

## Cultural and Linguistic Borrowing in the Urdu Translation of ‘The Bell Jar’: An Analysis of English Loanwords and their Significance

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### Abstract

*This research delves into the intricate dynamics of linguistic borrowing between English and Urdu, primarily focusing on the Urdu translation of “The Bell Jar.” Employing a qualitative methodology, the study navigates the nuanced reasons behind the incorporation of English loanwords into Urdu, emphasizing Lawrence Venuti’s theory of foreignization and domestication. Through purposive sampling, the research wields descriptive method to analyze loanwords, unveiling patterns and adaptations within the Urdu context. The findings shed light on the multifaceted interplay of cultural, historical, and linguistic factors, revealing a complex negotiation between preserving linguistic integrity and adapting to a globalized world. While acknowledging limitations, such as a lack of quantitative data, the study significantly contributes to understand the evolving nature of languages and the intricate dynamics of translation choices in the Urdu linguistic landscape.*

**Keywords:** Linguistic borrowing, Urdu translation, English loanwords, Cultural adaptation

### 1. Introduction

Language is the primary means of conveying ideas, sentiments, emotions, and beliefs, acting as a cornerstone of human communication. The global landscape's rapid growth and development profoundly affect various aspects of life, including language proficiency. In this interconnected world, characterized by diverse socio-cultural groups, language undergoes dynamic transformations through conscious and unconscious processes such as code mixing, borrowing, coining, and transliteration. The significance of a language is measured by its prevalence and utilization. Amid the vast linguistic diversity worldwide, where approximately 6500 languages exist, over 2000 languages are dwindling to merely 1000 speakers. English occupies the most prestigious status in academia while Urdu-Hindi is considered the second most spoken language in the world. Cross-cultural interactions frequently lead to word exchanges between languages, a phenomenon observed globally.

The historical context of the colonial subcontinent stands out, highlighting the extensive borrowing between English and Urdu. English's influence persisted for a century, fostering substantial vocabulary borrowing. Urdu evolved from Persian and Arabic influences beside the contribution of the other languages. Language dynamics, particularly during colonization, positioned Urdu as the language of the oppressed and English as the language of the oppressors. Despite the colonists' departure, English's impact persisted, and Urdu continued to integrate English terms into expressions, creating Urduized versions of English. The dynamic interplay between Urdu and English involves the assimilation of English terms into Urduized renditions, influenced by factors such as societal status, conceptual gaps, and prestige. Research on language contact, initiated by linguists like Haugen and Weirich in the 1950s, explores the evolving dynamics of languages during interaction, giving rise to phenomena like lexical borrowing, code-switching, and code-mixing (Annamalai, 1989). Urdu's continuous expansion, rooted in Persian and Arabic influences, manifests through various methods of language borrowing. This discussion focuses specifically on the direct borrowing approach, where Urdu seamlessly incorporates English words with minimal modification (Sarwet, 2006). The influence of English extends beyond spoken language, permeating written texts facilitated by technological advancements and globalization. Publications promoting Urdu globally grapple with resisting the influx of borrowed words, underscoring English's pervasive impact on the language (D’Souza, 2001). The ongoing evolution of language, characterized by the concurrent use

of Urdu and English, mirrors the dynamic nature of languages and their adaptive responses to shifting social landscapes.

This intricate interplay of historical, social, and linguistic factors underscores the evolving nature of languages. The incorporation of English terms into Urdu translations signifies a phenomenon rooted in the exchange of linguistic and cultural elements. Esteemed scholars like Tariq Rahman (2003) have extensively discussed this interplay, emphasizing the presence of linguistic gaps within Urdu, prompting the borrowing of English expressions (Rahman, 1998). English's predominance in science, technology, and academia influences Urdu translators to borrow terms precisely for conveying advancements in these fields (Baumgardner, 1993). The influence of English in global media, technology, and popular culture further permeates Urdu translations, with translators opting to integrate English words to capture cultural subtleties (Kachru, 1989). This backdrop sets the stage for the study, which aims to explore the incorporation of English vocabulary into the Urdu language, focusing on loanwords in the translation of Sylvia Plath's "The Bell Jar." Sylvia Plath, a distinguished poet, novelist, and short story writer, penned the captivating novel 'The Bell Jar.' Hailing from the United States, Plath's narrative unfolds as a semi-autobiographical exploration that underwent nuanced changes in its locales and character identities. The Urdu translation, titled 'Kanch ka Zindan' by Dr. Sahba Jamal Shadli, further enriches the narrative by employing English loanwords as linguistic bridges, guiding readers through the intricate tapestry of cultural and emotional nuances. Defined by Haugen (1950), a loanword seamlessly assimilates into another language without alteration, involving the adoption of a lexical item from a donor language into the recipient language. Lexical Borrowing (Capuz, 1997) encompasses the overarching process connecting languages through the adoption of words (Hudson, 1996). The theoretical framework guiding the exploration incorporates Lawrence Venuti's theory, which distinguishes between foreignization and domestication in translation.

