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Translation as an entrepreneurship and an Effective Factor in Small Businesses Growth: Evidence from the Field of Saudi Translation^(*)

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(* موقع المجلة:

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Abstract

This study focuses on the importance of translation as a growing industry sector in Saudi society. It aims at investigating the reality of translation sector as an entrepreneurship, and the role of AI in translation in Saudi Arabia. Using the descriptive approach, this study investigates translation market and its rapid growth, influenced by several factors such as rising need for language translation services, increasing AI adoption, and growing awareness of the benefits of digital translation. This growth is impacted by development in technology and government initiatives promoting digitalization in all sectors. Saudi translation market size was valued at USD 1.5 billion in 2022 and is estimated to register a Compound Annual Growth Rate CAGR of 22.8% between 2023 and 2032. Based on the established fact that entrepreneurship is more than business projects; translation industry becomes an opportunity to find one's passion that shapes the economic position and identity and participates in national income. Choosing translation as an entrepreneurship/industry includes an analysis of the concept as a self-employment sector, a soft skills development, and a micro economic participant which will also have implications on new pedagogical approach in improving the sector of translation. The study finds that Saudi translation market possesses distinctive features, evident in both freelance translation and agency-based work that require much more support.

Keywords: Saudi translation market, translators, entrepreneurship, income, industry sector

Introduction:

Entrepreneurship is more than business projects; creativity in language has become an important part of our life because it helps us express and share our ideas about everything with other people. Therefore, translation industry becomes an opportunity to find one's passion that shapes the economic position and identity and participates in national income (Dodaro 2021; Adu-Gyamfi et al 2022; Torkkeli & Loane 2022). As a result, the translation industry presents an opportunity to discover one's passion, influencing economic status, identity, and national income. Basmah Abu-Ghararah (2017) defines entrepreneurship as the pursuit of a creative and risky freelance business. Thus, three key pillars of entrepreneurial work are freedom, risk-taking, and creativity. A freelance translator qualifies as an entrepreneur due to the creativity they exhibit and the high-quality translation services they provide. The translation profession offers a lucrative career path for students and graduates alike. According to Sorrentino (2023), the language service sector has experienced significant growth over the past two decades. Professionals in the field can either pursue jobs in teaching, translation, cultural communications, international business, and tourism or work independently as freelance translators managing their own projects (2023). Therefore, creativity in translation can take various forms, from technological innovations and industrial products that assist translators to services such as translating documents, literary works, and theoretical texts across disciplines. It also includes developing new strategies and approaches to enhance translation quality and efficiency.

The table (1) below presents the growth in the value of the translation market in Saudi Arabia (in USD) over the years Machine Translation growth

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
USD	150	250	230	340	460	510	700	800	1100	1400	1600

Source: Statista Market Insights (2023).

These data highlight the steady and significant growth of the translation industry in Saudi Arabia, with projections indicating continued expansion. The increasing demand for translation services, driven by economic growth, globalization, and Saudi Vision (2030) initiatives, is expected to further boost the market value in the coming years (Statista 2024). The translation industry in Saudi Arabia is experiencing significant growth, driven by factors such as

the increasing adoption of AI, rising demand for language translation services, and greater awareness of the benefits of digital translation (Al Sawy & Altwaiji 2018). This expansion is further supported by technological advancements and government initiatives aimed at promoting digitalization across all sectors (Altwaiji, *et al* 2021 a). In (2022), the Saudi translation market was valued at USD (1.5) billion, with a projected Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of (22.8%) from 2023 to 2032 (Statista, 2025). This study explores the current state of the translation sector in Saudi Arabia to develop a unified vision of its role in the national economy. Given that entrepreneurship extends beyond traditional business ventures, the translation industry presents an opportunity for individuals to discover their passion, shape their economic standing and identity, and contribute to national income. Viewing translation as both an entrepreneurial endeavor and an industry involves examining it as a self-employment sector, a means of developing soft skills, and a key player in the microeconomy (Elmotri *et al* 2025). Additionally, this perspective has important implications for introducing new pedagogical approaches to enhance the translation sector.

