragement, and recommendations. According to Speech Act Theory, these functions are related to the speaker's attempt to influence the hearer's behaviour (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1975).

The communicative meaning of an imperative is not determined by grammatical form alone. For example, "*Close the window*" may function as a direct command, a request, or friendly advice depending on the context and the relationship between the participants. Translation must therefore preserve both the linguistic form, where appropriate, and the intended pragmatic force.

Imperatives also occur frequently in instructional, academic, legal, religious, and everyday contexts. In Arabic religious discourse, particularly the Qur'an,

imperative forms may express guidance, supplication, warning, permission, encouragement, and moral instruction in addition to direct commands. Abdul-Raof (2005) emphasizes the importance of contextual interpretation when translating such expressions.

2.3.2 ENGLISH IMPERATIVE SENTENCES

English imperative sentences generally use the base form of the verb and normally omit the overt subject *you*. Examples include:

- *Close the window.*
- *Open your books.*

The understood subject is normally the second person, although imperative constructions may occur in other forms, including negative imperatives and constructions involving *let*. Their interpretation depends on grammatical structure as well as context and communicative intention.

The relative simplicity of English imperative morphology can create difficulties when translating into Arabic because Arabic requires more explicit morphological specification.

2.3.3 ARABIC IMPERATIVE SENTENCES

Arabic imperative constructions differ from English imperatives in their morphological realization. Arabic imperative forms are derived within the Arabic verb system and display distinctions associated with the addressee, including gender and number. Examples include *uktub* (write, masculine singular), *uktubī* (write, feminine singular), and *uktubū* (write, masculine plural).

Arabic also employs different structures for negative imperatives and for expressions whose directive force is indirect. These differences require



translators to consider both grammatical form and communicative function.

2.3.4 CONTRASTIVE FEATURES RELEVANT TO TRANSLATION

The principal differences between English and Arabic imperatives can be summarized in terms of morphology, subject realization, negation, word order, and pragmatic expression. English normally leaves the second-person subject unexpressed, while Arabic imperative morphology can encode information about the addressee. English and Arabic also employ different strategies for expressing politeness and indirectness.

These contrasts make imperative translation a useful area for examining the relationship among formal awareness, functional interpretation, and pragmatic competence.

2.4 TRANSLATION OF IMPERATIVE SENTENCES

Translating imperative sentences requires the transfer of both grammatical meaning and communicative intention. Functional approaches emphasize that equivalent communicative effect may require different grammatical forms in the target language. Nida and Taber (1969), Newmark (1988), and Nord (2005) all provide theoretical support for prioritizing appropriate meaning and function over mechanical formal correspondence.

Literal translation may preserve surface structure but fail to communicate the intended degree of politeness, authority, advice, warning, or encouragement. Translators must therefore analyze the source imperative in context before selecting a target-language equivalent.

This issue is especially relevant to EFL learners because reliance on word-for-word translation may prevent them from recognizing functional and pragmatic differences. Research on Arab EFL learners has documented grammatical errors, literal translation, mother-tongue interference, and difficulties with translation direction. Ibrahim (2022), Betti and Basharah (2023), and Akki and Larouz (2021) provide evidence of such difficulties.

2.5 TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES AND PEDAGOGICAL TREATMENT

Teachers' perspectives provide an important source of evidence for understanding translation difficulties because instructors observe learners' performance across repeated classroom activities and can identify recurring problems and effective instructional responses.

For imperative translation, pedagogical treatment needs to address more than grammatical form. Contrastive analysis can help students identify structural differences between English and Arabic, while contextualized translation tasks can develop pragmatic awareness. Feedback and collaborative correction can further encourage learners to examine their translation choices and understand the reasons underlying alternative solutions.

The questionnaire used in the present study reflects these concerns through its fourth domain, which focuses specifically on feedback, classroom discussion, and collaborative correction. The items ask teachers to evaluate whether feedback improves performance, whether classroom discussion of translation errors is effective, and whether



collaborative correction helps students internalize appropriate imperative usage.

