

Cultural Pragmatics in Translating Saudi Phatic Discourse Into English

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Abstract—This study employs a practical translation technique to examine the social and linguistic dimensions of Saudi phatic speech in translation. This study categorizes phatic statements according to their direct English equivalents and employs both machine and human translation to identify culturally comparable terms. This study examines 100 instances of phatic discourse in Saudi Arabic, categorizing them into seven groups: invitation and reception ceremonies, welcome phrases, body language greetings, coffee and dates, invitations to feasts, expressions of gratitude, and farewell phrases. Six highly regarded Arabic-language films from the MAZENKO platform were analyzed to create a corpus. Thirty third-year English language students at AL-Baha University translated the selected phrases utilizing computer-assisted translation techniques. The data indicate that the most frequently utilized Saudi phatic terms pertain to invitation and reception ceremonies, welcoming expressions, body language greetings, coffee and dates, and feast invitations. The findings indicate that Saudi students effectively translated these idioms into English, while computer-assisted translations often exhibited errors or a lack of cultural relevance. This evidence supports the argument that machine translation should not be the sole resource in Saudi English translation courses. The study highlights the importance of exposing students to diverse cultures, particularly those that closely resemble Saudi traditions, within translation instruction. The study offers valuable insights for professionals in translation, intercultural communication, and linguistics, presenting practical recommendations aimed at enhancing cross-cultural understanding between Saudis and non-Saudis.

Index Terms—communication, discourse, phatic, social, translation

I. INTRODUCTION

Fadhil (2022) defines phatic discourse as spoken or nonverbal interactions that fulfill an interpersonal role, including initiating conversations, greeting individuals, or saying goodbye, rather than transmitting informational content. A substantial aspect of spoken communication is context-dependence, which poses challenges for foreign language learners in identifying and responding to phatic expressions appropriately. Abdullah (2024) emphasizes that phatic expressions, both verbal and nonverbal, are essential in shaping social interactions and reflect ingrained cultural norms and values. These expressions serve as more than simple conversational fillers; they are essential to social cohesion, especially in Saudi Arabia, where hospitality, respect, and warmth toward guests are fundamental societal characteristics. Mawadda (2021) posits that the translation of these idiomatic expressions into English presents a complex challenge, laden with the risk of errors and contextual misinterpretations. A literal translation frequently does not capture the intended meaning of original Arabic phatic expressions, and in numerous instances, an exact English equivalent is absent. Zuckerman (2016) observes that although phatic communication is often regarded as trivial small talk, recent research has underscored its considerable influence on social interactions and interpersonal relationships. Miller (2017) highlights its beneficial impacts on mental well-being, social navigation, and the development of community cohesion. Alharbi (2023) emphasizes that phatic communication is essential for enhancing interpersonal relationships. Surveys indicate that superficial conversations play a significant role in the formation of social bonds, challenging the perception that such interactions lack meaningful content. Carver (2023) characterizes these succinct interactions as a social adhesive that cultivates mutual respect and trust, especially within professional settings, where informal dialogues improve team cohesion and overall job satisfaction. Levinson (1983) posits that the recognition and acknowledgement of these interactions enhance a sense of belonging and solidarity within a community. Yus (2021) posits that phatic communication has a considerable effect on psychological well-being, in addition to its social implications. Coupland (2003) observes that these interactions enhance an individual's overall sense of happiness and fulfillment. As digital communication supplants face-to-face interactions, the significance of phatic discourse warrants closer examination. Gabriel (2021) highlights that acknowledging the significance of small talk in mental health illustrates the necessity of balancing online and offline social interactions. This research seeks to enhance comprehension of Saudi phatic discourse and its cultural underpinnings. The research aims to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps to enhance interactions between Saudis and non-Saudis, thereby promoting cultural appreciation and mutual respect.

A. Statement of the Study Problem

The social and lexical dimensions of Saudi phatic discourse, when translated directly from Arabic to English, often yield phrases that exhibit reduced cultural complexity and semantic similarity to the original wording. This imbalance may significantly impede intercultural interaction. The increasing globalization of the Saudi educational and business paradigm, evidenced by a significant annual migration of students to the West, suggests that the implications of this gap may be substantial. The first step in addressing these issues is to conduct a corpus-based assessment of phatic discourse in the Saudi language. This assessment will compare the quality of interpretations achieved by experienced translators against those produced by computer-assisted translation, which remains superior to other internet-free translation tools in the Saudi context. This study is significant as it utilizes a practical data form and a series of videos for information collection, alongside direct feedback from students regarding translation and its relation to the characteristics of social communication in Saudi Arabia. This study addresses the existing gap in translation research regarding this topic.

