

Translation studies in Iraq: a bibliometric review

دراسات الترجمة في العراق: مراجعة بيبليومترية

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الكلمات المفتاحية

الدراسات
البيبلومترية، دراسات
الترجمة، ترجمة
النوع، الباحثون
العراقيون.

الملخص

شهدت دراسات الترجمة تطوراً متسارعاً خلال السنوات الأخيرة، ترافق مع زيادة ملحوظة في عدد المقالات العلمية المنشورة. وتعدّ الدراسات البيبلومترية أداة فعّالة لاستكشاف اتجاهات البحث العلمي ورصد تطوراتها. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل اتجاهات النشر وتحديد أبرز المجالات الموضوعية في بحوث الترجمة في العراق.

اعتمدت الدراسة منهجاً بيبليومترياً قائماً على مراجعة وتحليل مخرجات البحث العلمي في مجال الترجمة خلال الفترة (٢٠٢١-٢٠٢٥)، حيث تم جمع (٢٧٦) مقالاً وتصنيفها وفقاً لمجالات الدراسة التي اقترحها ويليامز وجيسترمان (2014)

أظهرت النتائج وجود تركيز واضح على ترجمة الأنواع النصية (Genre) بوصفها المجال الأكثر اهتماماً لدى الباحثين العراقيين.

في المقابل، حظيت مجالات مثل أخلاقيات الترجمة، وتاريخ الترجمة، ومهنة الترجمة، والترجمة الشفوية، وعمليات الترجمة باهتمام محدود نسبيًا.

كما كشف تحليل الكلمات المفتاحية أن ترجمة القرآن الكريم والترجمة الأدبية تُعدّان من أكثر الموضوعات تداولاً في هذه الدراسات. وتقدّم هذه النتائج قراءة نقدية لواقع دراسات الترجمة، مؤكدة الحاجة إلى توسيع نطاق البحث ليشمل المجالات التي لم تنل نصيباً كافياً من الاهتمام.

KEY WORD Abstract

Bibliometric studies, translation studies, translation of Genre, Iraqi scholars

Studies on translation have developed rapidly, with considerable increase in published articles. Bibliometric studies are utilized to explore research trends. The purpose of this study is to identify the trends of publications and thematic focus. It has adopted a corpus-based approach method in order to review and analyse researches on translation's output from 2021 to 2025. A total of 276 articles published were collected and classified according to the classification of research areas suggested by Williams and Chesterman (2014). The findings of the study indicate a significant focus on translation of Genre as the main area interest within the Iraqi researchers. However, areas such as translation ethics, translation history, the translation profession, interpreting and translation process have received limited attention in researches. Furthermore, analysis of keywords indicates that Quran translation and literary translation the most researched topics among these publications. The study provides a critical overview of translation studies' current state. It emphasizes the need for further overall explorations into underrepresented areas within translation research.

Introduction

Translation Studies has been witnessing rapid development over two decades. With its interdisciplinary orientation, it has borrowed methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks from other fields including but not limited to Linguistics, Anthropology, Sociology, and Cultural Studies (Baker & Saldanha, 2019). It began to take shape in the mid-20th Century. Scientist started to systematically study and analyse translation processes, its strategies and translation role in language and culture. The works of (Nida, Roman Jakobson, Toury, and Holmes) established the theory and practice of translation (Munday et al., 2022)

According to Rovira-Esteva et al (2015), research in Translation Studies has provided insights that have shaped our understanding of the translation process, contributed to the development of machine translation, and offered many pedagogical approaches to teaching translation. This interdisciplinary infusion has not only expanded the scope of translation research but also enriched its depth, fostering a deeper understanding of translation as a complex sociocultural phenomenon. Over the past two decades, more than 40,000 scientific publications have been published in Translation Studies, with more than 3000 new publications issued each year.

Tymoczko (2005) points out, “translation research will move away from linguistic approaches as narrowly conceived and even from the circumscribed cultural studies approaches currently in use”. This foresight by Tymoczko stresses the inevitable evolution of Translation Studies towards embracing a more diverse array of theoretical and methodological perspectives.

Baker (1993) argues that translation studies has developed to a point where it is both ready for and in need of techniques and methodology of corpus linguistics to make a major leap from prescriptive to descriptive statements, from methodologising to theorising, and from individual and isolated research effort to powerful generalizations. Understanding the development and dominant trends in studies is important for researchers, educators, and practitioners. Gambier and Van Doorslaer (2016:5) assert that bibliometric studies are useful in “mapping the trends, networks and flows of the field, and in providing both diachronic and synchronic pictures of the state of the art.”

