

The Role of Persian and Arabic Poetry Translations in Vocabulary Acquisition for EFL Learners at Iranian-Iraqi Border Universities

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Saadoon Abdulameer, I., Zolfagharkhani, M., & Amirian, S. M. R. (2026). The Role of Persian and Arabic Poetry Translations in Vocabulary Acquisition for EFL Learners at Iranian-Iraqi Border Universities. *Iranian Journal of Educational Sociology*, 9(4), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.ijes.1540>



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Purpose: This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of Persian and Arabic poetry translation-based instruction in enhancing receptive vocabulary knowledge, productive vocabulary knowledge, and depth of vocabulary knowledge among undergraduate EFL learners at universities located in the Iranian-Iraqi border region.

Methods and Materials: A quantitative quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control-group design was employed. Seventy third-year undergraduate EFL students were selected through cluster sampling and assigned to an experimental group ($n = 35$) and a control group ($n = 35$). The experimental group received vocabulary instruction through translation activities based on selected Persian and Arabic poems with published English translations, whereas the control group received conventional vocabulary instruction. Vocabulary development was assessed using the Vocabulary Levels Test, Productive Vocabulary Levels Test, and Word Associates Test. After examining baseline equivalence and statistical assumptions, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to compare posttest performance while controlling for corresponding pretest scores.

Findings: ANCOVA revealed a statistically significant effect of poetry translation-based instruction on receptive vocabulary knowledge, $F(1, 67) = 671.56$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .909$. A significant intervention effect was also found for productive vocabulary knowledge, $F(1, 67) = 596.87$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .899$. Similarly, vocabulary depth differed significantly between the groups after controlling for baseline scores, $F(1, 67) = 538.94$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .889$. Thus, the experimental group demonstrated significantly greater improvement across all three dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, with very large treatment effect sizes.

Conclusion: Persian and Arabic poetry translation-based instruction appears to be a highly effective pedagogical approach for developing multiple dimensions of English vocabulary knowledge among EFL learners. Integrating culturally familiar literary materials with translation activities may facilitate lexical recognition, active vocabulary use, and deeper semantic knowledge more effectively than conventional vocabulary instruction.

Keywords: Poetry Translation; Vocabulary Acquisition; Receptive Vocabulary Knowledge; Productive Vocabulary Knowledge; Vocabulary Depth; EFL Learners

1. Introduction

Vocabulary knowledge constitutes one of the central foundations of foreign-language proficiency because learners' ability to comprehend texts, participate in interaction, express meanings, and develop higher-order language skills depends substantially on the breadth and quality of their lexical resources. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, vocabulary learning is particularly consequential because learners generally have fewer opportunities for sustained exposure to English outside formal educational environments. Consequently, classroom instruction must provide not only repeated encounters with lexical items but also meaningful contexts through which learners can understand, remember, retrieve, and use vocabulary. This requirement is especially important in university contexts where students are expected to move beyond elementary recognition of isolated words toward more sophisticated lexical competence encompassing productive use, semantic associations, contextual appropriateness, and depth of meaning. Studies conducted in Iranian and Iraqi EFL contexts have repeatedly demonstrated that language learning is shaped by instructional practices, learner strategies, contextual limitations, and opportunities for meaningful engagement with language (Darweesh & Kadhim, 2016; Faramarzi Babadi et al., 2024; Rezaee et al., 2018). Accordingly, identifying pedagogical approaches capable of situating vocabulary within meaningful linguistic, cultural, and communicative experiences remains an important concern in EFL education.

Vocabulary instruction has traditionally relied on techniques such as word lists, dictionary definitions, memorization, sentence-level exercises, and teacher explanation. Although such practices can contribute to lexical development, contemporary EFL pedagogy increasingly emphasizes approaches that promote active participation, contextualized language use, learner autonomy, and meaningful interaction with language. The movement beyond rigid methodological prescriptions is particularly relevant to educational environments in which teachers must adapt instruction to local learner characteristics, linguistic resources, and sociocultural circumstances. Research on Iraqi EFL education, for example, has emphasized the value of flexible pedagogical practices and teacher development within a post-method perspective, suggesting that effective instruction requires sensitivity to the particularity of learners and instructional

environments rather than exclusive reliance on predetermined techniques (Abbas & Al-Bakri, 2020). Similarly, research concerning Iraqi learners has demonstrated the importance of scaffolding and language-learning strategies in supporting more active engagement with English (Rezaee et al., 2018). These perspectives provide a basis for considering pedagogical resources that connect English vocabulary learning with learners' existing linguistic and cultural knowledge.

The need for contextually responsive instruction is particularly salient in Iranian and Iraqi educational environments. English learners in these contexts encounter diverse institutional, pedagogical, motivational, and linguistic circumstances. Research in Iranian universities has identified limitations affecting English-language learning and has emphasized the need for more effective instructional strategies that respond to learners' actual educational conditions (Faramarzi Babadi et al., 2024). In the Iraqi context, difficulties have also been reported in learners' use of particular linguistic resources, including cohesive devices, illustrating that formal exposure to English does not automatically produce effective command of language structures (Darweesh & Kadhim, 2016). Other studies have examined the relationship between proficiency and learners' ability to comprehend and produce pragmatically appropriate language, indicating that EFL development involves the integration of linguistic knowledge with contextualized use (Mubarak, 2023). Such findings reinforce the need for instructional practices that expose learners to language as a meaningful system rather than as a collection of disconnected forms.

Learner-related variables must also be considered when designing such instruction. EFL learning is influenced by motivation, learning preferences, engagement, attention, and learners' perceptions of instructional environments. Among Iraqi EFL students, self-motivation has been examined in relation to learning styles, highlighting the importance of individual differences in shaping language-learning experiences (Al-Banaa & Nevisi, 2023). Attention and engagement have likewise been identified as important dimensions of Iraqi EFL students' learning experiences, particularly in instructional settings requiring active participation (Khammat Al-iessa et al., 2023). These considerations suggest that vocabulary instruction may be more effective when learners interact with materials that are culturally recognizable, cognitively stimulating, and capable of sustaining attention. Rather than presenting vocabulary solely through decontextualized exercises, instruction can

therefore benefit from materials that invite learners to interpret, compare, discuss, and reconstruct meaning.