This pedagogical perspective aligns with the PACTE model, as reflective activities can support strategic competence. Students who receive feedback and participate in discussion are encouraged to identify problems, evaluate alternatives, and revise their decisions rather than rely exclusively on literal equivalents.

2.6 PREVIOUS STUDIES

Previous research has documented persistent translation difficulties among Arab and Saudi EFL learners. Al-Jarf (2015) reported frequent reliance on literal translation and grammatical and syntactic difficulties among Saudi EFL learners. Al-Qahtani (2016) similarly identified structural difficulties associated with differences between English and Arabic.

Research has also highlighted pragmatic and cultural difficulties. Studies cited in the dissertation, including Almujaal (2016), Al-Shahri (2019), Al-Enezi and Al-Khaleefah (2023), and Salih and Abdalla (2023), indicate difficulties in preserving communicative meaning, pragmatic force, and cultural appropriateness.

Other studies have emphasized cross-linguistic interference and contrastive grammar. Latif (2024), Bashara and Betti (2023), and Betti and Bsharah (2023) reported problems associated with first-language transfer, grammatical deficiencies, and structural differences between English and Arabic.

Abdul-Raof (2005) is particularly relevant to imperative translation because the study demonstrates that Qur'anic imperatives can perform

functions extending beyond direct commands, including guidance, warning, permission, and moral instruction.

Recent Saudi translation research has continued to identify learner difficulties and has emphasized the value of explicit translation instruction, authentic models, and corpus-based approaches. The dissertation identifies Alluhaybi (2024), Al-Harhi et al. (2024), and Brashi and Abdel Latif (2024) among recent contributions.

Although these studies provide valuable evidence concerning translation difficulties, most address translation competence more generally or focus on grammatical, lexical, pragmatic, or cultural problems without treating imperative sentences as a distinct grammatical and communicative category. The literature, therefore, provides a basis for examining imperative translation but leaves room for a focused investigation of teachers' perceptions of its linguistic and pedagogical dimensions.

2.7 RESEARCH GAP

The reviewed literature demonstrates that English–Arabic translation difficulties have been examined from grammatical, lexical, pragmatic, cultural, and strategic perspectives. However, relatively few studies have focused specifically on imperative sentences as an independent grammatical and communicative category. The literature also provides limited evidence concerning teachers' perceptions of the difficulties students encounter when translating imperatives and the instructional practices teachers consider effective.

The present study addresses this gap by examining teachers' perceptions across four



interconnected domains: formal and structural characteristics, logical and functional aspects, the syntax–semantics relationship, and translation and pedagogical treatment. This focus provides a teacher-informed perspective that complements research based primarily on student translation performance.

2.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for the present study is informed by the PACTE model of translation competence and adapted to the specific focus of imperative translation. The framework assumes that effective translation involves the interaction of linguistic, semantic, pragmatic, and strategic knowledge rather than a single isolated ability.

For this study, these broader dimensions are operationalized through four areas reflected in the teacher questionnaire:

1. Formal and Structural Characteristics — teachers' perceptions of students' awareness of imperative forms and their grammatical properties.
2. Logical and Functional Aspects — teachers' perceptions of students' ability to understand the communicative and logical force of imperatives.
3. Syntax–Semantics Relationship — teachers' perceptions of the interaction between grammatical structure and meaning.
4. Translation and Pedagogical Treatment — teachers' perceptions of feedback, classroom discussion, collaborative correction, and other instructional practices.

The framework, therefore, links translation competence with both linguistic and pedagogical dimensions. Rather than treating imperative translation as a purely grammatical task, it conceptualizes successful translation as the outcome of interaction among formal knowledge, functional interpretation, semantic understanding, pragmatic awareness, and strategic decision-making. The PACTE model provides the broader theoretical basis for this multidimensional perspective.

2.9 SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed the theoretical and empirical literature relevant to teachers' perceptions of English–Arabic imperative translation. It examined functional approaches to translation, grammatical and communicative competence, Speech Act Theory, Contrastive Analysis Theory, and the PACTE model. It then considered the lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and cultural differences that may affect imperative translation between English and Arabic.