Literature review

Doorslaer and Gambier (2015:306) define the bibliometric study as “a way of measuring and analyzing scientific output, studying the evolution and trends of academic disciplines and evaluating scholarly communities”. This method makes use of statistical analysis of written researches to assess the productivity of writers, institutions and countries (Ellegaard & Wallin, 2015). One of the earlier works is done by Šajkevič (1992). It was about translated books published between 1955-1983. The researcher used the UNESCO database Index Translationum. It reflects a considerable effort to analyze and map the field of translated books, shedding the light on the publishing trends, dominant target languages and the movement of cultural and literary exchange through translation. This study has laid the groundwork for more bibliometric

researches by demonstrating the value of such methods in revealing patterns and trends in translation activities. Toury (2009) analyzed articles published in Target Journal over two decades, examining contributions of nations, the geographical distribution of journal articles, and the gender of the contributing authors. She offered important insights into significantly sociocultural comprehension of research activities in translation studies.

Dong and Chen (2015) analyzed trends of publications, mapped the co-citation and analyze the evolution of translation studies from 2000 to 2015. The study highlighted key researches, publication sources, and research areas. The study concluded three main research focus—theoretical studies on translation, trainings on translation and interpreting and descriptive translation studies.

Across Arab world, Alangari (2023) made an investigation on published researches in Saudi Arabia from 1990 to 2019. She categorizes the development of research on translation and interpreting into three stages: early years (1990–1999), academic advancements (2000–2009), and advancements of industry (2010–2019). She used data from King Fahad National Library and from Scopus. She found a significant increase in published researches during 2010–2019. Studies related to pedagogy prevailed during those years. This trend aligns with the expansion of translation departments and growth of international scholarships in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Fatani (2009) and Alkhamis (2012) investigate translation industry in Saudi. The study explores developmental trajectory and sociological aspects from 2009 to 2011. Later on, Al-Otaibi (2015) assessed translation activities between 2010 to 2015 in Saudi Arabia. Though the study wasn't specifically target on translation and interpreting research.

However, so far, bibliometric studies haven't conducted to investigate the development of translation research published mainly by Iraqi researchers. Thus, this research seeks to address this gap. Through analysis, we aim to provide a clearer delineation of research themes and trends within the field, thereby advancing our understanding of translation studies.

Methodology

This review aims to explore the most significant studies on translation studies made by Iraqi scholars and researchers. To achieve this, the study adopts a bibliometric analysis to systematically review and analyze performance to quantify the total publications. (Donthu et al., 2021) This research was

conducted on Jan. 2026. Iraqi academic scientific journals' database used in this research. It is the main source for searching relevant literature. The initial search was 794 articles in translation studies. It is also guided by a set of inclusion criteria to ensure the relevance and scope of the data collected for analysis. The data have been retrieved based on the following criteria:

- 1) The scope was limited to articles published between Jan 2021 and December 2025. This 5-year period was selected in order to capture the evolution of the field over this period
- 2) Articles written in the English language.
- 3) Articles focusing on linguistics rather than Translation itself

Articles were further filtered based on their subject matter relevance to translation This was determined through a preliminary review of titles, abstracts, and keywords, where available. filtering was conducted to exclude conference papers, incomplete records, and duplications. The final step requires a careful review of the text to ensure articles discuss the topic of our systematic review. A total of 276 potential articles identified from the database used in this review.

Bibliometric analysis

This research utilized a bibliometric analysis presented through excel statistics (frequency and percentages). For the keywords, sketch engine was used to analyze the frequency. Article titles were subject to manual word analysis by the researchers using the classifications of areas of research (Williams & Chesterman, 2014). This review has been carried out based purposes. First, Translation studies have developed into a compelling research area with growing numbers. Thus, it is required to map, evaluate, and analyze Translation Studies research conducted by Iraqi scholars in order to identify publication trends and thematic orientations. Second, to Detect research gaps and underexplored areas in translation studies. Third, the study provides a reference for future studies.

Research questions

Within the framework of this aim, the following research questions were formed:

RQ 1: What journals and institutions produce the most Translation Studies research in the Arabic language?

RQ 2: What are the most dominant areas of translation research and topics published by Iraqi scholars and researchers?

