

## **Exploring the Translatability of English Neologisms: A Case Study on Translation Master's Students at The Libyan Academy in Al-Bayda and Benghazi Campuses**

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**استكشاف قابلية ترجمة المصطلحات الإنجليزية المستحدثة: دراسة حالة على طلاب ماجستير الترجمة في الأكاديمية الليبية في فرعى البيضاء وبنغازي**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to investigate the challenges encountered by M.A. translation students in translating English neologisms into Arabic. It also aims to identify the translation strategies they employ. To achieve the objectives of the study, a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data was adopted. A translation test consisting of 20 neologisms and a questionnaire were distributed to 25 advanced translation master's students enrolled in the Libyan Academy. The frequency of each translation strategy was analyzed based on Newmark's (1988) proposed strategies for translating neologisms. The findings revealed that the students utilized different strategies to translate English neologisms into Arabic, with literal translation being the most frequently used, followed by descriptive equivalent, couplets, transference, and functional equivalent. The findings also showed that most students faced challenges during the translation process, mainly due to unfamiliarity with certain neologisms, difficulties in finding suitable Arabic equivalents, the absence of these terms in Arabic dictionaries, and cultural differences. This study's findings have implications for translation pedagogy, highlighting the need for targeted training in neologisms translation.

**Keywords:** Neologisms, Translation, Newmark, Equivalence, Coinage

### **الملخص**

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف التحديات التي يواجهها طلاب الماجستير بأقسام الترجمة عند ترجمة الكلمات المستحدثة من الإنجليزية إلى العربية. كما تهدف إلى تحديد استراتيجيات الترجمة التي يستخدمونها. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة، تم اتباع نهج مختلط يجمع بين البيانات الكمية والتوعية. حيث تم توزيع اختبار ترجمة مكون من 20 مصطلحًا على 25 طالبًا من طلاب ماجستير الترجمة المتقدمين، المسجلين في الأكاديمية الليبية بفرعى البيضاء وبنغازي. وقد تم تحليل نسبة استخدام كل استراتيجية ترجمة بناءً على الإستراتيجيات المقترحة من قبل نيوبارك (1988) لترجمة الكلمات المستحدثة. أظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب استخدمو استراتيجية مترافق لترجمة الكلمات المستحدثة من الإنجليزية إلى العربية، حيث كانت الترجمة الحرافية هي الأكثر استخدامًا، بليها المكافئ الوصفي، الترجمة المزدوجة، النقل، والمكافئ الوظيفي. كما بينت النتائج أن معظم الطلاب واجهوا صعوبات أثناء عملية الترجمة، وذلك بسبب عدم إلمامهم ببعض المصطلحات الجديدة، صعوبة

إيجاد مكافئات عربية مناسبة، غياب هذه المصطلحات في القواميس العربية، بالإضافة إلى الاختلافات الثقافية. تسلط نتائج هذه الدراسة الضوء على أهمية تعزيز التدريب في مجال ترجمة المستحدثات اللغوية ضمن مناهج تعليم الترجمة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** كلمات مستحدثة، ترجمة، نيومارك، تكافؤ، صياغة الكلمات الجديدة.

## 1. Introductory Remarks

### 1.1 Introduction

Translation is the process of conveying the message of a text from one language into another, with the same impact on the target audience as the original text had on its intended readers. Scholars and linguists have provided different definitions of translation, each offering valuable insights. According to Newmark (1988, p. 5) translation is “rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text.” This definition emphasizes the importance of accurately conveying the intended meaning of the original text from the source language into the target language, adjusting it with the author’s intentions and the essence of the original message. On the other hand, Nida and Taber (1969) define translation as the process of rendering the closest equivalent of the source language message into the target language, prioritizing accuracy in meaning and style with the focus on creating an equivalent impact on the target language reader. While Venuti (1995, p. 306, as cited in Braçaj, 2014) defines translation as “a process that involves looking for similarities between language and cultures.” This definition expands the scope of translation beyond language, stating that it involves seeking similarities between languages and cultures.

“Every aspect of the life of a people is reflected in the words they use to talk about themselves and the world around them. As their world changes-through invention, discovery, revolution, evolution or personal transformation-so does their language.” (Algeo, 1991, p. 1). Amid current global transformations, new words and expressions are constantly emerging or being redefined to keep up with rapid changes. These linguistic innovations, known as neologisms, arise from factors such as technological advancements, media influence, and the need to articulate novel ideas and concepts. Neologisms are an illustration of language evolution in response to changes; understanding and effectively translating neologisms can pose challenges for translators as they must capture the meaning while considering cultural and contextual implications. Therefore, this study investigates the challenges encountered by translation master’s students when translating neologisms into Arabic, examines the strategies they employ to convey meaning, and assesses their ability to translate these terms.

### 1.2 Research Questions

To achieve the objectives, the present study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1- To what extent are the M.A. translation students capable of producing Arabic translation to the English Neologisms?
- 2- What translation strategies do the M.A. translation students employ when translating English neologisms into Arabic?
- 3- What challenges do the M.A. translation students encounter when translating English neologisms into Arabic and how do they perceive their experience with English neologisms translation?

### 1.3 Significance of the Study

Neologisms’ translation represents an interesting and intriguing area of study, due to the difficulties they entail when translating them from one language into another. The significance of the study lies in the crucial role neology plays in identifying inventions, new phenomena, or older ideas that have taken on new contexts. Moreover, the challenges posed by neologisms in translation underscore their importance, as mistranslation can lead to a breakdown in communication, therefore, accurate English neologisms translation into Arabic is vital for effective communication between two different language communities. Despite its importance, the field of English neologism translation into Arabic has received insufficient attention from researchers compared to other translation fields. By addressing and identifying the challenges and the strategies employed by translation master’s students in translating neologisms, specifically in Libya, a context understudied compared to others. This study aims to fill a research gap, contribute to place emphasis on and draw the attention to the need for increased efforts in translating English neologisms. In addition, the findings of this study can benefit M.A. translation students and aspiring translators interested in the field by enhancing their knowledge of neologisms, providing insights into different translation strategies and improving students’ understanding of the challenges associated with translating neologisms and how to overcome them.

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## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Neologism’s Definition

Neologisms are a significant aspect of languages that assist people in communicating new ideas and concepts. In fact, the concept of neologism has existed for as long as language has been in use. Different linguists and scholars have shown a notable interest in this topic, consequently, various linguists and scholars attempted to define the term "neologism." However, they shared different perspectives, according to Ibraheem (2021), scholars disagree on how to classify a term as a neologism, some, for example, argue that any word might be a neologism if it feels like one. Others, on the other hand, argue that no word should be regarded as a neologism if it is older than 25 years.