This study delves into the Urdu translation of Sylvia Plath's 'The Bell Jar,' a captivating novel, the labyrinthine narrative employs English loanwords as linguistic bridges, guiding readers through the intricate tapestry of cultural and emotional nuances. The study seeks to unravel the multifaceted interplay between language, culture, and sociopolitical contexts by examining the incorporation of English terms into Urdu translations. This exploration provides a nuanced perspective on linguistic borrowing, raising concerns about potential threats to Urdu's linguistic integrity. The study contributes to the broader understanding of the adaptive responses of languages in an increasingly globalized world, emphasizing the delicate equilibrium between language expansions through borrowing.

### **1.1. Significance of the Study**

The study provides insights into the use of English loanwords in the Urdu translation of 'The Bell Jar'. It explores factors influencing loanword adoption, revealing cultural and linguistic dynamics. Findings contribute to understanding historical and cultural influences on language in translated literature. The research aids in comprehending how loanwords shape cultural negotiation in literary translations, affecting community reception.

### **1.2. Objectives of the Study**

The prime objective of the study is to evaluate English loanword usage in the Urdu translation of 'The Bell Jar' across different categories. Secondly, it analyses factors shaping the adoption of English loanwords, influencing the narrative. Thirdly, this study also investigates the impact of English loanwords on cultural negotiation in the Urdu version, affecting community reception.

### 1.3. Research Questions

- i. How extensively does the Urdu translation of 'The Bell Jar' use English loanwords in various categories?
- ii. What factors do influence the adoption of English loanwords in the Urdu translation, shaping the narrative?
- iii. In what ways do English loanwords contribute to cultural negotiation in the Urdu translation of 'The Bell Jar'?

## 2. Literature Review

The dynamic nature of linguistics encompasses both intra- and interlinguistic changes, allowing languages to exhibit flexibility and readily adopt and modify elements (Bynon, 1977). With approximately 7000 languages worldwide, linguistic item transfer occurs during language interaction through word borrowing, a phenomenon highlighted by scholars like Kachru (1989). Kachru's distinction between "deficit hypotheses" and "dominance hypotheses" provides insights into the reasons for lexical borrowing. According to Kachru(1994), languages engage in borrowing to compensate for deficiencies, especially in lexical resources. This occurs when a native language lacks an equivalent, and borrowing serves to fill linguistic gaps. Conversely, the dominance hypothesis suggests that, during cultural contact, the dominant culture borrows words from the subordinate not to address deficiencies but to emphasize linguistic uniqueness (Kachru, 1994).

English, recognized as the world's language, plays a crucial role as a donor language, significantly influencing Urdu's status. At the beginning of the 20th century, English's emergence as a universal language, adopted by many nations, attributed to historical advancements and industrial revolutions, influences languages worldwide (Dollerup, 1996). Urdu, demonstrating remarkable adaptability in borrowing, absorbs and introduces diversity in English loanwords. The borrowing process involves linguistic modifications, reflecting the dynamic nature of language (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Linguists like Sapir (1921) acknowledge the flow of lexical resources between languages during cultural interchange. Crystal (2003) emphasizes that English's dominance extends beyond linguistic functions to modern technology, influencing internet-based communication and travel agencies.