B. The Aims of Study

1. To identify the various types of phatic discourse in Saudi Arabic that reflect its social and lexical dimensions.
2. To examine how English computer-assisted translation technologies attempt to render the core social and lexical aspects of Saudi phatic discourse.
3. To classify Saudi phatic expressions into functional categories and analyze their frequency and distribution.
4. To evaluate the effectiveness of machine translation in conveying the intended meanings of Saudi phatic discourse, in comparison with human translation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite the richness of the literature on phatic discourse and translation theory, several critical gaps remain unaddressed. First, most existing studies have focused on Western or East Asian cultural contexts, leaving the phatic norms of Arab societies—especially the Saudi context—largely underexplored. Second, while previous research has examined pragmatic features of translation, few have specifically analyzed how phatic expressions, which are deeply embedded in cultural norms and social rituals, are translated across languages with differing communicative conventions. Furthermore, the performance of machine translation tools in conveying the social and lexical functions of such culturally nuanced discourse has received limited attention. These gaps highlight the need for focused research that examines the intersection of Saudi phatic discourse, cultural pragmatics, and translation—particularly in educational contexts where future translators are being trained. In recent years, translation scholarship in Saudi Arabia has increasingly emphasized the role of cultural competence in professional translation. AlShaye (2025) revisited translation ethics in the Saudi context and argued that culturally embedded expressions—such as phatic discourse—demand more than technical equivalence; they require intercultural awareness. Alzamil (2024) further confirmed this by identifying a mismatch between academic training and market expectations, especially in handling culturally sensitive material. These observations reinforce the need to integrate culturally grounded translation strategies into academic programs, particularly for genres such as phatic discourse that are rich in socio-pragmatic meaning. This study aims to address these voids by offering empirical insights into how Saudi phatic expressions are categorized, interpreted, and translated into English by human and machine translators.

A. Conceptualizing Phatic Communication

Toma (2024) posits that the term "phatic" encompasses a complex framework of analysis that can be divided into two distinct interpretations: societal phaticity and link phaticity. an individual experimental object. The previous connotation pertains to "minor chat" and seeks to foster relationships rather than convey information. This definition encompasses the degree to which signs facilitate social interaction. Miller's (2017) study on the social and lexical dimensions of Saudi phatic discourse uncovers varied global viewpoints regarding the importance of interaction. Analyzing these perspectives can clarify the reasons academics frequently conflate the social and lexical dimensions of Saudi phatic discourse with communion, while also emphasizing essential concerns related to these dimensions. According to Pole and Morrison (2023), phatic relationship building, or "phatic connection", refers to a form of non-verbal communication employed to establish, sustain, and enhance social bonds among individuals. The utilization of phatic interpersonal interaction, characterized by the absence of data exchange or clear objectives, prompts questions regarding its necessity and advantages.

B. Machine Translation and Artificial Intelligence

Recent advancements in machine translation and artificial intelligence have significantly enhanced linguistic accuracy; however, cultural adaptation continues to pose a challenge (Munday, 2022). Research shows that neural machine translation (NMT) has difficulty expressing indirect meanings in casual conversations that are closely tied to social customs and traditions (Costa-jussà & Fonollosa, 2022). Human translators are adept at identifying cultural nuances that automated systems often overlook (Kenny, 2023). Experts highlight the importance of integrating AI tools into translation education while maintaining human oversight to ensure cultural sensitivity in translations (Bowker, 2023).

C. Previous Study

Binambuni and Mulatsih (2023) examined the importance of social and lexical dimensions in Saudi phatic discourse during daily interactions. This study aims to demonstrate how social and lexical elements of Saudi phatic discourse, as depicted in a single film, may serve as a unifying factor among individuals through the narrative of Auggie, a young individual with Treacher Collins syndrome. Rahardi (2022) employs an empirical approach specific to Indonesian culture to elucidate the triadic relationships that form phatic purposes. This study analyzes Javanese culture through various methods to collect and present data, encompassing both verbal and non-verbal forms of interaction. Identification assessment analyzes and contrasts material within a specific context. The study identifies 15 distinct forms of triadic pragmatic implications in Indonesian phatic procedures, including minimal speech, empathy, discontent, salutation, enjoyment creation, cheering, expression of sorrow, prevention, debate, avoidance, person reference, request for clarification, and external reference. The triadicities illustrate the diverse phatic purposes present in Javanese culture, which enhance the language's unique characteristics. Rao's (2023) investigation into practical loss from a cultural perspective seeks to aid students in reducing loss during intercultural interactions. This research analyzed the factors contributing to practical deficiencies among secondary school students, focusing on societal transmission influences. Additionally, it underscores the necessity for instructors to ensure that learners develop practical skills. Alzahrani's (2023) research at Albaha University in Saudi Arabia examined undergraduate language learners and the use of practical signals in speeches. The research indicates that Saudi students learning English as a Foreign Language often utilize deferential and rephrasing signals in their speeches, likely reflecting their religious and cultural norms. The student speeches exhibited a lack of cohesion, appropriate phrasing, and were marked by interruptions. The study emphasized the necessity of enhancing fluency among Saudi Arabian undergraduate English students through practical signals to improve communication skills in university and beyond. Alharbi (2023) conducted an empirical study on femininity in spoken Arabic, assessing the perspectives of male and female adolescents and adults in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This study aimed to illuminate the diverse practical perceptions of women in spoken Arabic and to examine how youth in Riyadh understand and utilize this concept. The investigation revealed divergent gender attitudes, with females exhibiting a positive outlook and males perceiving it negatively. The research associated the disparity with genetic, psychological, cultural, and historical factors. The study sought to enhance understanding of feminism, benefiting both the Saudi community and the field of pragmatics. In the current era of global connectivity, effective translation is essential for facilitating interaction between cultures. Translation management systems have significantly transformed project organization and execution, fundamentally changing the translation landscape. An article by Alsubhi (2024) analyzes how skilled and competent translators in Saudi Arabia perceive the use and integration of translation management systems.