Literature represents one potential resource for achieving these objectives. Literary texts provide language in contexts in which lexical items interact with imagery, emotion, cultural knowledge, figurative expression, narrative or poetic structure, and multiple layers of meaning. Within EFL and ESL education, literature has consequently been reconsidered not merely as an object of literary study but as authentic language material capable of contributing to language development. Islam emphasized the pedagogical relevance of incorporating conventional poetry as authentic material in EFL/ESL classrooms, illustrating the broader potential of literature to support language-learning experiences (Islam, 2022). Literature can expose learners to vocabulary in semantically rich contexts while encouraging interpretation and interaction with meaning. This characteristic is particularly relevant to vocabulary development because lexical knowledge extends beyond knowing a direct equivalent or dictionary definition; effective vocabulary knowledge involves recognizing how words operate across contexts and how their meanings relate to cultural, semantic, and communicative dimensions.

Among literary genres, poetry possesses distinctive characteristics that make it particularly relevant to vocabulary instruction. Poetry often compresses meaning into relatively short texts and uses carefully selected vocabulary, imagery, repetition, figurative language, sound patterns, and semantic associations. From a linguistic perspective, poetic language can therefore draw learners' attention to individual lexical choices and the relationship between form and meaning. Alipour's examination of the vocabulary and linguistic structure of contemporary poetry emphasizes the centrality of lexical organization to poetic expression (Alipour, 1999). For language learners, this lexical concentration can create opportunities to examine why a particular word is used, what associations it carries, how it relates to neighboring words, and how alternative expressions might change the meaning of a passage. Such engagement may be particularly relevant to the development of vocabulary depth, which requires more than simple recognition of lexical forms.

Empirical work has increasingly supported the pedagogical use of poetry in foreign-language classrooms. Farrah and Al-Bakri examined the effectiveness of using poetry for developing English vocabulary, pronunciation, and motivation among Palestinian EFL students, directly connecting poetic materials with multiple dimensions of

language learning (Farrah & Al-Bakri, 2022). Their work is particularly relevant because it positions poetry not only as a literary genre but also as an instructional resource for lexical development. Similarly, Ahmed investigated the use of first-language poetry and moral stories in relation to the acquisition of second-language oracy skills in EFL settings, demonstrating the pedagogical relevance of drawing upon familiar L1 literary resources when developing L2 abilities (Ahmed, 2022). Together, these studies suggest that learners' existing literary and linguistic knowledge can serve as a bridge to English-language learning rather than being treated as something that must be excluded from the EFL classroom.

Poetry-based pedagogy also has the capacity to increase learners' active involvement with language. Research on poetry writing in EFL classrooms has shown that learners employ a range of strategies while composing poetic texts, demonstrating that poetry can stimulate conscious attention to vocabulary, linguistic form, and meaning-making (Fithriani, 2021). Similarly, Wahibullah and Indah examined an instructional approach intended to develop students' ability to write English poetry, further illustrating how poetry can be transformed from a passive reading text into a productive language-learning activity (Wahibullah & Indah, 2021). From this perspective, poetry instruction can invite learners to select vocabulary, negotiate meanings, reformulate expressions, and consider relationships among lexical items. Such active processing may be especially valuable for productive vocabulary development because learners must retrieve and manipulate lexical knowledge rather than merely recognize words presented by the teacher.

Collaborative and oral engagement with poetry may extend these benefits. Kamala and Aziz's systematic review of collaborative learning in relation to guided writing and oral performance in poetry points to the potential for poetry-related activities to support interactive learning processes (Kamala & Aziz, 2020). Saad and colleagues similarly explored ESL students' experiences in moving from poetry recitation toward "thinking out loud," emphasizing the experiential and participatory dimensions that poetry can introduce into language learning (Saad et al., 2023). These forms of engagement may create opportunities for students to explain interpretations, compare lexical alternatives, articulate reasons for word choices, and negotiate meaning with peers. Such processes are potentially important for lexical acquisition because repeated retrieval and discussion can shift vocabulary from passive familiarity toward more accessible and productive knowledge.

Beyond specific language skills, poetry can also function as a means through which learners reflect on their language-learning experiences. Iida's poetic inquiry into a Japanese pre-service teacher's English-language-learning trajectory demonstrates that poetry can serve pedagogical and methodological functions in representing experiences of second-language learning (Iida, 2022). Although such work differs from experimental vocabulary instruction, it illustrates the broader capacity of poetry to connect language learning with identity, experience, and reflection. This dimension may be especially valuable in multilingual contexts where learners possess established relationships with more than one literary tradition. Familiar poetry can make the foreign-language classroom a site where existing cultural knowledge interacts with new linguistic resources, potentially increasing the personal relevance of lexical learning.

Translation provides an important mechanism through which such interaction can occur. In multilingual EFL environments, translation need not be understood merely as the mechanical substitution of one word for another. When incorporated into purposeful classroom activities, translation requires learners to compare meanings across languages, identify semantic similarities and differences, evaluate alternative lexical choices, and determine which expressions are most suitable within a particular context. Poetry translation intensifies these processes because poetic meaning frequently cannot be transferred successfully through literal substitution alone. Learners must attend to connotation, imagery, semantic relationships, cultural references, and contextual appropriateness. Thus, translating or comparing translations of poetry may encourage deeper lexical processing than activities centered exclusively on memorizing isolated English equivalents.

The use of learners' first languages and culturally familiar literature is particularly relevant in the Iranian-Iraqi border context. The region is characterized by contact between Persian and Arabic linguistic and cultural traditions, and many students may encounter both languages through education, community interaction, literature, or everyday communication. Such multilingual resources can potentially be incorporated into English teaching in ways that connect learners' prior knowledge with target-language vocabulary. Ahmed's work on L1 poetry provides support for considering first-language literary materials as resources for L2 development (Ahmed, 2022), while Farrah and Al-Bakri's findings concerning poetry and vocabulary reinforce the potential value of literary language for lexical instruction

(Farrah & Al-Bakri, 2022). In this respect, Persian and Arabic poetry offer particularly rich pedagogical resources because they contain culturally meaningful themes, dense lexical choices, and traditions with which learners in the region may already have varying degrees of familiarity.

