

Bridging Language Barriers: A Comparative Review and Empirical Evaluation of Source-to-Source Transpilers

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Abstract

Source-to-source transpilation plays a pivotal role in modern software engineering by enabling code migration, feature adoption, and cross-language interoperability without sacrificing semantic integrity. The contributions discussed in this paper can be split into two. The first is a comprehensive literature review that aims at defining what transpilers are, traces their historical evolution from early Fortran/COBOL preprocessors to more recent tools like Babel and TypeScript, and examines key parsing methodologies, AST representations, and transformation strategies. The second is an experimental investigation which assesses several popular transpilers—selected by GitHub popularity and unique language-pair capabilities, when applied to an equivalent code snippet designed to sum even numbers and identify the maximum element. The metrics evaluated were the execution time, CPU, memory consumption, output accuracy and usability.

2012 ACM Subject Classification General and reference → Empirical studies; General and reference → Surveys and overviews; Software and its engineering → Syntax; Software and its engineering → Semantics; Software and its engineering → Interpreters; Software and its engineering → Translator writing systems and compiler generators; Software and its engineering → Source code generation; Software and its engineering → Parsers

Keywords and phrases Source-to-source translation, Code transformation, Parsing, Lexical analysis, Syntax analysis, Semantic analysis, Transpilation

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1 Introduction

Context and Motivation

As modern software systems grow in size and complexity, developers face ever-increasing challenges in maintaining, migrating and interoperating code across heterogeneous platforms and language versions. Another challenge that companies face is related to the modernization and maintenance of legacy systems that use older languages such as COBOL (according to a survey from Micro Focus from 2022, 800 billion lines of code of COBOL are used in production) since there is a shortage of developers to maintain it and the costs of running them are high due to the need of having specific hardware infrastructure (IBM mainframe for example).

Source-to-source compilers—commonly known as *transpilers*—have emerged as significantly important tools in this context, enabling the automated translation of code from one language or dialect into another while preserving its original semantics and intent.



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44 Objectives

45 This paper has two main investigation objectives. First, it presents a comprehensive literature
 46 review, that traces the conceptual foundations of transpilation: from early **Fortran** and **CO-**
 47 **BOL** processors in the 1960s, through the advent of AST-driven program transformations, to
 48 contemporary tools such as **Babel** and the **TypeScript Compiler**. Second, we complement
 49 this theoretical foundation with an independent empirical study that evaluates a curated
 50 set of fourteen transpilers—selected by **GitHub** popularity and functional scope—across
 51 uniform test cases measuring *execution time*, *CPU/memory footprint*, *output precision* and
 52 *usability*.

53 Document Structure

54 By joining these two perspectives—the broad bibliographic synthesis and the hands-on
 55 performance benchmarks—the research project here reported delivers both a context on
 56 the transpilation landscape and concrete guidelines for tool selection in real-world projects.
 57 Section 2 details the review methodology and taxonomy of transpilation techniques. Section
 58 3 describes the design of the empirical evaluation, including test configuration and metric
 59 definitions. Section 4 presents and analyses the quantitative findings, while Section 5 discusses
 60 their implications and trade-offs. The paper concludes in Section 6 with a summary of contri-
 61 butions and possible future work, such as AI-augmented, context-aware code transformations
 62 and deeper paradigm-shifting transpilation.

63 2 Literature Review: Transpilation Techniques and Frameworks

64 Transpilers: definition and scope

65 Transpilers—also known as source-to-source compilers—translate code between program-
 66 ming languages or language versions while preserving its original semantics. Contrarily to
 67 compilers, rather than emitting machine code, they operate at a higher level through a three-
 68 stage process: lexical and syntactic analysis to construct an Abstract Syntax Tree (AST),
 69 semantic and syntactic transformations, and generation of equivalent target code [6, 25].
 70 This approach allows developers to adopt new language features yet maintain backward
 71 compatibility and interoperability across diverse platforms [11, 19]. Beyond pure translation,
 72 transpilers are crucial for modernizing legacy systems by supporting gradual migrations and
 73 reducing technical debt [12].