As stated by Sayadi (2011), "Neologisms are new words, word-combinations or fixed phrases that appear in the language due to the development of social life, culture, science and engineering." This definition highlights the contributing factors to the emergence of neologisms, such as the advancement in social life, the novel words that are adopted into people's daily language, culture, science and engineering. For instance, with the advancement of technology and social media words such as "clickbait" was coined in the 2000's, it combines the word "click" (relating to clicking on a thumbnail or link) and "bait" (attracting visitors like a fish on a hook), that is to say, writing deceptive headlines in order to get clicks on a piece of content.

Neologism is also defined by Newmark (1988, p. 140) as "newly coined lexical units or existing lexical units that acquire a new sense." Newmark's definition falls within the linguistics framework, based on his definition, a neologism can be either a new word or a new meaning to an existing word. It is not required for the word to be new in order for it to qualify as a neologism, since neologisms usually emerge in response to a need, they often have an initial single meaning, but over time, they may acquire an additional meaning. For example, the word "mouse" has two "senses", the original sense of the word is related to a rodent, the other sense, on the other hand, refers to one of the computers' components. Another example is the word "viral" which refers to the spread of an infection, however, the new meaning of viral, which is mostly used in social media, describes how quickly a content can circulate.

Another definition by Riggs (1981, p. 291, as cited in Menad, 2023) aligns with Newmark's definition but it's more concise. Riggs stated briefly that neologism is "a newly coined word, expression or usage." From this perspective, incorporating both Newmark's and Sayadi's definitions, neologisms can be viewed as new words or new meanings of existing words that emerge to fulfill a need, they may have a single meaning but over time they might acquire an additional meaning. However, the old meaning of a word can't be canceled just because it acquired a new one, the whole process of deciding its meaning is contextual.

In addition, Choi (2006) defines neologisms as "words that have been newly created." He also added that neologisms are "new words and phrases that are used commonly in speech but not included in dictionaries are also regarded as neologisms." According to Choi, neologisms include not only recently emerged words but also those that, despite being regularly used in speech, have not yet been included in dictionaries. To conclude, the preceding definitions highlighted that a neologism is a newly coined word or expression that carries a new meaning. However, they differed on how to measure the newness of a neologism. The upcoming section moves on to present different types of neologisms based on Newmark's classification, illustrated with examples.

## 2.2 Newmark's Classification of Neologisms

Newmark (1988, p. 140) outlines different types of neologisms based on whether they are newly coined words or existing words with new meanings. These include the following:

- 1- Old Words with New Senses: Existing words that take on new meanings. For instance, the noun "backup", sense 1: support (دعم) sense 2: copy of data (نسخة احتياطية لبيانات).
- 2- New coinage: Newly emerged words (e.g., selfie).
- 3- Derived words (including blends): Words formed by adding prefixes / suffixes. Another common type of neologism is word blending, unlike compounding, blending simply combines two parts, the first part of one word and the last part of another. As seen in the following example: (e.g., Brexit, combining "Britain" and "Exit" to describe the UK's withdrawal from the European Union).
- 4- Abbreviations : Shortened words or phrases, e.g., BVC (Bovine Coronavirus) فيروس كورونا البقرى.
- 5- Phrasal words: Another word formation process, where verbs are converted into nouns to create new expressions. For instance: "logout" تسجيل خروج and "buyout" استحواذ
- 6- Eponyms: Newmark (1988, p. 140) defines it as any word derived from proper nouns, Example: Marxism (ماركسيسم). A political theory originated in the thought of the economic and the philosopher Karl Marx.
- 7- Transferred Words: Newmark (1988, p. 147), highlights that these words can be internationalized and used by several languages. For instance: WIFI which is used by different languages with a similar meaning, Newmark adds that they can be common across several languages due to the influence of the media.

- 8- Collocations: Combined words with distinct meanings. For instance, "gig economy" which was first coined in 2009, (a free-market system that hires workers for a short term), "الاقتصاد الحر أو اقتصاد العمل".
- 9- Acronyms: Abbreviations pronounced as words. For example, "POTUS," which refers to the president of the United States (رئيس الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية).
- 10- Pseudo Neologism: This type is close to abbreviations, where it is composed of the initial letters of the words making up the phrases they refer to. The use of this type of abbreviations has increased in recent years, especially with the widespread use of social media. For instance, "ASAP" which stands for "as soon as possible" (أقرب وقت ممكن).

### 2.3 Challenges in Translating Neologisms

Accurate and acceptable translation of neologisms is essential, especially in today's world where cross cultural communication is increasingly growing. However, translators may encounter some challenges when attempting to accurately transfer the meaning of neologisms from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL). Consequently, "applying adaptive strategies to neologism translation is crucial for succeeding in cross-cultural communication" (Yun & Shuang, 2020, p. 6).

According to Ayada and Menad (2023) when translating neologisms, translators often encounter several challenges, finding an equivalent in the target language can be difficult, comprehending and determining the intended message of the source language poses another challenge, in addition to the continuous increase of neologisms due to the ongoing development and quick evolution, moreover, transferring cultural specifics is another significant difficulty in translating neologisms.

Neologisms can be quite challenging for translators since they may lack equivalents or precise translations in the target language, therefore, creative translation is necessary to convey the same message. Additionally, neologisms are a reflection of cultural differences and have cultural connotations that are unique to their original context, which may pose a challenge for translators to accurately convey the cultural meaning of the source term. Thus, the translator has to be aware of these cultural differences and have a deep understanding of both the source and the target language in order to translate them effectively. The original meaning and intent of the term in the source language must be preserved while the new term is modified to meet the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language. For instance, the word "cheugy", it's a slang term used in an ironic way to describe something that is outdated, which has become part of the pop culture in the UK and the USA, it can be translated as "عفا عليه الزمن" in Arabic to convey the meaning of the word, the translator has to stay current with recent neologisms from diverse cultural contexts.

In his book "A Textbook of Translation" (1988), Newmark stated that neologisms' translation is considered one of the biggest challenges encountered by translators. Meanwhile, Ching (1983, as cited in Al-Jarf, 2010) explains that in language learning and translation, neologisms pose several problems for learners and translators, the new sense of an old word or expression can be particularly challenging, in addition to the growing popularity of abbreviations which may require the learner or translator to do substantial research before understanding them. Another challenge arises from shifts in parts of speech, which create new grammatical usages and require attention to the structure. Thus, in addition to the lack of a TL equivalent, translators may encounter challenges in determining the meaning of the neologism and the appropriate strategy that transfer the intended message, translators have to identify if the neologism is an existing word with an old usage or a completely new concept and sense. In other words, it's essential to determine the intended meaning of a neologism and effectively translate it from the source language (SL) into the target language (TL), since neologisms might have different interpretation or multiple meanings.

**Example:** Sandbox

**Originally:** A low box filled with sand that children can play in.

**Modern Usage:** An environment in which software developers or editors can create and test new content

(في الحوسنة) صندوق الاختبارات.