English loanwords, beyond their linguistic functions, denote status and authority. Communities borrow terms with unique symbolic meanings from English, driven not only by linguistic prominence but also by the cultural domination of English (Myers-Scotton, 1993; Hudson, 1996). The symbolic importance of English loanwords significantly influences language evolution and cross-cultural communication. The study focuses on the incorporation of English loanwords into Urdu, examining their historical origins, cultural impacts, and linguistic modifications. Scholars like Venuti (1995) stress that translation is a cultural negotiation, not just word transfer. Drawing on Bassnett and Lefevere's (1990) cultural translation theories, the study explores the unfolding dynamics of cultural and linguistic borrowing in the Urdu translation. Cultural translation, viewed as a transformative process, involves adapting elements, including loanwords, to align with the socio-linguistic norms of the target culture. Analyzing the Urdu translation through this lens reveals nuanced dynamics in assimilating English loanwords, offering broader insights into cross-cultural understanding and the reception of Plath's work in Urdu-speaking communities.

The Urdu translation of Sylvia Plath's 'The Bell Jar' unveils a research gap, emphasizing the essential exploration of the dynamic interplay between the original English text and the Urdu language. This study aims to address this gap by delving into the intricate ways in which linguistic elements, particularly English loanwords, contribute to the cultural negotiation inherent in the translation process.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

Lawrence Venuti, a prominent translation theorist, introduced the concepts of “foreignization” and “domestication” to examine translation strategies and their impact on language and culture. Lawrence Venuti's translation theory, particularly the concepts of foreignization and domestication, provides a valuable framework for analyzing the linguistic and cultural dynamics in the Urdu translation of 'The Bell Jar.' Foreignization involves retaining foreign elements in the translation to maintain the foreignness and cultural nuances of the source text. In this context, Urdu's incorporation of English loanwords, as evident in terms like machine, lens, image, state, cell, physician, and blood, showcases a foreignization approach. The Urduized renditions maintain a degree of foreignness, emphasizing the unique cultural and linguistic identity of the source language. This echoes Venuti's notion that foreignization disrupts the target language's norms, allowing readers to engage with the source culture more authentically. Conversely, domestication involves adapting the foreign elements to align with the target language's conventions, making the text more accessible to the target audience. The utilization of English terms in Urdu translations, especially in fields like science, technology, and academia, demonstrates a domestication strategy. Here, the borrowed words are seamlessly integrated, aligning with Urdu linguistic norms, and preserving the readability and cultural relevance for the Urdu-speaking audience.

In the Urdu translation of 'The Bell Jar', the dual application of foreignization and domestication is evident. The direct borrowing approach, where English words are incorporated with minimal modification, showcases a domestication strategy, ensuring linguistic fluidity. Simultaneously, the presence of distinct Urduized versions of English terms emphasizes a foreignization approach, preserving the cultural nuances and foreign elements of the source text. This theoretical framework helps illuminate the complex choices made by Urdu translators in balancing the preservation of cultural integrity and ensuring accessibility for the target audience. It underscores the role of translation in shaping the cultural and linguistic dynamics between Urdu and English, reflecting the broader implications of Venuti's theory in the context of this study.

The translator navigates a delicate balance between foreignization and domestication, showcasing the complexity of linguistic and cultural choices. This application of Venuti's framework sheds light on how the translator negotiates between preserving the integrity of the source text and catering to the linguistic expectations of the Urdu-speaking audience.

#### **4. Methodology**

This research employs a qualitative approach to explore comprehensively the linguistic borrowing phenomena in the Urdu translations of 'The Bell Jar.' The Urdu translation of 'The Bell Jar' is purposively delimited based on the availability and recognition within the Urdu literary circle. The novel is translated in Urdu by Dr. Sahba Jamal Shadli, a distinguished translator known for her expertise in bridging cultural nuances. The study primarily relies on purposive sampling to select specific texts and instances where there English loanwords are integrated into the Urdu translation. This intentional selection allows for an in-depth analysis of the chosen loanwords and their contextual significance. The qualitative aspect involves a descriptive sampling technique, focusing on detailed examination and interpretation of the selected loanwords. By scrutinizing the linguistic, cultural, and contextual aspects, this approach aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the borrowed terms' impact on the Urdu text. This methodology allows for a qualitative exploration of the reasons behind linguistic borrowing, emphasizing the complexity of language, culture contexts. Additionally, the study incorporates a comprehensive review of existing literature on linguistic borrowing and translation theories to inform and support the qualitative analysis. This mixed-method approach enhances the depth and breadth of the research, offering a holistic perspective on the dynamics of Urdu translation influenced by English loanwords in 'The Bell Jar.'

