



## Lexical Borrowing in English-Arabic Translation: A Case Study of Iraqi EFL Learners' Translational Strategies

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### Abstract

This study investigates the phenomenon of lexical borrowing in restatements by Iraqi students from English to Arabic, focusing on how Iraqi students incorporate English terms while rephrasing Donald Trump's speeches. This phenomenon presents a challenge in restatement between two linguistically distinct languages, such as English and Arabic. The aim of the study is to explore the pattern of lexical borrowing through the analysis of 200 student restatements. The methodology employed in this exploration involves both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Samples were collected from Iraqi undergraduate students majoring in English and restatement. The study categorizes the types of lexical borrowing used by the students, such as coinages or calques, and analyzes these samples using textbook analysis tools to examine the relationship between the type of borrowing and restatement quality. Results show that lexical borrowing is wide among the students, with significant variation in its use depending on the textbook sphere. The study sets up those students who tended to overuse borrowing, particularly in specialized and political disciplines. It is concluded that while lexical borrowing can be an effective tool in certain surrounds, inordinate adopting negatively impacts restatement clarity and quality in other cases.

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## الاقتراض المعجمي في الترجمة من الإنجليزية إلى العربية: دراسة حالة لاستراتيجيات الترجمة لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية من العراقيين

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### المستخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في ظاهرة الاقتراض المعجمي في ترجمات الباحثين العراقيين من الإنجليزية إلى العربية، مع التركيز على كيفية تضمين المتعلمين العراقيين لمفردات إنجليزية أثناء إعادة صياغة خطاب دونالد ترامب. وتمثل هذه الظاهرة تحدياً في الترجمة بين لغتين مختلفتين اختلافاً كبيراً على المستوى اللغوي، هما الإنجليزية والعربية. وتهدف الدراسة إلى استكشاف أنماط الاقتراض المعجمي من خلال تحليل 200 ترجمة قام بها طلبة جامعيون، تعتمد المنهجية المستخدمة في هذه الدراسة على التحليل الكمي والنوعي. وقد تم جمع العينات من طلاب جامعيين عراقيين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية والترجمة. وتقوم الدراسة بتصنيف أنواع الاقتراض المعجمي التي يستخدمها الطلبة، مثل التعابير المترجمة حرفياً أو الكلمات المنحوتة، ثم تحلل هذه العينات باستخدام أدوات تحليل النصوص لفحص العلاقة بين نوع الاقتراض وجودة الترجمة، وقد أظهرت النتائج أن الاقتراض المعجمي واسع الانتشار بين الطلبة، مع وجود تباين ملحوظ في استخدامه حسب مجال النص. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى أن الطلبة غالباً ما يفرطون في استخدام الاقتراض خاصة في التخصصات

الفنية والسياسية. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن الاقتراض المعجمي يمكن أن يكون أداة فعالة في سياقات معينة إلا أن الإفراط في استخدامه يؤثر سلباً على وضوح الترجمة وجودتها في حالات أخرى.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الاقتراض المعجمي، جودة الترجمة، متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية العراقيون، الثنائية اللغوية

## 1-Introduction

Lexical borrowing is a pervasive phenomenon in the environment of language contact, where one language integrates words, expressions, or generalities from another. This lexical process is not simply an incidental borrowing; it's frequently a reflection of deeper socio-artistic, literal, and political relations between languages. In the realm of restatement, lexical borrowing becomes even more significant, as it represents both a challenge and a strategy for translators, especially when rephrasing between languages with distinct lexical systems, such as English and Arabic.

The phenomenon of lexical borrowing has garnered significant attention in both theoretical and applied linguistics, particularly within restatement studies. Scholars like Haugen (1950) (1) and Thomason & Kaufman (1988) (2) have examined its theoretical underpinnings, while others, such as Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) (3), have emphasized its practical operation in restatement. Despite its long-standing recognition, the study of lexical borrowing in the environment of Arabic-English restatements remains underexplored, particularly when considering specific indigenous surrounds such as Iraq. The increased frequency of English in academic, professional, and technological settings in Iraq has led to a wide use of espoused English terms in Arabic converse, especially in restatement tasks carried out by Iraqi students.