The word "sandbox" has evolved from a physical container for children to play in, to a virtual environment for developers and editors to test and create new content. The meaning of neologisms is often dependent on the context in which they are used, requiring translators to understand the context in order to provide an accurate translation, as Lorand (2004, as cited in Alawneh, 2007, p. 31) stated "understanding what is meant is of course only a first step towards the translation of neologism." In addition, euphemisms created to suit new social and political references can be misleading. To illustrate, the term "blue on blue" "نيران صديقة", as defined by the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), "an attack in which soldiers, etc. are injured or killed by their own army or by soldiers on the same side as them".

The euphemism is used to avoid the potentially upsetting and morale damaging implications of an accident resulting in death or injury, however, some new expressions may not be found in a dictionary and should not be taken literally without considering hidden meanings. The challenge of understanding and translating neologisms is also highlighted by Lehrer (2003), who points out that a lot of neologisms are witty because they incorporate the novelty puzzle. Lehrer refers to neologisms as having a sense of puzzle when they are new, translating them demands creativity from translators to develop innovative solutions that effectively convey the novelty and impact of the original term in the target language. In brief, translating neologisms poses significant challenges due to rapid technological advancements, linguistic creativity, ambiguity and domain knowledge requirements. Neologisms often rely on cultural references and specialized knowledge, making it difficult for translators to accurately convey their meanings. Translators must stay up to date with emerging trends, possess a deep understanding of the subject matter, and carefully consider context to effectively translate neologisms.

## **2.4 Neologisms Translation Strategies**

Different scholars and translators suggested strategies and offered insights and perspectives on neologisms' translation. Lychak (2010, as cited on kmail, 2016) stated that finding out the way in which the neologism was created can be beneficial for translators. Meanwhile, Niska (1998) uses the notion of "translational creativity" to argue that "neologisms are tokens of a creative process, a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life on the other." Niska also set translation strategies for neologisms taken from Greek.

In her turn, Baker (1992) added another translation strategy for dealing with newly coined words. This strategy is illustration and it aims to produce a short, direct, and concise text, whereas, Delabastita (2004) proposed five different procedures for the translation of neologisms. Newmark (1988, p.81) highlights the difference between translation methods and translation procedures. He notes that, "While translation methods relate to whole texts, translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language." Consequently, since neologisms are lexical units, procedures rather than methods are suitable for translating them. Additionally, Newmark (1988) proposed different procedures for translating sentences and smaller linguistic units, including neologisms. Newmark's translation model was selected for this study and applied in the data analysis. In contrast to Baker's emphasis on illustration and Delabastita suggested translation strategies, Newmark's (1988) classification is preferred due to its broad applicability. This framework is especially pertinent as it categorizes neologisms and proposes particular strategies, its clear connection between types of neologisms and translation methods resonates with the difficulties of translating English neologisms into Arabic.

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## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Methodology of the Study**

This study employed a mixed methods design, that integrated qualitative and quantitative approaches to facilitate a better understanding of the research topic. The combination of both approaches strengthens the validity of the findings by allowing the results from one method to complement and corroborate those of the other. Sharma et al. (2023) highlight that mixed-methods research offers distinct advantages, notably, its capacity to deliver a profound grasp of the research problem through the integration of quantitative and qualitative data.

### **3.2 Participants**

The study's population consisted of 25 M.A. students enrolled in the Translation Master's Program at Al-Bayda and Benghazi branches of the Libyan Academy, participants were selected from both branches to facilitate a broader investigation. The sample targeted students in their advanced semesters who were in the process of writing their proposals and theses. The rationale for this choice was that these students had completed coursework and modules such as Introduction to Translation, Translation Methodology, Business Translation, and had gained practical experience through previous courses. Furthermore, they had prior exposure to interpretation classes, including practical interpretation tasks. This academic background provided them with a good understanding of translation principles and practices, making them suitable participants for the study. The sample was selected purposively, following a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are deliberately selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives. While this sample size may limit applying the results to all graduate students, however, the sample is a highly specific group that shares similar characteristics, therefore, this sample was considered appropriate for providing valuable insights into the study by translation students nearing the completion of their graduate studies. Moreover, the combination of translation test and the questionnaire data ensures the findings are thorough and credible. Ultimately, this study provides a foundation for future, larger studies.

### **3.3 Instruments of the Study**

The data for the present study was elicited through two main instruments designed to fulfill the research objectives: a translation test and a questionnaire.

#### **3.3.1 Translation Test**

The first instrument to collect data was a translation test consisting of 20 English sentences containing neologisms. The process of collecting the English neologisms involved three phases. Firstly, the neologisms were selected from linguistic blogs and different articles introducing neologisms, the selected neologisms were diverse covering different domains subject matters, primarily from the COVID-19 pandemic period (2019-2021) and the preceding years. To ensure the validity of the neologisms, four authentic online dictionaries with regular annual updated corpus were used as reference, including Cambridge, Oxford, Merriam-Webster and Collins. Additionally, the usage frequency of each neologism was verified using the NOW corpus, a global web-based corpus for newspapers and magazines, 20 out of the 30 compiled neologisms by the researcher were selected and finalized based on their frequency of usage and domain diversity. Finally, each neologism was contextualized and presented within a context to maintain semantic clarity. To ensure authenticity the sentences were carefully selected from reputable sources, The Guardian, BBC, and Fox News, published during the designated period (2018-2023). The purpose of this test was to evaluate the participants' ability to translate English neologisms into Arabic and to identify the translation strategies employed by the participants when rendering these newly coined expressions, this instrument provided valuable insights into the participants' practical translation performance.

#### **3.3.2 Questionnaire**

The second instrument utilized to collect data was a questionnaire designed to gather feedback on the participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges when translating neologisms. The questionnaire comprised one open-ended question, allowing participants to freely express their perspectives on the challenges encountered when translating English neologisms; and two multiple-choice questions—one closed-ended regarding the significance of context when translating neologisms and one semi-closed-ended (i.e., including an “other [please specify]” option) regarding the essential factors for successful translation of neologisms. The inclusion of the “other (please specify)” option ensured that participants were not constrained on preset categories and allowed participants to express beyond pre-constructed answers - alternative points of view, the design of the questionnaire allowed for both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

### **3.4 Research Procedures**

25 students provided their consent to participate in the study. Subsequently, the translation test and questionnaire were administered online via WhatsApp in October 2024. Prior to completing the tasks, participants were fully informed about the study's purpose and assured of the anonymity of their identities. Following this, participants completed the two tasks online using Google Forms. The collected data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data elicited from the translation test and closed-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed using Microsoft Excel software. Figures displaying percentages and descriptive statistics were created to illustrate participants' performance, the strategies they employed during the translation task, and the patterns of their responses to the closed-ended, and semi-closed-ended questionnaire questions. Meanwhile, the qualitative data from the open-ended question were coded and organized into themes using thematic analysis. An inductive coding process was employed, where codes were derived directly from the raw data, these initial codes were then clustered into categories and refined into themes that reflected the participants' views. This process involved carefully reading through the responses, identifying patterns, and categorizing the data into meaningful themes that reflected the participants' perspectives on neologisms translation challenges.

