

# EVALUATING ESP MATERIALS FOR BUSINESS TRANSLATION: A CASE STUDY TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR IMPROVEMENT

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## Abstract

The demand for professional translators in business and commerce has increased the importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) training at universities. In these contexts, ESP is generally defined as an approach that aims to address learners' needs and the professional situations in which the language is used. However, the selection of ESP materials in Vietnam is still limited, especially in the field of business translation. This study examined the teaching materials used in the Business English Translation course at Thang Long University, a Vietnamese higher education institution, and suggested a practical model for improving them. The study employed a mixed-methods case study through data from the course outline, an in-house textbook, expert validation ( $n = 4$ ), a student survey ( $n = 150$ ), and a lecturer survey ( $n = 5$ ). The qualitative data were analyzed by manually coding survey responses into key themes, while quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to evaluate the effectiveness of the course materials. The findings showed that the current materials were highly authentic and professionally relevant, but they did not sufficiently support self-directed learning, teamwork, or digital usability. Based on ESP and translation theories, the study proposed a three-pillar framework including authenticity, professional relevance, and digital usability as key criteria for material design and evaluation. This framework adds digital readiness and learner-centred skills to existing ESP material evaluation models and helps strengthen the connection between language teaching and professional practice.

**Keywords:** Authenticity, business translation, digital usability, ESP, professional relevance.

## 1. Introduction

As cross-border communication and multilingual business activities continue to grow, business translation is increasingly regarded as an essential competence in the global labor market. This situation places considerable pressure on universities to prepare students not only for linguistic accuracy but also for working with authentic documents used in real professional settings. ESP courses, particularly those focusing on business translation, have been developed to respond to this need. In practice, however, the effectiveness of such courses largely depends on the quality and relevance of their teaching materials.

In many recent ESP programs, teaching materials have moved beyond traditional language practice. Greater attention has been paid to learner autonomy, collaborative work, and the use of digital tools in translator education (Tomlinson, 2013; McGrath, 2016; O'Brien & Rodríguez Vázquez, 2020; Kenny, 2022). In international training contexts, materials often include authentic professional texts and translation tasks that emphasize the translation process and the use of technology to reflect current professional practice. By contrast, ESP translation courses in Vietnam still rely largely on teacher-compiled materials or locally written textbooks. Many of these materials had been developed before recent developments in business communication and translation technology became more visible. This has limited students'

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opportunities to work with authentic business texts, to use up-to-date digital tools such as computer-assisted translation (CAT) software, and to participate in collaborative translation tasks.

This gap between international practices and the local context highlights the need for further investigation. Although a number of studies have proposed frameworks for evaluating ESP materials, empirical research in the Vietnamese context remains limited, particularly in translation-oriented ESP courses. Existing studies often focus on general English rather than systematically linking material design to course learning outcomes (CLOs) and professional translation competencies.

Against this background, the study examined the teaching materials used in the Business English Translation course at Thang Long University and proposed a conceptual framework for their improvement. Data collected from experts, lecturers, and students are used to explore how well the existing materials support the intended learning outcomes of the course and to identify aspects that require further attention. While the analysis is based on a single institutional context, the study also provides reference points for understanding how authenticity, professional relevance, and digital usability may be brought together in the design of ESP materials for translation training.

### **Research Questions**

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do the materials used in the Business English Translation course at Thang Long University support the intended CLOs?
2. What are the major strengths and limitations of these materials in relation to authenticity, professional relevance, and digital usability?
3. How can an evaluation framework be developed to support the design and selection of ESP materials that meet both pedagogical and professional requirements?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. ESP and the Role of Materials**

ESP is often defined as an approach to language teaching that is guided by learners' needs and the communicative situations in which the language is used (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). From this perspective, teaching materials play an important role not only in providing language practice but also in helping learners become familiar with authentic language use in real professional contexts. Hyland (2006) emphasized that authentic texts play an important role in developing learners' communicative competence, while Basturkmen (2019) underscored the need for ESP materials to balance linguistic instruction with occupation-related skills.

Over the past decade, views on teaching materials have gradually changed. Teaching materials have no longer been viewed simply as sources of content. Instead, they are increasingly seen as learning environments that support different aspects of the learning process. Tomlinson (2013) and McGrath (2016) pointed out that materials development is a continuous process that connects theoretical principles with classroom practice and takes local teaching contexts into account. In other words, effective materials should not only represent professional language use but also create conditions for learners to develop autonomy, reflect on their learning, and make appropriate use of technology.

