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Relationship between Translation Students' Grade Point Average Scores and Grammatical and Sociocultural Competencies at King Saud University

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Abstract
The current study is motivated by the dearth of studies regarding English translation students' grammatical and sociocultural competencies and their relationship with their Grade Point Averages (GPAs). To fill this gap, this study sought to find if there is a statistically significant relationship between the respondents' GPAs and their levels of grammatical and cultural knowledge. To do this, a multiple-choice test with four sections was developed and validated by experts in the field to examine the respondents' levels of grammatical and sociocultural knowledge. The first two sections examined respondents' knowledge levels of the functions of the key elements of English language tense and aspect (FELTA) and Acceptable Forms of English Language Tense and Aspect (AFELTA). The other two sections examined their knowledge levels of aspects of the culture of American English native speakers (AspCNS) and culturally appropriate American English language use (AppLU). The sample for this study were selected randomly from the department of English Language and Translation at King Saud University. Seventy-five male English translation students from different college levels responded to the questionnaire test. Using descriptive statistics, the responses were coded and analyzed, and thereafter, the respondents' scores on each single section of the test were compared with their GPA scores to determine the statistical significance of differences and correlation. It was found that there was a statistically significant relationship between the GPA scores, the respondents' knowledge of AFELTA, and the knowledge of AppLU. However, no significant relationships were found between the GPA scores and the respondents' knowledge of FELTA or knowledge of AspCNS.

Keywords: cultural competence, cultural translation, EFL tense and aspect, Grade Point Average, grammatical competence, sociocultural competence

Introduction

Many research studies on Foreign Language (FL) learning and translation studies have emphasized the development of sociocultural competencies and argued that learners who only master FL rules (grammatical competence) are generally unable to fully understand and communicate in the FL in different contexts of communication

Language learning and translation studies have tended to stress the inseparability of language and culture and claimed that without sociocultural knowledge, the language learner or translator might produce linguistically accurate but culturally inappropriate language and make cultural rather than linguistic communication mistakes. Bassnett (2002), for example, noted that without adequate cultural knowledge, when translating a foreign text, translators may only look for linguistic equivalence in the target language (TL) text without considering or being aware of the cultural meanings embedded in the language. According to Kramsch (2000), if translators are not aware of the "cultural coherence" in the FL text, appropriate understanding and translation is not possible.

This study aims to investigate whether there were any significant relationships between the Grade Point Average (GPA) scores of selected Saudi college-level translation students and their grammatical and/or sociocultural competencies. To measure their grammatical competence, the students were asked to respond to questions focused on functions and forms of English Language Tense and Aspect (ELTA), and to measure sociocultural competence, they answered questions related to TL cultural knowledge and culturally appropriate language. The results were analyzed and then compared to their GPA scores to determine whether there were any significant correlations.

Several studies have investigated the relationships between the GPA scores of language learners and their language proficiency, some of which found that there were significant relationships between the GPAs of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students and their academic success. However, a few studies that have been conducted on the relationships between the GPAs of language learners and their FL sociocultural knowledge found that higher target culture knowledge could be predicted due to a higher GPA. The importance of these studies stems from the importance of knowing if higher GPA scores could indicate higher FL grammatical and sociocultural knowledge.

Therefore, the main objective of this study lies in its importance to determine whether GPA scores of the selected Saudi translation students could be used as a predictor of their linguistic or sociocultural competence or both, and the study results could be employed to improve the required teaching skills for translation students to ensure accurate and appropriate English language text translations.

For convenience, "Functions of Key Elements of English Language Tense and Aspect" was abbreviated as (FELTA), and "Grammatically Acceptable Forms of Key Elements of English Language Tense and Aspect" were abbreviated as (AFELTA). "Aspects of the culture for the native American English speakers" was abbreviated as (AspCNS), and "culturally appropriate English use" was abbreviated as (AppLU), which also included prefabricated English language utterances as accepted and expected by native American English speakers.

Research Questions
1. What is the current grammatical knowledge level of the selected translation students?
2. What is the current sociocultural knowledge of the selected translation students?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' GPA scores and their grammatical and sociocultural knowledge performances on the questionnaire?