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability**

To ensure the validity of the study's instruments, two professors with expertise in linguistics and translation were consulted for their feedback on the suitability, clarity, relevance, and accuracy of the instruments for the study sample. Based on their valuable notes and recommendations, the researcher amended and modified some items to enhance its suitability and applicability. To guarantee that the instruments used in the study are reliable, suitable methods were applied according to the characteristics of each tool and the specific reliability aspect being evaluated. For the translation test, two complementary strategies were implemented to ensure a thorough assessment of reliability. Initially, piloted test-retest reliability was analyzed to assess the test stability over time. The test was administered twice, with a two-week gap, to 4 MA translation students who shared the same characteristics with the population, and the results revealed minimal changes in participants' overall scores, suggesting consistency across different administrations. Furthermore, internal consistency was evaluated to determine how effectively the items within the test measured the same construct. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the 20 translation items was 0.81, indicating strong internal consistency. Internal consistency was

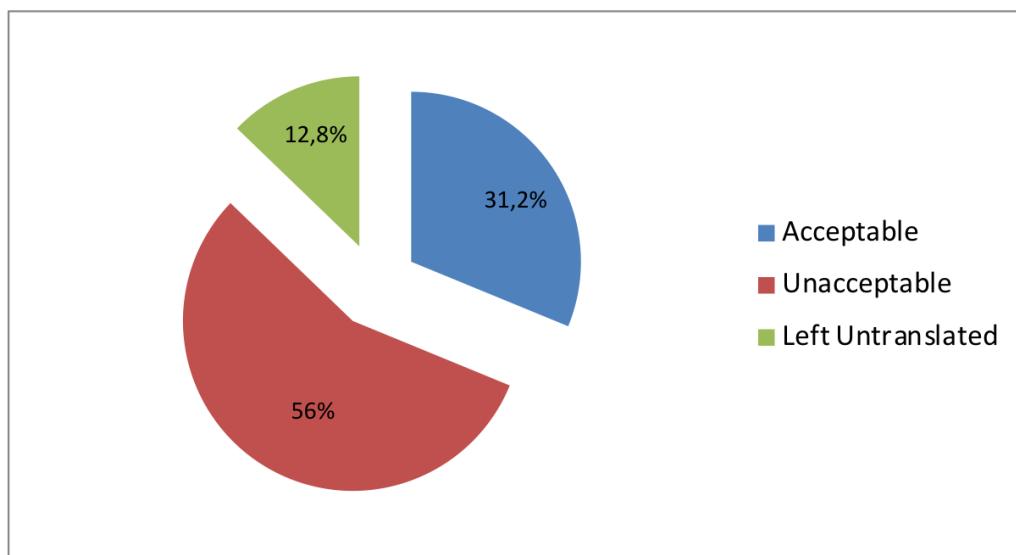
assessed in conjunction with the test-retest procedure because these two methods evaluate distinct aspects of reliability. Employing both methods offered a more thorough evaluation of the translation test reliability, ensuring it exhibited both temporal stability and internal consistency in measuring the intended construct. For the questionnaire, reliability was assessed using a test-retest procedure. The responses from both sessions were compared by calculating the percentage of identical responses, resulting in a total agreement of 83%. This suggests a good stability. Internal consistency measures such as Cronbach's Alpha were not utilized for the questionnaire due to the limited number of items and their categorical response format, therefore it was not applicable.

#### 4. Data Analysis

##### 4.1 Results of the Translation Test

###### 4.1.1 Participants performance in the Translation Test

The findings of the participants' overall performance on the translation test are visually presented in a pie chart, displaying the corresponding percentages. The current study employed the following categories to evaluate performance: acceptable (satisfactory translation that conveys the meaning), unacceptable (incorrect translation), and left untranslated (no translation provided). The overall performance of the participants is summarized in the following figure:



**Figure 1:** The Overall Performance of the Participants in the Translation Test

Figure 1 displays the overall performance of the participants in the translation test, with results presented as percentages. The data indicate that 56% of the participants' answers were unacceptable, while acceptable translations accounted for 31.2%. Furthermore, 12.8% of the translations were left untranslated. Overall, unacceptable translations outnumbered acceptable ones, implying that the participants encountered significant challenges in translating English neologisms. To illustrate the findings, three neologisms will be discussed as examples.

The first neologism is "Delta Variant", 17 participants out of 25 accurately translated "Delta variant" as "متغير دلتا" and "متغير دلتا". This indicates that over half of the participants display familiarity with the term, which enabled them to provide an accurate Arabic equivalent. This is significant as COVID-19 Delta Variant saw rapid global spread after its emergence, becoming a prominent term amid the pandemic. In contrast, six participants failed to provide an appropriate translation; among this group, four participants rendered the term as "بديل دلتا" or "متغير دلتا" thereby mistranslating "variant". Meanwhile, one participant employed transliteration, which is considered unacceptable in this context, another participant inaccurately translated "Delta Variant" as "فايروس". On the other hand, two participants left it untranslated, which suggests their lack of familiarity with the term.

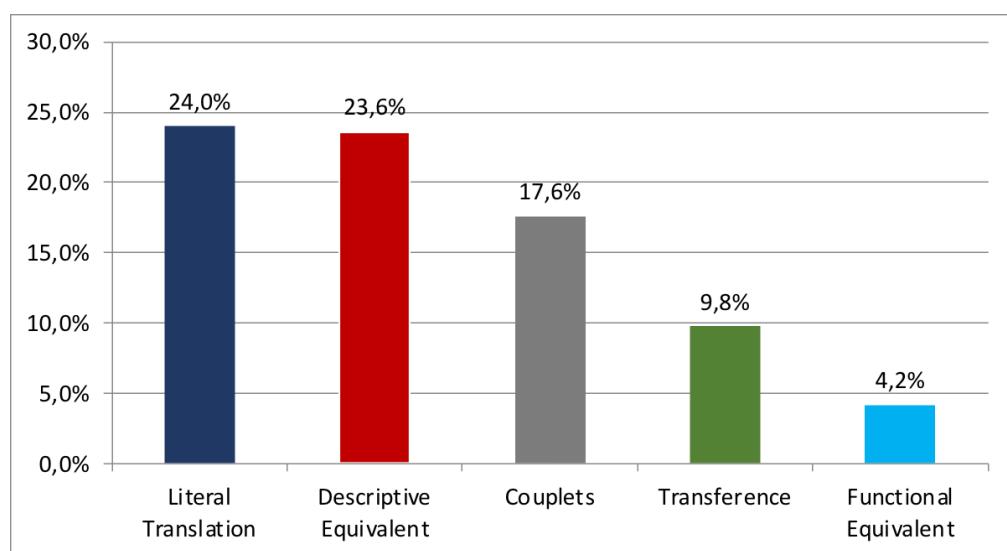
Another notable example is the term "doomscrolling" which gained widespread popularity on social media platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), doomscrolling refers to the act of spending excessive time on your phone or computer reading unpleasant or negative news. Only six participants successfully translated the term into Arabic equivalents as "التصفح السلبي" and "فوس تصفح الأخبار السيئة", in contrast 15 participants provided unacceptable translations, such as "تصفح الانترنت بدون هدف". Moreover, a number of participants relied on literal translation and translated "doom" as "هلاك" and "scrolling" as "تمرير", which led to a distortion in meaning. In addition, four participants left the term untranslated. These results indicate

that most participants were generally not well-acquainted with the term "doomscrolling" and had difficulty to accurately convey its meaning in Arabic.

