

تحديات الترجمة لطلاب الجامعات العراقية: التركيز على مهارات الترجمة الفورية في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية

Translation Challenges for Iraqi University Students:
A Focus on Interpretive Skills in English Language Education

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الملخص

يقدم البحث هذا إطاراً لدراسة تحليلية شاملة للتحديات التي تواجه تنمية المهارات التأويلية المتقدمة لدى طلبة الجامعات العراقية الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية والترجمة. وتستند إلى فرضية مفادها أن الترجمة الناجحة تمثل وساطة ثقافية ودلالية تتجاوز النقل اللغوي الحرفي. ويفترض البحث أن ثمة قصوراً حرجاً في الكفاءة التأويلية، المتمثلة في القدرة على تفكيك النص المصدر وظلال معانيه وإعادة بنائه في اللغة الهدف. وستُصنّف العقبات في أربعة محاور متداخلة: قصور لغوي ناتج عن الازدواجية اللغوية والتداخل، وفجوة في الوعي الاجتماعي الثقافي والتداولي، وقيود بيداغوجية متصلة بمناهج تقليدية، وندرة الموارد التقنية. وسيتبنى البحث منهجاً مختلطاً يجمع بين التقييم الكمي لأداء الترجمة والتحليل النوعي لعمليات التفكير والممارسات الصفية، مع مقابلات واستبانات. ويطمح البحث إلى الخروج بتوصيات إصلاحية شاملة للمناهج وطرائق التدريس وتوظيف التكنولوجيا وتطوير أعضاء هيئة التدريس. الكلمات المفتاحية: بيداغوجيا الترجمة، الكفاءة التأويلية، التعليم العالي العراقي، الازدواجية اللغوية، الوساطة الثقافية، تطوير المناهج، تدريب المعلمين.

Abstract:

This study proposal stems from understanding the fundamental issues that impede the processes used to cultivate advanced interpretive skills amongst Iraqi university students who focus on English language and translation. This proposal recognizes the complexities of effective translation, which involves mediation on both the cultural and semantic levels. It suggests that interpretive competence is severely lacking. Interpretive competence is the ability to both identify and comprehend all aspects of meaning, implications, and context of a source text and then place the source text into a target language in an equivalent manner. The issues that are being studied will be placed into four major categories that are interconnected. These categories are language issues that are caused by both diglossia and cross - linguistic interference, a large gap in socio - cultural and pragmatic competencies, teaching issues that are related to old teaching methods that are centered around the teacher, and a large void in both technological and scholarly resources. This study will employ a research methodology that focuses on both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The proposal focuses on providing an integrated, evidence - based reform model for translation education in Iraq. This model will focus on modernizing curricula, reforming teaching methods, integrating technology, and continuous professional development for faculty members.

Keywords: Translation Pedagogy, Interpretive Competence, Iraqi Higher Education, Diglossia, Cultural Mediation, Curriculum Reform.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

With contemporary social conditions, translation is no longer framed as a pure linguistic activity. Rather, it serves an important role in the mediation of intercultural communication and the transfer of knowledge (Cui et al. 2025). For Iraq, a country that experienced years of war, economic sanctions, and political instability, and is now engaged in multiple efforts of reconstruction and reintegration of its international relations, the need for skilled translators and interpreters is simple to justify. Translation is a tool for diplomacy, trade, and global communication. As Hatim and Mason (1997) say, translation is “a transfer of meaning, intention, culture and context” (p. 1).

Unfortunately, we cannot talk of a significant alignment between this national need and the quality of translation program graduates in Iraq. Newer research, supplemented by employer testimony, show that many of these graduates lack the interpretive skills required for professional practice. Although they may possess bare linguistic skills, they may fail to understand the nuances, intentions, and cultural contexts that are required to deliver professional translation (Gile 2009).

This proposal presents an underdeveloped interpretive competence as a core deficiency. Here, interpretive competence pertains to a translator’s holistic ability to analyze a source text not only for its explicit meaning, but also for its implicit meaning, intent, and contextual and ideological framing (Hurtado Albir, 2017). This ability involves the integration of linguistic and cultural inputs, as well as critical and strategic thinking. The PACTE model of translation competence argues that there are five connected sub-competences, which include the bilingual, extra-linguistic, the knowledge of translation, and the instrumental and strategic competences. All five sub-competences are engaged when interpretive capacity is employed (Hurtado Albir, 2017).