Viewing materials as dynamic learning environments, recent studies have underlined the importance of digital integration in ESP classrooms. The incorporation of learning management systems (LMS), online collaboration tools, and discipline-specific applications has been found to enhance interaction and personalized learning experiences (Rachmawati & Irawan, 2024).

Issues of material evaluation have also been addressed in the literature. Tomlinson reviewed the issue of evaluating teaching materials and emphasized that this process should be carried out in a systematic way and take the specific teaching context into consideration (Tomlinson, 2013). In his earlier work *Materials Development for Language Learning and Teaching* (Tomlinson, 2012), he

further examined the difficulties related to the use of digital materials and discussed the pedagogical implications of moving from printed materials to electronic formats.

While a number of studies in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) have proposed criteria and frameworks for material evaluation (Işık, 2018), most of them are designed for general English courses rather than translation-oriented ESP contexts. As a result, the evaluation of ESP materials for business translation remains underexplored in the existing literature.

### **2.2. Specialized Translation and Material Design**

In translation studies, the design of instructional materials has long been associated with the development of translation competence. Early discussions in translation studies emphasized the need to consider both the features of the texts involved and the communicative purposes they serve. For example, Nord (2005) argued that translation tasks should be designed with careful consideration of text type as well as the communicative functions of both the source and target texts. Mossop (2019) further suggested that translation quality is determined not only by linguistic accuracy but also by the appropriateness and usability of translated texts in professional contexts.

In recent years, research has increasingly shifted from product-oriented approaches to process-oriented perspectives on translation. Within this line of research, authentic translation tasks and the use of translation technologies have played an increasingly important role in translator training. O'Brien and Rodríguez Vázquez (2020) asserted that the integration of tools such as CAT systems and online corpora can encourage students to work more independently and professionally. In a similar vein, Bowker and Buitrago Ciro (2019) examined the pedagogical value of digital tools and corpora, suggesting that data-driven learning supports the development of translation competence by enabling learners to examine authentic language patterns and make more informed translation choices.

Empirical studies have provided further support for these views. Chen (2025) reported that the use of Termsoup, a cloud-based CAT tool, improved students' writing competence in ESP contexts by encouraging data-informed feedback and self-reflection. Similarly, Fraser et al. (2025) examined the use of specialized corpora in ESP teaching and reported that corpus-based tasks help learners select vocabulary that is appropriate to specific fields and become more actively involved in data-driven learning activities. Rather than concentrating only on translation products, these studies underline the importance of learning environments in which students can work with data, tools, and texts in ways that are closer to real professional translation practice.

Overall, ESP materials designed for translation training need to move beyond a narrow focus on text accuracy. Attention has increasingly been directed towards the integration of authentic translation tasks, opportunities for collaboration, and the use of translation technologies, including CAT tools, corpora, and digitally mediated assessment practices. These elements both reflect current professional practices and contribute to the development of key competencies required in contemporary translation training.

### **2.3. The Vietnamese Context**

Regarding the Vietnamese scenario, ESP study materials used in translation courses are usually compiled individually by lecturers or adapted from locally published textbooks (Le, 2000; Nguyen, 2007). These materials tend to focus more on language and grammar exercises, while giving less attention to updated business topics and the use of digital tools. In some cases, translation tasks involve translating individual sentences, which limits students' opportunities to work with real business documents and to apply CAT software.

In recent years, there has been growing awareness of the need for more authentic and technology-rich resources in translation education. However, there is still a lack of a clear and consistent approach to the evaluation and design of ESP materials for translation in the Vietnamese context. As a result, the design and evaluation of teaching materials vary across institutions.

Due to the absence of an organized framework, ESP translation courses in Vietnam largely rely

on lecturers' personal expertise. Consequently, material development and course evaluation tend to lack consistency, indicating the need for a more systematic and evidence-based approach to material design in translator training. Nguyen, Haworth & Hansen (2019) assert that applying active learning strategies and student-centered approaches can significantly transform ESP teaching method. They stated that when ESP practitioners challenged their traditional beliefs and incorporated more interactive and learner-driven activities, students tend to become more engaged in the lessons and then show improved academic performance. This insight is highly relevant in the Vietnamese context, where active learning can strengthen both the authenticity and technological integration of ESP materials. It, as a result, helps bridge the gap between traditional teaching practices and the need for innovative, technology-rich approaches in translation education.