The Saudi translation market has been recognized as one of the fastest-growing industries, with an expected Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of (22.8%) between (2023) and (2032) (Abdullateef et al., 2023, p. 235). This rapid expansion has heightened the demand for professional communication across different regions within the country. Several theorists in the field of translation, including Chesterman (2001), Pym (2001, 2012), Cronin (2003), Hermans (2009), and Kruger and Crots (2014), have explored the evolving role of translators. Traditionally seen as message communicators with ethical responsibilities limited to professional contexts, translators are now viewed as active agents who play a crucial role in promoting social justice through their work. Additionally, some scholars emphasize the significance of a translator's personal ethics, as these ethical considerations inevitably influence the decisions made throughout the translation process (Kruger & Crots, 2014; Robinson, 2003).

Methodology:

This study is a descriptive analysis that explores various aspects of translation as both an industry and an entrepreneurial venture, examining its role in income generation and its significance in strengthening the national

economy. Research methodology serves as a systematic, step-by-step framework guiding researchers toward achieving their objectives (Kruger & Crots, 2014, p. 181). The study adopts an explanatory research design and a quantitative analysis approach to assess the value and reality of translation work. The sample population will be drawn from Riyadh, Jeddah, and Damman-key hubs for translators and translation companies. Data collection will be conducted using Google Forms, and the stratified random sampling method will be employed, dividing the target population into subgroups based on their professional background, including freelance translators and translation companies. For data analysis, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used to process and evaluate the collected data. Additionally, Spearman's rank-order correlation will be applied to determine the relationship between respondents' experience in the translation industry and its impact on their income.

Significance of the Study:

This study on translation in Saudi Arabia as a type of entrepreneurship or as an industry sector is important in many ways. The study of Saudi translation market reflects the share of translation in national income and encourages junior translations into business. The study of Saudi translation market reflects country's diverse population, the cross-cultural communication, and global business partnerships grows. Translation as an entrepreneurship or as an industry sector asserts that Artificial Intelligence Market is witnessing a significant growth for many reasons such as the country's push towards diversifying its economy and investing in advanced technology. Therefore, this study reflects the importance of translation in commercial contact with the external world.

Objectives of the Study:

This study focuses on the importance of translation as a growing industry sector in Saudi society. Therefore, the objectives of the study can be divided as follows:

- 1- To explore the reality of Saudi translation Market, its share in income.
- 2- To investigate translation as an entrepreneurship/an industry sector and as an actor in diversifying Saudi economy
- 3- To study the role of Artificial Intelligence in Translation Market
- 4- To examine the effect of translation on the country's diverse population, the cross-cultural communication, and global business partnerships grows.

Literature Review:

Over the past decades, Saudi Arabia has experienced significant economic growth, with the government prioritizing the development of key sectors such as education, healthcare, transportation, and communication (Alenezi, *et al* 2021). Within this evolving economic landscape, the translation industry has begun to play an increasingly vital role as a sub-sector of the broader industrial framework. Given Saudi Arabia's expanding and open economy, the translation sector, like other industries, relies heavily on maintaining strong connections with the global market. Ofer Tirosh (2014) describes the translation industry as both an entrepreneurial field and an industry, noting that 80% of translators work within a business or sector and tend to remain in their chosen specialization. Similarly, many scholars view translators as entrepreneurs due to their shared characteristics with business professionals. According to a report by the UK Centre for Policy Studies, successful entrepreneurs possess qualities such as dedication, creativity, a strong work ethic, ambition, optimism, self-confidence, leadership skills, adaptability, resilience, and strong social skills (Abdullateef, 2023). Research conducted by the University of Vienna (2023) further supports this perspective, revealing that 80% of translators work as freelancers and that many are highly skilled, creative individuals with a deep understanding of social norms and professional ethics. Given these similarities, translators can be seen as language entrepreneurs rather than traditional business entrepreneurs, as their success depends on self-motivation, independence, and goal-oriented work.