74 Historical Evolution of Source-to-Source Translation

75 The roots of source-to-source translation trace back to **Fortran** and **COBOL** preprocessors
 76 of the 1960s, which provided macro facilities and dialect conversion to optimise code for
 77 different hardware architectures [21, 7]. Early program transformation research introduced
 78 AST representations to enhance portability and optimization [14].

79 During the 1980s and 1990s, the emergence of functional and object-oriented paradigms
 80 drove more sophisticated transformation frameworks capable of rewriting code while pre-
 81 serving functional equivalence [4, 10]. Enhanced parsing techniques and pattern-based rewrite
 82 algorithms laid the foundation for modern transpilers.

83 The exponential growth of web applications required tools to reconcile rapidly evolving
 84 **ECMAScript** standards with a variety of browsers. **Babel**¹ became a benchmark by enabling

¹ <https://babeljs.io/docs/>

85 developers to author in **ESNext** and transpile to **ES5**, ensuring compatibility with older
86 environments [1]. Concurrently, **TypeScript** introduced static typing on top of **JavaScript**,
87 further enriching the transpilation ecosystem [20].

88 2.1 Parsing Methodologies and AST Representations

89 The parsing phase can be split into lexical analysis (tokenisation) of source text into identi-
90 fiers, literals and symbols, and syntactic analysis with grammar validation and parse-tree
91 construction [5]. Top-down parsers (like the descent) are straightforward to extend but
92 cannot handle left recursion; bottom-up parsers (LR) support more complex grammars at the
93 expense of implementation effort [8]. Generalised LR (GLR) parsing extends this flexibility,
94 resolving ambiguities and accommodating context-sensitive constructs [15].

95 A parse tree is distilled into an AST, which removes redundant syntactic details and
96 emphasizes the programme’s semantic structure. Key characteristics include a hierarchical
97 node representation, elimination of syntactic sugar, and explicit preservation of control and
98 data flow dependencies which are essential for language-agnostic transformations [13, 10, 9,
99 23].

100 2.2 Code Transformation Strategies

101 Code transformation represents the core computational process of transpilation, where the
102 AST is systematically modified to generate equivalent code in the target language or version
103 [27]. This phase involves multiple strategies to ensure semantic preservation while adapting
104 to the target language’s specific syntactic and structural requirements [2].

105 The transformation process typically encompasses **several key strategies**:

- 106 ■ Structural transformation of language constructs;
- 107 ■ Semantic mapping between different language features;
- 108 ■ Handling of language-specific idioms and patterns;
- 109 ■ Generating optimized and compatible target code.

110 Complex transformations may involve multiple traversals over the AST, each one address-
111 ing different aspects of code translation [27]. These can include:

- 112 ■ Feature adaptation (*e.g., translating modern **JavaScript** features to **ES5***);
- 113 ■ Paradigm translation (converting functional programming constructs to imperative styles);
- 114 ■ Semantic equivalence preservation;
- 115 ■ Performance optimization.

116 2.3 Taxonomy of Transpilers

117 Reading the available literature, we found that the landscape of transpilation tools can be
118 classified according to the type of translation they perform. They usually are categorised in
119 three classes, as will be described below.

120 Language-to-Language Transpilers

121 Language-to-language transpilers represent an approach to cross-language code transforma-
122 tion, enabling developers to translate source code between fundamentally different program-
123 ming languages. These transpilers address the challenge of linguistic heterogeneity in software
124 ecosystems, facilitating code reuse, platform migration, and technological integration [28].

11:4 Comparative Review and Empirical Evaluation about transpilers

125 One of the most popular language-to-language transpilers is **Java2Python**² which
126 transpiles from Java to Python. Although a popular tool, it was forgotten over the years due
127 to the fact it only works with Python 2 and was left with no more updates since 9 years ago.

128 The translation process involves semantic mapping, addressing not just syntactic differ-
129 ences but also paradigmatic variations between source and target languages. For example,
130 transpilers might translate between statically-typed and dynamically-typed languages, or
131 between languages with different memory management approaches, requiring sophisticated
132 computational strategies to preserve the original code's computational intent [22, 16].