Translations that lack interpretive capacity can achieve technical accuracy, but are

likely to be culturally insensitive, semantically inaccurate, and pragmatically inappropriate. Such texts are technically accurate, but fail to convey their intended meaning and can result in detrimental professional, diplomatic, and financial repercussions. The landscape of translation tools is changing and improving, and while interpretive competence remains the key differentiator between expert and novice translators, the gap is growing (Duś, 2025).

1.2 Problem Statement

Initial assessments and preliminary data indicate that translations performed by Iraqi translation students are often linguistically proficient but do not fulfill contextual requirements within the translation target. Current teaching methods seem to focus more on outer form and ignore deep interpretation. As a result, they treat translation as a product to memorize rather than a process to master (Kiraly, 2000). This proposal maintains that the causes of these issues are multi-layered and interconnected. Among others, the causes include the peculiar diglossic state of the Arabic language (Ferguson, 1959), the misalignment of the structure of teaching and design of the curriculum with the requirements of the profession, the dominance of teacher-centered forms of teaching, the poor state of infrastructure, overwhelming lack of technology, no opportunities for continuous improvement of the faculty, and more.

1.3 The Scholarly Import and Distinctive Originality of the Present Study

Systematic, mixed-method research of this kind is not available and does not exist for the study of deficits of the interpretative skills of Iraqi translation students. The study is intended to contribute to this area in four important ways:

1. Empirical: It is expected the study will document translation, cognition, and teaching of translation within a profession in a research-deprived area for the first time.
2. Theoretical: The study will contribute to understanding the diglossic state of the Arabic language and the development of translation skills in a post-conflict situation

with limited resources.

3. Pedagogical: It is hoped the study will provide the first evidence - based framework for educational reform in the Iraqi context.

4. Practical: The study will provide Iraqi policy makers and university administrators with evidence - based recommendations for reform in translation education.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Interpretive Competence in Translation Theory

In modern translation theory, the role of interpretation has gained the spotlight. Within Steiner's (1998) hermeneutic motion Here, Steiner places the translator well beyond the boundaries of a mechanical worker. Steiner considers translators as interpretive motion co - creators with him. Skopos theory (Vermeer, 1989) redirects attention from linguistic parity to the purposive function (skopos) of the target text. This theory obliges translators to interpret the source text and the role the translated text will play in the new situational context of address. Nord's (2018) documentary and instrumental translation also emphasizes the need for flexible interpretive strategies.

An empirical study based on the translation competence PACTE model has identified five interrelated sub - competences: (1) bilingual competence, (2) extra - linguistic competence (culture and world knowledge), (3) knowledge of translation, (4) instrumental competence (resources), and (5) strategic competence (the organization of the translation process) (Hurtado Albir, 2017). Interpretive competence spans all the PACTE model sub - competences; however, in extra - linguistic and strategic competence, interpretive competence is the dominant concern and illustrates the degree to which translators activate their cultural knowledge while determining the course of the translation process.

Here are some recent perspectives on translator competence in the age of technology. According to Duś (2025), translator competence now denotes more than simply linguis-

tic and cultural competence and includes layered process and technology - related skills. Modern - day translators now occupy the positions of analysts, editors, and information managers, in addition to their role in a complex technology ecosystem (Duś, 2025, cited in Szabó, 2025). Szabó (2025) also addresses the impact technology, MT and AI, have on translator competence. He adds that competence models (PACTE 2017, EMT 2022) as well as industry - related surveys advocate for technological expertise as a primary competence for translators.

2.2 Diglossia and Its Impact on Translation Competence

Diglossia, as operationalized in this study, refers to the institutionalized functional bifurcation of a language into a codified, high - prestige superposed variety (H) and a vernacular, low - prestige native variety (L), wherein the rigid compartmentalization of their socio - pragmatic domains precludes mutual substitutability. It must be included in the analysis of the linguistic situation in Iraq. Ferguson (1959) described diglossia as a sustained language situation where primary dialects (Iraqi Arabic, IA) used in everyday situations, co - exist with highly codified (Modern Standard Arabic, MSA) that are superimposed. Importantly, no child in Iraq learns MSA as a native language, meaning that they learn it later in a formal setting. Consequently, there is a separation in a child's communication between what is literate and what is natural.