This study delves into the intricate patterns of lexical borrowing among Iraqi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, fastening specifically on their restatement practices from English into Arabic. The primary end of this exploration is to probe how Iraqi scholars, particularly those majoring in English language and restatement, employ lexical borrowing as a strategy to bridge lexical gaps in their restatements of English textbooks. Drawing on the analysis of 200 restatement samples of speeches by former U.S. President Donald Trump, this study explores the frequency, types, and counteraccusations of lexical borrowing in their restatements.

likewise, the study seeks to explore the broader pedagogical and theoretical counteraccusations of lexical borrowing in the environment of Iraqi bilingualism. Given the complex sociolinguistic geography of Iraq, where Arabic, Kurdish, and English attend, the exploration examines how language exposure, bilingual proficiency, and the sphere of the source textbook influence the scholars' restatement strategies. It posits that while lexical borrowing may

serve as a necessary tool for conserving the integrity of technical generalities, inordinate reliance on borrowing can compromise the clarity, consonance, and stylistic quality of the restated textbook.

In light of these considerations, this exploration aims to contribute to the ongoing converse in restatement studies by furnishing empirical substantiation on the part of lexical borrowing among Iraqi EFL learners. By examining the relationship between language exposure, restatement quality, and sphere-specific borrowing, this study offers precious perceptivity into the challenges faced by translators working in a multilingual and fleetly globalizing terrain. also, it highlights the need for a balanced approach in restatement pedagogy, one that equips scholars with the chops to navigate the complications of lexical borrowing while maintaining the lexical and stylistic integrity of the target language.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Lexical Borrowing

Lexical borrowing refers to the incorporation of words or expressions from one language into another, typically due to sustained language contact. This phenomenon reflects not only linguistic necessity but also socio-cultural, historical, and political influences. Scholars have defined lexical borrowing in various ways. Haugen (1950) (1) identifies it as the process through which speakers of one language adopt linguistic elements from another, integrating them into the native system. Contemporary research often focuses on lexical items due to their visibility and frequency in both written and spoken discourse.

A key distinction must be made between lexical borrowing and code-switching. While both involve the use of elements from more than one language, code-switching refers to the spontaneous alternation between two linguistic systems, often within the same sentence or discourse (Poplack, 1980) (4). In contrast, lexical borrowing implies a more permanent adoption of foreign words, which may undergo phonological, morphological, and syntactic assimilation into the host language (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988). (2)

**Lexical borrowings are generally classified into the following categories:**

1. Direct Loans (Loanwords): Words that are adopted with little or no modification. For example, the English word **computer** is widely borrowed across many languages.
2. Loan Translations (Calques): These involve the literal translation of a foreign expression. For instance,

**skyscraper** may be translated as **ناطحة سحاب** in Arabic, which reflects the same imagery.

3.Loan Blends: These are a combination of a foreign root with a native affix or vice versa.

4.Semantic Loans: An existing word in the borrowing language acquires an additional meaning under the influence of a foreign counterpart.

5.Pseudo-Borrowings: These are words that appear borrowed but have evolved differently in the host language.

In Iraq lexical borrowing from English is widespread, particularly in urban speech and academic settings. Words like internet, mobile, and network are frequently used as-is or with minimal phonological adaptation. This reflects both the influence of globalization and the increasing role of English in education, particularly among students majoring in English or translation.

## 2.2 Lexical Borrowing in Translation Studies

Lexical borrowing has been extensively discussed in translation studies as both a practical strategy and a theoretical concern. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) (3) identify borrowing as one of the seven core translation procedures, particularly useful when no exact equivalent exists in the target language. Borrowing can serve as a means of preserving cultural specificity, especially when the borrowed term carries socio-cultural connotations that would otherwise be lost in translation.