## 5. Data Analysis and Discussion

The data gathered from Urdu translation of 'The Bell Jar' to identify and categorize English loanwords, followed by an in-depth discussion of the implications observed. Through purposive sampling and descriptive method, the English loanwords were meticulously identified and categorized based on thematic domains given in the following table:



Categories	English Terms	Urdu Translation
<b>Beauty and Fashion</b>	Makeup Kit	میک اپ- کیٹ
	Lipstick Shades	لیپسٹک شیڈس
	Pony Tail	پونی ٹیل
	Beauty Editor	بیوٹی ایڈیٹر
	Mascara	مسکارہ
<b>Education and Academia</b>	Grades	گریڈز
	Faculty board	فیکلٹی بورڈ
	College	کالج
	Scholarship	اسکالرشپ
	Semester	سمیسٹر
<b>Entertainment and Events</b>	Fashion show passes	فیشن شو پاسس
	Dance show	ڈانس شو
	Film Premiere	فلم پریمر
	Party	پارٹی
	Orchestra	آرکسٹرا
<b>Technology and Communication</b>	Radio	ریڈیو
	Phone receiver	فون ریسیور
	Microphone	مائیکروفون
	Typing	ٹائپنگ
	Gramophone	گراموفون
<b>Lifestyle and Living</b>	Flat	فلیٹ
	Apartments	اپارٹمنٹس
	Furniture	فرنیچر
	Guest house	گیسٹ ہاؤس
	Cafeteria	کیفیٹیریا
<b>Science and Medicine</b>	Chemistry lab	کیمسٹری لیب
	Thermometer	تھرمامیٹر
	Test Tube	ٹیسٹ ٹیوب
	Stethoscope	اسٹیتھسکوپ
	Formula	فارمولے
<b>Work and Profession</b>	Staff	اسٹاف
	Waitress	ویٹرس
	Agent	ایجنٹ
	Meeting	میٹنگ
	Photographer	فوٹوگرافر
<b>Everyday and Domestic Usages</b>	Tie pin	ٹائی پن
	Suitcase	سوٹ کیس
	Toilet	ٹائیلت
	Lamp	لیمپ
	Coffee	کافی

The above table provides a comprehensive overview of the English words identified in this study, systematically organized based on their respective fields. It is noteworthy that the categorization emerged organically from the data itself, without predefined classifications. The exclusion of

repetitive words ensures a focused representation. The resulting categories span a spectrum of societal domains, encompassing beauty and fashion, education and academia, entertainment and events, technology and communication, lifestyle and living, science and medicine, work and professional, as well as everyday and domestic realms. This dynamic approach to classification mirrors the diverse linguistic landscape uncovered during the research, presenting a nuanced portrayal of the borrowed vocabulary in alignment with various facets of societal life.

The analysis reveals intriguing patterns in the adoption of English loanwords. English loanwords are not merely transliterations; they are seamlessly integrated into Urdu, preserving their original form while becoming integral components of the translated narratives. This cultural and aesthetic integration highlights the adaptability of Urdu to accommodate diverse linguistic influences. The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of linguistic borrowing, emphasizing its role in bridging cultural and linguistic gaps. The deliberate selection of loanwords reflects a conscious effort by translators to maintain the cultural nuances of 'The Bell Jar' while rendering it accessible to Urdu-speaking audiences. The discussion delves into the broader implications of linguistic borrowing in the context of Urdu translation. It explores how English loanwords contribute to the richness of Urdu literature, serving as conduits for cultural exchange. Additionally, the study addresses the impact of linguistic borrowing on the preservation of linguistic identity and the evolving dynamics of language.

## **5.1. Cultural Significance of Proposed Categories**

### **5.1.1. Beauty and Fashion**

The infusion of beauty and fashion-related loan words unveils a cultural metamorphosis, portraying a society embracing self-expression and redefining beauty norms. Terms like “Makeup Kit” and “Lipstick Shades” signify a cultural evolution, highlighting a fusion of global and local aesthetics. These linguistic choices mirror the dynamic interplay between Western influences and indigenous identity.

### **5.1.2. Education and Academia**

The incorporation of educational terms serves as a linguistic portal into a cultural panorama marked by academic fervor. “Grades,” “College”, and “Semester” unveil a society in the throes of educational reform, assimilating Western pedagogical concepts. The term “Scholarship” encapsulates a cultural reverence for intellectual achievements, portraying an era where knowledge acquisition became a revered pursuit.