#### **2.4. International Developments in Digital Usability**

Digital technology is becoming increasingly prominent in the teaching and learning of translation. According to O'Brien, Rodríguez Vázquez, and Fitzpatrick (2017), digital usability can be defined as how digital tools and platforms enable users to interact with them effectively and easily, especially in multilingual translation tasks. This includes ensuring that these tools are accessible and adaptable to different languages and user needs. In the context of translation education, this definition can be extended to encompass how translation technologies, such as CAT tools and online corpora, help students interact with learning materials and translation assignments in an efficient and user-friendly way.

Bowker and Buitrago Ciro (2019) noted that the use of corpora and CAT tools can help improve translation quality and support learner autonomy. In specialised areas such as economic translation, researchers have emphasized the need for discipline-specific materials and for technology to be integrated more systematically into translator training (Biel & Sosoni, 2017). In addition, Kenny (2022) suggested that translation training should include instruction in machine translation and post-editing practices, given the increasing role of technology in the translation profession.

In the wider ESP context, digital usability is no longer understood simply as converting materials into electronic form. Instead, it is regarded as an important factor in course design. Nation and Macalister (2019) pointed out that digital usability should involve interaction, flexibility, and support for data-driven learning. From this standpoint, well-designed materials should allow learners to work actively with language data and explore how language is used, rather than only reading or accessing information.

Recent reviews of technology use in ESP classrooms indicate that a range of digital tools is now being incorporated into teaching and learning. LMS, online platforms, and discipline-specific applications are increasingly used to support learner engagement and more personalised learning paths (Rachmawati & Irawan, 2024). The use of multimodal approaches that combine textual, audio, and visual resources has become more common in classroom practice. These approaches are discussed as helping learners improve comprehension and experience greater flexibility in ESP learning contexts (Rahmanu et al., 2024). For that reason, digital usability now plays a central role in shaping and assessing ESP materials.

#### **2.5. Research Gap**

Although research in ESP and translation pedagogy has developed in both scope and focus, the relationship between material design and the multiple demands of translation training has not yet been investigated in a comprehensive manner. In particular, authenticity, professional relevance, and digital usability are often addressed separately in the literature, rather than being considered as interconnected aspects of ESP material design. A number of international frameworks for ESP materials development, including those by Tomlinson (2013) and McGrath (2016), have provided systematic principles for balancing linguistic, pedagogical, and contextual factors. However, how far these principles can be applied to translation-oriented ESP courses in different local settings remains open for further discussion.

In the Vietnamese context, previous studies have placed greater emphasis on classroom practices or learners' perceptions of ESP courses than on the development and application of structured frameworks for material evaluation. Studies examining locally produced materials have often shown

the limitations related to content or teaching methods, but they have rarely explored how material design is connected to CLOs or to the competencies required in professional translation environments. Consequently, there is still limited evidence on how effectively current ESP materials support learner autonomy, teamwork, and digital literacy.

Against this background, the present study examines the materials used in a Business English Translation course in order to explore how they respond to these related concerns. The study also proposes an evaluation framework that integrates authenticity, professional relevance, and digital usability, and examines how these dimensions are connected to stated learning outcomes and professional practice.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

Such a case study approach was employed in the present research with a focus on a single Business English Translation course. Both quantitative and qualitative sources of data were used to examine the design and use of course materials in detail, as well as to consider the perspectives of different groups of participants. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaire surveys, whereas qualitative data were obtained from document analysis and expert feedback to provide additional explanatory information.

A mixed-methods approach was applied in the process of data collection and analysis. In this approach, different types of data were not treated separately but were considered in relation to one another. Survey data were used to identify general patterns in participants' responses, while qualitative data helped provide a more detailed examination of material design features and evaluation criteria (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). By combining these two types of data, the study aimed to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how the course materials were designed, implemented, and evaluated in the given course context.