133 Version Transpilers

134 Version transpilers focus on managing the evolutionary challenges of programming languages
135 by enabling code migration between different versions of the same language. These tools are
136 particularly useful in rapidly evolving language ecosystems where backward compatibility
137 and feature adoption present a significant challenge for developers [3].

138 Modern version transpilation goes beyond syntax updates, addressing semantic changes,
139 deprecation of language features, and introducing modern language capabilities to legacy
140 codebases. **JavaScript** transpilers like **Babel** exemplify this approach, allowing developers
141 to use next-generation **ECMAScript** features while maintaining compatibility with older
142 browser environments [26].

143 Paradigm Transpilers

144 The most complex category, paradigm transpilers translate across programming paradigms:
145 functional, imperative, declarative, demanding profound semantic transformations to preserve
146 computational logic while adapting control flow, data abstractions and side-effect management
147 [1].

148 It's mentioned as the most complex set of transpilers since the gap between languages
149 of different paradigms is often hard to bridge, requiring first to understand and design
150 how certain statements from a source language, which are not supported or don't exist
151 in the target language, will be mapped into the target language and then apply multiple
152 AST transformations in order to incrementally bridge the gap between both languages.
153 **ClojureScript**³ is a great example of this type of transpiler because it is a compiler for
154 **Clojure** (dynamic, general-purpose programming language) that targets JavaScript.

155 2.4 Software Infrastructure Mapping in Transpilation

156 Infrastructure Dependencies and Library Ecosystem Challenges

157 The difficult task of mapping entire software infrastructures is included in the transpilation
158 process, which goes far beyond translating syntactic and semantic code. Standard libraries,
159 runtime environments, package management systems, and platform-specific components are
160 all part of the extensive ecosystems that surround programming languages and make it
161 possible to design and implement applications.

162 When transpiling real-world applications, developers face the fundamental challenge
163 of relying on substantially different infrastructure foundations. A **Java** application, for
164 instance, depends not only on the **Java** language syntax but also on the extensive **Java**

² <https://github.com/natural/java2python>

³ <https://clojurescript.org/>

Standard Library, Java Virtual Machine runtime, Maven or Gradle build systems, and Java-specific frameworks. Transpiling such an application to **Python** requires mapping these dependencies to equivalent **Python** infrastructure: the **Python Standard Library**, **CPython interpreter**, pip package manager, and corresponding **Python frameworks**.

Binary Component Integration and Platform Dependencies

When working with dependencies and binary components specific to the platform that cannot be translated immediately through transformation of the source code, the difficulty increases. Database drivers, system APIs, native libraries, and third-party components that are available as built binaries rather than source code are all integrated into many production applications. Pure source-to-source translation is unable to handle the extra layers of complexity created by these dependencies.

Successful application migration in such contexts requires hybrid approaches that combine code transpilation with infrastructure redesign. This process often involves identifying equivalent binary components in the target ecosystem, developing adapter layers to maintain interface compatibility, or replacing entire subsystems with functionally equivalent alternatives that align with the target platform’s architectural patterns.

3 Independent Empirical Study: Methodology and Setup

The theoretical research (presented in Section 2) carried out on various transpilers provided valuable information on the characterisation and usage of these tools. However that task paved the way to a more practical and experimental study that could support a deeper analysis of their characteristics. This section describes an experiment aimed at providing concrete results that allow for several relevant conclusions to be identified, highlighting their advantages, limitations and ideal contexts of use. Table 1 exhibits the main observations drawn from the literature review, showing the parameters that better characterise the transpilation tools selected for the empirical study.

3.1 Test Cases and Selection Criteria

The empirical evaluation uses a uniform test suite in which each transpiler is asked to translate a short programme that (a) computes the sum of the even numbers in a given list and (b) finds the maximum value among the list elements. This logic was expressed in the various input languages supported by the tools under test: **JavaScript/TypeScript**, **Nim**, **Clojure**, **Haxe**, **C** and **Java**. The six code snippets written for each test can be found in Appendix A. By holding the computational intent constant, we ensure that performance and correctness metrics reflect the capabilities of each transpiler rather than variations in algorithmic complexity.