### **5.1.3. Entertainment and Events**

In the realm of entertainment, loan words act as cultural signposts, pointing towards a society embracing diverse forms of amusement. “Fashion Show Passes,” “Film Premiere,” and “Dance Show” underscore a cultural amalgamation of global entertainment trends. The term “Party” signifies a societal shift towards celebratory social gatherings, capturing the zeitgeist of cultural dynamism. The inclusion of “Orchestra” amplifies the cultural tapestry, showcasing an appreciation for Western musical influences in societal events.

### **5.1.4. Technology and Communication**

The infusion of technological and communication terms reflects a cultural engagement with the evolving landscape of connectivity. “Radio,” “Phone Receiver,” and “Microphone” epitomize a society navigating technological advancements, signifying a cultural shift towards modern

communication modes. "Typing" encapsulates the assimilation of typewriting technology, symbolizing a cultural adaptation to changing communication paradigms.

#### **5.1.5. Lifestyle and Living**

Terms related to lifestyle and living serve as linguistic threads weaving through the fabric of societal changes. "Flat," "Apartments," and "Furniture" reveal a cultural narrative of shifting living standards and architectural preferences. "Cafeteria" signifies a departure from traditional dining norms, reflecting cultural openness to diverse culinary experiences. The inclusion of "Guest House" adds a layer of cultural hospitality, portraying a society welcoming diverse interactions and exchanges.

#### **5.1.6. Science and Medicine**

In the realm of science and medicine, loan words carve a narrative of cultural appreciation for advancements in knowledge. "Chemistry Lab," "Test Tube," and "Thermometer" illustrate a society actively engaging with scientific discoveries. "Stethoscope" and "Formula" signify a cultural acknowledgement of medical tools and terminologies.

#### **5.1.7. Work and Profession**

Loan words related to work and professionalism illuminate a societal canvas painted with diverse occupational roles. "Staff," "Waitress", and "Photographer" depict a cultural landscape embracing varied professions. The term "Agent" signals a recognition of intermediary roles in different domains, reflecting a nuanced understanding of professional dynamics. The use of "Meeting" emphasizes the cultural importance of collaboration and effective communication in professional spheres.

#### **5.1.8. Everyday and Domestic Usages**

In the sphere of everyday life, loan words add depth to the portrayal of cultural nuances. "Suitcase," "Tie Pin," and "Toilet" provide glimpses into daily routines and personal habits, illustrating a society integrating modern conveniences. The term "Lamp" captures the cultural significance of lighting in domestic spaces, while "Coffee" signals a cultural shift in beverage preferences. These linguistic choices enrich the narrative, presenting a society adapting to changing domestic landscapes and embracing global influences.

### **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this comprehensive exploration of linguistic borrowing between English and Urdu, emphasizing the Urdu translation of "The Bell Jar," unveils a complex interplay of cultural, historical, and linguistic factors. Each borrowed term reflects not only linguistic assimilation but also cultural shifts, embodying societal values, aspirations, and adaptability. This study provides a nuanced understanding of how language acts as a cultural bridge, contributing to the evolving nature of languages in a globalized world. Employing qualitative methodologies with a focus on purposive and descriptive sampling, the study delves into the deliberate selection and systematic analysis of loanwords. The nuanced dynamics revealed underscore the evolving nature of languages and the delicate balance between foreignization and domestication in translation. While the research contributes valuable insights into the reasons behind the incorporation of English terms into Urdu, limitations such as a lack of quantitative data and a narrow linguistic focus are acknowledged. Nevertheless, the study significantly advances our understanding of language evolution and



adaptation in a globalized context, providing a nuanced perspective on the intricate interplay of language, culture, and translation choices.

## 7. Implications

The implications of this study are multifaceted. Firstly, it contributes to the scholarly understanding of linguistic borrowing and adaptation, particularly in the context of Urdu translation of English literary work "The Bell Jar." The insights gained into the reasons and patterns of incorporating loanwords provide a foundation for future research in translation studies and sociolinguistics. Moreover, the study's findings have practical implications for translators, encouraging a nuanced approach to foreignization and domestication based on the cultural and linguistic nuances of the target language. Moreover, by highlighting the delicate balance between preserving linguistic integrity and adapting to a globalized linguistic landscape, the study raises awareness about the evolving nature of languages, emphasizing the need for cultural sensitivity in translation practices. These implications collectively contribute to fostering a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics of language evolution and cross-cultural communication.

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