#### **3.2. Data Sources and Course Context**

The study used both secondary and primary data sources to obtain a well-rounded and contextually grounded understanding of the course materials. The secondary data consisted of the course syllabus and the in-house textbook currently used in the Business English Translation course at Thang Long University. These documents were reviewed to examine their objectives, overall organization, and degree of alignment with the stated CLOs. The primary data were gathered through expert review, lecturer and student questionnaire surveys, and semi-structured interviews with lecturers.

The course selected for the study is a three-credit subject that combines theoretical input with practical translation activities. It makes use of authentic business documents, including emails, reports, and company profiles, alongside texts developed by instructors for teaching purposes. This course was chosen as a representative case because it reflects common practices in ESP translation teaching in Vietnam, where teacher-compiled materials continue to serve as the main learning resources.

#### **3.3. Participants**

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method to ensure that they had relevant experience or direct involvement with the course. The student participants consisted of 150 third- and fourth-year English majors who were enrolled in the Business English Translation course. The lecturer sample included five instructors who had experience in teaching or designing translation courses at Thang Long University. The expert group comprised four professionals who held postgraduate degrees (MA or PhD) in translation studies and had at least five years of experience in the field of ESP or business translation. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study and participated voluntarily. Their responses were kept anonymous and were used only for academic analysis.

#### **3.4. Evaluation Framework**

The evaluation framework was developed based on ESP theory and the specific learning outcomes of the course. It included twelve criteria organized into three dimensions: authenticity, professional relevance,

and digital usability. The authenticity dimension examined the source, recency, and genre features of the materials. The professional relevance dimension evaluated how well the materials supported teamwork, independent learning, and alignment with CLOs. The digital usability dimension focused on technology integration, including the use of CAT tools, digital corpora, and electronic rubrics.

To validate the proposed framework, the Content Validity Index (CVI) method suggested by Polit and Beck (2006) was employed. Each expert was asked to evaluate the relevance of each criterion using a four-point rating scale. The Item-Level Content Validity Index (I-CVI) was used to indicate the proportion of experts who rated a given item at level 3 or 4. In addition, the Scale-Level Content Validity Index (S-CVI/Ave) was calculated by taking the average of all I-CVI values. Criteria that achieved an I-CVI score of 0.80 or above were regarded as valid. This process helped confirm that the framework was suitable before it was used to evaluate the course materials.

### 3.5. Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection and analysis were carried out following a sequential mixed-methods approach. This approach was used to combine quantitative results with qualitative interpretation and to provide a more complete understanding of the research data.

In the first stage, quantitative data from expert ratings and questionnaire surveys were exported from Google Forms to Microsoft Excel for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, mean (M), and standard deviation (SD), were calculated to show general trends in the data. These results were then compared to the CLO-PLO-PI matrix to evaluate how well the materials supported the intended learning outcomes.

In the second stage, qualitative data collected from experts and lecturers were reviewed and coded manually using an inductive approach. No qualitative analysis software was used. The collected data were read and reviewed several times to identify common, including authenticity, professional relevance, digital usability, and self-directed learning, that could help explain and supplement the quantitative results. During this process, recurring issues, such as outdated materials or the limited use of digital tools, were noted to provide clearer context for the statistical findings.

Finally, triangulation was applied to compare data obtained from experts, lecturers, and students. Similar responses among these groups were considered as evidence of consistency while differing opinions were used to clarify and refine the interpretation of the results. Through this process, the study was able to identify both the strengths and limitations of the course materials, thereby enhancing the overall validity of the research findings.

## 4. Results

Based on the analysis of the course syllabus and the in-house textbook for the Business English Translation course, the results show obvious strengths in authenticity and genre coverage. However, limitations remain in recency, digital usability, and alignment with several CLOs. Evidence from expert validation and surveys of students and lecturers provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of the materials, which is presented in the following subsections.

### 4.1. Genre Distribution and Authenticity

An analysis of genre distribution was conducted to determine the range and authenticity of the materials used in the Business English Translation course. Although authenticity was found to be a strong feature of the current materials, some gaps were identified in genre coverage, particularly for legal and administrative texts such as contracts.

