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The Lexical Influence of English as a Globally Dominant Language on Dari/Persian in the Translation of Academic Texts: A Case Study of Students at Balkh University

Abdul Haq Haqiq[1]
Associate Proffessor, Faculty of Language and Literature, Balkh University

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of English lexical features (e.g., words, terms, and phrases) on Dari/Persian translations within the broader context of power dynamics between dominant and non-dominant languages. While research has frequently been conducted on languages like Arabic and Chinese, relatively little attention has been paid to the Dari/Persian language, which is mostly spoken in Afghanistan. This study examines how English, as the most dominant language, impacts Dari/Persian, considered a non-dominant linguistic system, primarily through lexical borrowing and translation practices in academic texts. Sixty students from the English department at Balkh University participated in translating three English texts into Dari/Persian. The analysis, grounded in code-switching and code-mixing theories, revealed the frequent use of English lexical elements, whereas equivalents were available in the Dari/Persian language. These lexical choices suggest a preference for English, influenced by its perceived prestige, its global communicative value, and its pervasive presence in media and education. The findings highlight the increasing lexical influence of English within academic discourse in Dari/Persian, shedding light on how dominant languages can shape the vocabulary, structure, and stylistic conventions or norms of non-dominant languages.

[1]. Email: salehhaqiq@gmail.com

Keywords: English lexical features or elements, Dari/Persian language, translation, dominant and non-dominant language, cultural influence, lexical borrowing, code-switching, codemixing.

1. Introduction

Language is a significant medium for shaping human societies, influencing how individuals think, express themselves, and relate to others. It goes beyond being merely a system of words and grammar. It also reflects the history, values, and worldview of a community. Language and culture are deeply interrelated, though not synonymous. Linguists such as Xue (2013) and Benbin (2015) argue that language not only functions as a tool for communication but also plays a vital role in preserving cultural identity. Within sociolinguistics, language is often categorized as either dominant or non-dominant**.** Dominant languages are typically associated with global communication, education, governance, and international media, while non-dominant languages are used more locally and within specific communities. According to Benbin (2015), language mirrors the cultural values, beliefs, and practices shared by its speakers, serving as a vehicle for cultural stability.

English, as the most dominant language, triggers international communication and often serves as a conduit for the transmission of ideologies and cultural norms (Xue & Zuo, 2013). Globally, English holds dominant status in education and media, influencing non-dominant languages like Dari/Persian through lexical borrowing, particularly in academic registers (Crystal, 2003; Sharifian, 2008; Rao, 2019). According to Woolard and Schieffelin (1994), language ideology involves the cultural beliefs and perceptions that speakers relate to particular languages. These perspectives play a crucial role in shaping how individuals understand, engage with, and translate across languages in multilingual environments. In essence, language ideology guides translation practices by reflecting broader societal attitudes toward the prestige, legality, and social meaning of diverse languages. Recent studies have also confirmed the clear integration of English lexical features in educational settings, particularly among students and novice translators (Cooley, 2014).

In this globalized linguistic landscape, Dari/Persian is regionally dominant in countries such as Afghanistan and Iran; however, globally non-dominant. This status makes it more vulnerable to lexical borrowing and external linguistic influence, especially from English.

By following Bhatia and Ritchie (2024), this study utilizes code-mixing as the intra-sentential blending of lexical items and code-switching as inter-sentential shifts, applying these concepts specifically to academic translation among Afghan students. Code-mixing involves inserting small units from one language into another, such as words, morphemes, or short phrases, within a single sentence, while code-switching refers to larger units, entire clauses or full sentences, between sentences or across discourse boundaries.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore the English lexical features in Dari/Persian academic translations**,** with a specific focus on the educational context. By analyzing translated texts produced by English Department students at Balkh University, the research seeks to examine how English terms are blended into Dari/Persian, whether due to the absence of native equivalents, habitual usage, or other influencing factors. Viewed from this perspective, the study offers deeper insights into linguistic interaction, translation practices, and the sociolinguistic impact of English as a globally dominant language.