The Iraqi EFL literature further demonstrates why context-sensitive instructional innovation is warranted. Nader Sharhan and Janfeshan examined Iraqi preparatory-school teachers' perceptions of literature components within Iraqi English textbooks, directly drawing attention to the position of literature in formal English-language education (Nader Sharhan & Janfeshan, 2024). Their work indicates that literary content remains relevant to contemporary discussions of English pedagogy in Iraq. At the same time, Iraqi EFL research has explored a range of learner and instructional concerns, from learning strategies and scaffolding (Rezaee et al., 2018) to motivation and learning styles (Al-Banaa & Nevisi, 2023), online engagement and attention (Khammat Al-iessa et al., 2023), pragmatic comprehension and production (Mubarak, 2023), and specific linguistic difficulties (Darweesh & Kadhim, 2016). More recently, vocabulary acquisition itself has received attention through instructional approaches such as brain-based learning among Iraqi EFL students (Al-aajam, 2025). Collectively, this body of scholarship demonstrates sustained interest in finding instructional methods that increase meaningful learner engagement and promote stronger English-language development.

Nevertheless, the pedagogical potential of combining translation, poetry, and vocabulary instruction remains insufficiently developed in this specific regional context. Existing studies provide evidence for the usefulness of poetry in EFL learning (Farrah & Al-Bakri, 2022; Islam, 2022), the role of poetry in productive and reflective language activities (Fithriani, 2021; Iida, 2022; Wahibullah & Indah, 2021), collaborative and oral engagement with poetic texts (Kamala & Aziz, 2020; Saad et al., 2023), and the relevance of L1 literary resources to second-language development (Ahmed, 2022). At the same time, research in Iran and Iraq has highlighted the importance of instructional adaptation, strategy use, learner engagement, motivation, and locally appropriate pedagogical interventions (Abbas & Al-Bakri, 2020; Al-aajam, 2025; Faramarzi Babadi et al., 2024). What remains comparatively underexplored is whether Persian and Arabic poetry, when systematically incorporated through translation-based activities, can produce measurable improvement across different dimensions of English vocabulary knowledge among

university EFL learners situated at the intersection of these two linguistic and literary traditions.

This gap is important because vocabulary knowledge is multidimensional. An instructional method may improve learners' ability to recognize words without producing equivalent improvement in their capacity to use those words actively or understand their semantic relationships. Poetry translation potentially addresses all of these dimensions simultaneously. Reading translated poetic texts can support receptive recognition; discussing and selecting lexical equivalents can encourage productive retrieval; and comparing meanings, associations, metaphors, and contextual uses may deepen lexical knowledge. The pedagogical rationale is therefore not simply that poetry makes language classes more interesting, but that translation-based engagement with poetry may create a cognitively demanding and culturally meaningful environment in which learners repeatedly encounter, interpret, retrieve, compare, and use vocabulary. Such an approach is consistent with the broader movement toward pedagogies that treat learners as active participants in meaning construction rather than passive recipients of linguistic information (Abbas & Al-Bakri, 2020; Fithriani, 2021).

Accordingly, the aim of the present study was to examine the effectiveness of Persian and Arabic poetry translation-based instruction in improving receptive vocabulary knowledge, productive vocabulary knowledge, and depth of vocabulary knowledge among undergraduate EFL learners at universities in the Iranian-Iraqi border region.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study employed a quantitative research approach using a quasi-experimental pretest–posttest control-group design to examine the effectiveness of Persian and Arabic poetry translation-based instruction in developing English vocabulary knowledge among undergraduate learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The quasi-experimental design was considered appropriate because the participants were already organized into intact university classes, making individual random assignment impractical. Accordingly, existing classroom clusters were used for sampling and group allocation, while statistical procedures were subsequently applied to examine baseline equivalence and control for possible initial differences between the groups. The instructional condition

constituted the independent variable, with poetry translation-based vocabulary instruction administered to the experimental group and conventional vocabulary instruction provided to the control group. The dependent variables were receptive vocabulary knowledge, productive vocabulary knowledge, and depth of vocabulary knowledge. The study was conducted in a public university context within the Iranian-Iraqi border region, an educational environment characterized by substantial linguistic and cultural contact between Persian and Arabic. This context was particularly suitable for the study because students enrolled in English-language programs in the region commonly possess varying degrees of familiarity with Persian, Arabic, or both languages and their associated literary traditions. Seventy third-year undergraduate EFL students were selected from intact English-language classes through cluster sampling and allocated into two equally sized groups, consisting of 35 students in the experimental group and 35 students in the control group. Third-year students were selected because they had already completed introductory English-language courses and possessed sufficient linguistic competence to engage with intermediate-level literary and vocabulary materials, while still having substantial potential for further lexical development. According to the participant profile recorded during the methodological phase, 32 students were male and 38 were female; 24 students were aged 20–21 years, 33 were aged 22–23 years, and 13 were aged 24–25 years. Regarding linguistic background, 31 participants were Persian dominant, 21 were Arabic dominant, and 18 were Persian-Arabic bilingual. Information concerning participants' age, gender, academic level, language background, and familiarity with Persian and Arabic was collected before the intervention. Before instructional treatment began, all participants completed the vocabulary pretests, and independent-samples t-tests were used to examine baseline equivalence. The pretest comparisons indicated no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in receptive vocabulary knowledge, productive vocabulary knowledge, or vocabulary depth, demonstrating that the two groups were comparable before the intervention.

2.2. Instruments

Demographic Questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire was administered before the instructional phase to obtain background information relevant to the characteristics of the participants and the multilingual

context in which the study was conducted. The questionnaire collected information concerning age, gender, academic level, major and academic background, mother tongue or dominant language, and participants' familiarity with or exposure to Persian and Arabic. Collecting these data was particularly important because the instructional materials were drawn from Persian and Arabic poetry and because the study was conducted in a border-region university environment in which monolingual Persian speakers, Arabic speakers, and Persian-Arabic bilingual learners were represented. The questionnaire therefore provided information that could be used to describe the sample and to contextualize interpretation of the instructional findings. All participants were third-year undergraduate EFL students, which helped maintain relative homogeneity with respect to academic level and previous formal English-language instruction. At the same time, their different linguistic backgrounds reflected the multilingual characteristics of the target educational environment and strengthened the contextual relevance of examining Persian and Arabic literary materials as resources for English vocabulary learning.

Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT). The Vocabulary Levels Test was employed to assess participants' receptive vocabulary knowledge before and after the instructional intervention. In the context of the present study, receptive vocabulary knowledge referred to learners' ability to recognize and understand target English vocabulary when encountered in meaningful linguistic contexts. The VLT served as one of the principal outcome measures and was administered to both the experimental and control groups at pretest to establish their initial level of receptive lexical knowledge and again at posttest to determine the extent of vocabulary development following instruction. The pretest score was also used as the covariate in the analysis of posttest receptive vocabulary performance, allowing the intervention effect to be examined after statistically controlling for participants' baseline receptive vocabulary knowledge. The use of a receptive measure was especially relevant because one of the proposed benefits of poetry translation activities was increased exposure to lexical items embedded within meaningful semantic, literary, and cultural contexts rather than presentation of vocabulary as isolated words. The experimental and control groups showed statistically comparable VLT performance before the intervention, providing an appropriate basis for subsequent comparison of their post-intervention receptive vocabulary knowledge.

Productive Vocabulary Levels Test (PVLt). The Productive Vocabulary Levels Test was used to measure participants' productive knowledge of English vocabulary. Whereas receptive vocabulary assessment focused primarily on recognition and comprehension, the productive vocabulary measure was intended to determine learners' capacity to retrieve and actively use vocabulary rather than merely identify its meaning. The PVLt was administered to both groups before the intervention as a baseline assessment and again following the instructional period as a posttest measure. The resulting scores enabled the researchers to determine whether learners exposed to poetry translation-based instruction demonstrated greater development in active lexical knowledge than learners receiving conventional vocabulary instruction. The pretest PVLt score was entered as the covariate in the corresponding ANCOVA model so that posttest group differences could be evaluated while controlling for initial productive vocabulary ability. Productive vocabulary constituted a particularly important outcome in the present study because the instructional approach required learners not only to encounter vocabulary but also to engage actively with lexical choices while interpreting meanings and translating or comparing alternative expressions. Thus, the PVLt provided an outcome measure corresponding to the active retrieval and use of vocabulary that the intervention was designed to stimulate.

Word Associates Test (WAT). The Word Associates Test was administered to evaluate the depth of participants' vocabulary knowledge. In this study, vocabulary depth represented knowledge extending beyond simple recognition or production of individual words to encompass richer understanding of semantic relationships, lexical associations, contextual meanings, and relationships among words. The WAT was administered at both pretest and posttest to the experimental and control groups, thereby providing a baseline measure and an outcome measure of changes in the quality and interconnectedness of learners' lexical knowledge. This dimension was particularly relevant to poetry-based translation because literary texts contain words within semantic, metaphorical, cultural, and contextual networks, requiring learners to consider how lexical meanings change or become more precise according to context. The pre-intervention WAT scores were compared between the two groups as part of the baseline-equivalence analysis and were subsequently treated as a covariate when posttest vocabulary-depth scores were analyzed. In this way, the measure enabled the study to determine whether

translation-based engagement with Persian and Arabic poetry contributed not simply to acquiring additional vocabulary items but to developing a more elaborate and interconnected understanding of English vocabulary. The manuscript identifies the VLT, PVLT, and WAT as the three principal measures used to establish participants' baseline vocabulary performance and assess the three targeted dimensions of lexical development.

2.3. Intervention

The instructional intervention consisted of vocabulary teaching through selected Persian and Arabic poems and their published English translations. The experimental group received poetry translation-based instruction, whereas the control group received conventional vocabulary instruction during the same instructional period. Considerable attention was devoted to the selection and preparation of the literary materials to ensure that they were appropriate for intermediate-level undergraduate EFL learners and provided meaningful opportunities for vocabulary development. Selection criteria included lexical richness and vocabulary density, meaningful contextual presentation of target words, literary and cultural value, moderate linguistic complexity, availability of suitable English translations, relevance to learners' cultural backgrounds, suitability for classroom interpretation and discussion, and the potential to promote both receptive and productive vocabulary learning. Excessively complex, highly idiomatic, or otherwise inaccessible texts were avoided so that literary difficulty would not interfere with the vocabulary-learning objectives. The Persian corpus consisted of ten poems, including four by Rumi, three by Saadi, and three by Hafez, addressing themes such as human experience, wisdom, identity, morality, hope, love, and personal growth. The Arabic corpus likewise consisted of ten poems, including three by Al-Mutanabbi, four by Mahmoud Darwish, and three by Nizar Qabbani, thereby incorporating both classical and modern Arabic literary traditions and providing lexical diversity across different literary styles. Only published English translations produced by recognized translators or academic publishers were used. When more than one English translation of a poem was available, preference was given to the version offering greater semantic clarity and pedagogical suitability. Translation selection emphasized semantic accuracy, lexical transparency, cultural comprehensibility, accessibility to intermediate learners, and usefulness for instructional purposes, and the selected

materials were reviewed by specialists in English-language teaching and translation studies before their use. During instruction, learners engaged with vocabulary through activities that required them to read translated texts, compare linguistic expressions and alternative translations, examine lexical meanings in context, discuss interpretations, identify relationships between source-language concepts and English lexical choices, justify vocabulary selections, and reconstruct meaning across languages. Such activities provided repeated opportunities to notice, retrieve, manipulate, discuss, and use target words rather than encounter them solely through decontextualized definitions or memorization. In contrast, students in the control group were taught comparable vocabulary content through conventional instructional procedures without the use of Persian and Arabic poetry translation activities.

2.4. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively to determine whether poetry translation-based instruction produced greater improvement in receptive vocabulary knowledge, productive vocabulary knowledge, and vocabulary depth than conventional vocabulary instruction. Before conducting the principal inferential analyses, the dataset was screened for completeness, extreme values, baseline differences, and assumptions required for analysis of covariance. Missing-data screening indicated that complete pretest and posttest data were available for all 70 participants. Potential outliers were examined using standardized z scores and the interquartile-range approach; no extreme standardized outliers were identified, and a single mild observation detected for pretest vocabulary depth was retained because it was not considered severe or indicative of a data-recording error. Baseline equivalence between the experimental and control groups was evaluated using independent-samples t-tests for the receptive vocabulary, productive vocabulary, and vocabulary-depth pretest scores. These comparisons showed no significant pre-intervention differences between the groups. Before ANCOVA was performed, relevant statistical assumptions were evaluated. Shapiro-Wilk tests were used to examine normality, with particular emphasis on the distributions of the residuals from the ANCOVA models; residuals for all three outcome models showed acceptable normality. Equality of error variances between the groups was examined using Levene's test, and the results supported homogeneity of variance for receptive vocabulary,