One final instance is "sportswashing", according to the Oxford English Dictionary (2013), "sportswashing" refers to the use of sports and sport's events to polish the reputation of a host or sponsor, commonly a government or commercial entity to distract the public from unethical or disputed actions. 12 participants translated "sportswashing" properly as "الغسيل الرياضي" and "التبييض الرياضي". In contrast, 11 participants provided unacceptable translations. For instance, four participants translated it as "غسيل الأموال" which is likely due to their familiarity with the term "money laundering". Leading to confusion with the distinct concept of "sportswashing", this might have contributed to the incorrect translation. While the remaining participants resorted to paraphrasing, and used phrases such as "استخدام الرياضة للتغطية الإعلامية على الأحداث السياسية" and "جميل/تحسين صورة الرياضة", however, these translations didn't convey the same message as the original term. Additionally, two of the translations were left blank.

#### 4.1.2 Translation Strategies Utilized by the Participants

This section addresses the second research question by presenting the strategies used by participants to translate English neologisms into Arabic, along with their corresponding percentages, which will subsequently be discussed in detail, accompanied by examples.



**Figure 2:** Percentages of Translation Strategies Utilized by the Participants

As illustrated in Figure 2 participants utilized various strategies to translate English neologisms into Arabic. The most frequently used strategy was literal translation, accounting for 24%, followed closely by descriptive translation strategy at 23.6%. Couplets translation was employed by participants with a percentage of 17.6%, while transference accounted for 9.8%. The least utilized strategy was functional translation, which accounted for 4.2%.

##### 4.1.2.1 Literal Translation

As clearly illustrated in Figure 2, literal translation was the most prominent employed strategy, accounting for 24% of the participants' responses. This finding indicates a notable preference for literal translation among participants, who showed a significant reliance on the strategy when rendering English neologisms into Arabic. For instance, "circuit breaker" was translated literally by the majority of the participants as "قطع الدائرة الكهربائية", this translation fails to consider the context, in which "circuit breaker" refers to a safety measure implemented to limit the spread of COVID-19. Consequently, literal translation resulted in a distortion of the intended meaning, conveying a focus on electrical circuits instead of the core concept. Furthermore, the translation of "flight shaming" by a number of the participants as "عار الطيران", didn't convey the intended message, as it does not capture the essence of the movement advocated for reducing air travel to protect the climate. The participants' reliance on dictionaries, coupled with a disregard for the context, led to semantic distortions. As Dickins et al. (2002, p. 16) highlighted, "In literal translation proper, the denotative meaning of words is taken as if straight from the dictionary (that is, out of context), but TL grammar is respected." Literal translation often leads to inaccurate or ambiguous translations. However, it is noteworthy that in certain instances, this strategy may result in correct renderings. For instance, the translation of "twindemic" as "وباء مزدوج" by six participants, demonstrated an effective application of literal translation, where the participants' recognition of the word blending facilitated

an accurate translation. "Twindemic" was directly translated as "وباء مزدوج" maintaining the same meaning, where "Twin" was rendered as "مزدوج" indicating double or dual and "demic" was rendered as "وباء" signifying epidemic. This translation sought to maintain the original intent and idea behind the term "Twindemic", which describes the occurrence of two epidemics or health emergencies at the same time. Based on this observation, the findings highlight the importance of contextual awareness in translation, it is crucial for students to consider the context and the intended meaning behind the text to produce accurate and effective translations.

#### 4.1.2.2 Descriptive Equivalent

Descriptive equivalent was ranked as the second most adopted translation strategy by the participants in translating English neologisms into Arabic, with 118 frequencies (23.6%) of the participants' responses. Participants resorted to adopt descriptive translation when they either couldn't identify a direct equivalent in the target language or when they lacked adequate knowledge of the neologism. In these instances, the participants opted to rephrase or explain the meaning using their own wording to express the same concept and to ensure that the translation effectively conveyed the intended message by providing alternative translations that elucidated the meaning without changing the core message.

For instance, the majority of participants translated the neologism "Brexiteer" into Arabic using the explanation strategy to convey the meaning of this newly coined word, transliterating this neologism into Arabic as "بركسيرز" may not effectively convey the intended meaning, since its significance may not be immediately clear to the receptor, particularly among audience unfamiliar with the term, therefore, the most suitable translation for this neologism is "مؤيدٍ خروج بريطانيا من الاتحاد الأوروبي" which provides a clear explanation of the concept, given the absence of a single word in Arabic to express the intended meaning of "Brexiteer," which is derived from Brexit to refer to an individual who supports the departure and the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

Another example is the blended neologism "covidiot," this term refers to individuals who recklessly ignore COVID-19 protocols and increase the risk of transmitting the infection. It was translated by two participants as "متجاهلين الإرشادات الخاصة بكورونا". Both participants employed paraphrasing translation, which in this context, makes more sense than literal translation and effectively delivers the message to the receptor. As Sayadi (2011, as cited in Tabib, 2024) notes, in the absence of direct equivalents in the target language, especially for neologisms emerging in contexts like the Covid-19 pandemic, translators can apply explanatory and descriptive methods or paraphrasing to ensure effective translation and improve clarity. In these situations, providing explanations to convey the message more clearly is frequently the most effective strategy.

The application of paraphrasing and descriptive translation techniques emphasizes the significance of capturing meaning rather than adhering to literal translation, particularly when addressing neologisms that do not have direct counterparts in the target language. By employing these methods, translators can guarantee that the core message is conveyed effectively, even if it necessitates elaborating or rephrasing the original term. This technique not only aids comprehension but also enhances the target language by incorporating fresh concepts and meanings.

#### 4.1.2.3 Couplets

The Couplet translation strategy was proposed by Newmark (1988) as one of the strategies for translating neologisms. Couplets involve combining two translation strategies to address a single translation problem. This approach was placed third among the strategies employed by the participants, accounting for 17.6 %. When translating neologisms, particularly eponyms, the use of couplet can be effective.