Results and discussion

Name of the journal	Published by	Articles collected
Adab Al-Basrah Journal	University of Basra	26
Adab Al-Kufa Journal	University of Kufa	2
Adab Al-Rafidain	University of Mosul	45
AL BASRAH STUDIES JOURNAL	University of Basra	1
Al-Mansour Journal	Al-Mansour University	1
AL-Mustansiriya Journal of Arts	AL-Mustansiriya University	9
Al-Noor Journal for Humanities	Al-Noor University	11
Al-Ustath Journal for Human and Social Sciences	University of Baghdad	4
Arabian Gulf Journal	University of Basra	2
Bilad Alrafidain Journal of Humanities and Social Science	Bilad Al Rafidain University College	1
College of Basic Education Researchers Journal	University of Mosul	9
Hawlyat Al-Montada	National forum for ideology and researches culture	3
Iklil Journal for Humanity Studies	The Iraqi Scientific Society for Manuscripts and Human Studies	8
Iraqi Journal of Humanitarian, social and scientific research	Osol Al-Deen University College	7
Journal of Al-Farabi for Humanity Sciences	Al-Farabi University College	4
Journal of Al-Farahidi's Arts	University of Tikrit	4
Journal of Alma'rifa for Humanities	University of Mosul	1
Journal of Babylon Center for Humanities Studies	University of Babylon	7
Journal of Basra research for Human	University of Basra	2

sciences		
Journal of College of Education	University of Mosul	2
Journal of Education College for Women	University of Mosul	1
Journal of education for human science	Dhi Qar University	1
Journal of Language Studies	University of Tikrit	44
Journal of Media Studies and Research	Iraqia University	1
Journal of Misan Researches	University of Missan	1
Journal of studies in Humanities and Educational science	Al-Qadisiyah University	1
Journal of the college of education for humanities	Wassit University	1
Journal of the College of Education for Women	University of Baghdad	1
Journal of the College of Languages	University of Baghdad	2
Journal Of the Iraqia University	Iraqia University	13
Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities	University of Tikrit	7
Journal port science research	University of Uruk	2
Lark Journal	Wassit University	6
Midad AL-Adab	Iraqia University	10
Misan Journal for academic studies	University of Misan	7
Nasaq Journal	Iraqi Association for Educational and Psychological Studies	4
Surra Man Ra'a Scientific Refereed Journal	University of Samarra	8
Translation & Linguistics	Bayt Al-Hikma	9
University of Kut Journal for Humanitarian Science	University of Kufa	2
Wasit Journal for Human Sciences	University of Wasit	7

Table (1) The distribution of the collected articles

As reflected from the above Table 1, most of the translation studies research articles were published in journals issued by universities (n=36), followed by other institutions and associations (n=4). Figure 1 shows the journals' titles and the number of articles published in each journal.