The review also examined the functions and structural characteristics of English and Arabic imperatives and discussed the challenges associated with translating them. Previous studies were reviewed to establish the broader evidence concerning translation difficulties among Arab and Saudi EFL learners and to identify the limited attention given to imperative sentences as a distinct category.

The chapter establishes the theoretical basis for examining teachers' perceptions across four dimensions: formal and structural characteristics, logical and functional interpretation, the syntax–semantics relationship, and translation and



pedagogical treatment. These dimensions provide the conceptual foundation for interpreting the quantitative and qualitative findings from the questionnaire presented in the following sections.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This paper adopted a mixed-methods approach to examine university teachers' perceptions of the difficulties associated with translating imperative sentences between English and Arabic and the pedagogical practices they considered effective in addressing these difficulties. The quantitative component consisted of a structured questionnaire containing closed-ended Likert-scale items, while the qualitative component consisted of three open-ended questions. The two forms of data were analyzed separately and considered together to provide a more comprehensive account of teachers' perceptions.

The mixed-methods approach was appropriate because the closed-ended items provided measurable evidence of the degree of agreement among teachers, whereas the open-ended questions allowed participants to explain their views in greater depth and identify difficulties and instructional practices in their own words.

3.2 PARTICIPANTS

The participants were 20 university teachers at Jazan University with experience in translation and linguistics. The teachers were selected purposively because the study required participants with professional knowledge of translation, linguistics, and English language teaching.

The participants were invited to provide professional perspectives on students' difficulties in translating imperative sentences and on instructional practices that may support the development of imperative translation competence.

Table 1: Participants in the Teacher Questionnaire

Participant group	Number	Gender	Instrument
University teachers	20	Male and female	Teacher questionnaire
Total	20	—	—

3.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Data were collected through a structured teacher questionnaire consisting of 18 items. The first section contained 15 closed-ended statements measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The second section contained three open-ended questions designed to obtain more detailed information about teachers' experiences and perceptions.

The closed-ended items were organized into four conceptual domains:

1. Formal and Structural Characteristics of Imperatives, addressing teachers' perceptions of students' awareness of imperative forms, sentence structure, and morphological characteristics.
2. Logical and Functional Aspects of Imperatives, addressing teachers' perceptions of students' understanding of the communicative functions of imperatives,



including commands, requests, advice, warnings, and instructions.

classroom discussion, and other strategies for improving translation competence.

3. Syntax–Semantics Relationship, addressing the relationship between grammatical structure and semantic interpretation in imperative translation.
4. Translation and Pedagogical Treatment, addressing instructional practices such as feedback, collaborative correction,

The three open-ended questions addressed the major linguistic and syntactic difficulties students encounter when translating imperative sentences, the role of understanding the logical form of imperatives in translation teaching, and the instructional methods teachers considered effective for improving students' translation competence.

Table 2: Structure of the Teacher Questionnaire

Domain	Items	Focus
1. Formal and Structural Characteristics of Imperatives	1–4	Structural distinction between imperatives and other sentence types; formal properties; Arabic morphological markers; recognition of imperative forms
2. Logical and Functional Aspects of Imperatives	5–8	Logical form; communicative functions; contextual and pragmatic intention; relationship between form and meaning
3. Syntax–Semantics Relationship	9–12	Relationship between syntactic structure and meaning; effects of negation, polarity, and emphasis; semantic interaction among sentence components; compositionality
4. Translation and Pedagogical Treatment	13–15	Teacher feedback, classroom discussion of translation errors, and collaborative correction
Open-ended questions	16–18	Linguistic and syntactic difficulties; role of logical-form awareness; effective instructional methods

Note. Items 1–15 were measured using a five-point Likert scale: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. Items 16–18 were open-ended and were analyzed thematically.

3.4 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Specialists reviewed the questionnaire to establish its content and face validity. The review focused on the relevance and clarity of the questionnaire items, their alignment with the research objectives and four conceptual domains, and their suitability for the intended participants.