productive vocabulary, and vocabulary depth. Homogeneity of regression slopes was examined by testing the interaction between each pretest covariate and instructional group; none of these interaction terms was statistically significant, indicating that the relationship between pretest and posttest performance was sufficiently consistent across groups for ANCOVA. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated to summarize pretest and posttest vocabulary performance, and gain scores were derived by subtracting pretest scores from corresponding posttest scores. Paired-samples t-tests were used to examine pretest-to-posttest changes within each group, while independent-samples t-tests were used to compare the magnitude of gain scores between groups. Effect sizes were reported alongside these comparisons using Cohen's d or Cohen's $d_{>z}$, as appropriate. The principal analyses consisted of three separate ANCOVA models. For receptive vocabulary knowledge, posttest VLT performance served as the dependent variable, instructional group served as the independent variable, and receptive vocabulary pretest score was entered as the covariate. The same analytical procedure was applied to productive vocabulary knowledge using PVLTL scores and to vocabulary depth using WAT scores. This approach allowed post-intervention group differences to be evaluated after statistically adjusting for initial vocabulary performance. Statistical significance was evaluated at an alpha level of .05, while partial eta squared

was reported as an index of the magnitude of the instructional effect in the ANCOVA models. Together, these analyses enabled assessment of within-group vocabulary development, between-group differences in improvement, and the adjusted effect of poetry translation-based instruction on each of the three targeted dimensions of vocabulary knowledge.

3. Findings and Results

The study included 70 undergraduate EFL learners who were equally distributed between the experimental and control conditions, with 35 participants (50.0%) in each group. Of the total sample, 40 participants (57.1%) were male and 30 (42.9%) were female. Participants ranged in age from 20 to 24 years, with a mean age of 22.20 years. Specifically, 10 participants (14.3%) were 20 years old, 17 (24.3%) were 21 years old, 6 (8.6%) were 22 years old, 23 (32.9%) were 23 years old, and 14 (20.0%) were 24 years old. Thus, 23-year-old students constituted the largest age category. With respect to language background, 43 participants (61.4%) reported Persian as their dominant language, 17 (24.3%) reported Arabic, and 10 (14.3%) were Persian-Arabic bilinguals. The presence of Persian-dominant, Arabic-dominant, and bilingual students reflected the multilingual characteristics of the Iranian-Iraqi border-region context in which the study was conducted.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Vocabulary Knowledge Across Groups and Measurement Phases

Variable	Group	Phase	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Receptive Vocabulary	Experimental	Pretest	35	41.63	5.03	29	52
Receptive Vocabulary	Experimental	Posttest	35	56.06	5.63	41	67
Receptive Vocabulary	Control	Pretest	35	41.57	3.84	35	50
Receptive Vocabulary	Control	Posttest	35	45.69	4.43	39	57
Productive Vocabulary	Experimental	Pretest	35	37.94	4.76	29	48
Productive Vocabulary	Experimental	Posttest	35	51.09	4.90	41	63
Productive Vocabulary	Control	Pretest	35	38.06	3.62	31	45
Productive Vocabulary	Control	Posttest	35	41.03	3.70	34	47
Vocabulary Depth	Experimental	Pretest	35	35.54	4.01	28	45
Vocabulary Depth	Experimental	Posttest	35	49.89	4.57	40	62
Vocabulary Depth	Control	Pretest	35	35.49	4.98	23	44
Vocabulary Depth	Control	Posttest	35	39.06	5.19	26	49

As shown in Table 1, the experimental and control groups demonstrated highly comparable mean scores at pretest across all three dimensions of vocabulary knowledge. For receptive vocabulary, the experimental group increased from a pretest mean of 41.63 (SD = 5.03) to a posttest mean of 56.06 (SD = 5.63), whereas the control group increased from

41.57 (SD = 3.84) to 45.69 (SD = 4.43). A similar pattern was observed for productive vocabulary, for which the experimental group increased from 37.94 (SD = 4.76) to 51.09 (SD = 4.90), compared with an increase from 38.06 (SD = 3.62) to 41.03 (SD = 3.70) in the control group. Vocabulary depth also increased substantially in the

experimental group, from 35.54 (SD = 4.01) at pretest to 49.89 (SD = 4.57) at posttest, whereas the corresponding increase in the control group was from 35.49 (SD = 4.98) to 39.06 (SD = 5.19). Accordingly, although both groups showed higher posttest scores, the magnitude of descriptive improvement was considerably greater among learners who received poetry translation-based instruction.

Prior to conducting the primary inferential analyses, the data were screened and the assumptions required for ANCOVA were evaluated. No missing data were identified for any of the six pretest and posttest measures, and therefore all 70 participants were retained in the analysis. Examination of extreme values using standardized z scores revealed no severe outliers; although one mild IQR-based outlier was observed for pretest vocabulary depth, it was retained because it was neither an extreme standardized value nor indicative of a data-recording error. Independent-samples t-tests further demonstrated baseline equivalence between the experimental and control groups for receptive vocabulary, $t(68) = 0.053$, $p = .958$, productive vocabulary, $t(68) = -$

0.113 , $p = .910$, and vocabulary depth, $t(68) = 0.053$, $p = .958$. Regarding normality, the Shapiro-Wilk test was nonsignificant for posttest productive vocabulary ($W = .976$, $p = .190$) and posttest vocabulary depth ($W = .981$, $p = .360$), although posttest receptive vocabulary showed a significant deviation from normality ($W = .961$, $p = .028$). More importantly for ANCOVA, residuals from all three models were normally distributed, with $W = .979$, $p = .277$ for receptive vocabulary, $W = .990$, $p = .871$ for productive vocabulary, and $W = .975$, $p = .164$ for vocabulary depth. Levene's tests were nonsignificant for receptive vocabulary, $F = 0.731$, $p = .396$, productive vocabulary, $F = 1.510$, $p = .223$, and vocabulary depth, $F = 1.170$, $p = .283$, supporting homogeneity of variance. Finally, the interactions between each pretest covariate and group membership were nonsignificant for receptive vocabulary, $F = 0.160$, $p = .690$, productive vocabulary, $F = 0.015$, $p = .902$, and vocabulary depth, $F = 0.296$, $p = .588$. Therefore, the assumptions necessary for conducting ANCOVA were considered adequately satisfied.