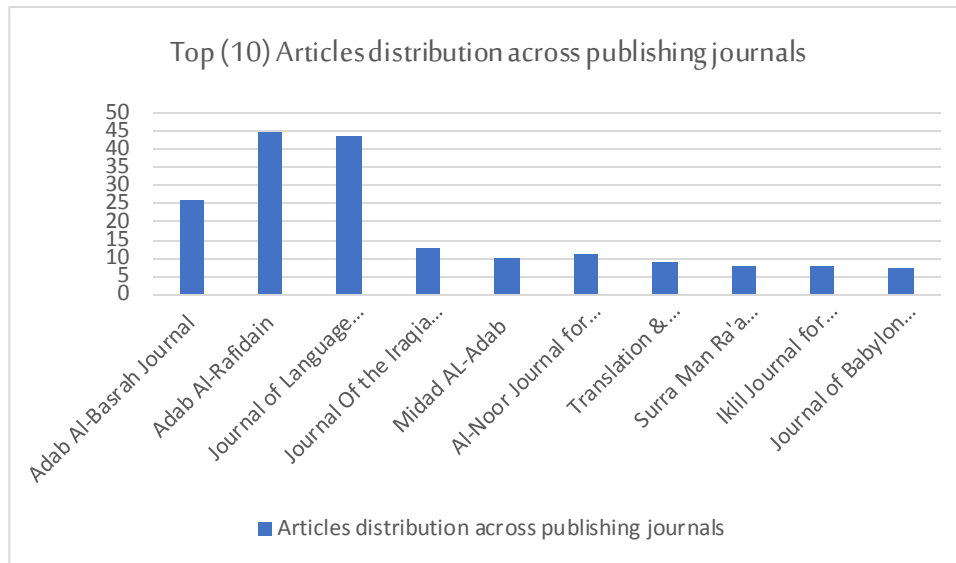


Figure (1) distribution of articles across journals

Figure (1) indicates that Adab Al-Rafidain Journals, published in Mosul province, has the most published articles (n=45), followed by Journal of language studies, published in Salah Al Din province, (n=44). The findings of our analysis indicates that the University of Mosul made the most contributions to the development of research in Translation Studies in Iraq. Moreover, the authors from this university contribute to most of the articles (n=87) across all journals. In addition, university of Tikrit has made the second most contributions to the development of the research (n=43). Figure (2) shows the contribution of the universities.

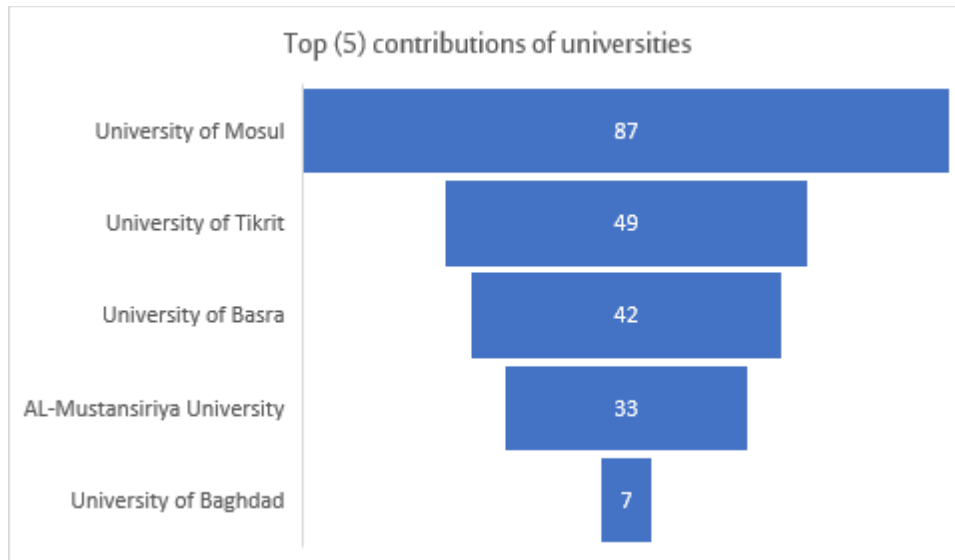


Figure (2) contributions by universities

Following the data collection, the analysis of 276 articles spanning a five-year period yielded the following findings. The initial analysis focused on publication output over time. Figure 3 illustrates the annual number of articles published between 2021 and 2025.

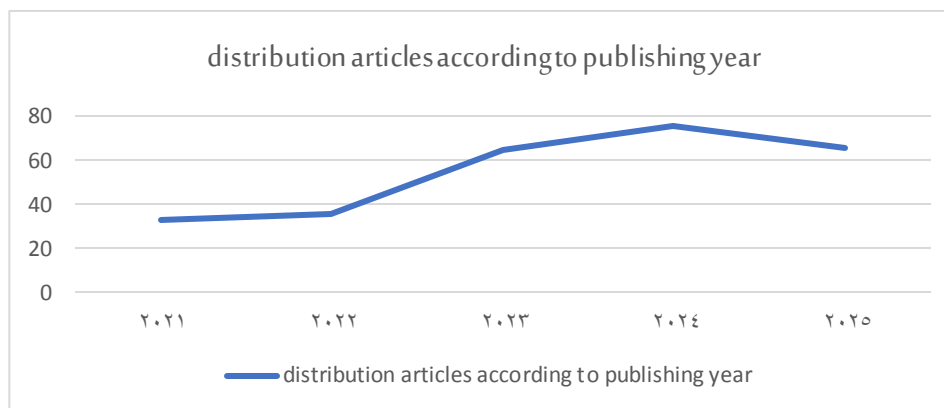


Figure (3) distribution of articles according to publishing year

As seen in Figure 3, the distribution of studies according to publishing years is divided into two phases. The years with the highest number of articles are ٢٠٢٥ (n=٦٦), ٢٠٢٤ (n=٧٦) and the years with the least number of articles are ٢٠٢١ (n=33) and ٢٠٢٢ (n=٣٦). Although the productivity appears positive initially, it is reasonable to conclude that online indexing has artificially increased the reported figures. It is to be expected “some years may be more productive than

others in terms of data entry, although productivity is not necessarily linked to year of publication”. (F. Zanettin et al, 2015:3). The analysis of the journal showed that not all of them are properly indexed. Most of the journals in this study tend to have an electronic archive of a selected number of years. The second research question in this study aimed to examine the most dominant areas of translation research and the most frequent topics researched. Figure 4 present