A pilot administration was also conducted to identify potential problems in wording, clarity, and response format. Minor linguistic modifications were made before the final questionnaire was administered.

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The questionnaire obtained a coefficient of .913, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Following validation and pilot testing, the questionnaire was distributed electronically to the 20 participating teachers. Participants completed the questionnaire independently after being informed of the study's purpose and the voluntary nature of participation.

The responses were coded for analysis, and participant identities were protected using numeric identifiers. The open-ended responses were organized and prepared for thematic analysis.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative questionnaire data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. These procedures were used to summarize teachers' responses across the four conceptual domains.

The qualitative responses to the three open-ended questions were analysed thematically. Responses were coded and grouped according to recurring ideas concerning students' linguistic and syntactic difficulties, the interpretation of imperative meaning, and effective pedagogical practices.

The quantitative and qualitative findings were then interpreted together to identify areas of convergence and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions.

4. RESULTS

The results are presented according to the four domains of the teacher questionnaire, followed by the findings from the three open-ended questions. The quantitative findings are based on responses from 20 university teachers, while the qualitative findings were derived from thematic analysis of teachers' written responses.

4.1 FORMAL AND STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPERATIVES

The first domain examined teachers' perceptions of the importance of students' awareness of the formal and structural characteristics of imperative sentences. As shown in Table 3, the responses indicate a consistently high level of agreement across all four items.

Most teachers strongly agreed that imperative sentences are structurally distinct from declarative and interrogative sentences in English and Arabic. Teachers also expressed strong agreement that recognizing the formal properties of imperatives contributes to accurate translation. Similarly, all participants agreed that awareness of morphological markers in Arabic imperatives enhances translation precision and that distinguishing imperative forms contributes to students' translation performance.

Overall, the findings suggest that teachers consider structural and morphological awareness an important foundation for imperative translation. From the teachers' perspective, learners need to



recognize the formal characteristics of imperative equivalents in the target language.
 constructions before they can select appropriate

Table 3: Teachers' Responses to the Formal and Structural Characteristics of Imperatives

Item	Statement	Neutral, n (%)	Agree, n (%)	Strongly agree, n (%)
1	Imperative sentences are structurally distinct from declaratives and interrogatives in both English and Arabic.	1 (5%)	4 (20%)	15 (75%)
2	Recognizing the formal properties of imperatives aids accurate translation.	1 (5%)	7 (35%)	12 (60%)
3	Awareness of morphological markers in Arabic imperatives enhances translation precision.	0 (0%)	8 (40%)	12 (60%)
4	Distinguishing imperative forms contributes to students' improvement in translation performance.	0 (0%)	10 (50%)	10 (50%)

4.2 LOGICAL AND FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS OF IMPERATIVES

The second domain examined teachers' perceptions of the logical and functional dimensions of imperative sentences. The results presented in Table 4 demonstrate a high level of agreement across all four items.

All teachers agreed that imperatives express a distinctive logical form associated with functions such as commands, requests, or advice. The majority also agreed that understanding the logical form of imperatives helps learners identify equivalent

meanings across languages. Similarly, teachers emphasized the importance of context and pragmatic intention in determining the logical force of an imperative.

The responses, therefore, indicate that teachers view imperative translation as more than a process of structural substitution. In their view, learners must consider the relationships among grammatical form, communicative function, context, and intended meaning when translating imperatives between English and Arabic.

Table 4: Teachers' Responses to the Logical and Functional Aspects of Imperatives

Item	Statement	Neutral, n (%)	Agree, n (%)	Strongly agree, n (%)
5	The imperative expresses a unique logical form conveying command, request, or advice.	0 (0%)	8 (40%)	12 (60%)
6	Understanding the logical form of imperatives helps identify equivalent meanings across	1 (5%)	6 (30%)	13 (65%)



	languages.			
7	The logical force of imperatives depends largely on context and pragmatic intention.	1 (5%)	9 (45%)	10 (50%)
8	Grasping the logical relation between form and meaning improves cross-linguistic translation accuracy.	1 (5%)	9 (45%)	10 (50%)

4.3 SYNTAX–SEMANTICS RELATIONSHIP

The third domain examined the relationship between syntactic structure and semantic interpretation. As shown in Table 5, the findings were generally positive, although the degree of agreement varied across the four items.