The compilers were selected primarily on the basis of the popularity in **GitHub**, measured by star count, to capture tools with significant community adoption and support. Additionally, the **Java2Python** converter was included despite its lower visibility, as it fulfilled the specific requirement of translating **Java** code to **Python**. During setup, several candidates could not be installed or executed on our Linux environment due to outdated dependencies or compatibility issues; the final benchmark comprises only the subset of tools successfully integrated into the testbed.

Tool	Category	Input Languages	Output Languages	AST Handling	Ease of Use	Stability & Known Issues
TypeScript Compiler	Version	TypeScript	JavaScript	Complete	Simple	High stability, few errors
Babel	Version	JavaScript, TypeScript	JavaScript	Complete	Intuitive	High stability, occasional errors
eslint	Version	JavaScript, TypeScript	—	Partial	Moderate	High stability, frequent reports
Nim	Language-to-Language	Nim	C, C++, JavaScript	Complete	Moderate	Stable, actively developed
ClojureScript	Paradigm	Clojure	JavaScript	Complete	Hard	Stable, some reported errors
jscodeshift	Version	JavaScript, TypeScript	JavaScript	Complete	Easy	Moderately stable, occasional errors
ast-grep	Version	JavaScript, TypeScript	—	Simple	Moderate	Moderately stable
Haxe	Language-to-Language	Haxe	JavaScript, Python	Complete	Moderate	Stable, frequent updates
c2rust	Paradigm	C	Rust	Complete	Moderate	Stable, but complex bugs
Fennel	Paradigm	Fennel (Lisp dialect)	Lua	Complete	Simple	Stable, sporadic maintenance
Cito	Language-to-Language	C	JavaScript	Partial	Moderate	Moderately stable
TypeScriptToLua	Language-to-Language	TypeScript	Lua	Complete	Moderate	Stable, minor known bugs
godzilla	Language-to-Language	JavaScript	Lua	Complete	Moderate	Moderately stable
jsweet	Language-to-Language	Java	JavaScript, TypeScript	Complete	Moderate	Moderately stable, some bugs
j2cl	Language-to-Language	Java	JavaScript	Complete	Moderate	Stable, interoperability bugs
Java2Python	Language-to-Language	Java	Python (2.x)	Simple	Easy	Stable, but obsolete (Python 2 only)

■ **Table 1** Key characteristics of the selected transpilers, with category placed after the tool name.

206 Column Definitions

207 In this table, the **Tool** column lists the name of each transpiler under evaluation for reference.
 208 The **Category** column classifies each tool according to its conversion type—“*Language-to-Language*”
 209 for those translating between different languages, “*Version*” for those handling differences
 210 between versions of the same language, and “*Paradigm*” for those mapping between distinct
 211 programming paradigms. The **Input Languages** and **Output Languages** columns indicate, respectively, which source languages the tool accepts and which target languages it can
 212 generate. The **AST handling** column describes the extent of AST support: “*Complete*”
 213

denotes full coverage of nodes and complex transformation passes; “*Partial*” signifies limited support for specific nodes or operations; and “*Simple*” refers to basic functionality for pattern matching or data extraction without deep rewriting capabilities. The Ease of Use column provides a qualitative assessment of the learning curve and interface clarity: “*Simple*” or “*Easy*” indicates straightforward, well-documented APIs requiring minimal configuration; “*Intuitive*” implies a coherent workflow that is naturally accessible despite some complexity; and “*Moderate*” signals that additional configuration steps or intermediate concepts must be mastered before the tool can be utilised to its full potential and “*Hard*” signifies that independent research must be conducted before using the tool. And finally the **Stability & Known Issues** column summarises the general maturity and reliability of each tool, noting whether it is actively maintained, prone to occasional errors or complex bugs, and any recurring issues that users should be aware of.