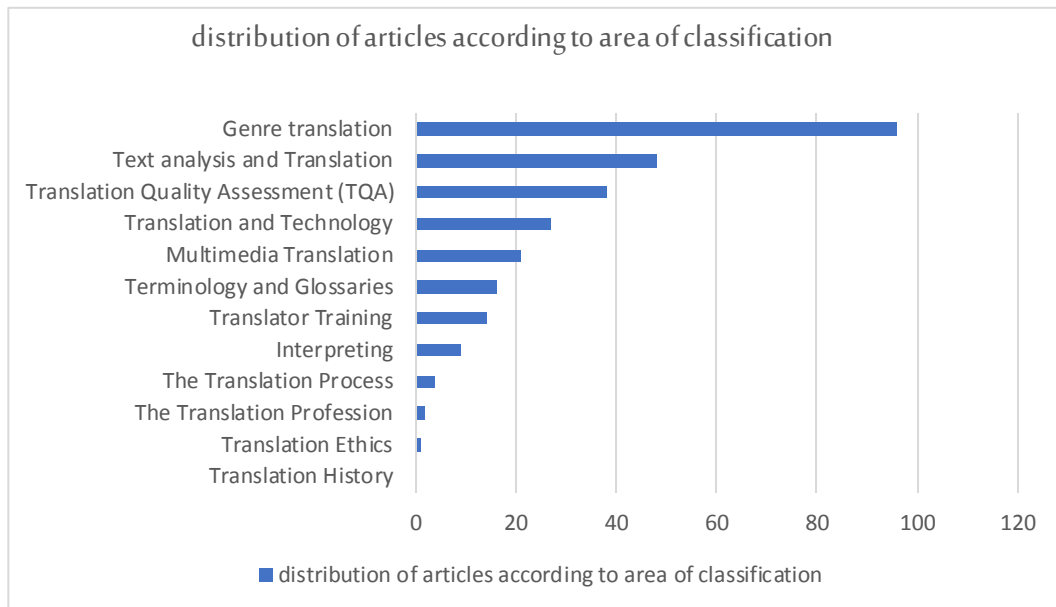


Figure 4: The distribution of articles according to the research area classifications

The findings reveal a strong dominance of Genre Translation (n=96), accounting for more than one-third of the total research output. This reflects a sustained scholarly interest in the translation of literary, religious, legal, political, and media texts. In addition, Text Analysis and Translation (n=48) and Translation Quality Assessment (n=38) has gained a major position. However, areas of research such as translation Ethics, translation profession, and translation history remain insufficiently represented. This is suggesting potential research gaps in Iraqi translation studies. The predominance of genre translation is attributable to the methodological accessibility of genre-based research.

In addition, the most frequent topic researched, our analysis reveals that Qur'an translation is the dominant topic. Figure 5 shows a list of the keyword frequency from articles' titles