Table 1. Genre distribution and authenticity in the Business English Translation materials

Text genre	Main source	Quantity	Authenticity level	Remarks
Company profile	Corporate websites	4	High	Clearly reflect genre characteristics
Business emails	Real corporate exchanges	6	Medium	Some simplified for readability

Notices/Internal memos	Instructor-developed	3	Medium	Outdated, lacking recency
Basic contracts	Instructor-developed (simplified)	2	Low	Missing annexes and detailed clauses
Summarized business reports	Public corporate reports	2	High	Preserve standard structure

Note. High = unedited authentic text from professional sources; Medium = adapted authentic text; Low = simplified or instructor-developed text.

As presented in Table 1, the materials used in the Business English Translation course accounted for a range of common business text types, namely company profiles, business emails, internal notices, basic contracts, and summarized business reports. Most of the materials were taken from authentic corporate sources, including company websites, public reports, and professional correspondence. It can be seen that these sources reflected real workplace communication and helped students become familiar with common business genres used in professional contexts.

Company profiles ( $n = 4$ ) and business reports ( $n = 2$ ) were regarded as highly authentic since they were presented in their original form and followed standard professional structures and writing conventions. Meanwhile, business emails ( $n = 6$ ) and internal notices ( $n = 3$ ) were considered moderately authentic, as some of these texts had been simplified for classroom use, particularly in terms of vocabulary and format. By contrast, the contractual texts ( $n = 2$ ) were prepared by instructors and represented simplified versions of real contracts. These texts did not include several key elements, such as annexes, detailed clauses, or conventional legal formatting, which reduced both their authenticity and their instructional value.

Overall, it is suggested that the current materials provide students with broad exposure to common workplace genres. However, the coverage of more complex legal and administrative documents remains limited. Authentic contracts are particularly important in business translation training, for they help students become familiar with specialized terminology, text functions, and formal business conventions. For this reason, future revisions of the materials should consider including complete and unedited legal and commercial documents to better support students in handling specialized translation tasks and preparing for professional practice.

#### 4.2. Alignment with CLOs

To examine how well the course materials supported the intended learning outcomes of the Business English Translation course, each text type was reviewed in relation to the six CLOs specified in the syllabus. This review made it possible to determine whether the materials addressed both the linguistic skills and the professional competencies expected of translation students.

Table 2. CLO coverage in the Business English Translation materials

CLO	Description of learning outcome	Supporting texts	Coverage level
CLO1	Identify genres of business texts	All texts	High
CLO2	Handle translation-specific language in business contexts	Emails, notices, contracts	High
CLO3	Analyze and edit source texts	Contracts, reports	Medium
CLO4	Translate terminology and conventions in business texts	Reports, company profiles	Medium
CLO5	Demonstrate self-directed learning and updating skills	Not clearly supported	Low
CLO6	Work effectively in teams	Not integrated	Low

Note. Levels are interpreted as High (fully supported), Medium (partially supported), and Low (weakly supported or absent)

It is clear that the first four outcomes (CLO1-CLO4) were generally well supported by the course materials. Students were provided with a variety of professional genres and frequent opportunities to practice translating business-related content. In particular, CLO1 and CLO2 were strongly supported, as most materials were authentic and closely reflected communication practices in real corporate

contexts. These texts helped students identify different business genres and apply appropriate translation conventions.

CLO3 and CLO4 were supported to a moderate extent. While contracts and reports encouraged analytical reading and terminological awareness, the related tasks were not consistently integrated across all units. This inconsistency limited students' opportunities to practice editing skills or to develop systematic strategies for dealing with specialized terms and stylistic features.

The weakest areas were CLO5 and CLO6. The materials offered very few activities that required independent research or reflective learning, and collaborative tasks were largely absent from the course design. Consequently, the materials mainly encouraged individual practice rather than supporting teamwork and learner autonomy. However, these competencies are of crucial importances for professional translators, who are often expected to work collaboratively and to continue developing their skills independently.

Generally, the materials were effective in supporting genre recognition and the development of translation-related skills. In contrast, learning outcomes related to self-directed learning and teamwork remained limited. This suggests a need for materials that place greater emphasis on learner autonomy and collaboration in order to better connect classroom learning with the practical demands of contemporary translation work.

### 4.3. Expert Validation (CVI Results)

The CVI was used to evaluate the clarity and consistency of the twelve criteria in the material evaluation framework.