Investigations into the intersection of diglossia and translation performance have advanced considerably and recently. Khalaf (2025) studied the diglossia challenges present in Arabic. He argued linguistic dualism severely impacts translation practices and requires sophisticated teaching interventions to allow the student to shift between the language varieties. Altamimi (2024) used a phrase judgment task to examine the degree to which Arabic - speaking students process congruent collocations (those that are the same in Arabic and English) faster and more accurately than the incongruent collocations, re-

porting a congruency effect even among low - proficient learners. These studies provide a base to explore the challenges of Iraqi students in identifying English collocational naturalness during translation.

Students' levels of metalinguistic awareness are greatly affected by the diglossic setting. In Iraq, where students are expected to learn MSA through formal instruction, many students may know a lot about Arabic through grammar instruction, but do not know how to use the language the way a native speaker would. The difference between the two situations is attributed to the diglossic framework. This difference creates the feeling of insecurity in students and the feeling of insecurity leads to an inability to make decisions independently. The inability to make decisions independently affects the quality of their translations.

2.3 Socio - Cultural Theory and Translation Pedagogy

The idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as developed by Vygotsky (1978) is also applicable to learning how to translate. When the teaching of a skill is done within the boundaries of the ZPD of the learners, the learners are able to complete challenges which are a little bit more advanced from the challenges they are able to complete without the aid of a teacher. When this idea is applied to teaching how to translate, students should be able to undertake translation exercises which are supported at the higher levels without the teacher having to intervene directly, remove all obstacles, or explain all the rules related to the exercise.

Applying Kiraly's (2000) extension of socio - cultural theory to translation pedagogy implies that translation pedagogy should embrace a social constructivist approach, as learning is facilitated by engaging in authentic collaborative tasks and by participating peripherally in legitimate and active communities of practice. It is a stark contrast to traditional, teacher - centered, transmissive models of pedagogy. This theory also justifies the changes to pedagogy outlined in this proposal.

2.4 Pragmatics and Cultural Mediation

Translation demands high levels of pragmatic competence. In Speech Act Theory, for example, there are locutionary acts, which refer to the literal meaning, illocutionary acts, which refer to the act's intended function, and perlocutionary acts, which refer to the act's impact on the listener. Student translators usually manage to convey the locutionary meaning, but they often fail to convey the illocutionary meaning, which leads to translations that are pragmatically faulty. Another example is Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory. In English there is a tendency towards negative politeness, which involves hedging, indirectness, and apologizing, whereas Arabic has a tendency towards positive politeness, which consists of solidarity and exaggerated generosity.

In Conceptual Metaphor Theory, for example, concepts and cognition are inevitably linked. Also relevant for translation is the idea that different cultures have different, and often divergent, systems of metaphor, which are influenced by the cultures' histories and environments. Translation students must learn to be aware of these different systems of conceptual metaphor cross - linguistically, and learn to handle metaphorical expressions with the appropriate techniques.

2.5 Translation Pedagogy in the AI Era

The field of translation education has undergone radical changes with the introduction of generative artificial intelligences (AI) and large language models (LLMs). In their study, Cui et al. (2025) claim that the use of AI in the field of translation education will require a radical redesign of pedagogy beyond the integration of AI as a tool, and will require educators to harness AI in a way that actively fosters the ability of students to think critically about translation ethics, as well as ensuring that the translation ethics and the role of the translator are maintained and preserved.

Emerging empirical research has much to offer us. One study focused on the workload, output quality, and user feedback for Chinese—English post - editing and found that

LLMs with post - editing (i.e. ChatGPT - 4o) helped create a post - editing output with greater quality compared to a neural machine translation output (DeepL), as evidenced by the post - editing output having a lower number of errors and lower error scores. Participants perceived that for error correction and task performance, LLMs were superior. These results call for a translation curriculum that integrates critical AI literacy—preparing students to not only know how to use AI tools, but also how to assess, post - edit, and critique AI outputs. To develop the ability to use AI tools effectively, students must also be taught the critical use of these tools.