All teachers agreed that syntactic transformations, such as negation, polarity, and emphasis, influence the meaning of imperatives. Similarly, all participants agreed that understanding the semantic interaction among sentence components contributes to faithful translation. Most teachers also agreed that the meaning of an imperative can be derived from its syntactic components.

Item 12 showed greater variation than the other items. Although the majority of teachers agreed that the meaning of an imperative can generally be understood from the meanings of its constituent

parts, some participants expressed disagreement or neutrality. This variation suggests that teachers do not view compositional analysis as sufficient in every case.

Overall, the findings indicate that teachers consider syntax and semantics closely interconnected in imperative translation, while also recognizing the contribution of contextual and pragmatic factors. The results, therefore, support an integrated understanding of imperative meaning in which grammatical structure provides an important foundation but does not always determine interpretation on its own.

Table 5: Teachers' Responses to the Syntax–Semantics Relationship

Item	Statement	Disagree, n (%)	Neutral, n (%)	Agree, n (%)
9	The meaning of an imperative can be derived from the meaning of its syntactic components.	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	10 (50%)
10	Syntactic transformations (e.g., negation, polarity, emphasis) directly influence imperative meaning.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (35%)
11	Understanding how sentence parts interact semantically	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9 (45%)



	helps achieve faithful translation.			
12	The assumption that sentence meaning equals the meaning of its parts is generally true for imperatives.	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	12 (60%)

4.4 Translation and Pedagogical Treatment

The fourth domain focused on teachers' perceptions of pedagogical practices that may support students' translation of imperative sentences. As presented in Table 6, the responses demonstrate strong agreement across all three items.

All teachers agreed that feedback on students' translations of imperatives improves translation performance. Similarly, all teachers agreed that collaborative correction between teachers and students supports the internalization of appropriate use of imperatives. Classroom discussion of imperative translation errors also received strong support, with only one neutral response.

Taken together, these findings indicate that teachers favor interactive and learner-centered approaches to imperative translation instruction. In particular, feedback, collaborative correction, and classroom discussion were viewed as useful practices for encouraging students to examine translation choices, consider alternatives, and develop greater awareness of grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, and strategic aspects of translation.

Table 6: Teachers' Responses to Translation and Pedagogical Treatment

Item	Statement	Neutral, n (%)	Agree, n (%)	Strongly agree, n (%)
13	Teachers' feedback on students' translation of imperatives significantly improves performance.	0 (0%)	4 (20%)	16 (80%)
14	Direct classroom discussion of imperative translation errors is an effective teaching strategy.	1 (5%)	6 (30%)	13 (65%)
15	Collaborative correction between teacher and student helps internalize the correct use of the imperative.	0 (0%)	9 (45%)	11 (55%)

4.5 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The three open-ended questions provided additional information about teachers' perceptions of the linguistic difficulties students encounter and the instructional approaches considered useful for addressing them.

4.5.1 FORMAL AND SYNTACTIC DIFFICULTIES

In response to Question 16, teachers identified several recurring difficulties. The most prominent themes concerned **subject exclusion** and **cross-linguistic structural differences**. Teachers noted that the implicit subject of English imperatives may create



difficulties for learners, particularly when translating into Arabic, where morphological marking contributes to the expression of person, gender, and number.

Teachers also identified differences between English and Arabic in areas such as negation, gender distinctions, verb morphology, and agreement. In addition, **pragmatic and cultural factors**, including politeness, tone, cultural nuances, and implicit contextual information, were identified as important considerations. Other themes included vocabulary limitations, sentence complexity, and pedagogical factors.

These responses indicate that, from the teachers' perspective, students' difficulties are not restricted to grammatical form. They involve an interaction of structural, lexical, pragmatic, cultural, and pedagogical factors.