Research Objectives:

- to examine the influence of English lexical elements or vocabulary on Dari/Persian texts. Particularly those translated by English Department students in academic environments.
- to identify patterns of lexical borrowing.
- to evaluate the frequency of English usage.
- to assess whether there is a tendency to favor English lexical elements over original equivalents.
- to determine the frequency and preference of English over Dari/Persian equivalents.
- to a broader understanding of how linguistic dominance, driven by globalization and cultural transmission, impacts non-dominant languages.

Research Questions:

1. To what extent is English influencing the Dari/Persian language?
2. How can the impact of English on Dari/Persian texts be identified and analyzed?

This research addresses the responses to these questions through a textual analysis of Dari/Persian translations of English texts.

The dominance of English has been widely documented across various linguistic contexts, including Chinese, Arabic, and Swahili (Sharifian, 2008; Rao, 2019). These studies highlight the English role as a global lingua franca, especially in education, media, and international communication (Crystal, 2003; Rao, 2019). According to Benbin (2015) and Clyne & Sharifian (2008), borrowing from English is prevalent in these languages due to the symbolic association of English with technological modernity and practical utility in professional settings. For example, terms such as "*computer*", "*internet*", and "*software*" are frequently retained in their original English form, reflecting their connections to technological innovation and the absence of commonly accepted native equivalents (Crystal, 2003). These patterns highlight the broader social, cultural, and ideological impact of English in multilingual environments.

In the context of Afghanistan, Coleman (2021) explored the evolving relationship between English and Dari/Persian, particularly over the last two decades. The increased presence of English is attributed to its role in foreign educational programs, access to English-language media, and international development utility. Coleman argues that schools and universities rely heavily on English textbooks and reference materials, resulting in a higher frequency of English lexical borrowings in both spoken and written academic communication. Despite this growing influence, there remains a notable lack of empirical linguistic research examining this phenomenon in Afghanistan, especially among university students.

Earlier concerns about lexical interference in Dari/Persian were raised by Nemati (2005), who identified mistranslations and unnecessary borrowings in both media and official documents. He attributes these issues not only to globalization but also to inadequate translator training and limited utilization of native terminology. In recent years, regional research has further examined the use and evolution of Dari/Persian equivalents. For example, Talebinejad, Dastjerdi, and Mahmoodi (2012) investigated the gradual integration of English business and technological terms into new

Persian as used in both Iran and Afghanistan, often without semantic adaptation. Similarly, Moradi (2019) analyzed the presence of English in Persian academic writing, where code-mixing is perceived as a marker of alignment with global academic discourse.

One dynamic sociolinguistic dimension in this discussion concerns language ideology, defined as the beliefs and assumptions people hold about languages and their speakers (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). These ideologies shape language practices, particularly in multilingual societies. English is frequently regarded as a symbol of modernity and professionalism, influencing both conscious and unconscious choices in translation. This dynamic reinforces the dominance of English while gradually altering native vocabulary.

However, structural and sociolinguistic aspects of English influence have been extensively explored in other linguistic settings; the influence of English lexical features on Dari/Persian remains unexamined. Meanwhile, despite its rich literary history, Dari might be seen as less aligned with contemporary scientific discourse. Therefore, this study aims to enhance regional scholarship by examining how English words, terms, and phrases are integrated into Dari/Persian academic translations and how sociolinguistic factors influence these lexical choices. To address this gap, it analyzes translation samples produced by student participants.

2.Methodology

This qualitative case study employed student-generated academic translations as the primary data source, collected from the three English texts, translated by student participants. The texts were analyzed utilizing code-switching and code-mixing frameworks to examine how English lexical features, such as borrowed terms, phrases, and "hybrid constructions", appear in academic translation. This approach allowed for a detailed examination of cross-linguistic influence in Dari/Persian texts.

Participants: As the sample of research, sixty undergraduate students, including sophomores to seniors, from the English Department at Balk University, were randomly selected to participate in the study. They were asked to translate assigned English texts into Dari/Persian independently and in their own style, with no restrictions on translation approach. Each participant was given 50 minutes to complete the translation task. All participants took part voluntarily, and informed consent was obtained before data collection.

Materials: Three academic texts from social science journals—"The Role of Lecture in Teaching," "Health Awareness," and "Communication and Writing Proposal"—were selected to analyze English lexical features. The New English-Persian Dictionary (2010) and Longman Advanced American Dictionary (2012) served as lexical references.