Literature Review

Communicative Competence

Context is a major component of successful communication, and to be communicatively competent, language learners and translators need to be cognizant of the context of communication as they use the language in a context with another human being. Kramsch (2019) emphasized that educators need to view "language teaching as educating denizens of a global ecology that requires sensitivity to context, political awareness, ethical answerability and a good dose of situational cunning" (p. 1). FL users can only be successful in communicating their ideas to native speakers if they managed to use a language that is not only grammatical correct but also culturally appropriate to the context of communication. This was stressed by Kramsch and Hua (2016) who stated that,

> Teaching students how to write a statement of purpose for admission to an American university requires teaching them not only how to write correct grammar and spelling, but how to use culturally appropriate phrases such as setting and achieving goals, overcoming adversity, showing leadership skills. (p. 44)

For language learners to reach this level, developing their communicative competence (CC) is required, which was a concept first coined by Hymes (1966, 1972) to account for sociocultural competence or the social and cultural dimensions of language use.

To establish a general model to account for accurate and appropriate language use, Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995), Celce-Murcia (2007) have developed and evolved the concept of CC to include essential components, namely, linguistic competence, discourse competence, sociocultural competence, strategic competence, interactional competence, and formulaic competence. As for the formulaic competence, she asserted that,

> Formulaic competence has grown in importance; it is now acknowledged that fluent speakers of a language draw on formulaic knowledge of the target language as often as they use systematic linguistic knowledge… Much language pedagogy has yet to catch up with this fact. (p. 48)

The CC model also emphasizes that knowledge of the rules of language use is as important, if not more important, as the knowledge of the rules of grammar, suggesting that a knowledge of grammatically accurate language is not enough because language learners also need to develop sociocultural competence to be able to use the FL in different social and cultural communicative settings based on agreed native-speaking rules of use. Rueda (2006) by citing Thomas (1983) confirmed that the adoption of the Communicative Approach to FL teaching prioritized "understanding and producing language that is appropriate to communicative situations in

accordance with specific sociocultural parameters" (p. 170). To further emphasize the importance of appropriate language use, Celce-Murcia (2007) developed a CC model that included both "sociocultural competence" and "formulaic competence" components to account for the culturally appropriate language use defined by native speakers, with "formulaic competence" being defined as "those fixed and prefabricated chunks of language that speakers use heavily in everyday interactions" (p. 47).

The Importance of Grammatical Competence in Translation Students

Several studies have sought to determine whether language learners have the same correct English Language Tense and Aspect (ELTA) function and forms competencies and stated that knowledge of the correct ELTA functions and meanings may not be as high as their knowledge of acceptable ELTA forms or structures.

Abu-Joudeh, Assasfeh, Al-Shabou, and Alshboul (2013) found that Arab "students tend to overuse the simple past tense whenever they translate the Arabic bare perfect form into English" (p. 44); this aspect was further explained by Gadalla (2017) who concluded that understanding the exact ELTA meanings was a source of difficulty for Arabic language translators. This is congruent to Shamaa's (1978) argument who stated that "Another area of Arabic which occasionally gives the translator some trouble is the temporal and aspectual reference of a sentence" (p. 32).

Gadalla (2017) also argued that the difficulties associated with understanding the aspectual functions of grammatical ELTA structures could be the reason why Arab translators tended to use the past simple structures when translating present perfect structures. He stated, "Whereas the Arabic verb has two aspectual forms, the English verb has 16 tenses. It follows that each Arabic form must substitute for several English tenses, which creates a problem for the Arabic-English translator" (p. 10). Walker (1967) had previously attributed this difficulty to a lack of understanding of the function and meaning of the present perfect, and in accordance with Walker's viewpoint, Mattar (2001) believed that Arab students may not yet have "established proper form-meaning associations" (p. 151). Gadalla (2017) claimed that if translators lack knowledge of the semantic properties of English tenses, they will face difficulties in determining the appropriate tense structure when translating from English to Arabic and vice versa and argued that knowing the exact ELTA meaning could assist translators in using "clues" in the target text to accurately translate the exact meaning and the ELTA structure. Most recently, Al-Qahtani (2020) argued that the exact timing of an English language utterance would not be accurately translated into Arabic if the translation students were unaware of the ways that tense and aspect are perceived and used in English. Another study that reveals the difficulty of recognizing the progressiveness and perfectiveness was done by Toma and Saddiq (2019). They studied tense and aspect differences between English and Behdini and concluded that, "Behdini learners were unable to differentiate simple tenses and progressive tenses on one hand, and simple tenses and perfective tenses on the other" (p. 81).