An eonym, which is a term based on a proper name, may require a combination of transference and sense translation based on the eonym's cultural significance and frequency of usage in the target language, the translator needs to determine whether a couplet is necessary by integrating transference and the sense (Shakur, 2008). For instance, the term "Bidenomics" a neologism combining 'Biden' and 'economics', it refers to the economic policies of Biden's administration. It was translated by a number of participants as "بایدنومیکس (السياسات الاقتصادية بادارة بایدن)". The participants utilized a combination of two strategies, transliteration and descriptive equivalent. In this context, this strategy caters the reader's needs and acknowledge their differences as some of them might be unfamiliar with the term. Accordingly, translators may present several translations or interpretations for the same term. For example, translators might use transliteration for readers who are acquainted with the source language, while offering a functional or descriptive equivalent for those who are more familiar with the target language. This strategy facilitates a broader understanding and appreciation of the text.

#### 4.1.2.4 Transference

Transference emerged as the fourth most frequently employed strategy among participants, it accounted for 9.8% of the translations."Transference maintains much of the flavor of the original text as it involves

transliteration/transcription of the SLT. It also indicates borrowing the original word from the SL and implants it in the soil of the TL." (Khaled, 2020).

This approach involves adopting the original term or name from the source language, often due to its novelty, recent emergence, or lack of equivalence in the target language. A notable example is the widespread use of "كوفيد-19" to refer to COVID-19, which became a commonly accepted term during the pandemic. A considerable number of the participants utilized transliteration for COVID-19 which was deemed acceptable. Interestingly, participants tended to apply transference more frequently with blended words or neologisms that lacked direct Arabic equivalents, such as 'infodemic', 'Brexit', and 'Bidenomics'. While transference can be an effective strategy for conveying new concepts, it may pose challenges for readers unfamiliar with the transferred terms. To mitigate this issue, it is suggested that translators consider employing a couplet strategy, combining transference with descriptive explanations or definitions. This approach would facilitate better understanding and clarity for readers, ensuring that the intended meaning is conveyed effectively.

#### 4.1.2.5 Functional Translation

Functional translation strategy was the least utilized strategy among the participants, constituting 4.2% of the participants' responses. Functional translation, as described by Nord (2002), can be termed 'functional', when the translation fulfills its intended purpose, indicating that a text (in this instance, a translation) 'functions' effectively for its audience in a specific communicative context, that is to say, it functions as the sender desires it to. For instance, the term "disruptor" was translated by students as "مُخْرِّج" successfully conveying the intended meaning and effect. According to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (n.d.), disruptor refers to "a company, person or form of technology that causes significant change in an industry or market by means of innovation." This approach is especially useful when dealing with polysemous words, where literal translation would likely lead to confusion and misinterpretation. As it prioritizes conveying the intended meaning and effect of the source text by focusing on its function and purpose and seeks to transfer meaning as naturally as possible without resorting to literal translation.

Overall, the findings of the translation test, indicated that blends such as (Infodemic and Twindemic) presented challenges for the participants, resulting in increased instances of unacceptable translations. It was particularly evident that literal translation strategy frequently resulted in less acceptable translations for terms with cultural significance, while more neutral expressions, for instance (Delta variant and Covid-19) produced better results.

### 4.2 Results of the Questionnaire

This section highlights the challenges encountered by the participants and how they perceive neologisms translation. The quantitative data of the questionnaire will be presented first, followed by the qualitative findings.

#### Question One

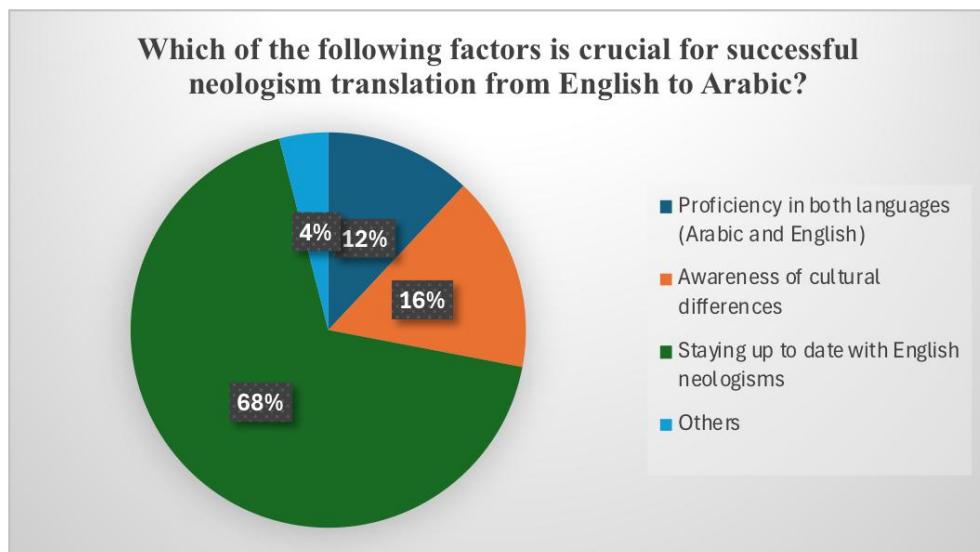
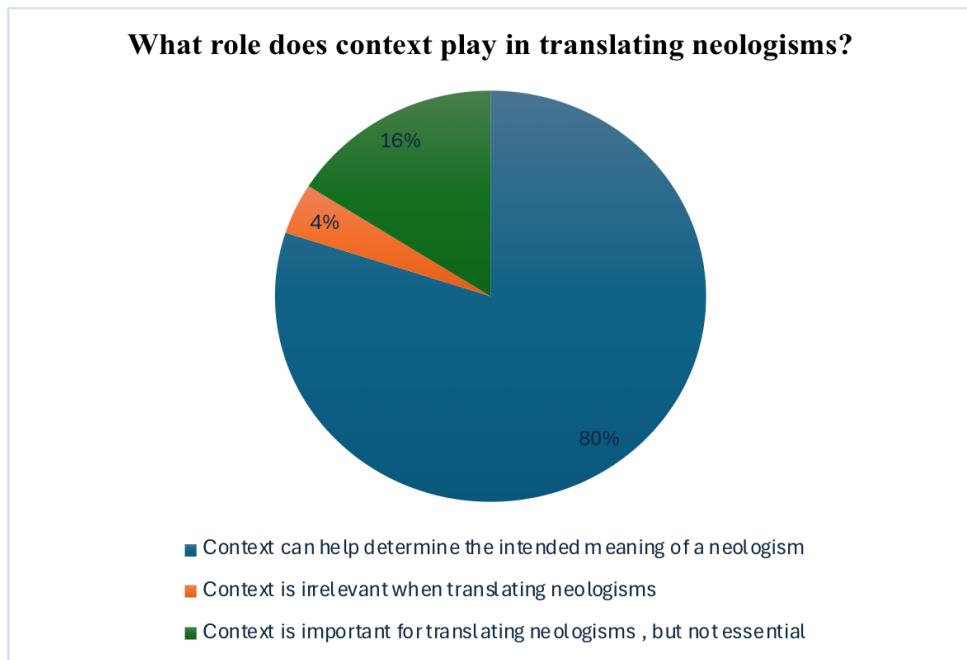