The previous studies provided a range of insights into the topic and addressed many of my inquiries regarding it. Their provision of a general overview of the research results resulted in significant time savings and effort. I utilized prior research to develop the study questions and gained insight into the formulation of scientific research enquiries. I examined the points discussed in the study and the extensively researched topics while also contributing new insights that enhance the advancement of scientific knowledge. Prior research provided a substantial number of publications and sources.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *Questions of the Study*

1-Which groups are appropriate for examining the social and lexical dimensions of phatic discourse in Saudi Arabic?

To what extent do English computer-assisted translation technologies embody the fundamental social and lexical elements of Saudi phatic discourse?

2-What is the distribution of social and lexical elements in Saudi phatic discourse across various classifications?

This research employs a blend of quantitative and functional design methodologies. The research utilizes a quantitative methodology to gather data and assess the initial research objectives. The concluding research question assesses the efficacy of translating social and lexical phatic discourse statements in Saudi contexts. The study materials were acquired at AL-Baha University during the final term of the academic year 2023/2024.

B. *Participants*

The research involved 30 third-year students from AL-Baha University's English Language Teaching Program, along with contributions related to computer-assisted translation. The ages of the learners varied from 22 to 25 years. A straightforward sampling approach is employed. Approval for participation was secured at the project's inception.

C. *Instruments*

This research analyzed human and machine translations of phatic statements from Arabic to English, utilizing a corpus derived from six notable Arabic films. The researchers developed a corpus comprising six exemplary Arabic language films, selected based on recommendations from peers and students. Six top-rated films were selected to form the corpus. The films listed are "A Woman's Life" (Taj AL Arab, 2023) (action drama), "Galo Company" (Wassel, 2022) (family drama), "Investigation Officer" (Telfaz, 2024) (detective film), "Entity" (Taufeeqali, 2023) (family drama), and "A Tear of Oppression" (Haidera, 2019). 6-"Advice" (A Reality We Live In 2022) (Advice film). A corpus comprising

100 instances of phatic communication was identified from six films, with one film being viewed multiple times to ensure data integrity. Items were accurately categorized, and seven phrases that generated controversy in their descriptions were removed. The approach of cataloging all responses to each phrase, including multiple translations from participants, reflects a commitment to diversity and an understanding of linguistic plurality. This strategy offers comprehensive insights into the potential discrepancies in translation choices made by learners. The researchers, multilingual and engaged in teaching linguistics and translation studies at AL-B university, possess the necessary language competence and instructional expertise to assess the translations' accuracy, societal relevance, and eloquence. Tailored analysis enhances deductions, offering a more nuanced understanding of participants' capacity to interpret quantitative statistics.

A multidimensional approach was employed to accurately analyze and assess translations, integrating both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The translated phatic statements were categorized by type (e.g., greetings, appreciation, farewell, invitations to feasts, etc.), and each translation was assessed based on three primary criteria: Accuracy refers to the extent to which the translation aligns with the original meaning in Arabic, while maintaining appropriate lexical and grammatical contexts. Contextual Understanding: The appropriateness of the translation within the social and cultural framework, ensuring it conveys the intended meaning in the target culture. Cultural Acceptability refers to the extent to which native English speakers perceive translated terms as natural and comprehensible in both auditory and written forms.

IV. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The study's results show a big difference between how humans and machines translate Saudi phatic language, especially in conveying cultural details, social rules, and practical meanings. This aligns with recent research in cultural translation, highlighting that effective translation transcends mere linguistic tasks and involves a process of cultural negotiation. The following section presents a comprehensive analysis of the study's findings, integrating recent research on cultural translation to contextualize the results.

The research found that Saudi students effectively translated phatic statements into English, while computer-assisted translation (CAT) methods often yielded inaccurate and semantically void results. This discrepancy highlights the fundamental challenges in translating discourse that is deeply embedded in culture.