Developing Sociocultural Competence in Translation Students

Celce-Murcia (2007) stated that "sociocultural competence refers to the speaker's pragmatic knowledge, i.e., how to express messages appropriately within the overall social and cultural context of communication" (p. 46). Therefore, based on this definition, FL learners need to develop FL sociocultural competence to avoid difficulties when communicating with native speakers; this

notion was also emphasized by Spinelli and Siskin (1992) who claimed that as different cultures have different perceptions of reality, the native speakers in different cultures have different sets of meaning.

Developing sociocultural competence is also a key focus in translation studies. "To translate two languages involving two different cultures, the translators should cultivate the profound and comprehensive culture knowledge as well as the full familiarity with the language symbols so as to obtain the deep comprehension of the cultural differences" (He, 2012, p. 74). Translation students who fail to develop FL sociocultural competence would not be aware of different cultural communication contexts and therefore could possibly attach contextually inappropriate meanings to the TL text. This was confirmed by Marinetti (2011) who commented on Bassnett and Lefevere's (1990) cultural approach to translation, stating that "for Bassnett and Lefevere, translation is primarily contextual" (p. 26).

To fully understand how the TL is used in different cultural communication contexts, it is essential to have a strong awareness of the TL culture. Similar to Kramsch (2000), Jukko (2016) argued that full meaning could only be delivered if translators were aware of the connotative meanings of the words and utterances in different contexts of communication. Kramsch (2000) referred to this as "cultural coherence" knowledge of the TL text and confirmed that "one of the greatest sources of difficulty for foreign readers is less the internal cohesion of the text than the cultural coherence of the discourse" (p. 59), i.e., if a non-native speaker lacked TL sociocultural competence, they would find it difficult to understand the cultural referents in a foreign text although they might understand the linguistic structures. To this end, Kramsch (2014) stressed that to fully realize the cultural referents of an FL text, it is necessary to learn the current connotative meaning used by native speakers. According to her, what makes a significant difference in meaning between two languages is not the denotative meaning but rather the current connotative meaning "relative to the context of the utterance" (p. 252).

Other studies have viewed translation as a form of cross-cultural communication and have emphasized the importance of viewing translation as a cross-cultural mediation or transfer rather than a cross-linguistic substitution (Eyckmans, 2017; Olk, 2009; Snell-Hornby, 1995). Guo (2012) believed that translators need to develop both TL sociocultural and linguistic competencies, as translation is not "merely translating the words, sentences or articles from the source language into the target language but indicate a transfer between cultures" (p. 343).

Failure to Develop Sociocultural Competence
The failure to develop sociocultural competence is probably due to the fact that EFL instruction places more importance to the teaching of grammar than teaching about the TC. Rodríguez (2013) stated,

> Byram (1997), Lázár (2003), and Dogankay-Aktuna (2005) assert that the attainment of ICC has been poorly developed because EFL instruction continues giving more importance to the study of the grammatical level of English than to the cultural implications involved in language production. (p. 96)

The failure to develop sociocultural competence has been highlighted in several studies. If sociocultural competence is not developed, "even fluent speakers can seriously misinterpret the messages they hear or read, and the message they intend to communicate can be misunderstood" (Pesola, 1991, p. 331). In agreement with Celce-Murcia (2007), Konishi (2016) affirmed that "a speaker's social or cultural error would be far more problematic than a linguistic error made during oral communication" (p. 40). The sociocultural error is more problematic because failing to use contextually appropriate language or failing to transfer the appropriate cultural meaning by a non-native speaker who has a good command of the language form might be misunderstood or taken as an offense by native speakers (Bennett, 1997; Catford, 1978; Marsh, 1990; Mizne, 1997; Nida, 1964; Rueda, 2006; Sun, 2007). Being unintentionally offensive or a "fluent fool" (Bennett, 1997) can make matters worse as argued by Mizne (1997) who stated that with a high level of grammatical competence, "the language learner's sociolinguistic errors are not perceived he [sic] native speaker as language errors at all, but as flaws in the speaker's character" (p. 9). Sun (2007) also argued that while native speakers tolerate the grammatical mistakes made by foreigners, they might not be "aware of the potential cultural differences; they may interpret violations of rules of speaking as bad manners" (p. 192). The reason is that native speakers expect that "command of a second/foreign language in structural terms assumes a corresponding ability to use the language efficiently in interaction" (Marsh, 1990, p. 182). On this point, Rueda (2006) concluded that native speakers would consider this behavior by non-native speakers as "insensitive, rude, or inept" (p. 170).