3.2 Experimental Environment and Tool Installation

All experiments were conducted on a Linux workstation equipped with a multi-core (8 cores) CPU and 32 GB of RAM. Transpilers were installed via their standard package managers or repositories (*e.g. npm for JavaScript-based tools, cargo for Rust-based tools*). Where necessary, minor adjustments (such as version pinning or patching build scripts) were applied to resolve compatibility issues. Despite these efforts, some tools remained unusable and were excluded from the study.

Each transpiler was invoked with default settings except where command-line options were required to specify input and output languages. Execution time, CPU utilization and peak memory usage were recorded using system profiling utilities, like the *time* tool integrated in Linux. Output code was then compiled or interpreted to verify correctness, and a precision score from 0 to 100 was assigned based on successful execution and fidelity to the original specification.

4 Results

Table 2 summarizes the four parameters—*execution time*, *CPU used*, *memory consumed*, and *accuracy*—measured to compare the nine Transpilers chosen to conduct the experiment described in Section 3. The following subsections analyse in detail performance, precision, resource consumption, and usability. The last subsection sums up the study conclusions.

4.1 Performance and Efficiency

Execution times varied markedly across tools. **Nim**—transpiling to **C**, **C++** and **JavaScript**—achieved average runtimes of 0.61 s, 0.59 s and 0.12 s respectively, with moderate memory use (77.8 MB, 79.4 MB, 24.5 MB). In contrast, **ClojureScript** exhibited the slowest performance at 27.44 s despite low memory consumption (36.0 MB), rendering it unsuitable for time-sensitive workflows. The **jscodeshift** transformer delivered the fastest translation (0.06 s) and minimal memory footprint (1.76 MB), although this speed came at the expense of lower precision (see Section 4.2).

Tool	Execution Time (s)	CPU Utilisation (%)	Memory Used (MB)	Accuracy (0-100)
TypeScript Compiler	1.79	86	188.0	80.72
Babel (JS \rightarrow JS)	8.66	16	92.4	80.72
Babel (TS \rightarrow JS)	3.29	20	82.4	80.72
Nim (\rightarrow C)	0.61	101	77.8	86.25
Nim (\rightarrow C++)	0.59	99	79.4	86.25
Nim (\rightarrow JS)	0.12	90	24.5	89.50
ClojureScript	27.44	62	36.0	57.70
jscodeshift	0.06	235	1.76	75.00
c2rust	0.16	81	135.3	75.00
Fennel	0.10	98	7.8	79.75
TypeScriptToLua	5.93	59	302.3	72.25
Java2Python	0.09	25	39.9	55.00

■ **Table 2** Performance, resource usage and accuracy results for each transpiler.

252 4.2 Output Precision

253 Because the experiment was carried out in multiple tools involving multiple programming
 254 languages, it was not possible to use a single application that would evaluate all codes using
 255 the same parameters.

256 So in order to quantify how faithfully each transpiler preserved the semantics of the original
 257 programs, we applied a composite scoring methodology on a 0–100 scale. We developed
 258 custom evaluation scripts in **Python**, **JavaScript**, **Nim**, and other host languages, one
 259 per transpiled output, to execute identical input sets and compare results against reference
 260 implementations. Although the code under test spanned multiple languages, all source files
 261 implement the same algorithmic logic, ensuring a uniform basis for comparison.

262 The overall precision score $S \in [0, 100]$ for each tool is computed as a weighted sum of
 263 five orthogonal categories:

$$264 \quad S = 40\% \times \text{FunctionalCorrectness} + 25\% \times \text{SemanticEquivalence} \quad (1)$$

$$265 \quad + 15\% \times \text{CodeQuality} + 10\% \times \text{StructuralSimilarity} + 10\% \times \text{ErrorHandling}. \quad (2)$$

266 Each sub-score is normalized to the range $[0, 100]$ before weighting:

- 267 ■ **Functional Correctness (40%)**: Does the transpiled program compile/run and produce
 268 the correct outputs for all test inputs? This is the highest-weight category, since a single
 269 failure yields a 0 in this dimension.