2.6 Contextual Realities in Iraqi Higher Education

Iraqi universities operate in an environment that was shaped by a devastating long - term conflict. Higher education after conflict is extremely important for rebuilding society. The Nahrein Network and the Ministry of Higher Education in Iraq signed a Memorandum of Understanding in January 2025 to support research grants, scholarships, and help build the capacity of Iraqi universities. The UNDP has helped reconstruct the English departments of Anbar University. Research on the reconstruction of education after conflict shows that rebuilding the infrastructure of a country's education system is not enough. Sustainable reform requires pedagogical and curricular innovation.

2.7 Identifying the Knowledge Gap

Internationally, the literature on both translation competence and diglossia is considerable; however, research that integrates these two fields of study in the context of Iraq is practically non - existent. This research covers a major gap by incorporating socio-linguistic, cultural, pedagogical, and technological dimensions, and in so doing, creates research that is both theoretically and practically oriented.

3. Research Questions and Aims

3.1 Main Research Question

What are the key obstacles hindering the development of interpretive competence

among translation students in Iraqi universities, and in what ways can these obstacles be tackled through a holistic reform framework?

3.2 Sub Research Questions

1. How do Iraq's socio - linguistic settings, exemplified by diglossia and cross - linguistic interference, create unique interpretive and linguistic challenges for translation students?
2. What ways do the current practices and procedures for teaching, curriculum design and assessment explicitly create barriers towards developing interpretive skills?
3. Given the extreme constraints of resources, how may the purposeful infusion of technology and critical literacy of AI improve interpretive skills?
4. What barriers of an integrated framework concerning pedagogy, curriculum, technology and personnel may be overcome in Iraqi contexts to elicit a greater degree of interpretive skills?

3.3 Aims

1. To identify and classify the types of errors that are made in student translations and distinguish the linguistic errors from interpretive or pragmatic errors.
2. To examine, by way of think - aloud protocols, how students engage in interpretive tasks and what strategies they employ during the translation process.
3. To investigate the relationship of diglossic comfort and exposure to different pedagogical and cultural contexts and access to technology and practice of translation.
4. To develop an evidence - based, multi - factor reform model for the Iraqi context.

4. Method

4.1 Research Design

This research will adopt a sequential explanatory mixed - methods design. It will be carried out over 18 months and consist of 2 phases.

Phase 1 (Quantitative Dominant): Assessment of translation tasks and an extensive

student survey to establish the prevalence of errors, interpretive skills and translation performance.

Phase 2 (Qualitative Follow - up): Application of think - aloud methods, including classroom observation and structured in - depth interviews, to understand the contextual and causal factors.

The combination of both qualitative and quantitative data will facilitate an understanding of the frequency of errors as well as the cognitive and instructional and organizational factors that may be associated with error production.

4.2 Research Sites and Sample

The study has three target Iraqi Universities, representing both geographic and institutional diversity.

1. University of Baghdad: the most established and the largest University, with relatively better resources and international contacts.

2. University of Mosul: a post - conflict reconstruction of education in the context of rehabilitation after the ISIS occupation (2014 - 2017) and liberation.

3. Al - Mustansiriya University: a University that has attempted to innovate pedagogy with the recent inclusion in the curriculum of Cultural Studies, and portfolio assessment.

Sample Composition:

150 undergraduate translation students (50 per University) in the 3rd and 4th Year, selected based on stratified random sampling on GPA (high, medium, low segments).

24 translation teachers (8 per University) purposefully selected to represent different levels of teaching experience.

- 6 department heads (2 per University).

45 recently graduated translators (15 per University) representing members of the translation profession and / or related professions and obtained through alumni associations.

· Triangulation of perspectives: The four stakeholder groups—students, teachers, administrators, and alumni—each hold a distinct but complementary piece of the programme quality puzzle. Comparing their views strengthens the validity of findings. · Multi - site comparison: Drawing equal samples from three universities enables cross - case analysis, helping to distinguish between institution - specific phenomena and broader trends in translation education. · Mixed - methods readiness: The stratified random sampling of students supports quantitative generalisation, while the purposive and quota sampling of other groups enables rich qualitative exploration. Together, they fit an explanatory or convergent mixed - methods design. · Feasibility and representation: Each sample size respects practical constraints while remaining adequate for the intended analytical depth—whether statistical testing, thematic analysis, or comparative case study.