Similar arguments have been advanced in translation studies. Translation students who fail to develop sociocultural competence often lack the ability to produce culturally appropriate meanings for texts or utterances and consequently produce incoherent translations that might be viewed as machine translation. Nida (1964) argued that the "Differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure" (p. 130) and lead to translation fails or "untranslatability" (Catford, 1978). Catford claimed that not being aware of the cultural coherence of an FL text could result in "untranslatability," arguing that

> Translation fails—or untranslatability occurs—when it is impossible to build functionally relevant features of the situation into the contextual meaning of the TL text. Broadly speaking, the cases where this happens fall into two categories. Those where the difficulty is linguistic, and those where it is cultural. (p. 94).

Therefore, an FL speaker who has a high level of FL grammatical competence is often assumed to also have a high level of sociocultural competence, and can unintentionally offend native speakers through inappropriate language use (Marsh, 1990).

Relationship between Learners' GPA Scores and Their Linguistic and Sociocultural Competencies

Several studies have investigated the relationships between language learners' GPA scores and their language proficiency (Sahragard, Baharloo, and Soozandehfar, 2011). Sahragard et al. (2011) found that there was a significant relationship between Iranian EFL student GPAs and their academic success: "The analysis of the data proves a profound relationship between students' language proficiency and academic achievement which indicates that those who are more proficient in English can achieve academically better" (p. 1747). Also, another study by

Pishghadam, Noghani, and Zabihi (2011) found that the learners' GPA scores can be used as an indication of their linguistic competence:

> The prediction of these four dimensions of foreign language achievement (speaking, reading, writing, and grammar) by students' diploma GPA may be due to the predominant role of the educational system in providing schools and universities with the necessary educational capital which helps students speak, read and write efficiently and grammatically. (pp. 154–155)

However, a few research studies have examined the relationships between language learners' GPAs and their FL sociocultural knowledge. Pishghadam and Zabihi (2011) found that English language learners' higher knowledge level of the target culture was predictive of a higher GPA: "Moreover, having conducted the regression analysis, the researchers found out that literacy and cultural competence were predictive of higher GPA (p. 50)". Chiang (2013), however, claimed that "Few studies were developed to examine the relationship between cultural competence and GPA. Few data were found to explain why researchers did not intend to include the factor of GPA into their study" (pp. 84 - 85). However, these few studies are important because they reveal that higher GPA scores could indicate higher grammatical and sociocultural knowledge.

Chiang (2013) investigated the relationships between learners' sociocultural competence and their GPA scores and demonstrated that the "GPA was not considered as a strong factor because the statistical results indicated the scores on GPA were not statistically significantly different" (p. 84). Chiang, however, also reviewed the results from previous studies that had exhibited a significant relationship in "7th, 8th, and 9th grade students from two secondary schools in Finland" (p. 100).

Research Methodology

This was a descriptive research study that sought to determine the relationship between respondents' GPAs and their knowledge level of linguistic and sociocultural competences. To do this, a questionnaire instrument adapted from Alqahtani (2020) was designed to collect the quantitative data. The questionnaire instrument was distributed in Fall 2019 and administered by the researcher himself to assure full understanding of the instrument.

Instrument Description

A five-sectioned questionnaire was designed, with Sections two, three, four, and five each having 10 multiple-choice questions for which there was only one acceptable answer. Section one collected the respondents' demographic data and their current GPA; Sections two and three examined the respondents' knowledge level of the English language grammatical competence, and Sections four and five examined their knowledge level of the English language sociocultural competence (American culture).

Particularly, Section two examined the respondents' knowledge level of the functions of the key elements of English language tense and aspect (FELTA), and Section three examined their knowledge level of the grammatically acceptable forms of key elements of English language tense and aspect (AFELTA). In Section two, the respondents read statements that stated the functions or definitions for certain key elements of ELTA, and thereafter, they had to select the acceptable

option for the stated functions or definition (present simple, present perfect, etc.). In Section three, the respondents had to select the acceptable grammatical form for filling the gap in the sentences.

Section four examined the respondents' knowledge level of certain aspects of the Target Culture (TC) that related to TC practices, perspectives, products, persons, and communities as defined by Moran (2001). Section five examined the respondents' knowledge level of contextually appropriate English language use and their knowledge of formulaic language use as specified in Celec-Murcia's (2007) CC framework. The "TC" in this study was the American culture.