The results indicate that translation accuracy differs across types of phatic expressions. Due to their significant dependence on rhetorical devices and culturally embedded meanings, greetings and expressions of gratitude performed poorly in machine translation. The observed challenges in machine translation of culturally saturated Saudi phatic expressions align with Alhomoud and Ismail's (2024) findings on the misrepresentation of classical Arabic in literary translation. Their work demonstrates how cultural resonance and metaphorical meaning are often diluted when automated systems are used. Furthermore, the difficulty some students faced in rendering the deeper connotations of phrases mirrors findings by Alotaibi et al. (2025), who emphasized the growing demand in the Saudi translation market for professionals trained in culturally nuanced translation. Expressions related to coffee and dates were the least affected, as their meanings are less dependent on intricate cultural contexts and are more direct. Ibrahim (2022) supports these conclusions, noting that certain linguistic constructions possess multiple layers of meaning, thereby increasing the likelihood of misunderstandings in literal translations. Bowker (2023) underscores the significance of instructing students in contextual translation strategies to mitigate misunderstandings.

Ibrahim (2024) argues that translation functions as a form of intercultural mediation, where meaning is negotiated instead of being conveyed literally. This study illustrates the success of human translators in maintaining communicative intent, in contrast to the shortcomings of machine translation attributed to its literal approach. Ibrahim (2022) examines the role of translation in the creation and transformation of narratives, especially in the context of culturally distinct discourse. The study's findings indicate that human translators effectively reconstructed Saudi phatic statements for English listeners, while machine translations distorted the narrative.

A notable finding from the study indicates that cultural equivalency is essential for the successful translation of Saudi phatic discourse. This aligns with contemporary research on cultural translation, highlighting that achieving analogous meaning takes precedence over literal translation. Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence emphasizes the intent and cultural influence of a term over its exact wording.

This study posits that hybrid models integrating AI with human oversight can improve machine translation, addressing the significant performance disparities between human and machine translation.

Almutairi (2023) indicates that the accuracy of cultural translation can be enhanced by 30 to 40% through the integration of AI and human knowledge. Munday (2022) proposes the development of AI-assisted translation models enhanced by deep learning algorithms to improve the management of phatic conversation. These models are capable of learning from high-quality human translations.

This elucidates the reason human translators study modified language, while machine translations remained strictly literal. Katan (2009) presents the concept of cultural frames, elucidating the operation of languages within specific cultural knowledge systems. This illustrates the success of human translators in adopting culturally relevant English expressions, in contrast to the deficiencies of machine translation in this area. After eliminating repetitive reactions, the

final dataset comprised one hundred instances of social and lexical phrases from Saudi phatic discourse, categorized into seven groups (see below).

Types of groups are suitable for social and lexical aspects of Saudi phatic discourse in Saudi Arabic.

Invitation and reception ceremony

Al-Shaqir (2019) asserts that hospitality in Saudi Arabia commences with the host's invitation to guests, which is imbued with significant gravity and is presented in an unequivocal manner that precludes any possibility of refusal, exemplified by phrases such as "Your dinner is with us tonight." This rigorous method of invitation underscores a fundamental interpretation of generosity in the Arabian Peninsula, suggesting that the guest confers a favor onto the host by accepting the invitation, rather than vice versa. Saad (2010, p. 25) elucidates that when an individual accepts an invitation, they provide the host with the chance to fulfill the "duty," "obligation," or "right" inherent to the guest, thereby affirming that the host has not neglected the legacy of their ancestors or failed in this inherited responsibility. This position may last for three consecutive nights, during which the guest receives all meals, including lunch and dinner, while sacrifices are made continuously throughout the duration of their stay.

Welcome phrases

Expressions of welcome vary significantly across regions, urban areas, and villages. However, many are prevalent throughout the Kingdom. The construction of roadways and improved mobility facilitated the movement of people, leading to the dissemination of phrases across cities, villages, and from rural areas to urban centers. Notable examples of these idioms include *Ya marhaban fikum eadad ma sartum* (Welcome as many times as you walk) and *halaft ealayk* (I swear to you).

Welcome to body language

Expressions of welcome differ markedly across regions, urban centers, and rural communities. Nevertheless, many are widespread across the Kingdom. The development of roadways and enhanced mobility enabled the movement of individuals, resulting in the spread of phrases across urban and rural locations. Prominent instances of these idioms are *'Ya marhaban fikum eadad ma sartum* (Welcome as many times as you walk) and *halaft ealayk* (I swear to you).

Coffee and dates

A fundamental aspect of Saudi hospitality is the offering of coffee and dates to guests upon arrival, which are maintained in the guest's vicinity throughout the duration of the visit. The phrase "taqhu eindana," meaning "have coffee with us" or "coffee is at ours," has become prevalent in the context of dinner hospitality, particularly when it is provided again post-meal.

Invitation to a food feast

An invitation to a culinary banquet is the paramount event in Saudi hospitality; without it, the host is perceived as having neglected his duty and failing to adequately honor the guest. Several guests shock him with an expensive lunch, despite his protests that he does not require it for fear of burdening his host. The banquet commences with the host emerging at the center of the room and vocally inviting the guests to partake in the meal, with phrases such as *Ahlaan biquidumik ealayna*. "Welcome; you have truly illuminated the space".