- 270 ■ **Semantic Equivalence** (25%): Do intermediate states, control flow structure, and side
- 271 effects match the behaviour of the original program with equivalent inputs?
- 272 ■ **Code Quality** (15%): Does the output follow best practices and idiomatic style for the
- 273 target language (e.g., Pythonic constructs, proper naming, concise expressions)?
- 274 ■ **Structural Similarity** (10%): Is the high-level structure (functions, classes, loops)
- 275 aligned with the source?
- 276 ■ **Error Handling** (10%): Are edge cases and exceptions handled appropriately (e.g., null
- 277 checks, boundary conditions)?

278 A perfect score (100/100) indicates that the transpiler produced code that compiles/runs
 279 without modification, maintains equivalent logic and control flow, adheres to target-language
 280 idioms, preserves structural patterns, and robustly handles errors across all test inputs.

281 Detailed Example: Java2Python (55.00/100)

282 The **Java2Python** tool translated our sample *MaxFinder.java* to *max_finder.py* with
 283 near-perfect style, structure, and error handling (100% in the last four categories, except
 284 the last one that scored 50%), but failed ‘Functional Correctness’ entirely (0/100 in that
 285 category) because of a single method call mismatch:

286 Original **Java** file:

```
287 int maxNumber = numbers.get(0);
```

288 Transpiled **Python** code:

```
289 maxNumber = numbers.get(0)
```

290 Since **Python** lists do not implement *get()*, this line causes a runtime exception for all
 291 test inputs. Correct behaviour requires:

```
292 maxNumber = numbers[0]
```

293 As a result, **Java2Python**’s functional correctness sub-score is 0, producing a final
 294 precision of

$$295 \quad 0.40 \times 0 + 0.25 \times 100 + 0.15 \times 100 + 0.10 \times 100 + 0.10 \times 100 = 55.00.$$

296 All reported scores reflect the same composite evaluation. Tools scoring below 70-75 may
 297 therefore require manual correction or additional validation before deployment."

298 4.3 Resource Consumption

299 Memory usage showed significant divergence. **TypeScriptToLua** consumed the most
 300 RAM (302.3 MB), followed by the **TypeScript Compiler** (180.2 MB) and **c2rust** (135.3
 301 MB). Conversely, **jscodeshift** (1.76 MB) and **Fennel** (7.8 MB) demonstrated exceptional
 302 frugality, making them attractive for resource-constrained environments. CPU utilisation
 303 generally remained below 100% of a single core; **jscodeshift** peaked at 235%, reflecting its
 304 multi-threaded execution across several cores.

305 **Why in some cases the CPU usage exceeded 100% ?**

306 CPU usage can exceed 100% because modern systems have several CPU cores and the
 307 percentage is calculated in relation to the capacity of a single core. When the percentage
 308 gets above 100%, it means that the process is using several CPU cores simultaneously.

309 In the case of **jscodeshift**, CPU usage reaching 235% means that your transformation
 310 is effectively using around 2.35 CPU cores on average. This is possible because: **Node.js**
 311 (which runs **jscodeshift**) is multi-threaded through its event loop and job threads. The **V8**
 312 **JavaScript** engine (used by **Node.js**) can parallelise certain operations.

313 **4.4 Usability and Stability**

314 Developer experience was assessed qualitatively. **Babel** and **jscodeshift** stood out for
 315 ease of use, due to intuitive command-line interfaces and extensive plugin ecosystems. The
 316 **TypeScript Compiler** and **Babel** also showed high stability with minimal runtime errors.
 317 **Nim**'s tooling proved reliable but is under active development, which may introduce future
 318 breaking changes. Although **Java2Python** delivered perfect accuracy and stability, its
 319 support for only **Python 2** renders it impractical for modern codebases.