Table 3. CVI results by criterion (n=4 experts)

Criterion	Expert ratings (1-4)	I-CVI	UA (100% ≥ 3)
A1 - Updated text sources	4 × 3	1.00	√
A2 - Genre-specific features	4 × 4	1.00	√
A3 - Raw/unaltered data integrity	4 × 3	1.00	√
A4 - Coverage of varied contexts	3 × 4, 1 × 3	1.00	√
B1 - CLO alignment	3 × 3, 1 × 4	1.00	√
B2 - Professional translation process	2 × 3, 2 × 4	1.00	√
B3 - CLO5 (self-directed learning)	Mixed (2-3 ratings)	0.75	x
B4 - CLO6 (teamwork)	4 × 2	0.00	x
C1 - Digital formats (corpus, TMX, termbase)	4 × 2	0.00	x
C2 - CAT/LMS integration	4 × 2	0.00	x
C3 - Digital rubric (MQM/DQF)	2 × 3, 2 × 2	0.50	x
C4 - Accessibility & copyright	2 × 3, 2 × 2	0.50	x

Note. √=consensus achieved; x=consensus not achieved; MQM = Multidimensional Quality Metrics; DQF = Dynamic Quality Framework; S-CVI/Ave = .65 (overall average). Criteria were accepted if I-CVI ≥ .80 (Polit & Beck, 2006).

Table 3 shows that the experts expressed unanimous agreement on six out of the twelve criteria, mainly those related to authenticity (A1-A4) and professional relevance (B1-B2). All of these criteria achieved an I-CVI value of 1.00, indicating that all experts agreed on their clarity and relevance. This suggests that the framework adequately captured key aspects of text authenticity and relevance to the translation process.

By contrast, lower levels of agreement were found for criteria related to self-directed learning (B3), teamwork (B4), and digital usability (C1-C4). These criteria received I-CVI values ranging from .00 to .75, and the overall S-CVI/Ave was .65, which is below the commonly recommended threshold of .80. According to expert feedback, although digital usability is an important dimension, the related criteria were not described in enough detail and were not always suitable for the local teaching context.

On the whole, the results indicate that the framework is strong in terms of authenticity and professional relevance. However, the digital and collaborative dimensions require further improvement. Experts suggested that clearer descriptions and concrete examples of digital integration, such as the use of corpora, CAT tools, and online rubrics, would make the framework more practical for evaluating ESP translation materials in Vietnamese teaching contexts.

#### 4.4. Student Survey Results

A survey was conducted with 150 students to explore their perceptions of the materials used in the Business English Translation course. The survey results are summarized in Table 4. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for twelve evaluation criteria corresponding to the three framework dimensions: authenticity, professional relevance, and digital usability.

Table 4. Student survey results (n=150)

Criterion	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	M	SD
A1 - Authentic texts	0	0	0	96	54	4.36	.48
A2 - Recency	0	0	0	88	62	4.41	.49
A3 - Genre-specificity	0	0	0	113	37	4.25	.43
B1 - CLO alignment	0	0	0	24	126	4.84	.37
B2 - Translation process	0	0	0	87	63	4.42	.49
B3 - Self-directed learning	0	0	0	98	42	4.30	.46
B4 - Teamwork	0	0	42	103	5	3.75	.50
C1 - Digital formats	0	0	43	92	15	3.81	.59
C2 - CAT tools	0	0	0	133	17	4.11	.32
C3 - Digital rubric MQM/DQF	0	0	0	132	18	4.12	.32
C4 - Accessibility & copyright	0	0	0	142	8	4.05	.22

Note. Ratings were based on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

As illustrated in Table 4, students generally evaluated the course materials positively. Most mean scores were above 4.00, indicating that students considered the materials authentic, relevant, and useful for learning business translation. The highest ratings were recorded for alignment with CLOs (B1, M = 4.84, SD = .37) and for authenticity-related criteria (A1-A3), with mean scores ranging from 4.25 to 4.41. Students reported that the texts were realistic and reflected communication situations commonly found in real business contexts.

Scores for self-directed learning (B3, M = 4.30, SD = .46) were also relatively high, showing that the materials encouraged students to study independently and practice translation outside the classroom. However, lower ratings were found for teamwork (B4, M = 3.75, SD = .50) and digital usability (C1, M = 3.81, SD = .59). Many students reported that group translation activities were limited, and the digital versions of some texts were not fully interactive or accessible.