In the Saudi context, the translation sector as an entrepreneurial industry contributes to national income by generating job opportunities, fostering innovation to improve the world, and creating new wealth for the economy (Asiri & Amal, 2024, p. 504). This sector exhibits key entrepreneurial traits, particularly within freelance translation, where many professionals share characteristics commonly associated with entrepreneurs. As a result, freelance translation and its related innovative projects can undoubtedly be classified as entrepreneurial endeavors. Furthermore, the translation industry serves as a fertile ground for investment, particularly in major cities like Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam. To maximize its potential, the sector requires significant support from innovative entrepreneurs to drive its growth. This would not only enhance cultural knowledge and exchange but also enrich

society with valuable content while creating employment opportunities for many unemployed translators.

Translator as an entrepreneur:

Translators can extend their role beyond traditional translation tasks by incorporating innovation, strategic decision-making, and market adaptability. While some argue that translators primarily focus on linguistic expertise, others believe that the entrepreneurial spirit is evident in their ability to market their skills, create specialized services, and navigate a competitive industry (Alshammari *et al* 2023). Entrepreneurship in translation goes beyond freelancing - it involves recognizing market needs, developing unique solutions, and continuously evolving to meet industry demands (Muñoz, 2020. P. 32). Translators who establish their own businesses, develop proprietary translation tools, or carve out niche expertise demonstrate key entrepreneurial traits. Therefore, while not all translators may fit the definition of an entrepreneur, those who actively innovate, take risks, and build sustainable translation ventures can indeed be considered language entrepreneurs.

Translation: Saudi Context:

Educational institutions in Saudi Arabia offer various translation programs, including those at Effat University, King Saud University, Umm Al-Qura University, the King Abdullah Institute for Translation and Arabisation, and King Abdulaziz University (Altwaiji, 2023). The Kingdom has made significant contributions to the field of translation, establishing translation as a recognized industry. The King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Award for Translation, for instance, promotes cultural exchange and intellectual engagement. As Fatani (2009) notes that Saudi Arabia's entry into the World Trade Organization has accelerated the demand for translation and interpreting services, creating excellent employment opportunities for trained professionals (p. 2) The demand for expert translators continues to rise due to various factors, including the need for cultural communication with non-Arabic-speaking pilgrims who visit Saudi Arabia annually for religious purposes. Additionally, communication needs have become a key aspect of Saudi Vision 2030, further driving the demand for translation services in fields such as tourism, artificial intelligence, and sports. As a result, the translation market is now recognized as a crucial sector,

particularly when assessing the effectiveness of translation training programs. This study explores the gap between academic translation programs and the actual needs of the Saudi translation market, suggesting that training programs should be designed based on industry demands. According to Kościółkowska-Okońska (2012), the role of education in preparing professional translators remains unclear, with instructors playing a crucial role in translation studies. The growing need for specialized training programs in Saudi Arabia has led to evaluations of their effectiveness. Moreover, this study highlights the importance of considering stakeholders' perceptions to ensure that training programs align with the requirements of the professional translation market in Saudi Arabia.

Determinants affecting Translation as entrepreneurship

- 1- **Type or version of translation:** The most important versions and expensive translation jobs are the specialized ones.
 - **Simultaneous translation:** This translation is done orally in conferences, official meetings, court sessions, etc.
 - **Legal translation:** Legal translation differs from other types of translation because of the legal terms it contains, and the legal translator is well-versed in them.
 - **Literary translation:** This translation includes different literary fields such as history, philosophy, etc.
 - **Medical translation:** Medical translation is one of the highest-paying specializations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
 - **Technical translation:** Technical translation includes many technical terms that require extensive experience in this field.
- 2- **Years of experience:** Experience plays a crucial role in shaping the translation business and income levels in Saudi Arabia, making it one of the key factors influencing the development of this growing industry. Data indicates that approximately 34% of Saudi translators working in entrepreneurship have less than two years of experience, while 19% have between two and five years of experience. Additionally, 8% of translators have between 10 and 15 years of experience, and fewer than 7% have more than 15 years of experience. The following table illustrates the distribution of experience levels among translators in the Saudi translation market.