Table 2

ANCOVA Results for the Effects of Poetry Translation-Based Instruction on Vocabulary Knowledge

Dependent Variable	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	Partial η^2
Receptive Vocabulary	Pretest	1557.84	1	1557.84	562.39	< .001	.894
	Group	1860.22	1	1860.22	671.56	< .001	.909
	Error	185.59	67	2.77	—	—	—
Productive Vocabulary	Pretest	1076.79	1	1076.79	355.53	< .001	.841
	Group	1807.75	1	1807.75	596.87	< .001	.899
	Error	202.92	67	3.03	—	—	—
Vocabulary Depth	Pretest	1375.01	1	1375.01	364.97	< .001	.845
	Group	2030.44	1	2030.44	538.94	< .001	.889
	Error	252.42	67	3.77	—	—	—

The ANCOVA results presented in Table 2 demonstrated statistically significant effects of instructional condition on all three dimensions of vocabulary knowledge after controlling for the corresponding pretest scores. For receptive vocabulary knowledge, the group effect was statistically significant, $F(1, 67) = 671.56$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .909$, indicating a very large treatment effect. After adjustment for baseline scores, the experimental group obtained an adjusted posttest mean of 56.03 compared with 45.72 for the control group. A similarly significant effect was observed for productive vocabulary knowledge, $F(1, 67) = 596.87$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .899$, with adjusted posttest means of 51.14 for the experimental group and 40.97 for the

control group. Finally, poetry translation-based instruction had a statistically significant effect on vocabulary depth, $F(1, 67) = 538.94$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .889$. The adjusted posttest mean for vocabulary depth was 49.86 in the experimental group and 39.09 in the control group. All three partial eta-squared values indicated very large effects, with the largest effect observed for receptive vocabulary, followed by productive vocabulary and vocabulary depth. These results supported all three study hypotheses and showed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group after baseline vocabulary performance was statistically controlled.

Table 3

Paired-Samples t-Test Results for Pretest-to-Posttest Changes in Vocabulary Knowledge

Variable	Group	Pretest M	Posttest M	Mean Difference	t	df	p	Cohen's dz
Receptive Vocabulary	Experimental	41.63	56.06	14.43	45.33	34	< .001	7.66
Receptive Vocabulary	Control	41.57	45.69	4.11	16.78	34	< .001	2.84
Productive Vocabulary	Experimental	37.94	51.09	13.14	38.01	34	< .001	6.42
Productive Vocabulary	Control	38.06	41.03	2.97	12.72	34	< .001	2.15
Vocabulary Depth	Experimental	35.54	49.89	14.34	43.09	34	< .001	7.28
Vocabulary Depth	Control	35.49	39.06	3.57	11.22	34	< .001	1.90

As shown in Table 3, paired-samples t-tests revealed statistically significant pretest-to-posttest improvements in all vocabulary dimensions in both instructional groups. In the experimental group, receptive vocabulary increased by 14.43 points, $t(34) = 45.33$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d_z = 7.66$; productive vocabulary increased by 13.14 points, $t(34) = 38.01$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d_z = 6.42$; and vocabulary depth increased by 14.34 points, $t(34) = 43.09$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d_z = 7.28$. Significant improvements were also observed in the control group, including a 4.11-point increase in receptive vocabulary, $t(34) = 16.78$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d_z = 2.84$; a 2.97-point increase in productive vocabulary, $t(34) = 12.72$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d_z = 2.15$; and a 3.57-point increase in vocabulary depth, $t(34) = 11.22$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d_z = 1.90$. Although both groups demonstrated significant gains over time, the mean differences and effect sizes were substantially greater in the experimental group across all three outcomes, providing further evidence that poetry translation-based instruction produced stronger vocabulary development than conventional vocabulary instruction.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study examined the effectiveness of Persian and Arabic poetry translation-based instruction in improving receptive vocabulary knowledge, productive vocabulary knowledge, and depth of vocabulary knowledge among undergraduate EFL learners in the Iranian-Iraqi border region. The findings consistently demonstrated that learners who received poetry translation-based instruction achieved substantially greater vocabulary development than those who received conventional vocabulary instruction. After controlling for corresponding pretest scores, statistically significant group effects were observed for receptive vocabulary, $F(1, 67) = 671.56$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .909$, productive vocabulary, $F(1, 67) = 596.87$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .899$, and vocabulary depth, $F(1, 67) = 538.94$, $p < .001$,

partial $\eta^2 = .889$. These effect sizes indicate that the instructional intervention accounted for a substantial proportion of posttest variance across all three dimensions of vocabulary knowledge. Although both groups improved significantly from pretest to posttest, the magnitude of improvement was considerably greater in the experimental group. Taken together, these findings support the use of culturally familiar poetry and translation activities as an integrated approach to vocabulary instruction in multilingual EFL contexts.

The strongest effect was observed for receptive vocabulary knowledge. Learners exposed to Persian and Arabic poetry translation activities demonstrated a considerably greater ability to recognize and understand English vocabulary following the intervention than learners receiving conventional instruction. One plausible explanation is that poetic texts provided vocabulary in meaningful semantic and cultural contexts rather than as isolated lexical units. Poetry characteristically condenses meaning and places considerable functional weight on individual lexical choices, thereby directing learners' attention toward the relationship between specific words and the larger meanings constructed within a text. Alipour's analysis of the vocabulary and linguistic structure of poetry emphasizes the importance of lexical selection and organization as fundamental characteristics of poetic language (Alipour, 1999). When such texts are incorporated into language instruction, learners are repeatedly required to attend to vocabulary in relation to imagery, ideas, cultural references, and contextual meaning. This contextual richness may have facilitated stronger lexical recognition and comprehension among learners in the experimental group.

The receptive-vocabulary findings are particularly consistent with Farrah and Al-Bakri, who reported that the use of poetry could contribute to the development of English vocabulary among EFL learners while also supporting

pronunciation and motivation (Farrah & Al-Bakri, 2022). Their findings strengthen the argument that poetry can serve as more than an aesthetic or literary supplement in language classrooms; it can function as a pedagogically useful source of lexical input. Similarly, Islam emphasized the value of conventional poetry as authentic material in EFL/ESL classrooms and argued for integrating literary texts into language-learning environments (Islam, 2022). The present findings extend this perspective by indicating that poetry may be especially effective when combined with translation activities requiring learners to identify, interpret, and compare lexical meanings across languages. Thus, the significant improvement in receptive vocabulary can be understood as a result of repeated contextualized exposure coupled with conscious attention to meaning.