Section two contained questions having five answer choices, whereas Sections three, four, and five each had four answer choices, and one point being assigned for each correct answer; therefore, the total points for all four sections was 40. The Education First website and Azar (2003) were used as the main sources for language accuracy to provide the items for Sections two and three.

Participants
A simple random sampling was employed to select respondents from different courses representing different college levels where each student has equal chance to volunteer to participate. The 75 respondents were randomly selected from the target group, the male translation students from different college levels from the English and Translation Department at King Saud University. They were all Arab native male students majoring in English/Arabic translation at the college of Languages and Translation in King Saud University between Level three (first year) and Level 10 (fourth year) because Levels one and two are preparatory years. Only male students were selected for this study, as the female students studied on a separate female campus. The Department of English and Translation provided the permission to conduct this study and collect data, and the students participated voluntarily and were instructed not to write their names or university identification numbers on the questionnaire to safeguard their privacy.

Pilot Study
The final draft of the questionnaire was emailed to two EFL experts, namely, a native EFL instructor with a considerable EFL teaching experiences in Saudi Arabia and other countries, and a Saudi college professor of applied linguistics, to review and examine the clarity, relevance, and plausibility of the questionnaire items, and then, modifications were made on the basis of their recommendations and suggestions. The questionnaire was then piloted on a group of 20 students. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 was employed to calculate the Cronbach's alpha that was used as a measure of internal-consistency, and it reliability was established on the basis of the pilot study data. The questionnaire had an adequate level of reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.74.

Data Analysis
Procedures
The data obtained from the questionnaire were summarized using descriptive statistics (i.e., means and standard deviations). The responses were coded and analyzed, and the frequency summation and percentage calculations were tallied using SPSS v. 25.

To determine the relationships between the respondents' GPA scores and their overall performances in the four sections of the questionnaire (Sections two, three, four, and five

correspond to FELTA, AFELTA, AspCNS, AppLU, respectively), Pearson's correlations were calculated and reported. The answers were then coded as either (1) for correct choice or (0) for wrong choice.

Data Presentation and Analysis

In all, the respondents had GPAs ranging from 2 and above (3%) to 4 and above (40%), with the majority (56%) having an average of 3 and above. All respondents reported that they had various authentic language input, such as watching American TV shows (series and comedies) and movies, and most had been EFL learners for more than four years (87%).

While 57% reported that they had visited a foreign country at least once, only 29% had visited an English-speaking country. The nature of these visits may need to be explored in future studies, as the results may give more insight into the respondents' questionnaire performances.

Results

In relation to Research Question one, it was deduced that the grammatical knowledge of the respondents was based on their answers to specific questions related to FELTA and AFELTA in Sections two and three of the questionnaire.

FELTA Performances

In all, 10 multiple-choice questions each with five answer choices were used in Section two to determine the respondents' FELTA, each of which assessed a specific English tense or aspect grammatical function, as exemplified in the following:

The …………………………. describes an activity that was in progress at a particular
                                                                                    time in the past.

        a. Past simple
        b. Past continuous
        c. Past perfect
        d. Present perfect
        e. Not sure

The following English tenses and aspects were included in Section two of the questionnaire:

- present tense and its aspects, including simple present tense, present continuous, present perfect, and present perfect continuous;
- past tense and its aspects, including simple past, past continuous, past perfect, and past perfect continuous; and
- future tense and its aspects, including simple future, future continuous, future perfect, and future perfect continuous.

Table one shows that less than half of the respondents (41.45%) succeeded in selecting the correct answers.

Table 1. *FELTA knowledge*

Questions	*Number of correct answers (N = 75)*	*Percent (%)*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*
Mean number of correct answers	*31.1*	*41.45*	4.15	2.38

AFELTA Performances

In all, 10 multiple-choice questions with each containing four answer choices were used in Section three to examine the respondents AFELTA performances. In this section, respondents had to select the correct grammatical form for the same English language tenses addressed in Section two, as exemplified in the following:

He…………………. the TV when I called.

    a.   watched
    b.   was watching
    c.   have watched
    d.   Not sure

Table two illustrates that the majority of respondents (75.87%) succeeded in selecting the correct options.