The table (2) below presents the distribution of translators in the Saudi labor market based on their years of experience

Years of Experience	Percentage of Translators
1-4 years	19%
5-10 years	8%
10-15 years	7%
15-20 years	4%
20+ years	1%

This data indicates that the majority of translators in the Saudi market are in the early stages of their careers, with 19% having 1-4 years of experience. In contrast, only a small percentage (1%) have more than 20 years of experience, highlighting the need for professional development and long-term career support to retain experienced professionals in the industry. This distribution highlights the relatively high proportion of early-career translators in the industry, emphasizing the need for professional development and training opportunities to enhance their skills and competitiveness in the market.

The table (3) below presents the income progression of translators in Saudi Arabia over a 15-year period based on their years of experience:

Years of Experience	2010	2015	2020	2025 (Projected)
1-5 years	6.500	7.000	8.500	9.000
5-10 years	7.000	8.500	11.000	12.000
10-15 years	12.000	13.000	15.500	19.000
15-20 years	14.500	16.000	18.900	20.000
20+ years	16.000	17.500	19.000	22.000

This data highlights the steady growth in translators' earnings over time, demonstrating the strong correlation between experience and income in the translation industry. The projections for 2025 indicate that seasoned translators will continue to see substantial financial growth, reinforcing the importance of experience and professional development in this field.

3- The academic qualification of translators: The academic qualification of translators plays an important role in translations business in Saudi

Arabia. It has a significant impact on determining the salaries of translators in all sectors.

The table (4) below shows the distribution of translators in the Saudi labor market based on their educational qualifications

Educational Qualification	Number of Translators
High School	11.000
Vocational Institute	13.000
Bachelor's Degree	17.000
Master's Degree	22.000

This data indicates that higher educational qualifications are associated with a greater number of translators in the workforce, with the majority holding a bachelor's or master's degree. This reflects the increasing importance of formal education and specialized training in securing opportunities in the translation industry.

Is translation a form of entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship is not limited to commercial ventures; it also involves pursuing one's passion in business, whether on a large or small scale. Investing time and effort in translation can lead to a successful entrepreneurial journey, provided that translation is the primary passion. According to Bennett (2007), entrepreneurship should be understood as a free profession characterized by creativity and risk which rests on three core pillars: freedom, risk-taking, and creativity (p. 120). Translation is a promising and profitable career path for both experienced professionals and new graduates. According to Memsource, a leading translation management platform, the language services sector in Saudi Arabia has grown significantly over the past decade. Those engaged in translation, including professional translators, play a vital role in this expanding industry. Opportunities range from working in translation service agencies and tourism offices to freelancing as independent translators, managing their own projects, and establishing translation companies and professional offices.

Technical Translation: an important Translation Business:

The technical translation market in Saudi Arabia is experiencing significant growth, driven by factors such as the expansion of the industrial sector, advancements in technology, and the increasing reliance on various

software and applications by both private and public sectors (Al Sawy, 2018). This study explores ways to enhance technical translation, a vital process for disseminating knowledge, new discoveries, and information on both local and international levels, playing a crucial role in modern society. Freelance and junior technical translators encounter multiple challenges, which are examined in this study. These include difficulties with technological terminology, achieving lexical equivalence in technical texts, maintaining readability, ensuring quality, and accurately conveying context. The study highlights the essential knowledge and skills that freelance and junior translators need to develop. Additionally, it delves into the history of technical translation, the evolution of technical language, and key characteristics of technical terminology. These include eponyms, multi-word terms, acronyms, abbreviations, affixation, word compounding, the doublet phenomenon, polysemy, and synonymy.