The use of learners' familiar linguistic and cultural resources may have further strengthened receptive vocabulary acquisition. In the present study, the poetry materials originated from Persian and Arabic literary traditions that were relevant to the linguistic backgrounds of participants. This may have allowed learners to activate existing cultural and conceptual knowledge while processing unfamiliar or developing English vocabulary. Ahmed found that the use of first-language poetry and moral stories was associated with second-language oracy development in an EFL context, demonstrating that L1 literary resources can contribute meaningfully to L2 learning rather than necessarily interfering with it (Ahmed, 2022). The present results appear compatible with this perspective. When learners already possess some understanding of a poetic theme, cultural reference, or source-language concept, translating that material into or through English may reduce conceptual unfamiliarity while simultaneously focusing attention on the English lexical forms required to express the meaning.

The second major finding concerned productive vocabulary knowledge. After adjustment for baseline productive vocabulary, the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group, with a very large treatment effect. This result is particularly important because productive vocabulary requires learners to retrieve and employ lexical items actively rather than merely recognize them. Poetry translation activities appear to have created opportunities for this type of active lexical processing. Learners were not restricted to reading target words; they had to consider possible equivalents, compare expressions, reconstruct meanings, and make decisions about appropriate lexical choices. Such processes may strengthen the

accessibility of vocabulary in memory because learners repeatedly retrieve and manipulate words in the course of completing meaningful tasks.

This interpretation aligns with research showing that poetry-related activities can encourage active and productive language use. Fithriani's investigation of poetry writing in EFL classrooms demonstrated that learners draw upon multiple strategies while constructing poetry in English, illustrating the cognitive and linguistic engagement involved in poetic production (Fithriani, 2021). Likewise, Wahibullah and Indah reported on the development of students' English poetry-writing ability through an instructional approach centered on poetic composition (Wahibullah & Indah, 2021). Although the present study focused on translation rather than original poetry writing, all of these activities share an important feature: learners must actively search for, evaluate, and produce lexical items. Consequently, the substantial gains in productive vocabulary may reflect the transition from passive exposure to active lexical retrieval generated by the translation process.

Collaborative and oral engagement with poetic material may also explain the productive vocabulary gains observed in the experimental condition. Poetry-based activities often stimulate discussion because meanings, interpretations, and lexical choices can be negotiated among learners. Kamala and Aziz highlighted the role of collaborative learning in supporting guided writing and oral performance through poetry (Kamala & Aziz, 2020). Saad and colleagues similarly examined learners' experiences with poetry-oriented oral and reflective activities, emphasizing the potential of poetry to promote active verbalization and engagement (Saad et al., 2023). Within translation-based instruction, discussing alternative meanings or determining how a poetic expression should be represented in another language can require learners to articulate their reasoning and repeatedly retrieve relevant vocabulary. Such interaction may help explain why the experimental group developed productive vocabulary to a substantially greater degree than learners who received more conventional instruction.

The third major finding was that poetry translation-based instruction significantly enhanced vocabulary depth. The experimental group showed substantially greater improvement in knowledge related to lexical relationships and contextual meaning than the control group, even after pretest differences were statistically controlled. Vocabulary depth involves more than knowing a word's basic definition; it concerns richer knowledge of how a word relates to other lexical items and how its meaning operates across contexts.

Poetry is particularly suitable for such learning because poetic language often depends on semantic association, connotation, figurative meaning, and deliberate lexical contrast. Learners translating a poem cannot always rely on direct one-to-one lexical substitution. Instead, they may need to consider the semantic implications of different alternatives and determine which option most appropriately conveys the intended meaning.

The particularly strong improvement in vocabulary depth is therefore understandable in light of the cognitive demands of translation. Comparison across languages can encourage learners to recognize that apparently equivalent words may differ in connotation, contextual appropriateness, emotional value, or semantic range. This process may lead to more elaborate lexical representations than conventional memorization activities. Iida's work using poetry as a means of examining and representing English-language-learning experience demonstrates the capacity of poetic activity to generate reflection on language and meaning (Iida, 2022). Although situated within a different methodological framework, such findings are consistent with the broader view that poetry promotes deliberate engagement with language rather than superficial processing. The present results indicate that this reflective and interpretive potential can be converted into measurable improvement in lexical depth when poetic texts are incorporated into systematic translation activities.

The findings can also be understood within the wider context of EFL education in Iraq and neighboring multilingual settings. Previous research has identified persistent challenges in learners' ability to use English appropriately and effectively. Darweesh and Kadhim, for example, documented problems among Iraqi EFL learners in the use of conjunctions as cohesive devices, demonstrating that language learners may experience difficulty transferring formal knowledge into appropriate contextual use (Darweesh & Kadhim, 2016). Mubarak likewise examined Iraqi EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge and their ability to comprehend and produce speech acts, emphasizing the relationship between language knowledge and its productive application (Mubarak, 2023). Although these studies addressed grammatical cohesion and pragmatic competence rather than vocabulary acquisition, they illustrate a broader pedagogical issue: successful EFL learning requires learners to use linguistic knowledge meaningfully rather than simply demonstrate awareness of isolated forms. The poetry translation approach employed in the present study may help

address this broader problem by positioning vocabulary within interpretive and communicative activity.

The results are also consistent with pedagogical perspectives emphasizing scaffolding, strategy use, and learner-centered instruction. Rezaee and colleagues investigated scaffolding and the use of language-learning strategies in the Iraqi language-teaching context, illustrating the importance of instructional support in encouraging learners to engage more effectively with language-learning processes (Rezaee et al., 2018). Poetry translation can function as a scaffold because learners begin with culturally and linguistically meaningful source material and gradually construct equivalent or related meanings in English. Rather than confronting English lexical items entirely without conceptual support, learners can use prior linguistic knowledge as a basis for interpretation. The process therefore connects familiar information with developing L2 lexical resources and may promote more deliberate use of vocabulary-learning strategies.

The effectiveness of the intervention may additionally be related to learner engagement. Research among Iraqi EFL students has shown that motivation, learning styles, attention, and engagement are relevant aspects of the language-learning process. Al-Banaa and Nevisi explored the relationship between self-motivation and learning styles among Iraqi EFL learners, emphasizing individual variation in how students approach learning (Al-Banaa & Nevisi, 2023). Khammat Al-iessa and colleagues likewise examined attention and engagement among Iraqi EFL students, reinforcing the importance of learners' active involvement in instructional settings (Khammat Al-iessa et al., 2023). Poetry translation may promote engagement by giving students texts that are culturally recognizable and semantically interesting while simultaneously requiring active decision-making. This combination may generate more sustained cognitive involvement than vocabulary exercises in which correct meanings are simply supplied by the teacher.