4.3 Data Collection Instruments

4.3.1 Student Translation Performance Tasks

For the purpose of this study, participants will complete three translation tasks of different text types (journalistic, technical, literary) in each translation direction (Arabic - to - English and English - to - Arabic). Tasks will be designed to differ in interpretive complexity, using pragmatic challenges, metaphors, culture - bound expressions, and indirect speech acts. A rubric, based on the PACTE research group, will assess translations on the dimensions of accuracy (40%), naturalness (20%), register (20%), and cultural (20%) score. Each translation will be scored by two independent raters. Inter - rater reliability will be established by applying Cohen's kappa, targeting $\kappa \geq 0.80$. Differences will be resolved by discussion and reaching a consensus.

4.3.2 Student Survey

A detailed survey will include items on the following:

- Demographics

· Self - reported linguistic comfort with MSA and IA in academic and non - academic contexts

- Previous educational experiences
- Authentic English media (films, news, literature)
- Authentic teaching English (lecturing, interactive)
- Technology access and usage
- Self - reported translation skills

The survey will consist of 25 items using a 1 to 5 Likert scale and 5 items in the form of questions. It will be tested with 20 students before the planned administration to improve item wording and ensure the survey is in plain language.

4.3.3. Think Aloud Protocols

Thirty students (10 per university and by performance level) will participate in individual think - aloud sessions. These students will receive training in think - aloud procedures and then asked to verbalize all of their thoughts while translating a passage specifically created for this study that includes multiple interpretive roadblocks. These sessions will be recorded, transcribed, and coded for:

- Problem recognition (what triggers and when does difficulty awareness occur)
- Strategy deployment (dictionary use, inferencing, contextual guessing)
- Decision - making (what options and how / who selects quality output)
- Metacognitive reflection (thinking and evaluating output)

4.3.4. Classroom Observations

Sixty classroom sessions (20 each university) will be observed by a structured observation protocol that will capture:

- the teaching method (lecture, discussion, group work, workshop)
- the material (textbook, authentic text, technology)
- Teacher - Student Interaction (Who initiates, who responds, who gives feedback)

- visible indicators of student engagement (Who asks questions, who participates)
- Arabic / English used in classroom instruction

4.3.5. Instructor Interviews

Semi - structured interviews of 24 instructors (45 - 90 min) will capture:

- Teaching philosophies and approaches to translation instruction
- Student difficulties and causes
- Training and development
- Translation theory and pedagogy awareness
- Required changes and barriers (to shift)

Interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed

4.3.6. Document Analysis

To evaluate best practices and instructional design for translation pedagogy, analysis will align course syllabi and program and course descriptions with assessment instruments and instructional materials (textbooks).

4.4 Data Analysis

4.4.1 Quantitative Analysis

Means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions will be computed for the descriptive statistics of the variables

Error categorization: All translation errors will be classified into categories (linguistic, interpretive / cultural, pragmatic).

Inferential statistics: The relationships among the variables will be examined using Pearson correlation coefficients. Multiple regression will be used to determine which of the variables (English proficiency, diglossic comfort, pedagogy type, cultural exposure, technology access, university context) will be significant for translation performance. This analysis will be done using the SPSS (Version 28).

4.4.2 Qualitative Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) will be used for the analysis of TAP, interviews, observation field notes, and open - ended survey questions.

This analysis will be performed in three phases. The first phase is open coding, in which preliminary ideas are identified. In the second phase, codes will be grouped into categories (axial coding). The final phase is selective coding, in which categories will be assembled to form major themes.

Qualitative data will be analyzed in NVivo, which will aid systematic coding.

4.4.3 Integration

Data will be analyzed independently and quantitative findings will be presented first. Qualitative data will be used to explain, contextualize, and elaborate on the findings using a joint display matrix.

4.5 Validity and Reliability

The following will be used to improve trustworthiness of the findings:

Triangulation: Multiple data sources (translation tasks, TAPs, observations, interviews) and multiple methods (quantitative and qualitative).

Member checking: Interpretations will be validated by a subset of instructor participants.