Table 2. *AFELTA knowledge*

Questions	*Number of correct answers (N = 75)*	*Percent (%)*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*
Mean number of correct answers	*56.9*	*75.87*	*7.59*	*1.51*

Research Question two examined the respondents' sociocultural competence. Sections four and five each had 10 multiple-choice questions with four possible answers, only one of which was correct, to measure the respondents' AspCNS and AppLU performance.

AspCNS Performance

The respondents' AspCNS knowledge was tested in Section four using 10 multiple-choice questions with blanks followed by four possible choices, as exemplified in the following:

The …………………..……… is an American federal holiday that is also referred to
                                             as the "Fourth of July."

    a.   President's Day
    b.   Memorial Day
    c.   Independence Day

d. Not sure

Selected examples of basic aspects of American culture (including history, special days, shopping, political system, sport, and daily-life practices) were the cultural issues addressed in this section. Table 3 reveals that less than half of the respondents (45.6%) selected the correct answers.

Table 3. *AspCNS knowledge*

Questions	*Number of correct answers (N = 75)*	*Percent (%)*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*
Mean number of correct answers	*34.2*	*45.6*	*4.56*	*2.72*

AppLU Performance
    To examine the respondents' AppLU knowledge, Section five had 10 examples of common American language utterances followed by four possible options, as exemplified in the following:

In the United States, a person who performs manual labor is described
                                                as…………………….
a. a blue-collar worker
b. a white-collar worker
c. a green-collar worker
d. Not sure

This section examined the respondents' knowledge of basic language forms, structures, phrases, and common sayings used in daily American communication, such as "What do you do?," "Would you like a gift certificate." Celce-Murcia (2007) labeled such utterances as "prefabricated chunks of language." Table four illustrates that only 34.39% of the respondents selected correct answers.

Table 4. *Knowledge level of AppLU*

Questions	*Number of correct answers (N = 75)*	*Percent (%)*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*
Mean number of correct answers	*25.8*	*34.39*	*3.44*	*2.075*

 In case of Research Question three, to determine the relationships between the respondents' GPA scores and their questionnaire performances, Pearson's correlations were calculated, from which it was found that there was a correlation between the respondents' GPAs and their overall scores for all the questionnaire sections (r = 0.325**), as shown in Table five.

Table 5. *Pearson's correlation coefficients between GPA and performance on FELTA, AFELTA, AspCNS, and AppLU (N = 75)*

Variable	Current GPA	
	Pearson's correlation	P
Section 2: FELTA	0.058	0.629
Section 3: AFELTA	0.292*	0.012
Section 4: AspCNS	0.180	0.127
Section 5: AppLU	0.339**	0.003
Total	0.325**	0.005

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

Note. FELTA refers to Functions of Key Elements of English Language Tense and Aspect.

AFELTA refers to Acceptable Forms of key Elements of English Language Tense and Aspect.

AspCNS refers to Aspects of Culture for native American English speakers.

AppLU refers to Appropriate Language Use for the American English speakers including prefabricated utterances.

   Table five demonstrates that there was a statistical significance between the respondents' GPAs and their performance in the questions related to AFELTA (r = 0.292*) and AppLU (r = 0.339**); however, there was no significant relationship observed between the GPA scores and the knowledge of FELTA (r = 0.058) or AspCNS (r = 0.180). Although the majority of respondents failed to select the correct AppLU answers, the highest correlation was observed between the GPA and respondents' performance for AppLU questions (r = 0.339**), with the correlation being significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed) and a p-value of (0.00).

   A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was then conducted to determine if the differences were statistically significant between the respondents' GPA score means for the four different competency scales, as shown in Table six.

Table 6. *One-way ANOVA test*

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
FELTA	Between-Groups	9.982	2	4.991	0.802	0.452
	Within-Groups	448.018	72	6.222		
	Total	458.000	74			
AFELTA	Between-Groups	14.989	2	7.494	3.883	0.025
	Within-Groups	138.958	72	1.930		
	Total	153.947	74			

AspCNS	Between-Groups	25.097	2	12.548	1.766	0.178
	Within-Groups	511.490	72	7.104		
	Total	536.587	74			
AppLU	Between-Groups	37.714	2	18.857	5.137	0.008
	Within-Groups	264.286	72	3.671		
	Total	302.000	74			
M.total	Between-Groups	319.454	2	159.727	6.063	0.004
	Within-Groups	1896.733	72	26.344		
	Total	2216.187	74			

Table six reveals that there were statistically significant differences between the respondents with respect to their AFELTA knowledge (F = 3.883, p < 0.05) and AppLU knowledge (F = 5.137, p < 0.05). However, there were no significant differences observed between the respondents' FELTA knowledge (F = 0.802. p > 0.05) or AspCNS knowledge (F = 1.766, p > 0.05).