4.5.2 The Role of Logical Form

Question 17 examined how understanding the logical form of imperatives could support translation teaching. Teachers emphasized three major benefits: identifying the implicit subject, interpreting pragmatic meaning, and selecting clear and contextually appropriate target-language structures.

The responses suggest that awareness of logical structure may help learners understand the implicit *you* commonly associated with English imperatives and recognize how subject agreement is represented in Arabic. Teachers also emphasized that logical-form

awareness can help learners distinguish communicative functions and adjust politeness levels and tone according to context.

Overall, the responses indicate that logical-form awareness can contribute to more coherent and contextually appropriate translations by connecting grammatical structure with communicative intention.

4.5.3 Effective Instructional Approaches

In response to Question 18, teachers identified several instructional approaches for addressing imperative translation difficulties. Three major themes emerged: **functional and pragmatic approaches, contrastive analysis, and practice-based learning**.

Teachers emphasized the importance of presenting imperatives as functional and communicative constructions rather than focusing exclusively on their grammatical form. They also highlighted contrastive analysis as a means of helping learners identify structural differences between English and Arabic and reducing potential negative transfer.

Finally, teachers recommended greater use of contextualized exercises and authentic materials to provide learners with practical opportunities to develop imperative translation skills.



Table 7: Summary of Qualitative Themes from Teachers' Open-Ended Responses 4.6 Summary of the Findings

Question	Major theme/category	Main issues identified by teachers
Q16. What formal or syntactic features make imperatives difficult for students to translate accurately?	Subject exclusion	Implicit or omitted subjects, particularly the interpretation of the implied <i>you</i> in English and the need for explicit agreement in Arabic
	Cross-linguistic structural differences	Differences in negation, gender, verb morphology, and subject–verb agreement between English and Arabic
	Pragmatic and cultural factors	Cultural nuances, politeness, tone, and implicit contextual cues
	Vocabulary limitations	Limited lexical resources affect students' ability to select appropriate equivalents.
	Sentence complexity	Difficulty processing complex imperative structures
Q17. How can understanding the logical form of the imperative support translation teaching?	Pedagogical factors	Instructional practices that may affect students' ability to understand and translate imperatives
	Subject identification	Helps learners identify the implicit subject and understand how subject agreement is represented in the target language
	Pragmatic interpretation	Helps learners adjust politeness levels and convey the intended tone and communicative function
	Target-language formulation	Supports the selection of clear, precise, and contextually appropriate structures
Q18. What instructional methods are most effective in treating imperative translation problems?	Functional and pragmatic approaches	Teaching imperatives as functional and communicative forms rather than focusing exclusively on grammatical structure
	Contrastive analysis	Comparing English and Arabic structures to identify differences and reduce negative transfer
	Practice-based learning	Using contextualized exercises and authentic materials to provide practical translation experience



The quantitative and qualitative findings reveal a consistent pattern in teachers' perceptions. Teachers consider translation to involve several interconnected dimensions, including structural awareness, morphological knowledge, logical and communicative interpretation, syntax-semantic relationships, and contextual and pragmatic understanding.

The findings also show strong teacher support for pedagogical practices based on feedback, classroom discussion, collaborative correction, contrastive analysis, and contextualized translation practice. These findings suggest that imperative translation instruction may benefit from an integrated approach that combines linguistic knowledge with pragmatic awareness, contextual interpretation, and active learning.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study indicate that teachers perceive the translation of imperative sentences as a multidimensional task involving grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, and strategic knowledge. Although the quantitative results showed strong agreement across the four questionnaire domains, the qualitative responses provided further insight into the specific linguistic and contextual factors that teachers associate with students' difficulties. Taken together, the findings suggest that accurate imperative translation cannot be achieved through grammatical recognition alone but requires learners to integrate structural knowledge with communicative and contextual interpretation.

5.1 STRUCTURAL AND MORPHOLOGICAL AWARENESS

The strong agreement observed in the first domain indicates that teachers consider awareness of imperative structures to be an important foundation for translation. In particular, teachers emphasized the importance of recognizing imperative forms and understanding Arabic morphological markers. This finding is consistent with the linguistic differences between English and Arabic, where imperative constructions may differ in their formal realization.