Audit trail: All analytic decisions will be documented

Inter - rater reliability: Translation raters will be surveyed to measure agreement.

Peer debriefing: Academic supervisors and colleagues who are not part of the data collection will be consulted regularly.

5. Expected Outcomes and Contributions

5.1 Expected Results

From the theoretical framework and observable phenomena, we expect to find the following:

1. Error Distribution: We expect interpretive and pragmatic errors to be the largest categories among translation errors, and that these will constitute more than 65% of total errors. These errors will be greater than the errors that are strictly linguistic (i.e. syntactic / morphological) errors. If this expectation is realized, we will have evidence that a major component of translation errors is interpretive rather than linguistic.

2. Diglossia Effects: We expect that self - reported comfort (ease of coming into contact with MSA in an academic setting) will be a major predictor of translation performance, even when accounting for the individual's overall proficiency in English. We expect that students who report greater comfort with IA than MSA in an academic setting will perform better on informal and non - technical texts.

3. Correlates of Pedagogy: We expect better translations from students who have reported more interactive and student - centered teaching practices compared to those who have reported teaching based on lectures and less student participation. If this expectation is achieved, it will provide support for the needed pedagogical reforms.

4. Effects of Cultural Exposure: Those who report more self - reported exposure to authentic English media will be more successful at culturally specific translation tasks. This will indicate that authentic media should be included in educational curricula.

5. Lack of Cognitive Strategy: We expect to find that translation students who are reporting on the same research lack systematic interpretive strategies. We expect students will demonstrate an uncritical and unreflective dependence on bilingual dictionaries, and will find it difficult to identify pragmatic issues of translation. We expect that students will have difficulty defending their translation decisions.

5.2 Contributions of the Study

Theoretical Contributions:

This work creates an empirically based model that relates diglossia, translation pedagogy, and the development of interpretive competence in a Middle Eastern, post - con-

flict context.

The work continues the application of socio - cultural and cognitive translation theories to an educational context that has been mostly unexplored.

Pedagogical Contributions:

This work provides a context - sensitive reform model that includes various curriculum design options, learning activities, and assessment frameworks.

The work provides transition strategies to help shift from teacher - directed translation pedagogy to student - directed translation pedagogy.

Practical Contributions:

This work provides university administrators and policymakers with a concrete option for faculty development plans, how to allocate resources, and assessment planning.

This work provides an option to international agencies and funding sponsors on how to support the reconstruction of the Iraqi higher education system.

Technological Contributions:

This work provides an option to support the inclusion of open - source CAT tools and critical AI literacy into translation education in under - resourced settings.

6. Proposed Reform Framework

Based on literature and expected empirical data, a refinement model consisting of four categories will be created:

6.1 Curriculum Modernization

Translation education will be reorganized into a four - year program by competencies:

Year 1: Foundations of Language and Culture Curriculum Draft - Proficient English with the ability to analyze reading and writing; the role of the translator as a cultural mediator; coupled with the introduction of intercultural communication.

Year 2: Curriculum Draft - Fundamentals of Interpretation and Translation - Introduction to the analysis of function, audience, and register of texts (Critical Translation

Skills); fundamentals of comparative Arabic - English structural linguistics; introduction to functionalist translation theory with a critical AI literacy component.

Year 3: Curriculum Draft - Specialized Translation - Translation of technical, legal, media, and literary texts as part of authentic project - based learning (along with learning the conventions of various text types and specialized language) and the different technologies associated with translation.

Year 4: Curriculum Draft - Integration with Practicum and Capstone - Translation project with a reflective element and a defended portfolio.

All years: Digital literacy and translation technology; professional skills workshops; seminars.

6.2. Pedagogical Transformation

Teacher - centered, transmission - based pedagogy will be replaced with learning by doing. This will include:

Translations done in teams (small groups to negotiate the meaning and / or solution); Workshops that have a translation focus (studio model with a peer critique element); problem - based learning; flipped classrooms; think - aloud protocol to promote the development of metacognition.

6.3. Thoughtful Use of Technology

Open Educational Resources; the intentional sourcing of free materials found online to address lack of library resources.

Training omegaT and CafeTran focuses on learning core functions through open - source CAT tools and learning transferable skills to commercial CAT tools.