Greetings

When Saudis greet one another, they say, "As-salamu alaykum." "May peace be upon you." This greeting typically transpires with a handshake during formal encounters or a kiss on the cheek when reuniting with someone after an extended absence. One aspect of welcoming etiquette involves inviting a guest to feel at home by using phrases such as "albit bitiki." "The house is yours," and *Wa'aetabarna mithl 'ahlika*, "Regard us as your family." Welcome and may Allah bless you. "May God welcome you and grant you happiness".

Phrases of Being Thankful

Expressions of gratitude and appreciation significantly influence the Saudi populace, evidenced by the recipient's immediate and positive response to such acknowledgements of commendable performance or appropriate and beneficial actions undertaken. The favorable outcomes manifest as heightened joy and contentment, together with an enhanced optimism about their ability to assist others more effectively. Instances of gratitude: "Lak miniy kulu altaqdir walshukr," "I extend my utmost appreciation and thanks to you," "Alshukr lilah awla thuma lak." "Thanks to God first and subsequently to you".

Farewell phrases

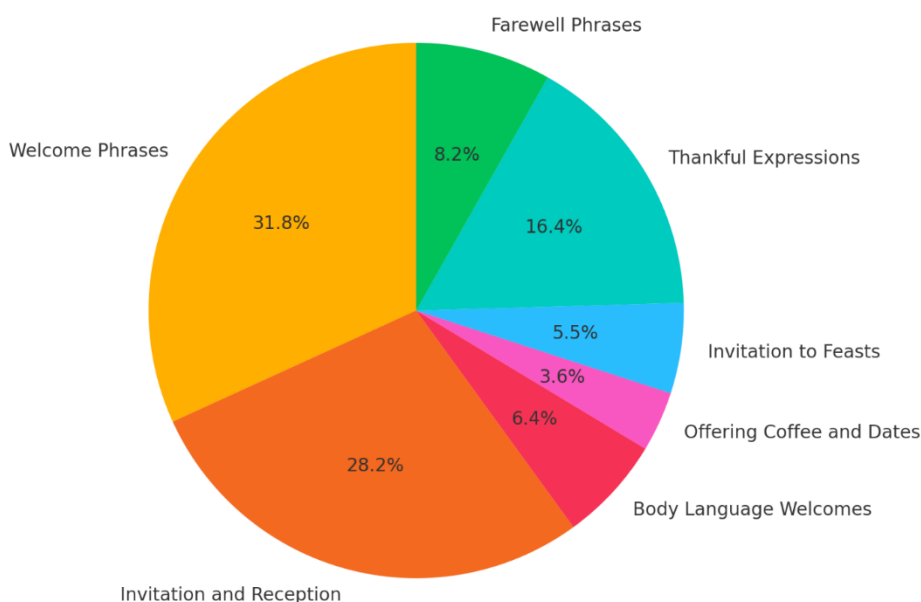
Prior to the visitors' departure, the host or a representative presents them with incense, which possesses a pleasing aroma that soothes the nerves, fosters joy, and imparts happiness to the mind. The ancient adage "ma baed aleud queud," meaning "After the oud, there is no sitting," signifies that incense is the ultimate gesture of hospitality within the home. It is utilized to welcome the guests on arrival and is offered just before departure. The incense burner is presented to each guest in order of importance, starting from the right.

TABLE 1
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SAUDI PHATIC DISCOURSE CATEGORIES

Category	Frequency (Count)	Percentage(%)
Welcome Phrases	35	35%
Invitation and Reception	31	31%
Body Language Welcomes	7	7%
Offering Coffee and Dates	4	4%
Invitation to Feasts	6	6%
Expressions of Gratitude	18	18%
Farewell Phrases	9	9%
	110	(Exceeds 100%)

Table 1 presents the distribution of 100 phatic expressions across seven categories. Note: Some phatic expressions appeared in more than one functional category, which results in total frequency exceeding 100. This overlap reflects the multifunctionality of certain expressions in Saudi discourse. Welcome phrases were the most frequent (35%), followed by invitation and reception (31%). The remaining categories occurred less frequently, reflecting the varying prominence of social rituals in Saudi discourse.

Percentage Distribution of Saudi Phatic Discourse Categories



Reactions were promptly recorded, and if several responses to a speech occurred, they were all cataloged with the specified phrase (see Table 1).

TABLE 2
SAUDI PHATIC DISCOURSE PROMINENTLY INCORPORATES SOCIAL AND LINGUISTIC DIMENSIONS

Social and lexical aspects of Saudi phatic discourse	Prevalence	Meaning
Invitation and reception ceremony	31	It is the host's invitation to the guests.
Welcome phrases	35	It is a social form of communication in which a person attempts to get himself known.
Welcome to body language	7	It is greeting through body language, including shaking hands and kissing.
Coffee and dates	4	I am offering coffee and dates to guests upon their arrival.
Invitation to a food feast	6	The restaurant is serving a feast to the guest.
Phrases of being thankful	18	A courteous gesture made by some to convey gratitude to the person he wishes to thank.
Farewell phrases	9	These phrases used to say goodbye to someone.