However, the findings also indicate that structural awareness should not be regarded as sufficient in itself. The source study reports that structural awareness alone was not a significant predictor of translation performance. This distinction is important because a learner may successfully identify an imperative as a grammatical category while still having difficulty conveying its intended meaning in the target language.

The qualitative findings reinforce this interpretation. Teachers identified implicit subjects, verb morphology, gender distinctions, agreement, and differences in negation as important sources of difficulty. These observations suggest that cross-linguistic differences between English and Arabic can create challenges even when learners have a general understanding of imperative structures.

5.2 LOGICAL, FUNCTIONAL, AND PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION

The second domain received consistently high levels of agreement, indicating that teachers attach considerable importance to understanding the logical and communicative functions of imperatives.



Teachers recognized that imperative forms may express commands, requests, advice, instructions, and other communicative purposes. Therefore, identifying the grammatical form alone does not necessarily determine the appropriate translation.

This finding is particularly relevant to translation because the same grammatical imperative form may perform different communicative functions depending on context. A translator must therefore determine what the speaker intends to accomplish through the utterance before selecting an equivalent expression in the target language.

The finding is compatible with the functional perspective adopted in the study and with Speech Act Theory, which treats utterances as actions performed in particular communicative circumstances. In the context of imperative translation, this means that learners need to consider not only what the sentence says structurally but also what the speaker is doing through the utterance.

The qualitative responses further support this interpretation. Teachers highlighted politeness, tone, cultural conventions, and implicit contextual cues as factors influencing the interpretation of imperatives. Thus, pragmatic competence appears to complement grammatical competence in determining an appropriate translation.

5.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS

The findings from the third domain demonstrate that teachers perceive a close relationship between syntactic structure and semantic interpretation. The high levels of agreement for the items concerning negation, polarity, emphasis, and the interaction of

sentence components indicate that teachers recognize grammatical structure as an important contributor to meaning.

At the same time, the greater variation in responses to Item 12 is particularly significant. It suggests that teachers do not regard the meaning of an imperative as completely predictable from the meanings of its individual components. The source discussion similarly emphasizes that the meaning of "imperative" may depend on contextual factors, speaker intention, interpersonal relationships, and cultural conventions.

This finding supports an integrated view of imperative translation. Structural analysis remains necessary, but it must be complemented by semantic and pragmatic interpretation. In practical terms, learners need to move from identifying grammatical forms to interpreting how those forms function within a particular communicative situation.

5.4 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The fourth domain provides strong evidence of teachers' support for interactive approaches to translation instruction. All teachers agreed that feedback improves students' translation performance, while classroom discussion and collaborative correction also received very high levels of support.

These findings suggest that teachers favour approaches that actively involve learners in examining translation choices rather than relying exclusively on teacher-provided corrections. Classroom discussion can give learners opportunities to justify their choices, compare alternative translations, and consider how grammatical and



pragmatic factors influence meaning. Collaborative correction can similarly encourage learners to reflect on errors and participate in the process of constructing more appropriate target-language equivalents.

The qualitative responses reinforce these quantitative findings. Teachers recommended functional and pragmatic instruction, contrastive analysis, and practice-based learning. They also emphasized contextualized exercises and authentic materials. These recommendations are consistent with the broader finding that imperative translation requires learners to apply linguistic knowledge within meaningful communicative contexts.

5.5 CONVERGENCE OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

An important feature of the study is the convergence between the quantitative and qualitative findings. The questionnaire responses indicate strong teacher support for structural awareness, logical and functional interpretation, syntax–semantics integration, and interactive pedagogical practices. The qualitative responses provide more specific explanations for these perceptions by identifying implicit subjects, cross-linguistic structural differences, pragmatic and cultural factors, vocabulary limitations, and sentence complexity as relevant difficulties.

This convergence suggests that teachers understand imperative translation difficulties as multidimensional rather than as the result of a single grammatical weakness. The findings therefore support an instructional approach that combines explicit linguistic analysis with contextual

interpretation, pragmatic awareness, contrastive analysis, and translation practice.