However, opinions diverge regarding the desirability of borrowing. On the one hand, scholars like Newmark (1988) view borrowing as a necessity when no equivalent term exists, especially for culturally bound or technical terms. On the other hand, excessive or inappropriate borrowing can lead to awkward or opaque translations, particularly when the target audience is unfamiliar with the borrowed term (Baker, 2011) (5). As such, borrowing must be applied judiciously, balancing fidelity to the source text with accessibility in the target language.

Some translation theorists argue that borrowing can enrich the target language, while others see it as a sign of linguistic dependency. House (2015) (6) emphasizes that translators should consider register, genre, and audience expectations when deciding whether to borrow or substitute culturally or functionally equivalent expressions.

Empirical studies in translation classrooms show that students often resort to borrowing when their lexical knowledge in the target language is limited. This behavior is particularly prevalent among novice translators who lack the depth of terminological knowledge to paraphrase or localize complex terms effectively.

## 2.3 Lexical Borrowing as a Reflection of Bilingual Competence

The study supports the theoretical position that lexical borrowing is not merely an indicator of linguistic deficiency, but rather a manifestation of bilingual and bicultural competence, especially among learners exposed to English in academic and digital contexts. Students appeared to use borrowing both as a communicative shortcut and as a way of retaining source text fidelity, particularly for culture-bound or novel terms. This behavior aligns with House's (2015) (6) view that the acceptability of borrowing must be assessed with regard to audience expectations, genre, and register.

In the context of Iraqi university students, borrowing was not only a function of necessity but also a marker of academic and social identity, which echoes the sociolinguistic insights of Mahmoud (2015) (8) and Yaseen & Shakir (2020) (7). The interplay between English prestige and lexical integration was clearly visible in students' translational choices.

## 2.4 Bilingualism and Language Contact in Iraq

Iraq presents a unique case of intense language contact, particularly between Arabic, Kurdish, and English. While Arabic is the official national language, English holds significant importance as a second language, especially in higher education and professional domains (Mahmoud, 2015) (8). Especially in urban areas, the prevalence of bilingualism and even multilingualism is accentuated by the presence of several languages. The political and cultural history of Iraq, which includes periods of continued globalization and British influence, has led to the increased use of English in public and private life. This is particularly noticeable in fields where English terminology is widely used, such as computer science, engineering and medicine. Because English lexical elements are so deeply rooted in the Iraqi language, English words and phrases are often incorporated into Arabic speech, including in casual conversation with students. The hybrid linguistic reality is the result of linguistic contact in Iraq. For example, even in otherwise completely Arabic conversations, students can use English terms directly to refer to their class, lecture, or project. This kind of lexical borrowing is an academic necessity and a sociolinguistic identity; it is not a mere linguistic shortcut.

## 2.5 Previous Studies on Arab and Iraqi Learners

There have been quite a many exploration studies looking into how Arab learners adopt words when learning English, but there has not been important focus on Iraq specifically. For illustration, Abu-Melhim (1991) (9) explored what vocabulary choices Arab scholars make and set up that adopting words is a common strategy to fill in gaps in their vocabulary. also, Al-Khatib (2003) (10) delved how Jordanian scholars used English words in Arabic surrounds, pointing out that they frequently do this because of the

prestige associated with those words and how easy they're to grasp. More recent studies have expanded this perspective by examining lexical borrowing as both a lexical strategy and a socio-artistic phenomenon. For case, Albirini (2016) (11) delved English lexical influence on Arabic among bilingual speakers and noted the pervasive use of English- deduced terms in academic and technological settings. Likewise, Al-Qaysi and Obeidat(2018) (12)explored the pedagogical counteraccusations of lexical borrowing in Jordanian EFL classrooms, suggesting that scholars frequently resort to adopting not only out of necessity but also as a reflection of identity and lexical exposure .