To particularly identify the differences between the three GPA groups (GPAs: 2 and above, 3 and above, and 4 and above), a post hoc (Scheffe) test was conducted, and its results are shown in Table seven.

Table 7. *Differences between the three GPA Groups*

Dependent Variable (Scores on sections)	(I) GPA	(J) GPA	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
AFELTA	4 and above	2 and above	1.82796*	0.033
		3 and above	0.72227*	0.032
AppLU	4 and above	2 and above	2.52688*	0.032
		3 and above	1.26672*	0.007
M.total	4 and above	2 and above	8.26882*	0.010
		3 and above	3.39890*	0.007

The results indicated that the respondents with GPAs of four and above performed better in the AFELTA and AppLU Sections and that this was statistically significant. However, those with GPAs of two and above and three and above were similar for the AFELTA and AppLU Sections. Table seven also indicates that there were differences between the respondents' performance in both sections because of the variations in their GPA scores. Compared to the other respondents, those with a GPA of four and above overall had a higher performance in the AFELTA and AppLU Sections. However, there were no significant differences found for the FELTA and AspCNS performances between the respondents regardless of their GPA scores, that is, all respondents performed more or less the same in these two sections, as the differences in their GPA scores did not result in any differences in their answers given for these two sections.

Discussion

This study examined the relationships between GPA scores and grammatical and sociocultural competencies. Particularly, it attempted to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the respondents' GPA scores and their performance in a focused questionnaire.

Correlation Analysis
GPA Relationship with Overall Performance

Although it was difficult to establish a cause–effect relationship, the overall analysis indicated that the respondents' GPA scores had a positive and significant correlation ($r = 0.325$**) with their overall performance in the four sections of the questionnaires (grammatical competence: FELTA and AFELTA and sociocultural competence: AspCNS and AppLU).

However, the statistical analysis revealed that less than half of the respondents (41.45%) succeeded in selecting the correct answers for FELTA, and the GPAs ($r = 0.058$) appeared to have no significant relationship with their FELTA performances. This finding might indicate that there had been more emphasis placed on teaching the correct forms of tense and aspect than on helping students recognize the meaning and functions of these tenses and their aspects.

The relationships to the GPA scores were more obvious for the questions related to AppLU knowledge although less respondents (34.39%) managed to select the correct options in this section. However, as only those with the highest GPAs managed to answer these questions correctly, it could be surmised that high GPA scores predict better AppLU knowledge.

Overall Performance of all the Four Sections

To measure the overall grammatical and sociocultural competencies, they were subcategorized into two sub-knowledge levels, namely, knowledge of the rules (FELTA and AspCNS) and knowledge of the use (AFELTA and AppLU).

The study analysis indicated that the respondent's GPA had a significant relationship with their AFELTA knowledge; however, no significant correlations were observed between the respondents' GPAs and their scores on the questions related to FELTA knowledge. If language learners or translators lack knowledge about the accurate function or meaning of tenses and aspects, knowledge of the correct forms would be insufficient. This was confirmed by Gadalla (2017) who insisted that translators from English into Arabic need to identify the Arabic verb form and particles that can combine with it to convey the intended English tense is a major difficulty that can face translators. Gadalla (2017) felt that this issue could lead to difficulties in knowing the exact language forms to use when translating from English to Arabic.

With respect to the respondents' sociocultural competence, Table five suggests that the respondents had more developed knowledge on how to use the language appropriately, as there were significant correlations found between the GPA scores and AppLU knowledge. However, the respondents' TC competence appeared to be less developed, as there were no significant relationships found between the GPA scores and the AspCNS knowledge.

The results of the one-way ANOVA test indicated that there were statistical differences between the means for the respondents' GPAs and their answers to the AFELTA and AppLU

questions, and the post hoc test revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the scores for those with a GPA four and above and those with GPAs of two and above and three and above for the AFELTA and AppLU questions, which also clearly revealed that those with a GPA of four and above tended to perform better in the AFELTA and AppLU questions. However, regardless of their GPA scores, all respondents performed more or less the same in the FELTA and AspCNS questions.