Technical translation is a specialized branch of translation that requires not only linguistic proficiency but also domain expertise, strong research skills, and meticulous attention to detail. It involves transferring the meaning of technical texts, documents, and labels created by technical writers from one language to another. These materials often focus on technological subjects or contain technical information (Brian & Anca, 2022). Effectively handling scientific and technical knowledge demands proficiency in technical terminology, familiarity with industry-specific jargon in both the source and target languages, and the ability to accurately contextualize concepts (Altwaiji, 2017). Technical terminology extends beyond industries such as technology, software development, and medicine; it also includes unique elements like abbreviations that are not commonly found in everyday language (Alexander, 2013 & Altwaiji 2023). Even a minor mistranslation can significantly alter meaning, leading to serious consequences—from mislabeling a product with incorrect warnings to failing to protect intellectual property in patent translations (Sorrentino, 2023). This specialized form of translation requires a deep understanding of the subject matter and its associated terminology. Likewise, technical translators must have expertise in both language and technology to ensure that technical terms are conveyed accurately and contextually in the target language.

Technical translation services require translators to have a strong grasp of the subject matter, specialized terminology, and a thorough understanding of

both the source and target languages to accurately translate technical terms (Kruger & Crots, 2014; Pym, 2021).

This study explores five essential skills that technical translators must develop: domain knowledge, research skills, writing skills, editing skills, and technology skills.

- 1- **Domain Knowledge** - A technical translator must master the terminology, concepts, standards, and conventions of fields such as engineering, medicine, law, and IT. Strong domain knowledge helps prevent errors, mistranslations, and ambiguities that could compromise translation quality (Ehrensberger & Massey, 2015, 2017). Translators can build this expertise by reading industry-related materials, consulting experts, using specialized dictionaries, and staying updated on trends and developments in their field.
- 2- **Research Skills** – The ability to locate, assess, and utilize reliable information is crucial for technical translators. Research skills enable them to verify meanings, ensure accuracy, and understand the context of expressions and terms. They also help translators resolve complex contextual issues (Sorrentino, 2023). To achieve this, technical translators should leverage resources such as online databases, specialized journals, search engines, and professional forums, applying critical thinking to filter and validate the information they find.

The table (5) below presents key salary statistics for translators in Saudi Arabia

Salary Category	Amount (SR)
Average Salary	14.800
Minimum Salary	7.410
Maximum Salary	23.000
Translation Rate per Hour	85

Technical Translators Income (2025).

These data highlight the income range within the translation industry, showing significant variation based on experience, qualifications, and job type. The average salary of 14,800 SR suggests that translation is a financially viable profession in Saudi Arabia, with potential for higher earnings as expertise and demand increase.

- 3- **Writing Skills** - A technical translator must be able to write clearly, coherently, and concisely, ensuring that the message of the original text is conveyed accurately without adding or omitting information. A well-

written translation should be easy for the target audience to read, understand, and follow while adhering to the style and format requirements set by the client and industry standards (Folaron, 2020). To develop strong writing skills, translators should practice regularly, review their work, seek feedback, and follow best practices and guidelines for technical writing.

- 4- **Editing Skills** - Editing is essential for refining translations before submission. This skill enables translators to review, revise, and enhance their work by eliminating inaccuracies, errors, and inconsistencies. Effective editing improves clarity, fluency, and suitability for the target audience and the intended purpose of the text. To achieve this, translators should utilize various tools such as spell checkers, grammar checkers, style guides, quality assurance software, and peer review.
- 5- **Technology Skills**-Technical translators must be proficient in using various software and applications that streamline and enhance the translation process (Zaretskaya, 2019). These skills help improve productivity, efficiency, and consistency while saving time, effort, and costs. Essential technology skills include proficiency in computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, collaboration platforms, translation memory systems, terminology management, project management software, quality control tools, and localization technologies for software, web, or multimedia content.

Technical translation plays a crucial role in the Saudi market by facilitating trade and collaboration. As companies expand their global reach, they aim to connect with as many audiences as possible. The success of their products, services, and overall approach depends on how well they resonate with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Technical translation ensures that products and services remain both appealing and functional for users worldwide. A clear example of this is the mobile phone industry. When mobile phones were first introduced, manufacturers had a vision of creating a global device that connects people across the world—and they succeeded. A key part of this success was ensuring that mobile phone interfaces were accessible to speakers of different languages. The applications, settings, and internal system text had to be translated from the original language into multiple target languages; otherwise, foreign users would struggle to navigate and use the device effectively. This example highlights the essential role of

technical translation in making technology universally accessible and user-friendly.