Free - access corpora training (COCA & Sketch Engine) help students to examine collocations and register, while corpus literacy training helps them learn authentic examples.

The 'Critical AI Literacy' module focuses on the evaluation, post - editing, and crit-

ical analysis of machine translations and LLMs, through guidance frameworks. Here, students are encouraged to solve problems on their own before using AI tools.

National Faculty Development (NFD) Framework

Pre - service preparation requires new lecturers to complete a course on teaching translation

Intensive summer institutes: Time for training on active learning, curriculum design, AI, and technology.

Peer observation and mentoring: Designed to pair inexperienced instructors and teaching veterans.

Collaborative action research: Small, personal teaching experiments.

Online professional learning communities: Support geographically distant instructors through discussions, webinars, and virtual meetings.

International partnerships: Capitalize on the Nahrein Network to offer scholarships and build skills.

7. Timeline and Work Plan

The plan outlines the designated period for 12 identified activities within this study.

8. Required Resources and Budget Considerations

8.1 Personnel

Required personnel includes the principal investigator, at least two committed research assistants to collect and transcribe data, and two independent raters to evaluate the translated texts.

8.2 Equipment and Software

Required equipment includes three digital recorders, and a principal investigator's personal license for SPSS (v. 28) and NVivo, and laptop computers.

8.3 Access Requirements

Required access includes formal permissions listed and cooperation of department

heads.

8.4 Budget Items (Estimated)

Required budget estimates include travel within three governorates, printed materials costs, modest student participation incentives, transcription costs (outsourced for accuracy), software, and costs to conduct and participate in conferences to present results.

9. Ethical Considerations

Research will integrate components of best practices for research, particularly in regard to research with human participants.

The first step will be obtaining formal institutional approval.

2. Informed Consent: Participants will receive information sheets detailing the study and their rights. Written consent will be obtained prior to participation. All participants will have the right to withdraw from the study without consequences. Participation will be voluntary.

3. Confidentiality and Anonymity: Participants will be assigned codes. All documents will be kept separately. All documents will have limited access.

4. Data Security: Digital documents will be maintained on encrypted technology with limited access. Printed documents will be maintained in a locked cabinet. After five years, all documents will be destroyed.

5. Minimizing Harm: Students will have the opportunity to complete the study in a private space. Students will be assured that the study will not impact their course grades.

6. Benefit to Participants: No immediate benefits to the participants are expected. The study will hopefully improve future translation education.

10. Conclusion

This study proposes a mixed - methods study of the significant interpretive skill deficits of the Iraqi translation student. Particularly, it aims to explore the linguistic educational gap in Iraq's translation education. Currently, Iraqi educational translation pro-

grams focus on a surface - level understanding of linguistic translation with no focus on cultural or pragmatic educational gaps.

Using translation theories (Steiner, 1998; Hurtado Albir, 2017); sociolinguistics (Ferguson, 1959); and modern translation pedagogy (Kiraly, 2000; Cui et al., 2025), the research categorizes barriers on the level of diglossic and cross - linguistic interferences, gaps in socio - cultural and pragmatic awareness, obsolete teacher - centered pedagogies, and infrastructural and technological shortages. Following a sequential explanatory design, the quantitative analysis of interpretive errors and their correlates will be the first step in the identification of these errors and their predictors. The second step will involve the qualitative think aloud protocol, observations of classroom activities, and interviews to evaluate the cognitive and institutional factors that contribute to the errors.

The main product of this project is an evidence - based, multi - pillar reform framework specifically designed for the post - conflict Iraqi context. The framework will include specific details for the transformation of the four - year undergraduate translation degree, the relocation of teaching methodologies from transmission - based to constructivist, the inclusion of open - source tools and critical AI literacy, and the creation of a self - sustaining national system of teacher training. The framework is intended to be flexible and adaptable to other diglossic and resource - restricted contexts.

This research answers the call for the post - conflict reconstruction of the Iraqi educational system, placing interpretive competence at the center of translation expertise. The results will establish a foundation for policymakers and educators in Iraq as well as the international community, and will provide translation programs with the tools to improve Iraq's intercultural communication and knowledge transfer abilities and its fair position in all global activities. By bringing together the international theories and local practices, the research will contribute to translation pedagogy and the innovative project of Iraqi higher education.

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