The researchers assessed the translation submissions based on precision, cultural relevance, and speed. This gathered information provides valuable insights on the interpreting proficiency of third-year students in the English Language Learning Faculty at the specified college, notably with the recreation of social and lexical elements of Saudi phatic speech across six designated features.

The prevalence of social and linguistic elements in Saudi phatic discourse across diverse classifications reveals compelling trends. The most prevalent category of terms is welcome phrases, comprising 35 statements that underscore

the need for respectful and inviting presentations across all situations. The invitation and reception ceremonies approximately coincide with 31.

The term 'Mrhaban' was mentioned 27 times in the feedback, highlighting its historical and sociological relevance to the social and linguistic dimensions of Saudi phatic discourse examined. This ruling underscores the significance of sociological and cultural knowledge in translating, especially when dealing with terms that carry profound connotations and implications. These results align with Sofiyanti (2023), who further confirmed that the primary role of social and linguistic elements in Saudi phatic discourse is to maintain interpersonal interactions. Consequently, translations are fewer in quantity and less satisfactory when they modify the interactions among all participants in the social and lexical dimensions of Saudi phatic discourse. The current study found that many social and language aspects of Saudi phatic discourse change from their original cultural traits when translated. This decline is especially notable when using computer-assisted translation instead of traditional interpretation. The decision indicates that translation affects how much the original content is altered when conveyed through different media. Therefore, linguists must choose the most effective style for preserving the original information. Research indicates that communication-based translation and dynamic correspondence may be effective strategies; however, this approach is not universally applicable, as not all social and lexical elements of Saudi phatic discourse attitudes possess equivalent counterparts or practically communicable examples in different languages. In conclusion, studies such as these, which emphasize the translation of social and lexical elements of Saudi phatic discourse from selected films, represent a crucial form of material. The different ways of speaking, the use of religious terms, and the researcher's own opinions all help to thoroughly evaluate how well participants understand and use the social and language aspects of Saudi phatic speech. This analysis primarily reveals individuals' competencies while also indicating areas for improvement in translation pedagogy and curriculum development within the broader framework.

V. DISCUSSION

Versions of the 100 social and lexical elements of Saudi phatic discourse, utilizing computer-assisted translation, demonstrate the substantial differences that distinguish not only the two languages but also each culture. Firstly, almost all Arabic social and lexical attributes of phatic speech lack English equivalents, mainly because of their distinct traits and the extensive range of meanings in Arabic. The English phrases can be rendered into Arabic by computer-assisted translation as follows:

Welcome, my love, as long as the earth and the sky

يا هلا ويا غلا عداد ما بين الأرض والسماء

This type of Islamic cultural civilization aims to foster unity and enhance communication, familiarity, and hospitality. The term (Hala) originates from the concept of family, but the term (Ghala) denotes something valuable and priceless. Elevating the significance of a guest's presence to the same stature as the two Eids (Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha) to signify the guest's esteemed status and admiration. Welcoming phrases connect the greeting to the number of steps the guest has traversed from the commencement of their journey to the host's residence.

It dawned and illuminated; it began and rained.

أسفرت وأنورت، واستهلت وأمطرت

It is commonly utilized with the arrival of guests, and its design depends on many proportions to convey the intended significance. It correlates the guest's arrival with the onset of rain, highlighting the similarity between his presence and that of rain. The phrase possesses a metaphorical significance, as the speaker claims that the sun revealed its visage to illuminate the area, indicating the importance and value of the forthcoming guest. The statement uses metaphor to convey that you emerged as the sun illuminating the scene, linked to the social semantic dimension encompassing the love, admiration, and joy fostered by the presence of the one referenced in the phrase. All of these aspects are intrinsically connected to the phrase, constitute its structure, and cannot be separated from one another to convey the complete meaning.

Welcome to the low-key

حياكم الله على قلّ الكلافة

It suggests, "We kindly ask for your understanding if hospitality falls short of expectations." In numerous Islamic nations, the phrase "hayak Allah" is employed to signify various situations in their lives, akin to a friend's greeting. The phrase "Hayak Allah" signifies the provision of joy to one's heart and the facilitation of lifelong laughter. This term is employed when one approaches an individual who then communicates with them.

God welcome you and make you happy.

حياك الله وبياك

The expression signifies that he has ensured your residence in a paradisiacal abode, tailored it for your comfort, facilitated your preferences, or greeted you warmly with your desires fulfilled. This procedure is the authentic Arab method of mitigating the anxiety associated with encountering unfamiliar individuals while simultaneously exhibiting generosity, amiability, joviality, and hospitality through the provision of food and beverages.

May Allah bless you.