However, the results should be interpreted within the limits of the data. The questionnaire measures **teachers' perceptions**, and the qualitative responses represent their professional observations. These findings should therefore complement, rather than replace, evidence obtained from students' actual translation performance.

5.6 RELATIONSHIP TO THE PACTE MODEL

The findings support the multidimensional conception of translation competence as represented by the PACTE model. The study's results suggest that successful imperative translation involves more than linguistic knowledge. Learners must coordinate linguistic and bilingual knowledge with contextual understanding, pragmatic interpretation, strategic decision-making, and appropriate use of translation resources.

The findings from the four domains correspond particularly well with this multidimensional perspective. Structural and morphological awareness provides a linguistic foundation; logical and functional interpretation contributes to understanding communicative purpose; syntax–semantics awareness supports meaning construction; and feedback and collaborative learning can contribute to the development of strategic competence.

Accordingly, the findings support the use of an integrated pedagogical model in which grammatical instruction is connected to communicative interpretation and authentic translation practice. This interpretation is consistent with the source study's



conclusion that translation competence develops through the interaction of complementary competences rather than through grammatical knowledge in isolation.

5.7 OVERALL DISCUSSION

Overall, the findings suggest that imperative translation represents a particularly useful area for examining the interaction between linguistic form and communicative meaning. Teachers recognize the importance of grammatical and morphological knowledge, but their responses also demonstrate that structural knowledge alone does not guarantee an appropriate translation.

The qualitative findings explain this broader pattern by highlighting subject omission, English–Arabic structural differences, pragmatic and cultural factors, and contextual interpretation. The pedagogical findings, meanwhile, indicate strong support for feedback, classroom discussion, collaborative correction, contrastive analysis, and authentic translation practice.

The central implication is therefore that imperative translation should be taught as an **integrated linguistic and communicative skill**. Instruction should help learners identify the grammatical structure of the source imperative, determine its communicative function, consider the relevant contextual and cultural factors, and then select a target-language expression that preserves both meaning and function. Such an approach is more consistent with the multidimensional nature of translation competence than instruction based solely on grammatical equivalence.

6. CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study examined university teachers' perceptions of the linguistic and pedagogical difficulties associated with translating imperative sentences between English and Arabic. The findings indicate that teachers view imperative translation as a multidimensional process involving structural, functional, semantic, pragmatic, and strategic considerations.

The findings also demonstrate strong teacher support for pedagogical practices that encourage reflection and active participation. Feedback, classroom discussion, and collaborative correction were consistently viewed as valuable approaches to improving students' translation competence.

Several pedagogical implications follow from these findings. First, translation instruction should integrate explicit comparison of English and Arabic imperative structures with contextualized translation practice. Second, students should be encouraged to identify the communicative function and pragmatic force of an imperative before selecting a target-language equivalent. Third, teachers should use formative feedback and collaborative correction to help students evaluate and revise their translation choices. Finally, authentic and contextualized materials should be incorporated into translation activities so that students can examine how imperative expressions vary according to communicative purpose, context, and interpersonal relationships.

The study therefore supports an integrated approach to imperative translation instruction in which grammatical knowledge is developed alongside



pragmatic awareness, contextual interpretation, cultural sensitivity, and strategic competence. Such an approach may provide a stronger pedagogical foundation for English–Arabic translation instruction in Saudi higher education.

7. LIMITATIONS

The findings should be interpreted within the scope and limitations of the present study. The teacher questionnaire involved 20 university teachers with experience in translation and linguistics at Jazan University. Consequently, the findings reflect the perceptions of this group and should not be automatically generalised to all university teachers or to EFL contexts.

In addition, the questionnaire findings reflect teachers' professional perceptions rather than direct measures of students' translation performance. The value of these findings, therefore, lies primarily in identifying teachers' observations of students' difficulties and the instructional practices they consider appropriate for addressing them.

Future research could examine these teacher-reported difficulties alongside direct classroom observations, student interviews, or experimental investigations of specific instructional interventions.

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY

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