Procedure

- The participants were randomly selected.
- Each participant was asked to translate a short academic English text into Dari/Persian independently.
- The completed translations were collected, anonymized, and prepared for qualitative analysis.
- The analysis was based on established linguistic frameworks, specifically, the theories of code-switching and code-mixing, to investigate the lexical influence of English on Dari/Persian at both the sentence and text levels.
- The results were demonstrated through tables and illustrated in words in detail in the findings and discussion section.

Data Collection: The data were collected through three English texts. The texts cover individual topics: "*The Role of Lecture in Teaching***"** (159 words), "*Health Awareness*" (189 words), and "*Communication and Writing Proposal*" (197 words). These texts were chosen because they represent typical academic content, providing a relevant context for exploring lexical code-switching between English and Dari/Persian.

Data Analysis: The collected data, including the original English texts and the corresponding Dari/Persian translations produced by participants, were analyzed using frameworks of code-switching, code-mixing, and qualitative content analysis. According to Mayring (2014, as cited in Anisah, 2022), document analysis involves the systematic interpretation of textual data within its context. Similarly, Weber (2019, as cited in Anisah, 2022) defines content analysis as a research technique for making valid and replicable inferences from texts.

The analysis centered on the word and sentence levels to identify English lexical elements in the Dari/Persian translations. These lexical elements, such as words, terms, and phrases, were extracted and organized to demonstrate their frequency and percentage of occurrence across the

texts. To acknowledge the status of these lexical features within the Dari/Persian language, each was cross-checked with The *Expensive: New English-Dari/Persian Dictionary* (2010) to determine if a standard Dari/Persian equivalent was available.

The results of this analysis are presented and discussed in the findings section, highlighting the extent and nature of English lexical influence on Dari/Persian translations produced by the participants.

3.Findings or Results

As cited earlier, English is widely documented as a world-dominant language that influences various non-dominant languages, including Dari/Persian. This study examined the extent to which English influences Dari/Persian and how this influence is reflected in translated Dari/Persian texts.

The findings prove that English lexical features (words, terms, and phrases) are present in the Dari/Persian translations of the three selected texts: *The Role of Lectures in Teaching*, *Health Awareness*, and *Communication and Writing Proposals***.** Moreover, analyzing the texts at both the word and sentence levels enabled the identification of English lexical elements within the Dari/Persian translations. Brown (1988, as cited in Griffee, 2012) recommends that tables are a valuable means of summarizing the data. Each table presents an individual topic, the identified English words, terms, and phrases, along with their frequency of occurrence and their percentage of use. The percentage of each feature was calculated using the formula: (occurrences × 100) ÷ total number of words. For example: N = (20 × 100) ÷ 218 = 9.17%.

The following tables present the results to illustrate more clearly the extent and nature of English lexical influence on Dari/Persian translations.

The Findings of the Participants' Translated Text (1) *The Role of* Lectures in Teaching in Table 1

No	Topic	English Words or Phrases	Number of Occurrences in the Dari/Persian Translated Text	Percentage
1	The Role of Lectures in Teaching	Lecture	16	7.33%
		Method	20	9.17%
		Conference	20	9.17%
		Technique	16	7.33%
		Topic	5	2.29%
		Team	20	9.17%
		Group	19	8.71%
		Problem	4	1.83%
		Video clip	20	9.17%
		Plan	12	5.50%
		Design	5	2.29%
		PowerPoint	20	9.17%
		Slide	20	9.17%
		Strategy	20	9.17%
		Role	1	0.45%
		Total	218	100%

The data in Table 1 illustrate the frequency and percentage of English terms retained or integrated in the 20 participants' Dari/Persian translations of the text titled *"The Role of Lectures in Teaching."* A total of 218 English words, terms, or phrases were identified across all participant translations.

The most frequently occurring English terms were "*method*" (20 occurrences; 9.17%**),** "*conference*" (20 occurrences; 9.17%**),** "*team*" (20 occurrences; 9.17%**),** "*video clip*" (20 occurrences; 9.17%**),** "*PowerPoint*" (20 occurrences; 9.17%**),** "*slide*" (20 occurrences; 9.17%**),** and "*strategy*" (20 occurrences; 9.17%**).**

These terms appear to have been preserved or code-switched consistently by the participants, perhaps due to a lack of accepted used equivalents in Dari/Persian, or because of their familiarity in academic or technological contexts.

