AI Review Report

Paper: Translexeme Theory and the Teaching of Pragmatic Competence: Toward a Cross-Linguistic Framework for Formulaic L

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Round 1 - Completed

Paper version: v1

Submitted: June 20, 2026 at 14:07 UTC

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reviewer3

Comparing a sociopragmatic theory of formulaic language to Chomsky's 1965 generative syntax is anachronistic and theoretically mismatched, as classical generative grammar explicitly isolates linguistic competence from performance and sociocultural context. A more appropriate and rigorous theoretical contrast for situating this framework would be contemporary cognitive linguistics?such as Construction Grammar, which explicitly handles formulaic language and form-meaning pairings?or Wierzbicka's Natural Semantic Metalanguage.

reviewer3

The core theoretical definition of the translexeme relies on the existence of a 'pragmatically and culturally unmarked realization'. This assumes a monolithic target language culture, whereas what is 'unmarked' varies drastically across dialects, regions, and micro-cultures within a single language. While the author briefly mentions this in the limitations section, the framework itself should theoretically address how an abstract unit can be defined by an 'unmarked' status when markedness is inherently fluid, negotiated, and context-dependent.

reviewer3

The manuscript introduces the 'translexeme' as a novel theoretical unit, but the concept heavily overlaps with existing constructs in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics, such as 'pragmalinguistic equivalence' or 'cross-linguistic speech act realization'. To justify the introduction of this new terminology at the level of a high-impact journal, the manuscript must clearly articulate how 'translexeme' offers predictive or explanatory power beyond merely renaming the well-documented phenomenon of pragmatic equivalence in formulaic language.

reviewer3

The claim that cross-linguistic pragmatics of formulaic equivalence has received limited attention overlooks major foundational work. Decades of research, beginning with the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) and continuing through extensive studies on pragmalinguistic mapping, directly address how learners map L1 formulaic routines to L2 contexts to achieve pragmatic equivalence. The manuscript must contextualize its proposed framework within this specific, highly relevant body of literature to accurately represent the current state of the field and identify genuine gaps.

reviewer3

The proposed future directions are presented as a brief list of broad topics rather than coherent, hypothesis-driven next steps. To provide a robust roadmap for this new theoretical framework, the author should elaborate on how these constructs can be operationalized and measured empirically. For instance, the manuscript should discuss how one might design an assessment instrument that successfully isolates 'translexemic competence' from general pragmatic or lexical competence.

reviewer1

The manuscript frequently shifts from proposing "translexemic competence" as a descriptive theoretical category to characterizing it as an active cognitive mechanism that facilitates fluency and reduces cognitive burden. Because the framework is entirely theoretical and lacks empirical validation (as acknowledged in Section 10), describing it as a mechanism that actively drives cognitive or communicative outcomes overstates the current evidence. The author should revise the language throughout the manuscript to clearly distinguish between established cognitive processes (e.g., holistic processing of formulaic sequences) and the proposed theoretical categorization (translexemic competence), treating the latter's impact on fluency as a hypothesis rather than an established functional mechanism.

reviewer1

The manuscript uses a null finding from Ziafar (2020) to justify the foundational premise of the proposed framework. If the contrastive lexical approach did not significantly outperform implicit or explicit instruction in the cited study, it is logically inconsistent to conclude that this specific finding indicates that using contrastive or comparative methods supports the teaching of pragmatics. The disappearance of an advantage for explicit teaching when translation is removed does not inherently prove the efficacy of contrastive methods, especially when the contrastive condition itself failed to demonstrate superiority. The author should revise this section to accurately reflect the limitations of the cited evidence and avoid drawing supportive conclusions from non-significant differences.

contradictions-reviewer

In the table comparing lexical theory to the proposed translexemic theory, the right column header contains an editorial placeholder ("Your theory") instead of the name of the theory ("Translexemic Theory"). This is an editorial error left in the manuscript.

Round 2 - Approved

Paper version: v2
Submitted: June 20, 2026 at 19:50 UTC
Completed: June 20, 2026 at 19:50 UTC

Comment 1

Score: 4/4 - Fully addressed

Original comment:

Comparing a sociopragmatic theory of formulaic language to Chomsky's 1965 generative syntax is anachronistic and theoretically mismatched, as classical generative grammar explicitly isolates linguistic competence from performance and sociocultural context. A more appropriate and rigorous theoretical contrast for situating this framework would be contemporary cognitive linguistics?such as Construction Grammar, which explicitly handles formulaic language and form-meaning pairings?or Wierzbicka's Natural Semantic Metalanguage.

Author response:

We sincerely thank the reviewer for this insightful and constructive comment. We agree that the original comparison with classical Chomskyan generative grammar did not provide the most appropriate theoretical framework for situating a sociopragmatic and formulaic account of language. In response to this observation, we have substantially revised this section of the manuscript.