Figure 3: Key Factors for Neologism Translation

The data in Figure 3 highlight important insights into the key factors necessary for translating neologisms from English to Arabic successfully. As noted in the chart 68% of respondents indicated that keeping up with neologisms is essential. This underlines the importance of ongoing learning and adaptability in the translation field, where new terms and concepts constantly emerge. In addition to staying updated on neologisms, 16% of the

participants stressed the importance of recognizing cultural differences. This highlights the necessity for translators to have a refined understanding of the cultural settings related to both the source and the target language. Cultural awareness is crucial for ensuring that translations are precise, relevant, and effectively communicate the intended message. 12% of the participants regarded proficiency in both English and Arabic as essential for successful neologism translation. This is a basic requirement, as translators must deeply understand both languages to provide a high quality translation. While one respondent 4 % asserted that a combination of factors, including keeping up with neologisms, cultural awareness, and fluency in both languages, is crucial for successful translation. Furthermore, the participant pointed out the importance of practicing translation using effective strategies and having expertise in specific domains. This includes being acquainted with specialized terms and jargon, which are essential for an accurate and effective neologisms' translation.

### Question Two



**Figure 4:** Role of Context in Neologism Translation

Based on the responses, the vast majority of the participants 80% as illustrated in Figure 4, reported that context plays a key role in determining the meaning of neologisms. This suggests that most participants acknowledge the significance of considering the surrounding context to accurately interpret and translate neologisms, when translators consider context, they are more capable of understanding the intended meaning and selecting the most suitable translation strategy. While 4% of survey participants expressed disagreement regarding the significance of context in translating neologisms, the remaining 16% of respondents acknowledged that context provides useful assistance although it is not strictly essential. These respondents acknowledge the importance of context but recognize that specialized terminology databases and expert knowledge can serve as alternative resources. The findings of the question indicate that context stands as a crucial element in translating neologisms. In essence, considering context during translation assists to clarify terms' meaning, recognize cultural or domain specific subtleties, and select the most effective translation strategy. Hence, translators must prioritize context when translating neologisms to achieve accurate and meaningful outcomes.

### Question Three

The results are presented thematically, with direct quotations from participants incorporated to illustrate the key findings. Four themes were identified, shedding light on the main challenges associated with translating neologisms according to the MA translation students.

#### Lack of familiarity

Some participants stressed their unfamiliarity with neologisms. One participant noted, "I wasn't familiar with some of the words," while another participant explained that one of the challenges faced when translating neologisms is "unfamiliarity with the source language neologisms." This lack of knowledge of English neologisms can lead to difficulties in conveying accurate meanings and may hinder the translation process.

#### Limitations of dictionaries and resources

The lack of sufficient, updated, or reliable dictionaries and references posed an obstacle for the participants. Several participants pointed out the limitations of traditional dictionaries. One participant stated, “most neologisms are not available in regular dictionaries,” while another participant echoed this sentiment, and remarked “no updated dictionaries.” One participant further noted, “not having enough sources to look for English neologisms.” Such resources limitations make it challenging for students to find reliable information.

### **Equivalence challenges**

Finding an equivalent in the target language is among the challenges reported by the participants. Several participants noted the difficulty in finding direct equivalents, stating that “there are no direct equivalents in Arabic,” “these terminologies may not have adequate equivalents in the Arabic language,” and that “the main challenge is not finding exact Arabic equivalent neologisms to the English ones.” These equivalence challenges require translators to think creatively and adopt suitable strategies to convey the intended meaning.

### **Cultural differences**

Cultural differences between the source language and the target language can also pose challenges in translation. One participant reported “lack of cultural knowledge of the source language may affect finding the right equivalent in the target language,” another participant pointed out “Neologisms often reflect specific societal trends that may not exist in the Arabic-speaking world.” While another participant referred to the importance of cultural context, stating that “cultural context plays a crucial role in translation.”

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## **5. Discussion**

The study’s first objective sought to assess the participants’ performance in translating English neologisms into Arabic. The findings obtained from the translation test revealed that the participants encountered considerable challenges. A significant proportion of the participants provided unacceptable translations; this high rate of unsatisfactory translations pertains to the difficulties the participants encountered in conveying the intended meaning of English neologisms into the target language.

Several factors were identified as contributing to the participants’ performance, including the lack of direct equivalents in Arabic and limited familiarity with English neologisms. These findings are consistent with a previous study conducted by Awadh and Shafiull (2020) on Yemeni students, which further indicates to the complexity of translating neologisms, with a notable percentage of unacceptable translations, their study identified that finding Arabic equivalents for English neologisms and understanding the intended meaning is particularly challenging for the participants merely due to the limited presence of neologisms in both ordinary and specialized dictionaries. The correspondence between the two studies’ findings points to the intricate challenges associated with translating neologisms, indicating that these difficulties are not limited to a specific group of learners. Rather, they are a common issue within translation studies. This highlights the necessity for a more refined understanding of the translation process and the competency needed to successfully convey the intended meaning of neologisms between languages, as their translation can greatly influence the effectiveness of communication. Participants’ overall performance, specifically the high rate of unacceptable translations, can also be attributed to the insufficient consideration of context. A marked unanticipated distinction was observed between answers reported by the participants and their actual practical application and performance. Most participants responded positively, when surveyed about the importance of context in the translation of neologisms and acknowledged its significance. However, their performance in the translation test lacked effective contextual consideration, which suggests a disconnect between their theoretical knowledge and their ability to apply it in a practical setting. This gap exists because knowing a theory is different from practicing it. In the Libyan context, students may be taught translation as a set of rules rather than a skill to practice, therefore, when they encounter a new word (neologism), they focus on the literal meaning of the word itself and ignore the surrounding context.

This inconsistency denotes a fundamental issue in translation pedagogy. Although students may be taught the principles of translation, they may not receive adequate training in applying these principles practically. This discrepancy suggests the necessity for a more emphasis on the practical application of contextual knowledge in the translation process. In addition to inadequate contextual consideration, other contributing factors include cultural and linguistic differences, which are often deeply intertwined with neologisms. This observation accords with Hanaqtah (2019), who stated that translators often encounter difficulties when attempting to translate neologisms due to the deep cultural and linguistic disparities between Arabic and English. Similarly, Phlysnik and Pohorila (2024) emphasized that specific cultural contexts generate a variety of neologisms mirroring distinct cultural realities; therefore, a translator must acquire a strong understanding and perception of the source language culture to accurately grasp the intended message, moreover, it’s crucial to take into account the type of text and the audience it is aimed at.

Additionally, effective translation of neologisms demands a thorough understanding of their meanings; thus, being proficient in the source language entails fully comprehending the intended meaning behind language expressions, whereas proficiency in the target language assists the translator to convey these meanings in manners that are equally suitable for the intended audience. In terms of the strategies employed by the participants in translating English neologisms into Arabic, the findings indicated that the most frequently utilized strategy was literal translation, followed by descriptive equivalent, couplets, transference, and functional equivalent.