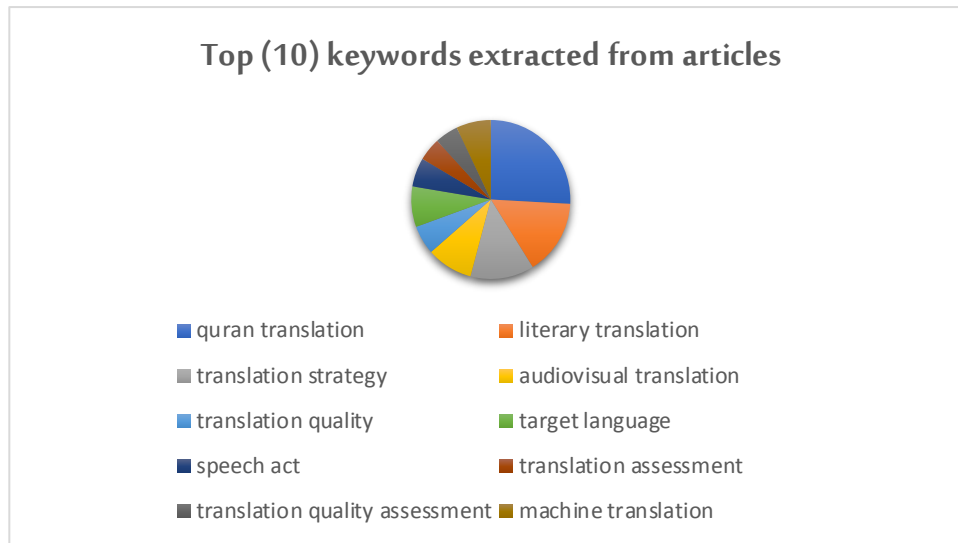


Figure 5: Keywords extracted from articles

The keywords analysis shows that Quran translation (n=22) has become one of the most researched topics in the Iraqi translation research, and perhaps the most growing; it has remained dominant throughout the five-year period, accounting for more than one-third of the articles. According to Mehawesh (2014), "the translation of the Quran is one of the most important markers to the history of Arabic translation" (p.686). Qur'an translation has been widely discussed in both Arabic and English languages. Therefore, Qur'anic translation is considered a top priority for researchers in the Arab world, in which Iraq is no exception.

For Qobti & Almohaimeed (2024, 85) the translations of the Qur'an by non-Muslims were for "polemical reasons. On the other hand, Muslim scholars felt the need to "defend the Qur'an against the translations of the missionaries" by offering different translations that are "reliable". The debate around the translation of the Qur'an is positioned between two extremes. On the one hand, there is a resistance stemming from religious conservatism, prohibiting the translation of the Qur'an and arguing that its language is one of the most miraculous aspects. This argument reconfirms the impossibility of translating it, which is also reflected in many research articles. On the other hand, the Qur'an

translation has been used as a tool of ideological war and fueled a debate about its sacredness. Therefore, scholars advocate for the translation to counter the hostile translations and make Islam accessible to non-Arabic speakers.

In addition, the literary translation comes second highest researched topic (n=13). Researches on literary translation has examined the translation literary devices and figurative language (Metaphor, simile, symbolism, to name just a few), cultural and culture bound expression (Culture specific items, proverbs and idioms, social norms, tradition and belief), translation strategies and procedures in literary texts and Poetry Translation (Translating poetry, Meter, rhyme, and rhythm). The studies have also examined two or more translations of the same novels and plays. It has also examined old and modern translations of same novels.

Conclusion

This review article has outlined the landscape of researches on translation studies research conducted by Iraqi researchers between 2021 and 2025. The study offers insight of publication trends, contributions of institutions in Iraq, substantial research areas, and thematic priorities. To achieve this aim, 276 articles were collected. The findings set forth a considerable growth of researches on translation studies particularly 2024 and 2025. The study concludes that genre translation areas is preferred area of research. Studies on religious and literary texts translation has received special focus. Contrary, the limited researches on translation ethics, translation history, the translation profession, interpreting and translation process points to insufficiently development of these areas. Therefore, this indicates a significant gap in Iraqi translation scholarship. In this regard, Qobti and Almohaimeed (2024) says “the absence of interpreting and translation process research and the recurring themes of research topics like texts analysis and literary translation can be partly traced to Translation Studies' uneasy institutional placing”.

Moreover, topic analysis shows that Qur'anic translation forms the most examined in research topics. It emphasizes its central role in translation studies and its ideological, religious, and cultural important. However, despite of these enhancements, the study refers to a significant challenge in funding. This indicates a research gap in resources that could further enhance the scope and impact of research in this field. However, the study has some limitations. One such limitation is time-frame and the exclusive use of Iraqi academic journal.

Furthermore, the study utilized solely on journal articles, excluding books and conferences. Despite of its value, it is significant to acknowledge that our analysis of keywords may have limitations in capturing the depth of research topics explored in the articles.

Future studies can build upon our findings by analyzing the methods and models utilized in collected articles. This can provide valuable vision into the theoretical frameworks which guide researches in translation studies and the methodological approaches employed by Iraqi researcher. Furthermore, future studies can benefit from our finding by expanding research beyond genre translation and text analysis. Future studies can be directed to work more with translation ethics, translation history, interpreting, translation process and the translation profession.

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