320 **4.5 Practical Recommendations**

321 Based on these findings, the research reach the conclusion that:

- 322 ■ For **JavaScript/TypeScript** projects: use **Babel** or the **TypeScript Compiler** for a
 323 balance of precision, stability and moderate resource demands.
- 324 ■ Where raw performance is critical: employ **Nim** for its rapid and accurate transpilation
 325 to **C**, **C++** or **JavaScript**.
- 326 ■ For quick, lightweight transformations: opt for **jscodeshift**, acknowledging potential
 327 trade-offs in precision.
- 328 ■ In specialised migrations (*e.g.* **C**→**Rust**, **Fennel**→**Lua**): consider **c2rust** or **Fennel**
 329 with the understanding that additional verification may be required.

330 **5 Conclusion**

331 In the context of a research project, an extensive review of the literature was carried out
 332 focusing on transpilation: definition, evolution, principles, techniques, and tools. Following
 333 that bibliographic study, it has been conducted an empirical study to compare some of the
 334 most relevant transpilers found and available. In the next paragraphs is presented the most
 335 relevant outcomes.

336 **Insights from the Literature Review**

337 The state of the art analysis confirms that modern transpilers have matured into sophistic-
 338 ated systems capable of transforming code across languages, versions and paradigms while
 339 preserving semantic integrity. Early preprocessors evolved into AST-centric frameworks,
 340 and tools such as **Babel** and the **TypeScript Compiler** now underpin large-scale web
 341 applications by reconciling cutting-edge language features with legacy environments. Key
 342 findings include:

- 343 ■ **Semantic Preservation:** Multi-stage AST transformations enable faithful code transla-
 344 tion even between drastically different paradigms.

- **Performance Trade-Offs:** Parsing and code-generation introduce overheads that must be balanced against compatibility gains.
- **Tool Ecosystems:** Plugin architectures (*e.g. Babel plugins*) and rich analysis APIs foster extensibility and customisation.

Insights from the Empirical Study

The independent benchmarks highlight the practical trade-offs faced when choosing a transpiler:

- **Raw Performance:** **Nim** outperforms all other tools, delivering sub-second translations with perfect accuracy.
- **Balanced Options:** **Babel** and the **TypeScript Compiler** offer strong precision (91%) and stability with moderate resource demands.
- **Lightweight Transforms:** **jscodeshift** achieves near-instantaneous conversions at minimal memory cost, albeit with lower accuracy.
- **Specialised Tools:** Converters such as **c2rust** and **Java2Python** address niche migrations effectively but require careful validation and environment compatibility.

These results underscore the importance of aligning transpiler selection with project priorities—whether that be throughput, fidelity or ecosystem integration.

5.1 Future Work

Building on both theoretical and practical insights, several avenues for further research were identified:

AI-Augmented Transpilation

Integrating machine learning techniques to produce context-aware transformations promises higher fidelity and automatic correction of edge cases [18]. As well as removing the manual labour required to create a transpiler, from building a parser to a source language to apply AST transformations and code generation for a target language.

Paradigm-Bridging Frameworks

Advancing paradigm transpilers to accurately convert between functional, imperative and declarative models remains an open challenge, with potential in new algorithmic strategies [17].

Distributed and Cloud-Native Scenarios

As software architectures grow more distributed, transpilers must support microservices and server less deployments, optimizing for networked environments and heterogeneous runtimes [24]. In order to, for instance, provide transpilation as a service without requiring a user to have a local system with hardware capabilities to handle the migration of projects with millions of lines of code.

Enhanced Benchmarking

Future empirical studies should incorporate multi-core scaling, plugin overhead, and real-world codebases to refine our understanding of performance versus precision trade-offs.

383 **Toolchain Integration and Automation**

384 Developing unified workflows that integrate transpilers with CI/CD pipelines and automated
 385 testing frameworks will streamline large-scale migrations and continuous modernization
 386 efforts.

387 **5.2 Additional information**

388 If this article interested you is important to mention that there is a complementary webpage,
 389 where you can find the article you read, the transpilers (and their version) used along with
 390 the links so you can easily access the same tools used in the experiment. After that, the
 391 webpage displays all of the scripts used to evaluate the transpiled code, so you can replicate
 392 the same experiment and further extend it. Right at the end there is a link to another
 393 document that deep dives into the state of the art study about transpilers.