The prominent use of literal translation strategy suggests limited awareness of alternative strategies and insufficient contextual consideration as participants relied heavily on dictionary based word-for-word translation. This finding aligns with the findings of Badawi (2008), who concluded that poor awareness in translation strategies results in the prevalence of literal translation among students. Moreover, the structural differences between English and Arabic may make literal translation appear to be the most straightforward option for the participants. This coincides with previous research conducted by Othman (2024), who also found literal translation to be a common strategy among students.

Whereas the relatively high usage of paraphrasing as the second most prevalent strategy indicates that participants were making efforts to maintain clarity when no appropriate Arabic equivalents are present. Although, this method shows an understanding of the concept, but also revealed challenges in finding suitable equivalents in the target language. The use of couplets as a strategy, where participants combine two strategies to convey the meaning, suggests that the participants recognized the limitations of a single approach for some neologisms and chose to use two strategies in rendering them to Arabic. Transference, on the other hand, was used less frequently, whereas the infrequent use of functional translation could suggest a need for more training on this translation strategy. Interestingly, the least frequently utilized translation strategy in this study contradicts with that reported in the aforementioned research, which reported that transference was the least employed strategy, potentially due to differences in context and translation task requirements. Overall, the findings of this study have important implications towards the practice of translation, emphasizing the necessity of raising awareness of translation strategies, focusing on contextual factors, and enhancing cultural competence to achieve better translation results.

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## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1 Conclusion

Language is dynamic and is never static; it adapts over time in response to changes and its users' needs. Consequently, translators must keep pace with these developments and find effective methods to integrate new terms into the target culture. Given the English language's prominent role in generating new terminology; hence, this study focused on English neologisms. The research investigated both the obstacles and the procedures the participants utilized to translate English neologisms into Arabic.

It has been evident that M.A. students of translation in their final semesters need enhancements in handling neologisms. The overuse of literal translation leads to errors; as it does not always produce accurate or natural equivalents. Particularly, because it overlooks the cultural dimensions involved in translating neologisms. According to Newmark (1988), neologisms can be classified into types, and some may acquire new meanings that deviate from their original sense. In such cases, literal, word-for-word translation fails to convey the intended meaning, as the denotative sense alone may not capture the cultural or contextual relevance in the target language. Although students attempted to utilize other translation strategies apart from literal translation, their application was not always effective, leading to generally weak performance. In essence, the current study contributed to map the specific linguistic and cognitive barriers specifically the failure to recognize word-formation patterns that limited understanding of new lexical items, inadequate cultural awareness, and ambiguity regarding how to implement translation strategies appropriately in context which led to the breakdown of the translation process. These findings provide definitive empirical evidence that current pedagogical methods are insufficient for handling neologisms. This research serves as a critical foundation for a necessary shift in translation curricula, proving that training must prioritize morphological analysis and contextual research over traditional dictionary reliance, by pinpointing these exact gaps, the study offers a clear roadmap for modernizing translation pedagogy to meet contemporary demands.

### 6.2 Recommendations

1. M.A translation students should understand word formation processes since they play a significant role in creating and translating neologisms. This is particularly true for blended neologisms, which were challenging for students to predict and translate accurately in this study.
2. Translation instructors should implement case studies or projects that require students to research and translate neologisms in a specific context, discouraging a reliance on literal translation.

3. Translation programs ought to incorporate the translation of neologisms in their curriculum, allowing students to engage with these new terms. Such courses should highlight the unique and the morphological characteristics of neologisms to build awareness of how new terms emerge in English.
4. M.A translation students should be trained and familiarized with translation strategies and techniques to address cultural differences and ensure translations are clear and natural.
5. A specialized bilingual dictionary of neologisms supported by a yearly corpus should be developed to provide translators with up-to-date terms not yet found in standard dictionaries.
6. Further research should prioritize the translation of neologisms between English and Arabic, given the relatively limited attention this area has received, particularly in the context of bidirectional translation.

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## Appendix: Translation Test and Questionnaire

# Exploring the Translatability of English Neologisms

Dear MA translation students,

You are kindly invited to participate in this survey for my research study, exploring the challenges and strategies involved in translating English neologisms (newly coined words, expressions or existing words that acquire new meanings) into Arabic. Your participation will significantly contribute to the research findings and recommendations, and your responses will remain completely anonymous.

Your time and effort are greatly appreciated.

\* Indicates required question

Which campus of the Libyan Academy are you affiliated with? \*

Choose

### Part One: Translation Test \*

Translate the following sentences into Arabic:

1- The UK has more cases of the Delta variant than most of the rest of the world

Your answer

2- We're not just fighting an epidemic; we're fighting an infodemic. \*

Your answer

3- Chinese health authorities confirmed that they had identified a novel coronavirus. \*

Your answer

4- Anti-masker who caught virus had worst two weeks. \*

Your answer

5- Flight shaming is an environmental movement across Europe. \*

Your answer

6- Formula 1 faces legal challenge over Bahrain contract and sportswashing. \*

Your answer

11- You only need to spend a short amount of \* time on the internet to know that call-out culture is in fact extremely divisive.

Your answer

7- The number of delivery riders working in \* the gig economy has boomed during the pandemic.

Your answer

12- I think disruptors bring a different opinion \* to an industry.

Your answer

8- Trump was repeatedly labelled a snowflake \* earlier this month.

Your answer

13- If you find yourself doomscrolling your \* way through social media, help is at hand.

Your answer

9- Selfish covidiot on flight to UK from Greek \* island were criticised.

Your answer

14- Zoom fatigue is a common struggle for \* remote workers.

Your answer

10- Two leading Brexiteers have said any \* delay to Brexit would do harm to public trust in politics.

Your answer

15- If Bidenomics is successful, it will make \* the American economy both stronger and fairer in years to come.

Your answer

16- China reported three new cases of Covid- \*  
19.

Your answer

17- People are being urged to have their flu \*  
and Covid vaccines to avoid a twindemic.

Your answer

18- Northern Ireland is going to start a two \*  
week circuit breaker lockdown on Friday.

Your answer

19- Reddit was at the centre of the so called \*  
meme stock phenomenon earlier this year.

Your answer

20- An ill conceived implementation of this \*  
friendshoring strategy could result in price  
hikes and a stronger China over time.

Your answer

**Part two:**

1. Reflecting on your experience, what are  
some of the challenges that MA students of  
translation encounter when translating  
English neologisms into Arabic?

Your answer

2. What role does context play in translating \*  
neologisms?

- Context can help determine the intended meaning of a neologism
- Context is irrelevant when translating neologisms
- Context is important for translating neologisms, but not essential

3. Which of the following factors is crucial for \*  
successful neologism translation from  
English to Arabic?

- Proficiency in both languages (Arabic and English)
- Awareness of cultural differences
- Staying up to date with English neologisms
- Other:

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