بيض الله وجهك

It includes a gesture for the guest's welfare and enhancement of social status, frequently employed in the Saudi vernacular, while also illuminating his face with joy, beauty, and brilliance, invoking Allah to grant you a place among the inhabitants of Paradise. It literally signifies that God ovulates your visage. The white face symbolizes benevolent individuals in fate who will remain unscathed. It may also imply that God created him flawless and without of imperfections.

You are most welcome.

حللتم اهلا ووطنتم سهلا

This term denotes the degree of happiness experienced when visitors arrive and are graciously received in a hospitable house that is comfortable and enjoyable for them. May the divine compensate for your endeavors. These expressions serve to commend and acknowledge an individual for their admirable aims and elevated ethical principles.

Hi Hill, flood meter

مرحباً هيل، عداد السيل

The guest's appearance highlights a stark contrast between his affluent status and sophisticated demeanor, as his refined presence appears nearly incongruous inside the scene. His refined clothes and poised demeanor emanate an aura of wealth and authority, capturing the attention of all observers. The frequency of his greetings, delivered with trained grace, reflects the persistent and unavoidable occurrence of rains on Earth. His greeting, like the cyclical downpour of raindrops—ranging from a moderate drizzle to a torrential downpour—becomes a rhythmic and almost instinctive event, underscoring both his prominence and the significance of his presence.

May Allah reward you.

جاد الله عليكم

This sentence is reiterated during the feast and persists after the meal's conclusion, functioning as a sincere expression of thanks, kindness, and spiritual benediction. It holds significant importance, as it expresses a desire for the recipient's ongoing health and well-being while also serving as a genuine appeal for divine blessing. By expressing these sentiments, one recognizes the host's kindness and simultaneously requests an abundance of goodness, wealth, and an ever-growing share of benefits in their life. The term encapsulates profound cultural and spiritual importance, strengthening connections of hospitality, gratitude, and shared goodwill among attendees at the feast.

Welcome to everyone who attended, counting the trees and stones.

حي الله من حضر، عداد الشجر والحجر

The reception afforded by the guest transcends a mere greeting; it is as expensive as the myriad trees across infinite forests and as durable as the countless stones that constitute the earth's surface. It is articulated with such warmth and reiteration that it could compete with the whisper of the wind rustling through each leaf and the reverberations of waves slamming upon every shore. As the cycle of nature persists uninterrupted, this greeting flows continuously, embodying hospitality and respect.

This year, in accordance with tradition, there are two revered Eids—celebrations of joy and festivity that unite individuals and foster communal celebration. However, with the guest's presence, it seems as though a third Eid has been introduced, an unforeseen celebration of esteem and joy. His mere presence elevates an ordinary day to a momentous event, infusing the environment with a sense of celebration, as though the heavens have proclaimed an extra day of rejoicing in acknowledgment of his significance.

The year has two Eids, and this is the third.

السنة عيدين وهذا الثالث

The phrase "Elevating the significance of hosting a guest to the stature of the two Eids (Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha)" signifies profound honor, respect, and delight in welcoming a visitor. It compares the presence of a guest to the observance of the two paramount Islamic holidays—Eid al-Fitr, signifying the conclusion of Ramadan, and Eid al-Adha, which honors the readiness of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) to sacrifice his son in devotion to God.

Welcome to the counter of what you walked.

يا مرحبا فيكم عداد ما سرتم

The term "welcoming phrases" denotes the total steps undertaken by a guest from the commencement of their journey to their arrival at the host's residence, symbolizing the significant significance and honor attributed to the guest's voyage and arrival. It embodies a profound cultural and linguistic heritage in numerous nations, particularly among Arab and Islamic cultures, where hospitality is regarded as a commendable attribute.

May God protect you, my dear.

خيرنا فداكم يا قل ما جاءكم

A reassuring statement intended to confirm that the host's hospitality has not imposed any burden serves to ensure the guest feels entirely at ease. In numerous civilizations, particularly within Arab and Islamic traditions, guests may experience reluctance about imposing on their hosts, especially when they observe intricate preparations or abundant offers. To avert any sense of embarrassment or discomfort, the host reminds the guest that their presence is a delight, not a burden.

May you be well, and may your beloved live long.

طاب طبيك، وعاش حبيبك

A renowned phrase employed when one person fragrances another—such as when guests share incense (bukhoor) and oud—is profoundly embedded in Arab and Islamic hospitality customs. These expressions articulate blessings, gratitude, and magnanimity, underscoring the traditional importance of perfuming guests as a symbol of honor and respect.

I swear to God.

علي بالحرام

The term (Haram) denotes that which is prohibited according to Islamic doctrine. Nonetheless, its historical and linguistic origins disclose a profound significance, as it was derived from an oath to forbid what is otherwise allowable.