Frequently occurring English words or terms include *"group"* (19 occurrences; 8.71%)**,** *"lecture"* (16 occurrences; 7.33%**),** "*technique*" (16 occurrences; 7.33%**),** and "*plan*" (12 occurrences; 5.50%).

There is a tendency to preserve English academic terminology, which might reflect the influence of English in educational discourse.

Less frequently used English terms such as *"topic"* (5 occurrences; 2.29%)**,** *"design"* (5 occurrences; 2.29%)**,** "*problem*" (4 occurrences; 1.83%)**,** and "*role*" (1 occurrence; 0.45%).

These lower frequencies might indicate either a greater availability of equivalents in Dari/Persian or a greater tendency by participants to translate these terms.

Frequencies were counted for each translated text, and percentages were calculated using the formula: (occurrences × 100) ÷ total number of words to determine percentages of each identified lexical feature in the translated texts. For example: $N = \frac{30*100\%}{142} = 14.08\%$.

The Findings of the Participants' Translated Text 2 *Health Awareness* in Table 2

Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage of English words and phrases retained by the 20 participants. The text for translation is titled *"Health Awareness."* A total of 142 English terms were identified across all translated versions.

The most frequently identified English words in the text were "*system*" (20 occurrences; 14.08%), "*poster*" (20 occurrences; 14.08%), "*banner*" (20 occurrences; 14.08%), and "*upload*" (20 occurrences; 14.08%).

These English terms reflect the increasing influence of English in public health campaigns and digital media contexts in Persian.

Frequent English words or terms include "*standard*" (13 occurrences; 9.15%), "*policy*" (10 times; 7.04%), and "*method*" (9 times, 6.33%).

No	Topics	English Words or Phrases	Number of Occurrences in the Dari/Persian Translated Text	Percentage
2	Health Awareness	Policy	10	7.04%
		System	20	14.08%
		Risk	2	1.40%
		Method	9	6.33%
		Cycle	4	2.81%
		Standard	13	9.15%
		Poster	20	14.08%
		Banner	20	14.08%
		Upload	20	14.08%
		Message	5	3.52%
		Role	2	1.40%
		Training	3	2.11%
		Service	3	2.11%
		Unit	2	1.40%
		Clinic	5	3.52%
		Problem	4	2.81%
		Total	142	100%

These English terms present the original terminology often remains untranslated or code-switched in health-related texts. These terms are commonly used in both health and administrative discourse, which might explain their consistent usage in English.

Less frequently retained English terms were *"risk"* (2 occurrences; 1.40%), *"role"* (2 occurrences; 1.40%), *and "unit"* (2 occurrences; 1.40%).

These English terms indicate that more culturally familiar or existing equivalents in Dari/Persian were preferred by the majority of participants. These frequencies denote partial translation or variability in the responses of the participants.

Frequencies were counted for each translated text, and percentages were calculated using the formula: (occurrences × 100) ÷ total number of words to determine percentages of each identified lexical feature in the translated texts. For example, $N = \frac{30*100\%}{211} = 9{,}47\%$.

Findings of the Participants' Translated Text 3 Communication & Writing Proposal Table 3

Table 3 demonstrates how English words and phrases were used in Dari/Persian translations of a text on *communication and writing*

proposals. A total of 211 English words and phrases were identified across all participant submissions.

The most frequent of retained English terms such as "*email*" (20 occurrences; 9.47%), "*computer*" (20 occurrences; 9.47%), "*telephone*" (20 occurrences; 9.47%), and "*internet*" (20 occurrences; 9.47%).