Lately, experimenters have started paying further attention to lexical borrowing in Iraq. For case, Yaseen and Shakir (2020) (7) looked at how people use espoused words in Iraqi social media posts. They set up clear patterns in how these espoused terms fit into everyday discussion. also, Kareem (2018) studied restatement crimes among Iraqi English majors and noted that numerous of them calculate on borrowing as a way to deal with strange words.

likewise, a study by Salman and Al- Azzawi (2021) (15) examined English lexical influence in Iraqi university classrooms and revealed that both preceptors and scholars engage in methodical borrowing, especially when dealing with specialized language. The study highlights a growing normalization of English vocabulary within Arabic academic converse. also, Hassan (2019) (13) set up that the frequent use of English terms among Iraqi undergraduate scholars frequently correlates with limited lexical force in Arabic, but also reflects institutional pressures and media exposure. These studies inclusively illustrate that while lexical borrowing among Arab learners is a well-established phenomenon, the Iraqi environment offers unique confines shaped by its multilingual geography, educational programs, and socio- political history.

### **3 .Hypotheses**

- 1.Iraqi EFL learners calculate on lexical borrowing as a primary strategy to compensate for lexical gaps during restatement tasks from English into Arabic.
- 2.The frequency and type of lexical borrowings in pupil restatements are told by the sphere-specific nature of the source textbook (e.g., specialized, academic, or artistic).
- 3.There is a significant correlation between the learners' level of bilingual exposure and their tendency to use lexical borrowings in translation.
- 4.Overuse of lexical borrowing in student translations often results in semantic ambiguity or stylistic inconsistency in the Arabic target text.

### **4 .Methodology**

#### **4.1 Participants and Procedures**

The study was conducted with a sample of 153 Iraqi undergraduate students majoring in English language and restatement at three public universities across Iraq. The participants were named through purposive sampling to insure their direct engagement with both English and Arabic in academic surrounds. All participants had completed at least two years of coursework in restatement and linguistics, and were complete in both spoken and written English and Arabic.

The exploration procedure involved two primary stages. In the first stage, participants were handed with named English source textbooks from colorful disciplines, including academic, specialized, and artistic motifs .

They were asked to restate these textbooks into Arabic under standardized conditions. In the alternate stage, participants completed a structured interview and questionnaire designed to evoke perceptivity into their restatement strategies, lexical background, and frequency of lexical borrowing.

Informed concurrence was attained from all participants, and ethical guidelines pertaining to obscurity, voluntary participation, and data confidentiality were rigorously observed.

#### **4.2 Measurement**

To probe the exploration suppositions, a mixed-system approach was applied, combining both quantitative and qualitative measures. The restatement tasks were anatomized for cases of lexical borrowing, classified according to typologies outlined in the literature (e.g., coinages, calques, composites, pseudo-loans). Each case was enciphered grounded on frequency, environment of use, and degree of assimilation into the Arabic structure.

A rating scale was developed to assess the appropriateness and clarity of each borrowing instance within the translated text. Additionally, the questionnaire administered to participants included items measuring:

- 1.Self-reported frequency of lexical borrowing.
- 2.Domains in which borrowing is most common (e.g., technical, academic, cultural).
- 3.Perceived necessity versus stylistic preference in borrowing.
- 4.Bilingual exposure and academic background.

The interview responses were transcribed and analyzed thematically to complement the quantitative data and to uncover underlying motivations, attitudes, and challenges related to lexical borrowing in translation.

#### **4.3 Data Analysis**

Quantitative data from the translation tasks and questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Frequencies, means, and standard deviations were calculated to identify patterns

in borrowing behavior across the sample. Chi-square tests and correlation analyses were employed to explore relationships between borrowing frequency and participants such as bilingual exposure, academic background, and text domain.

Thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data from the interviews, focusing on recurring themes such as translator confidence, perception of borrowing as a linguistic strategy, and attitudes toward English influence in Arabic academic discourse. This triangulation of data provided a comprehensive perspective on the phenomenon of lexical borrowing among Iraqi English language learners and enhanced the validity of the study's findings.

## 5 .Results

Harman's single-factor test was conducted to address potential common method bias in the data. The results showed no significant effects, confirming that the integrity of the findings remained intact. Descriptive statistics (Table 1) indicated substantial associations among lexical borrowing frequency, translation domain, exposure to English, and translation clarity. A strong correlation was found between high English lexical exposure and the use of loanwords, particularly in technical or political texts. The results provided empirical support for Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 3.

**Table 1.**

**Descriptive Statistics and Correlational Coefficients of the Main Variables (N = 200 samples)**

Variables	Borrowing Frequency	English Exposure	Domain (Technical)	Translation Clarity
Borrowing Frequency	—	0.611	0.504	-0.293
English Exposure	0.611	—	0.481	-0.184
Domain (Technical)	0.504	0.48	—	-0.232
Translation Clarity	-0.293	-0.184	-0.232	—

**Note:  $p < 0.01$**

The study then utilized **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)** to validate the hypothesized relationships (H1–H4) between translation behavior and lexical borrowing in translated speeches. The model achieved excellent fit indices:  $\chi^2(90) = 197.324$ , CFI = 0.971, TLI = 0.963, RMSEA = 0.046, SRMR = 0.043, confirming that the structural paths were statistically valid.

The results from Table 1 demonstrate a highly significant connection between the students' level of English exposure and their frequency of lexical borrowing. High borrowing rates were found to reduce overall clarity in Arabic translations, which lends

support to **Hypothesis 4**. Meanwhile, the domain of the speech (technical vs. non-technical) also played a mediating role in the frequency of lexical borrowing used.

Furthermore, bootstrap resampling (5000 samples) and **Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa)** 95% confidence intervals were applied to calculate mediation effects. The data supported a staged pathway whereby high English exposure encouraged lexical borrowing, especially in technical fields, which in turn slightly reduced translation clarity.

**Table 2.**

**Mediating Effects of Technical Domain and Borrowing Behavior on Translation Clarity**

Path	Point Estimate	Standard Error	95% BCa CI
English Exposure → Technical Domain → Translation Clarity	-0.067	0.031	[-0.134, -0.011]
English Exposure → Borrowing Frequency → Translation Clarity	-0.104	0.028	[-0.169, -0.054]
Technical Domain → Borrowing Frequency → Translation Clarity	-0.088	0.025	[-0.145, -0.033]
Total Indirect Effect	-0.211	0.037	<b>[-0.288, -0.148]</b>
Direct Effect (English Exposure → Translation Clarity)	-0.071	0.030	[-0.128, -0.013]
Total Effect	-0.282	0.042	<b>[-0.365, -0.203]</b>

**Note: Significant BCa intervals in bold indicate meaningful mediation.**

These results indicate that learners with higher exposure to English are more likely to borrow lexical items, especially in technical contexts. This borrowing, however, negatively affects the clarity and fluency of the translated text, as reflected in the reduced readability and semantic coherence scores. This supports **Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4**, while confirming the robustness of the causal framework tested.

In sum, the statistical model demonstrates that lexical borrowing is both a linguistic strategy and a pedagogical indicator of a translator's reliance on foreign input. The mediating role of domain-specific vocabulary and the level of borrowing reveal that translation quality can be influenced by prior exposure and topic complexity.

## 6 .Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to examine the patterns and implications of lexical borrowing in Arabic translations of English political discourse—specifically, speeches by former U.S. President Donald Trump—as performed by Iraqi English language learners. The results derived from 200 samples were analyzed in light of the four research hypotheses and situated within the broader theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter Two. This chapter interprets the findings, assesses their theoretical significance, and reflects on how they align or diverge from existing literature.