Specifically, the former discussion centered on Chomskyan linguistics has been replaced with a new section entitled "Translexemic Theory in Relation to Construction Grammar and Usage-Based Linguistics." The revised section now situates translexemic theory primarily within contemporary cognitive and usage-based approaches, particularly Construction Grammar (Goldberg, 1995, 2006; Croft, 2001), which conceptualizes language as a network of conventionalized form?meaning pairings and assigns a central role to formulaic language in linguistic competence.

Reviewer assessment:

The author has fully addressed this comment by completely rewriting the problematic section. The anachronistic

comparison to Chomskyan linguistics has been replaced with a new, much more appropriate section that situates the framework within Construction Grammar and usage-based linguistics. This change fundamentally strengthens the theoretical grounding of the manuscript.

Comment 2

Score: 4/4 - Fully addressed

Original comment:

The core theoretical definition of the translexeme relies on the existence of a 'pragmatically and culturally unmarked realization'. This assumes a monolithic target language culture, whereas what is 'unmarked' varies drastically across dialects, regions, and micro-cultures within a single language. While the author briefly mentions this in the limitations section, the framework itself should theoretically address how an abstract unit can be defined by an 'unmarked' status when markedness is inherently fluid, negotiated, and context-dependent.

Author response:

We thank the reviewer for this important theoretical observation. We agree that pragmatic and cultural markedness cannot be regarded as fixed or homogeneous across an entire speech community. In response to this comment, we have revised the theoretical discussion to clarify that translexemic theory does not assume a monolithic target-language culture or a single universally unmarked realization shared by all speakers.

The revised manuscript now explicitly conceptualizes translexemes as dynamic and prototype-based pragmatic abstractions rather than fixed categorical entities. Pragmatic unmarkedness is treated as probabilistic and emergent from recurrent sociocultural usage patterns within discourse communities. The manuscript further clarifies that what counts as pragmatically unmarked may vary across dialects, regions, social groups, institutional settings, registers, and interactional contexts.

Reviewer assessment:

The author has thoroughly addressed this theoretical concern by adding a new section titled "Contextual Markedness and the Dynamic Nature of Translexemes." This section reframes the concept of 'unmarkedness' as probabilistic and prototype-based, rather than absolute, and clarifies the role of allotranslexes in capturing contextual variation. This revision successfully resolves the issue of assuming a monolithic culture.

Comment 3

Score: 4/4 - Fully addressed

Original comment:

The manuscript introduces the 'translexeme' as a novel theoretical unit, but the concept heavily overlaps with existing constructs in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics, such as 'pragmalinguistic equivalence' or 'cross-linguistic speech act realization'. To justify the introduction of this new terminology at the level of a high-impact journal, the manuscript must clearly articulate how 'translexeme' offers predictive or explanatory power beyond merely renaming the well-documented phenomenon of pragmatic equivalence in formulaic language.

Author response:

In response to this concern, we have substantially revised the Introduction by inserting a dedicated clarification section immediately after the gap statement. This addition explicitly delineates the theoretical and analytical contribution of the translexeme framework and clarifies why it cannot be reduced to a mere terminological reformulation of existing pragmatic concepts.

Specifically, the revised manuscript now makes explicit that the concept of the translexeme is not intended as a substitute label for pragmatic equivalence, but rather as a structured, hierarchical, and analytically generative construct that extends existing approaches in three important ways:

Hierarchical analytical structure:

The translexeme framework introduces a three-level model distinguishing between:

the translexeme (abstract cross-linguistic pragmatic prototype),

the translex (language-specific realization), and

the allotranslex (contextually conditioned variation within a language).

Reviewer assessment:

The author has fully addressed this by adding several new paragraphs at the end of the introduction that explicitly differentiate the 'translexeme' concept from existing constructs. The new text clearly articulates the proposed framework's added value in terms of its hierarchical structure (translexeme, translex, allotranslex) and its explanatory and predictive power. This addition successfully justifies the introduction of the new terminology.

Comment 4

Score: 4/4 - Fully addressed

Original comment:

The claim that cross-linguistic pragmatics of formulaic equivalence has received limited attention overlooks major foundational work. Decades of research, beginning with the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) and continuing through extensive studies on pragmalinguistic mapping, directly address how learners map L1 formulaic routines to L2 contexts to achieve pragmatic equivalence. The manuscript must contextualize its proposed framework within this specific, highly relevant body of literature to accurately represent the current state of the field and identify genuine gaps.

Author response:

We thank the reviewer for this important and constructive comment. We fully agree that research in interlanguage pragmatics, particularly the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) and subsequent studies on pragmalinguistic mapping and speech act realization, constitutes a substantial and foundational body of work addressing cross-linguistic pragmatic equivalence and the realization of formulaic routines across languages. We have revised the Introduction to explicitly acknowledge and integrate this literature in order to more accurately represent the current state of the field.

Reviewer assessment:

This comment has been fully addressed. The author has revised the introduction to explicitly acknowledge and incorporate the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) and related literature. The revised text now accurately situates the proposed framework as an extension of this foundational work, rather than incorrectly claiming the area has received limited attention.