Despite these limitations, student feedback showed growing awareness of technology-enhanced translation learning. Criteria related to CAT tools (C2, M = 4.11, SD = .32), digital rubrics (C3, M = 4.12, SD = .32), and accessibility (C4, M = 4.05, SD = .22) received favorable ratings. This suggests that students valued the inclusion of digital elements in the materials. At the same time, several respondents noted that the use of such tools could be expanded further to better match current professional translation practices.

#### 4.5. Lecturer Survey Results

A separate survey was conducted with five lecturers who had taught or designed the Business English Translation course. Their responses provided professional perspectives on the same evaluation criteria as used in the student survey. The survey results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Lecturer survey results (n=5)

Criterion	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	M	SD
A1 - Authentic texts	0	0	0	4	1	4.20	.40
A2 - Recency	0	0	4	0	1	3.40	.55
A3 - Genre-specificity	0	0	0	4	1	4.20	.40
B1 - CLO alignment	0	0	0	5	0	4.00	.00
B2 - Translation process	0	0	0	5	0	4.00	.00
B3 - Self-directed learning	0	0	2	3	0	3.20	.45
B4 - Teamwork	0	0	1	4	0	3.40	.55
C1 - Ease of digitization	0	0	3	2	0	3.40	.55
C2 - CAT tools integration	0	2	3	0	0	2.60	.49
C3 - Digital rubric MQM/DQF	0	0	0	4	1	4.20	.40

The results of the lecturer survey generally corresponded with student feedback, although lecturers showed slightly more varied opinions. Like the student results, authenticity and genre coverage were identified as core strengths of the course materials. Authentic texts (A1 and A3) were the most highly rated aspect of the course (M = 4.20, SD = .40), followed by the alignment between the materials and CLOs (B1-B2, M = 4.00, SD = .00). These results reveal that lecturers generally agreed that the course design was coherent and relevant to professional translation competence.

However, lecturers expressed more critical views on the recency of materials (A2, M = 3.40, SD = .55) and the use of digital tools (C1-C2, M = 3.00, SD = .52). They noted that some texts were outdated and that access to technology during class time was limited, which reduced students' opportunities to practice using CAT tools. Lower ratings were also reported for self-directed learning (B3, M = 3.20, SD = .45) and teamwork (B4, M = 3.40, SD = .55), suggesting that the course mainly encouraged individual work rather than collaborative translation activities.

In addition to the survey ratings, lecturers provided qualitative comments pointing out several areas for improvement. They recommended updating authentic texts to better reflect current business practices and increasing the use of digital tools in the course. Many lecturers also emphasized the importance of including collaborative translation projects, noting that such activities would help students apply theoretical knowledge in more practical, team-based contexts. These recommendations were generally consistent with the survey results and reflected practical constraints in the current teaching context.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Authenticity of the Course Materials

The results from expert validation indicate that authenticity was the strongest aspect of the course materials. All authenticity-related criteria (A1-A4) received full agreement from experts (I-CVI = 1.00), and both students and lecturers reported high mean scores above 4.20. These findings suggest that the materials provided students with meaningful exposure to common business communication genres, such as emails, reports, and company profiles. This result is in line with the views of Tomlinson (2013) and McGrath (2016), who emphasized the role of authentic materials in helping learners understand how language is used in professional contexts.

Despite these strengths, several limitations were also noted. Lecturers noted that some materials were outdated (A2, M = 3.40, SD = .55), indicating that the selection of texts had not always reflected current business practices. As noted by Hyland (2006), authenticity in translation teaching depends not only on the source of materials but also on their relevance to the communicative context. Although the materials represented real-world genres, regular updating is necessary to ensure that they remain relevant. Periodic revision of the texts would therefore help maintain contextual validity and further support the development of students' pragmatic and translation competence.

Further analysis confirmed that authenticity was the most consistent dimension across all data

sources. These materials first exposed students to some key genres in business communication, such as emails, reports, company profiles, and press releases. Each genre was then presented according to its very clear purposes, target audiences, and typical stylistic features. Most of the tasks involved working with complete texts rather than simplified excerpts, and the accompanying rubrics focused on the accurate use of terminology, tone, and discourse structure. This design helped students practice shifting the registers between internal and external communication, using common expressions appropriately (e.g., greetings and closings), and organizing information in familiar genre formats, for example, subject lines, executive summaries, and action points.