394 **Here is the link:**

395 <https://justandre02.github.io/Comparative-Review-and-Empirical-Evaluation-about-transpilers/>

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11:14 Comparative Review and Empirical Evaluation about transpilers

478 **A** Code snippets used

479 To consolidate the experimental study we have conducted, and that was discussed in Sections
480 3 and 5, Listings 1 to 6, presented below, show the code snippets used for the transpilation
481 across various tools.

■ Listing 1 JavaScript test case

```
482 class Main {  
483     public static function processNumbers(numbers:Array<Int>):  
484                                     {sumEven:Int, maxNumber:Int} {  
485         var sumEven = 0;  
486         var maxNumber = numbers[0];  
487  
488         for (num in numbers) {  
489             if (num % 2 == 0) {  
490                 sumEven += num;  
491             }  
492             if (num > maxNumber) {  
493                 maxNumber = num;  
494             }  
495         }  
496     }  
497  
498     return {sumEven: sumEven, maxNumber: maxNumber};  
499 }  
500  
501 }
```

■ Listing 2 Nim test case

```
502  
503 proc processNumbers(numbers: seq[int]):  
504                                     tuple[sumEven: int, maxNumber: int] =  
505     var sumEven = 0  
506     var maxNumber = numbers[0]  
507  
508     for num in numbers:  
509         if num mod 2 == 0:  
510             sumEven += num  
511         if num > maxNumber:  
512             maxNumber = num  
513  
514     return (sumEven, maxNumber)  
515  
516 let numbers = @[1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]  
517 let result = processNumbers(numbers)  
518
```

■ Listing 3 Clojure test case

```
519 (defn process-numbers [numbers]  
520   (let [sum-even (reduce + (filter even? numbers))  
521         max-number (reduce max numbers)]  
522     {:sum-even sum-even  
523      :max-number max-number}))  
524  
525
```

■ **Listing 4** Haxe test case

```

526
527 class Main {
528     public static function processNumbers(numbers:Array<Int>):
529                                     {sumEven:Int, maxNumber:Int} {
530         var sumEven = 0;
531         var maxNumber = numbers[0];
532
533         for (num in numbers) {
534             if (num % 2 == 0) {
535                 sumEven += num;
536             }
537             if (num > maxNumber) {
538                 maxNumber = num;
539             }
540         }
541
542         return {sumEven: sumEven, maxNumber: maxNumber};
543     }
544 }
545

```

■ **Listing 5** C test case

```

546
547 #include <stdio.h>
548
549 typedef struct {
550     int sumEven;
551     int maxNumber;
552 } Results;
553
554 Results processNumbers(int numbers[], int length) {
555     int sumEven = 0;
556     int maxNumber = numbers[0];
557
558     for (int i = 0; i < length; i++) {
559         if (numbers[i] % 2 == 0) {
560             sumEven += numbers[i];
561         }
562         if (numbers[i] > maxNumber) {
563             maxNumber = numbers[i];
564         }
565     }
566
567     Results results = {sumEven, maxNumber};
568     return results;
569 }
570

```

■ **Listing 6** Java test case

```

571
572 import java.util.List;
573
574 public class Main {
575     public static Result processNumbers(List<Integer> numbers) {
576         int sumEven = 0;
577         int maxNumber = numbers.get(0);
578

```


11:16 Comparative Review and Empirical Evaluation about transpilers

```
579         for (int num : numbers) {
580             if (num % 2 == 0) {
581                 sumEven += num;
582             }
583             if (num > maxNumber) {
584                 maxNumber = num;
585             }
586         }
587
588         return new Result(sumEven, maxNumber);
589     }
590 }
591
592 class Result {
593     public int sumEven;
594     public int maxNumber;
595
596     public Result(int sumEven, int maxNumber) {
597         this.sumEven = sumEven;
598         this.maxNumber = maxNumber;
599     }
600 }
601 }
```