Respondents with high GPA scores of 4 and above seemed to have a better understanding on how to use the language both accurately (AFELTA) and appropriately (AppLU) than they seemed to know the functions (FELTA) that governed the correct forms or the cultural knowledge of native speakers (AspCNS). This may have been because of the general tendency of language teachers to focus on correct and appropriate language use rather than teaching the functions of the English language tense and aspect or teaching about the native speakers' cultures. However, this needs further investigation.

The results of this study appeared to agree with previous studies (Byram, 1997; Dogankay-Aktuna, 2005; Lázár, 2003); Rodríguez, 2013) in that teaching acceptable language forms is more common in English language classes. Previous studies have also found that non-native English language teachers focus more on teaching language forms than on teaching about the TC or culturally appropriate language use for several reasons. Al-Qahtani (2003) found that non-native teachers of English did not feel socioculturally competent to teach TC or appropriate language use as defined by native speakers. This could also be due to FL teaching policies as noted by Pishghadam et al (2011). Translation professors, therefore, need to develop their own grammatical and sociocultural competencies for FL to be able to assist their translation students determine the proper grammatical equivalence and, more importantly, the equivalences that can appropriately convey the intended cultural referents in the target text or utterance (e.g., Catford, 1964; Bassnett, 2002; Nida, 1964, 1994; Jukko, 2016; Kramsch, 2000).

As opposed to Chiang's (2013) study which "did not find statistically significant differences in student cultural competence levels according to GPA" (p. 100), the current study managed to find a significant relationship between the GPA scores and the knowledge of culturally appropriate language use.

Delimitations and Limitations

The study questionnaire was administered to 75 male translation students from the Department of English Language and Translation at King Saud University (KSU) who were randomly selected from different levels. No female students participated in this study, as they study on a separate campus.

The diversity of the respondents' backgrounds (EFL learning experience, GPA scores, experiences related to traveling aboard, etc.) may have limited the generalizability of the results of this study. The small sample could have also been a limitation because the respondents may not have been representative of the target population, as there are 521 male translation students in the Department of English Language and Translation.

The questionnaire instrument could have also been a potential limitation; however, to minimize this risk, the questionnaire instrument was validated by two experts in the field. Then. the instrument was piloted with a small group to minimize any misunderstandings of the questionnaire instructions and eliminate the use of ambiguous words or phrases.

Conclusion and Pedagogical Notes

This paper attempted to investigate the relationship between the respondents' GPA scores and their knowledge level of linguistic and sociolinguistic competence. This study found that the GPAs scores could be a good indicator of learners' linguistic ability with respect to recognizing the acceptable language forms of the English tense and aspect (AFELTA), and appropriate language use (AppLU). However, the GPAs could neither predict their performance on recognizing the functions of the English language tense and aspect (FELTA) nor the on recognizing the cultural aspects of the native speakers (AspCNS). Similar to Foreign Language Learners, this study confirmed that translation students need to develop more than their knowledge of FL grammar, as they also need to know how the FL is used accurately and appropriately by native speakers in different contexts of communication. The lack of FL sociocultural knowledge suggests that non-native translators who only have a high level of grammatical competence can be "fluent fools" (Bennett, 1997), as their translations would violate the rules of common communication (Sun, 2007), would fail to "build functionally relevant features of the situation into the contextual meaning of the TL text" (Catford, 1978, p. 94), and would result in translation failure or "untranslatability" (Catford, 1978) or, as Nida (1964) puts it, "severe complications" for the translators.

Therefore, educators need to be aware of the importance of developing language learners' sociocultural competence including what Celce-Murcia (2007) labeled as "formulaic competence". Celce-Murcia emphasized the importance of developing learners' formulaic competence as a crucial component of their communicative competence. Translators who lack this competence can fail to use appropriate language forms common to native speakers, and accordingly, can fail in communicating the intended contextual meaning.

Language learners, in general, and translation students, in particular, need to be more aware of the grammatical complexity of the key elements of English language tense and aspect in accordance with the sociocultural factors. This aspect was highlighted by Canale and Swain (1980) who stated, "It seems that factors such as grammatical complexity should be considered in the process of specifying the grammatical forms and communicative functions that relate to learners' sociolinguistic needs" (p. 24). Moreover, it is very important to note that the sample used in this study was small, and therefore, a larger sample with a more rigorously designed test would probably yield more reliable results.

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Declaration of Interest
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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