We often encounter complex, specialized terminology specific to particular fields or purposes. In their essay *Technologized Translation at the Workplace*, Ehrensberger and Andrea (2016) emphasize that the accurate conveyance of complex information, along with precision and attention to detail, are critical factors in ensuring high-quality technical translation. They state that technical translators must always ensure that “complex information is accurately conveyed from one language to another” (p. 75). This process requires extensive training in translating various types of technical content, including scientific research papers, engineering specifications, software documentation, safety manuals, medical reports, and legal contracts. Precision and attention to detail are especially crucial in technical translation because even minor errors or omissions can have serious consequences (Daems & Lieve, 2019). In conclusion, inaccuracies or misinterpretations in translated instructions could lead to significant risks or failures. Therefore, technical translators must not only focus on vocabulary accuracy but also adhere to formatting conventions, including tables, diagrams, and symbols, to ensure clarity and consistency in technical documents.

Technical translation involves translating materials related to technical and scientific subject areas. As a specialized form of translation, it requires a translator who is well-qualified to understand the subject matter and specialized terminology in both the source and target languages. It is also a lifelong learning skill, meaning that technical translators must continuously expand their knowledge, stay updated on new terminologies, and refine their expertise. Key strategies include seeking feedback and mentorship, participating in training and education programs, joining professional associations and networks, and staying informed about the latest industry developments and innovations. Moreover, the role of a technical translator extends beyond merely transmitting information; they actively construct procedural discourse and knowledge by shaping meaning. This is particularly significant because technical translators often take on responsibilities similar to those of technical writers or authors. Additionally, this study emphasizes that technical translators should have a well-rounded, cross-disciplinary background. Beyond theoretical and linguistic expertise, they should also

possess knowledge in areas such as technical communication, usability engineering, and cognitive psychology to enhance their effectiveness in the field.

Conclusion:

This study finds that translators and translation agencies inside Saudi Arabia function as entrepreneurs, contributing to the national economy by creating job opportunities, driving innovation, and leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to generate new wealth. According to collected data on the number of translators, translation agencies, and the implementation of technology in translation, this study finds that translation is an institutional sector that has a very important effect on national economy. It is a thriving industry and a fertile ground for investment, particularly in Saudi Arabia. Understanding entrepreneurship enables individuals to recognize the value of their contributions to national development. Entrepreneurial translation possesses distinctive features, evident in both freelance translation and agency-based work. The qualities of entrepreneurs-creativity, adaptability, and vision-align closely with the nature of translation and its related innovative projects, making the field inherently entrepreneurial. Encouraging translators to enter this sector as entrepreneurs can significantly enhance the industry. Increased participation from innovative entrepreneurs can help organize and develop the sector, promote cultural and knowledge exchange, enrich Arabic knowledge content through translated works, and create employment opportunities for many unemployed translators.

Recommendations:

The study recommends that:

- 1- New translators should receive the necessary assistance from major translation agencies.
- 2- Exposure to the new features in AI should reach all translators in order to keep pace with the latest knowledge and techniques of translation.
- 3- As a growing sector, entrepreneurial translation in Saudi major cities needs efforts to organize freelance translators and help them recognize the importance of the sector in the national economy.

Further, since technical translation requires a solid knowledge base of technological skills, this study recommends the following:

- 1- Freelance and junior technical translators should be equipped with the specialized knowledge starting at the educational institutions. Therefore,

translation studies departments should offer knowledge beyond simple vocabulary and grammar. Qualified translators need knowledge on technical terminology, industry-specific jargon, and cultural nuances.

- 2- Technical translators should keep pace with advancement of technology in order to overcome translation challenges. As new technologies emerge and existing ones evolve, technical translators work must stay updated on industry trends and terminologies related to these advancements.

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