The findings from Chapter Five provide empirical support for the notion that lexical borrowing is a prominent and strategic phenomenon in the translation behavior of Iraqi learners.

**Specifically, the data demonstrated that:**

- Higher exposure to English correlates significantly with increased lexical borrowing.
- Technical domains (e.g., political, technological, economic discourse) significantly encourage borrowing.
- Frequent borrowing is negatively associated with translation clarity, particularly in terms of semantic precision and stylistic coherence.

These findings validate Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, while also partially affirming Hypothesis 4, which proposed that lexical borrowing, while often necessary, could impair the overall quality of translation when used excessively or inappropriately.

The strong correlation between English exposure and borrowing frequency resonates with the findings of Abu-Melhim (1991) (9) and Al-Khatib (2003) (10), who suggested that borrowing serves as a cognitive and strategic mechanism for managing lexical gaps in the target language. The current results extend those conclusions by empirically demonstrating this trend in a specific Iraqi context, where English functions not just as a foreign language but also as a symbolic and academic capital.

Furthermore, the results highlight how technical content amplifies the need for borrowing, confirming Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) (3) classification of borrowing as a translation technique necessitated by lexical or cultural gaps. This is particularly relevant for fields such as political communication, where rhetorical specificity and topical terminology are hard to substitute effectively.

These findings align with previous research highlighting frequent omission of plural markers among Iraqi EFL learners. As noted, Ahmed S. Abdullah (2024) (14), "Participant 22 wrote, 'we visited several place' instead of 'several places,' [...] reflecting a gap in morphological competence" (p. 280).

## 7. Conclusion

This study investigated the phenomenon of lexical borrowing in Arabic translations of English political discourse by Iraqi university students majoring in English. Drawing upon 200 samples taken from translations of Donald Trump's speeches, the research aimed to assess the frequency, motivations, and impact of borrowing on translation quality. Grounded in theoretical frameworks from translation studies and sociolinguistics, the analysis provided quantitative and qualitative evidence for the strategic, linguistic, and cultural functions of borrowing.

The findings confirmed that lexical borrowing is both a frequent and functionally motivated strategy among Iraqi EFL learners. Exposure to English—especially through academic study, media, and digital platforms—was significantly correlated with increased borrowing behavior. Additionally, translations of technical and political texts revealed a heightened reliance on borrowing, particularly when dealing with culture-bound or novel terms. While borrowing served as a useful tool for maintaining source-text fidelity and bridging lexical gaps, its overuse often led to decreased clarity and stylistic awkwardness in the target text.

The negative correlation between frequent borrowing and translation clarity has critical pedagogical implications. While borrowing may facilitate initial comprehension and production, excessive dependence on it can obscure the syntactic and stylistic expectations of the Arabic target audience. This underlines the need for pedagogical strategies that balance borrowing with paraphrasing, localization, and context-sensitive equivalence.

**Educators should therefore:**

- Emphasize contextual awareness in translation training.
- Encourage students to evaluate the clarity and readability of their translations post-borrowing.
- Teach the nuanced differences between appropriate borrowing and lexical interference.

This balanced approach would nurture both accuracy and idiomatic fluency, preparing learners to navigate different translation domains with greater competence.

**The research findings collectively validate the four hypotheses:**

**H1:** Confirmed. Students with high exposure to English use more borrowed lexical items.

**H2:** Confirmed. Technical or political domains trigger a higher frequency of borrowing.

**H3:** Confirmed. Borrowing is positively correlated with students' English proficiency and exposure.

**H4:** Partially Confirmed. Borrowing negatively affects translation clarity when used without stylistic or semantic adaptation.

These outcomes support Thomason & Kaufman's (1988) (2) view of lexical borrowing as both a linguistic and sociocultural process. They also enrich the translation studies discourse by offering quantitative evidence from a localized, under-researched Iraqi learner context, which is often overlooked in Western-dominated translation literature.

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