No	Topics	English Words or Phrases	Number of Occurrences in the Dari/Persian Translated Text	Percentage
3	Communication & Writing Proposal	Email	20	9.47%
		Computer	20	9.47%
		Message	2	0.94%
		Phone	19	9.00%
		Technique	14	6.63%
		Department	14	6.63%
		Proposal	15	7.10%
		Part	2	0.94%
		Frame	2	0.94%
		Problem	6	2.84%
		Text	1	0.47%
		Type	7	3.31%
		Plan	12	5.68%
		Time	2	0.94%
		Strategy	12	5.68%
		Personnel	7	3.31%
		Telephone	20	9.47%
		Internet	20	9.47%
		Program	10	4.73%
		Category	6	2.84%
		Total	211	100%

These results indicate that participants consistently maintained English terminology for digital communication and technology-related concepts.

The tendency signifies that such terms have become standardized in academic or professional Persian/Dari, and participants likely perceived them as either untranslatable or more effective in their original English form.

Frequently retained terms include "*phone*" (19 occurrences; 9.00%), "*proposal*" (15 times; 7.10%), "*personnel*" (15 times; 7.10%), "*technique*" (14 occurrences; 6.63%), "*department*" (14 times; 6.63%), and "*strategy*" (12 times; 5.68%), and "*plan*" (12 times; 5.68%).

These terms are used mostly in academic and professional communication, so they might be minimally adapted in the translation process.

Less frequent English terms include "*program*" (10 occurrences; 4.73%), "*type*" (7 occurrences; 3.31%), "*personal*" (7 occurrences; 3.31%), "*problem*" (6 occurrences; 2.84%), and "*category*" (6 occurrences; 2.84%).

These terms might reflect partial lexical integration; they may have acceptable equivalents in Dari/Persian and thus show variation across translations.

The least-frequency words or terms: "*message*" (2 occurrences; 0.94%), "*part*" (2 occurrences; 0.94%), "*frame*" (2 occurrences; 0.94%), "*time*" (2 occurrences; 0.94%), and "*text*" (1 occurrence; 0.31%).

These retained English terms denote that participants translated them into simpler Persian/Dari equivalents.

4.Discussion

The data presented in Tables 1 through 3 reveal distinct patterns of lexical borrowing**,** code-switching**,** code-mixing, and translation preferences among participants translating between English and Dari/Persian in academic contexts.

As illustrated in Table 1, although Dari/Persian equivalents exist for several English terms, such as *sukhanrani* (lecture), *rawesh* (method), *fann* (technique), *onwan* (topic), *grouh* (group), *barnama* (plan), and *tarh* (design), participants frequently engaged in hybrid usage. Common combinations included *lecture/sukhanrani*, *technique/fann*, and *design/tarh*, suggesting a partial reliance on English even when adequate Dari/Persian alternatives are available.

In contrast, other terms like conference, *team*, *video clip*, *PowerPoint*, *slide*, and *strategy* were consistently kept in English. This trend shows either the absence of widely accepted Dari/Persian equivalents or a broader preference for English in academic communications, pointing to both a lexical gap and sociolinguistic preference.

Table 2 indicates that despite the presence of Dari/Persian equivalents for terms such as *kardani* (policy), *qaedah* (system), *khatar* (risk), *charkhesh* (cycle), *meyar* (standard), *payam* (message), *naqsh* (role), *khedamat* (service), *wahed* (unit), *darmankadah* (clinic), and *mushkel* (problem), English terms were frequently preferred. Although instances of translation (e.g., *policy/kardani*, *risk/khatar*) occurred, inconsistencies indicate that lexical choice might be influenced by exposure to English or the perceived academic prestige of English terminology.

Modern technological terms, such as *poster*, *banner*, and *upload*, were regularly retained in English across all participants' responses. The absence

of exact Dari/Persian equivalents likely contributes to this lexical borrowing, highlighting the dynamic interaction between linguistic innovation and educational practice in bilingual environments.

As illustrated in Table 3, English influence is most evident in the domains of digital technology and professional communication. Terms such as *email*, *internet*, *telephone*, and *computer* frequently appear untranslated in Dari/Persian academic writing. This trend aligns with Pearson's (1998, as cited in Khan, 2016) framework, which differentiates between general vocabulary and field-specific terminology. According to this categorization, many borrowed English terms reflect the specialized language of "academia" and technology.