The present results are also relevant to discussions concerning literature in Iraqi EFL education. Nader Sharhan and Janfeshan examined Iraqi preparatory-school teachers' perceptions of literature-related content in English textbooks, demonstrating that the place of literature within EFL curricula continues to be a meaningful pedagogical issue (Nader Sharhan & Janfeshan, 2024). The strong effects observed in the present study suggest that literary content may have greater instructional value when it is directly connected to identifiable language-learning objectives.

Rather than incorporating poetry only for cultural appreciation or literary interpretation, teachers can structure activities around lexical recognition, translation choices, semantic comparison, and productive use. In this way, literature can become an integrated language-learning resource.

The results further complement recent attempts to develop alternative approaches to vocabulary instruction. Al-aajam investigated brain-based learning as an approach to developing vocabulary acquisition among Iraqi EFL students, reflecting continuing interest in instructional strategies that go beyond routine vocabulary teaching (Al-aajam, 2025). The current findings similarly indicate that innovation in vocabulary pedagogy can produce substantial learning benefits when instruction requires learners to process lexical items actively and meaningfully. The specific contribution of the present study lies in combining poetry, translation, multilingual knowledge, and vocabulary learning within a single instructional framework.

More broadly, these findings support flexible and context-sensitive approaches to English-language teaching. Abbas and Al-Bakri's work concerning post-method-era teacher development in the Iraqi EFL context reflects the importance of moving beyond rigid dependence on a single prescribed teaching methodology (Abbas & Al-Bakri, 2020). The poetry translation approach represents such contextual adaptation because it takes advantage of resources already available within learners' linguistic and cultural environment. Likewise, research examining limitations of English-language learning in Iranian universities has emphasized the need to identify practical strategies for overcoming obstacles to effective learning (Faramarzi Babadi et al., 2024). The current results suggest that the incorporation of regional literary traditions may be one productive response, particularly where students possess multilingual backgrounds that can be mobilized rather than suppressed during English instruction.

Overall, the pattern of findings demonstrates that Persian and Arabic poetry translation-based instruction supported vocabulary learning at several levels simultaneously. Receptive vocabulary showed the largest effect, suggesting that repeated encounters with contextualized lexical items strongly facilitated recognition and comprehension. Productive vocabulary also improved markedly, indicating that translation tasks encouraged learners to retrieve and actively use target words. The substantial effect on vocabulary depth further suggests that engagement with poetic meaning promoted richer semantic connections and

contextual understanding. These complementary outcomes are consistent with previous research emphasizing poetry as an authentic and productive EFL resource (Farrah & Al-Bakri, 2022; Islam, 2022), the usefulness of L1 literary resources in second-language learning (Ahmed, 2022), and the value of active poetic production and interaction (Fithriani, 2021; Kamala & Aziz, 2020; Saad et al., 2023). The present study therefore contributes evidence that culturally grounded translation activities can transform poetry into a systematic tool for multidimensional vocabulary development in multilingual university EFL classrooms.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study employed a quasi-experimental design based on intact classes rather than individual random assignment, which limits the extent to which all possible pre-existing differences between participants could be eliminated despite statistical evidence of baseline equivalence. Second, the sample consisted of only 70 third-year undergraduate EFL learners from a particular Iranian-Iraqi border-region educational context; therefore, the findings cannot automatically be generalized to learners at other proficiency levels, educational stages, institutions, or sociolinguistic environments. Third, the study focused on a selected corpus of Persian and Arabic poetry, and differences in literary genre, poetic complexity, translation quality, cultural familiarity, or learners' previous knowledge of particular poems may influence instructional effectiveness. Fourth, vocabulary development was assessed over a pretest–posttest period without a delayed follow-up assessment, so the long-term retention of vocabulary gains remains unknown. Finally, the study concentrated on receptive vocabulary, productive vocabulary, and vocabulary depth and did not directly examine other potentially relevant outcomes such as learner motivation, attitudes toward translation, classroom engagement, reading comprehension, speaking performance, or qualitative experiences during the intervention.

Future studies should replicate the present investigation with larger and more diverse samples across multiple universities and educational settings to determine whether similar effects emerge among learners with different linguistic backgrounds and proficiency levels. Randomized controlled designs, where institutionally feasible, could strengthen causal inference by providing more rigorous control over potential group differences. Longitudinal studies incorporating delayed posttests are particularly recommended to determine whether vocabulary gained

through poetry translation is retained over several weeks or months. Researchers could also compare Persian and Arabic poetry separately to determine whether cultural familiarity, source language, literary period, or poetic style influences vocabulary outcomes. Comparative studies involving poetry translation, prose translation, conventional vocabulary instruction, and other literature-based approaches could clarify which components of the intervention contribute most strongly to lexical development. Future research should additionally incorporate qualitative interviews, classroom observations, learner diaries, or think-aloud procedures to investigate how students process lexical meanings during translation activities. Examining possible mediating variables such as motivation, engagement, translation competence, language background, and degree of bilingualism may also provide a more detailed explanation of why some learners benefit more strongly from poetry translation than others.

EFL teachers working in multilingual university contexts may consider incorporating carefully selected culturally familiar poetry into vocabulary instruction rather than relying exclusively on isolated word lists, definitions, and decontextualized exercises. Poetry should be selected according to learners' proficiency levels, lexical needs, cultural familiarity, and the clarity of available English translations. Instructional activities can encourage learners to identify target vocabulary in context, compare possible translations, explain differences among lexical alternatives, examine connotations and semantic relationships, reconstruct meanings, and use newly learned vocabulary in original sentences, discussions, or written tasks. Teachers should avoid treating translation as simple word-for-word substitution and instead use it as a guided process of semantic comparison and meaning negotiation. Persian and Arabic literary materials can be particularly useful in multilingual border-region classrooms because they provide culturally meaningful starting points for engagement with English. Curriculum developers and material designers may therefore integrate local literary resources into vocabulary-learning units while establishing explicit receptive, productive, and depth-of-knowledge objectives. Teacher education programs may also provide training in selecting pedagogically appropriate literary texts and designing translation activities that promote active vocabulary retrieval, contextual interpretation, and sustained learner participation.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

We hereby thank all participants for agreeing to record the interview and participate in the research.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were under the ethical standards of the institutional and, or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

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