Comment 5

Score: 4/4 - Fully addressed

Original comment:

The proposed future directions are presented as a brief list of broad topics rather than coherent, hypothesis-driven next steps. To provide a robust roadmap for this new theoretical framework, the author should elaborate on how these constructs can be operationalized and measured empirically. For instance, the manuscript should discuss how one might design an assessment instrument that successfully isolates 'translexemic competence' from general pragmatic or lexical competence.

Author response:

In response to this critique, we have substantially revised this section to transform it into a coherent, hypothesis-driven research program.

In the revised manuscript, the previous ?Future Research Directions? section has been replaced and expanded into a new section entitled:
?Empirical Operationalization and Research Program for Translexemic Competence.?
This new section addresses the reviewer?s concerns in three major ways:
1. Introduction of explicit, testable hypotheses
2. Operationalization and measurement of translexemic competence
3. Methodological framework for construct validation

Reviewer assessment:

The author has comprehensively addressed this comment by replacing the simple list of future directions with a detailed, multi-page research agenda. The new section provides specific, testable hypotheses and proposes concrete methods

for operationalizing and measuring 'translexemic competence,' including sample assessment instruments. This revision provides the robust roadmap the reviewer requested and significantly strengthens the paper.

Comment 6

Score: 4/4 - Fully addressed

Original comment:

The manuscript frequently shifts from proposing "translexemic competence" as a descriptive theoretical category to characterizing it as an active cognitive mechanism that facilitates fluency and reduces cognitive burden. Because the framework is entirely theoretical and lacks empirical validation (as acknowledged in Section 10), describing it as a mechanism that actively drives cognitive or communicative outcomes overstates the current evidence. The author should revise the language throughout the manuscript to clearly distinguish between established cognitive processes (e.g., holistic processing of formulaic sequences) and the proposed theoretical categorization (translexemic competence), treating the latter's impact on fluency as a hypothesis rather than an established functional mechanism.

Author response:

Thank you for this insightful comment. We agree that some sections of the original manuscript employed language that could be interpreted as attributing empirically established cognitive or communicative effects to translexemic competence, despite the framework being theoretical in nature. In response, we have carefully revised the manuscript to distinguish more clearly between (a) established findings in the literature regarding formulaic language, holistic processing, processing efficiency, and communicative fluency, and (b) the proposed construct of translexemic competence as a theoretical and analytical category.

Reviewer assessment:

This comment is fully addressed. The author has carefully revised the manuscript to soften claims about the cognitive effects of 'translexemic competence.' Deterministic language has been replaced with more tentative, hypothetical phrasing (e.g., 'may contribute to'), and explicit statements have been added to emphasize the theoretical nature of the framework and the need for empirical validation.

Comment 7

Score: 4/4 - Fully addressed

Original comment:

The manuscript uses a null finding from Ziafar (2020) to justify the foundational premise of the proposed framework. If the contrastive lexical approach did not significantly outperform implicit or explicit instruction in the cited study, it is logically inconsistent to conclude that this specific finding indicates that using contrastive or comparative methods supports the teaching of pragmatics. The disappearance of an advantage for explicit teaching when translation is removed does not inherently prove the efficacy of contrastive methods, especially when the contrastive condition itself failed to demonstrate superiority. The author should revise this section to accurately reflect the limitations of the cited evidence and avoid drawing supportive conclusions from non-significant differences.

Author response:

Thank you for this valuable observation. We agree that the original discussion of Ziafar (2020) could be interpreted as drawing stronger conclusions from the findings than the evidence warrants. In response, we substantially revised the relevant section to more accurately reflect the limitations of the study and to avoid treating non-significant findings as support for the effectiveness of contrastive instruction.

The revised text now explicitly acknowledges that Ziafar (2020) did not find a statistically significant advantage for the contrastive lexical approach over the comparison conditions and therefore does not provide conclusive evidence for the superiority or effectiveness of contrastive methods.

Reviewer assessment:

The author has fully addressed this concern by completely rewriting the paragraph discussing Ziafar (2020). The revised text now accurately represents the study's null findings, explicitly states that the author's original interpretation was speculative, and reframes the study as one that raises questions for future research rather than providing evidence for the framework. The logical inconsistency has been resolved.

Comment 8

Score: 4/4 - Fully addressed

Original comment:

In the table comparing lexical theory to the proposed translexemic theory, the right column header contains an editorial placeholder ("Your theory") instead of the name of the theory ("Translexemic Theory"). This is an editorial error left in the manuscript.

Author response:

Thank you for identifying this editorial oversight. The table has been corrected, and the placeholder heading "Your theory" has been replaced with "Translexemic Theory" to ensure consistency and clarity throughout the manuscript.

Reviewer assessment:

The author has corrected the editorial error in the table as requested. The placeholder text "Your theory" has been replaced with "Translexemic Theory" in the revised manuscript.