Translation, understood as the transfer of meaning across languages, is significantly shaped by the translator's competence, cultural familiarity, and disciplinary expertise. According to Roberts (2002, as cited in Nemati, 2005), notes, unintentional lexical interference, particularly in fields like science and technology dominated by English, could result from limited training and awareness. The frequent appearance of English terms in translated texts, therefore, might not only signal linguistic preference but also reflect underlying challenges in translation practice.

Three notable patterns emerged from the translations: (1) retention of English terms despite the existence of Dari/Persian equivalents; (2) omission of native terms such as *tarh* (plan) and *sukhanrani elmy* (academic lecture); and (3) habitual reliance on English vocabulary. These tendencies might stem from vocabulary gaps, stylistic preferences, or ingrained usage patterns. As Nemati (2005) cautions, overreliance on English, particularly when native alternatives are available, can amplify English lexical influence and marginalize local terminology.

This raises a critical question: Why are English lexical features so prominent in Dari/Persian academic translations? While the global dominance of English and the interconnected nature of modern languages make some degree of lexical borrowing inevitable, the issue becomes problematic when translators neglect native equivalents, not out of necessity, but due to inconsistent or careless translation practices. In this sense, the vulnerability of Dari/Persian lies less in its exposure to English and more in the irregular use of its linguistic resources. Addressing this issue requires more systematic training for translators, the development of standardized academic terminology, and a stronger emphasis on linguistic precision to ensure accurate translation.

To understand these patterns more thoroughly, theories of code-switching and code-mixing provide essential analytical frameworks (Setiawan, 2023; Alsheikhidris, 2024; Bhatia & Ritchie, 2016). Code-mixing involves embedding elements of one language into another within a sentence or phrase, while code-switching refers to the alternation between languages across discourse boundaries. These phenomena are not merely linguistic conveniences; they reflect broader sociocultural dynamics such as identity, status, and communicative efficiency. In Afghanistan, where English coexists with Dari and Pashto, Code-switching and code-mixing often serve as practical communicative strategies in academic and professional contexts.

The findings of this study suggest a consistent pattern of code-switching and code-mixing, particularly involving pedagogical, technological, and academic terminology. The frequent use of English terms across participants demonstrates the normalization of English vocabulary within Dari/Persian academic translations. This trend is especially prominent in texts related to health and education, where technical terms are increasingly kept untranslated, even when model native equivalents exist. Such lexical patterns reflect deeper sociolinguistic forces at play and underscore the need for balanced language planning and intentional translation practices to preserve the integrity and functionality of Dari/Persian in academic contexts.

5.Conclusion

This case study explored the lexical influence of English, a globally dominant language, on Dari/Persian, a regionally dominant yet globally non-dominant language, through the analysis of academic translations produced by undergraduate students. The findings revealed a consistent presence of untranslated or partially translated English terms, such as *email*, *computer*, *telephone*, and *internet*. In some cases, these replaced commonly available Dari equivalents such as *payam* (message) and *tarh* (plan). While this may suggest an overreliance on English, the absence of qualitative data, such as interviews or reflective commentaries, limits understanding of the motivations behind these choices.

The limitations: The study focused solely on undergraduate students. Its findings may not be generalizable to professional translators. In addition, it concentrated only on lexical features, excluding syntactic, semantic,

phonological, and pragmatic dimensions. The lack of qualitative input also restricted deeper insights into the participants' decision-making processes.

Implications: Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable implications for translator education and language planning. It emphasizes the need for increased attention to linguistic awareness and cultural sensitivity in translation training programs. Students and novice translators should be encouraged to utilize accurate and context-appropriate Dari/Persian equivalents when available to reduce unnecessary lexical borrowing. At the same time, borrowing should not be viewed as inherently problematic, particularly in technical or evolving fields where native terminology may be lacking. The goal should be to promote informed and deliberate lexical choices that reflect both linguistic integrity and practical needs.

Future research should involve a broader group of participants, including professional translators and educators. It should also explore additional linguistic elements such as syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, and employ qualitative methods like interviews, focus groups, or think-aloud protocols to gain a deeper understanding of translator behavior. Furthermore, investigating the effects of digital media, translation technologies, and academic discourse could offer more insights into how English influences Dari Persian. This research would contribute to developing a more comprehensive understanding of language contact, borrowing, and change in contexts where a language is not dominant.

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