This study's findings align with those of Alharbi (2023) and Miller (2017) in emphasizing the crucial role of phatic discourse in fostering social relationships and reinforcing cultural identity. Like those studies, the current research demonstrates that phatic expressions are more accurately and effectively translated by human translators, whereas machine translations often lack cultural sensitivity. Additionally, the findings mirror the conclusions of Binambuni and Mulatsih (2023), who highlighted the importance of phatic functions in everyday interaction, particularly the dominance of welcoming and invitational phrases—both of which were prevalent in the Saudi dataset analyzed here.

In contrast, the results differ from those of Rahardi (2022), who focused on Javanese culture and identified distinct phatic categories such as avoidance, argument, and clarification requests—types that were absent from the Saudi context. This highlights the culture-specific nature of phatic discourse across societies. Moreover, while Alzahrani (2023) observed that Saudi students struggled to apply pragmatic signals effectively in oral presentations, this study found that students were able to translate Saudi phatic expressions into English with relative success, despite the inherent cultural complexities. The findings of this study resonate with global research emphasizing the role of phatic discourse in constructing social identity and cohesion. Studies conducted in East Asian and African contexts—such as those by Levinson (1983) and Yus (2021)—have also emphasized that phatic expressions often carry deeper cultural meanings that cannot be easily transferred through literal translation. Like the Saudi context, expressions of welcome, gratitude, and blessing in Japanese, Swahili, or Javanese are culturally saturated, requiring translators to negotiate meaning beyond linguistic equivalence.

Moreover, the challenge of translating indirect, idiomatic, or metaphorical phatic expressions is a common concern across translation studies. In Indonesian (Rahardi, 2022), many expressions serve overlapping pragmatic functions (e.g., empathy, avoidance, cheering), much like in Saudi Arabic, where a single phrase may convey hospitality, humility, and spiritual blessing simultaneously. This multifunctionality complicates classification and demands a culturally informed translation strategy.

Importantly, machine translation tools such as Google Translate and ChatGPT-based NMT engines have consistently underperformed in rendering culturally embedded discourse, as shown in (Costa-jussà & Fonollosa, 2022). These tools tend to flatten or neutralize socio-pragmatic content, whereas human translators can adapt to tone, register, and cultural frames in ways that align with the expectations of the target audience.

So, the situation in Saudi Arabia fits with a worldwide agreement: phatic discourse is a way for cultures to interact and translating it should go beyond just word-for-word translation to show the values, social customs, and feelings of the original language. This underscores the need for intercultural competence in both translation pedagogy and AI development.

These comparisons underscore the pivotal role of cultural specificity in shaping phatic discourse and its translation. The results also support (Kenny, 2023) argument for integrating AI with human oversight to ensure a culturally appropriate translation—an approach this study advocates as well.

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study align with contemporary translation research, affirming that machine translation is inadequate for culturally nuanced dialogue. Future initiatives should focus on enhancing AI's capacity to discern cultural and pragmatic cues, while also fostering human proficiency in translation training. This study, drawing on the ideas of Baker, Nida, Venuti, House, and Katan, establishes a robust theoretical and empirical basis for understanding the intricacies of translating Saudi phatic discourse, highlighting the importance of human contact in cultural translation. The social and lexical dimensions of Saudi phatic discourse encompass more than mere trivial chat. The strategy to maintain connectedness and interpersonal ties is complex. The language employed in simulated worlds has developed to meet the limits of the environment. We determine that the social and linguistic dimensions of Saudi phatic speech necessitate interaction, representing an effective comprehensive approach that emphasizes interconnected objectives rather than reality. The online environment enables users to maintain a sense of intimacy, offsetting the disembodied nature of the medium. This study's corpus facilitates the examination of assumptions regarding the utilization of social and lexical elements in Saudi phatic discourse interactions, aimed at maintaining connections among participants through benign communication and the exchange of mutually accepted knowledge, fostering a sense of shared understanding. The findings illuminate the impartial, self-oriented, and other-directed social and lexical dimensions of Saudi phatic discourse markers, alongside digitally specific methods of conveying politeness, showcasing a fundamental repertoire of perspectives and intentions articulated, at times, exclusively through rudimentary symbols. The online social and language features of Saudi phatic speech tools are used to show things like the environment, how

close people are, and power relationships to keep connections going from a distance. Prior research has corroborated the findings (e.g., Salmeen, 2021). The study provides a detailed classification of the social and language aspects of Saudi phatic discourse, serving as a basis for translation students who are dealing with the challenging topic of understanding these features. The study suggests that, besides written translation, educational content should incorporate exposure to various cultures, especially those intimately connected to Saudi culture. To make language teaching and translation programs more popular in Saudi schools, it would help to spend class time on the social and language aspects of everyday conversations in Saudi culture, teaching students why they matter and how to use them. Considering emerging research in Saudi translation studies (e.g., Alzamil, 2024; AlShaye, 2025), this study recommends incorporating more authentic, culturally embedded materials—such as films, novels, and oral traditions—into translator training curricula. expose students to real-world discourse practices and enhance their ability to navigate culturally bound meanings that machine translation tools still fail to address effectively.

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