According to lecturers, this exposure helped students develop better awareness of business genres and how professional communication works. The students became more considerate about reader expectations, word and expression choice in varying contexts. In the graded translations, they depended less on word-for-word translation and demonstrated better understanding of pragmatic use, particularly for politeness and implied meaning. These findings confirm that authentic materials promote students' understanding of workplace communication and thus allow for better translation choices than just sentence-level accuracy (Tomlinson, 2013; McGrath, 2016).

However, this did not come out evenly for all topics. Some texts were outdated or did not include less common but important sub-genres, such as investor relations documents. As a result, students had limited opportunities to practice certain high-stakes communication tasks. These gaps highlight the need for more careful selection of materials and closer alignment with collaborative and technology-supported translation activities, which are discussed in the following sections.

## **5.2. Professional Relevance and Course Alignment**

Survey results and expert feedback indicated that the course materials were generally well-matched to the CLOs, especially the genre awareness, professional communication, and translation processes. The students rated with a high level of consensus regarding relevance to learning objectives (B1,  $M = 4.84$ ,  $SD = .37$ ) and utility in understanding the translation procedures (B2,  $M = 4.42$ ,  $SD = .49$ ). The ratings by the lecture members were also similar, both scoring an average of 4.00,  $SD = .00$ . It suggests that the materials supported students in working confidently with common business text types and helped them develop skills that are closely related to real translation tasks in professional settings.

The course materials also showed a clear connection to professional practice. Many translation tasks required students to consider purpose, audience, and writing style in ways similar to real workplace situations. Students worked with texts such as business reports, company profiles, and internal notices, which helped them balance language accuracy with appropriate tone and register. These findings support Basturkmen's (2019) view that ESP materials should develop both language skills and professional competence. They are also consistent with Nation and Macalister's (2019) emphasis on the importance of contextual relevance in effective material design.

Nevertheless, two areas were clearly weaker than others, namely self-directed learning and teamwork. Both students and lecturers gave lower ratings to these aspects. Teamwork scored a mean average of 3.75 (standard deviation .50), while lecturers scored self-directed learning with a 3.20 (standard deviation .45) and teamwork with a 3.40 (standard deviation .55). These findings reveal that there were mostly individual learning tasks and a couple that encouraged teamwork between individuals or peer feedback. Lecturers also stated that there had been a current emphasis on linguistic correctness and the final product of translation, but little emphasis on teamwork and reflective learning practices.

This pattern reflects a common tendency in Vietnamese ESP programs, where learning materials often place greater emphasis on grammatical accuracy than on professional practice. To improve professional relevance, future revisions should include more project-based translation tasks that resemble real workplace processes. Activities such as dividing group roles, peer editing, and shared decision-making regarding translations via online platforms, among other activities, can foster the development of both individual working capabilities and teamworking capabilities. Furthermore, all these proposed

adjustments can be effective in the development of critical reflection, negotiation, and confidence in the use of technology, which is of great significance in the professional practice of translation.

Overall, the course resources were useful in promoting key translation skills and fundamental professional know-how. Nevertheless, in an attempt to bring them more in line with the stipulated learning outcomes and professional demands in the sector, emphasis should be placed on cooperation, reflective learning, and technology application in the design of course resources.

### **5.3. Digital Usability of the Materials**

Digital usability was the weakest aspect of the course materials. This was reflected in the low CVI scores assigned by experts to the digital-related criteria (C1-C4). Lecturers also only moderately rated the accessibility of digital facilities and the embedding of CAT tools. However, students' attitudes towards digital rubrics ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = .32$ ) and accessibility ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = .22$ ) are more positive. This implies that digital facilities existed but were not utilized in a planned manner in the teaching and learning processes.

These mixed results indicate that the course is in a transitional stage with regard to technology use. Although translation work in professional settings increasingly relies on digital tools, many ESP courses in Vietnam still depend mainly on printed materials or instructor-developed resources. As observed by O'Brien and Rodríguez Vázquez (2020) and Bowker and Buitrago Ciro (2019), digital competence is now an essential part of translator training. This competence includes not only the use of CAT tools, but also skills related to data handling, corpus use, and responsible management of digital resources. From this perspective, the current course materials provide only limited support for developing digital literacy needed in professional translation practice.

The limited use of digital tools can be seen as a structural issue rather than a pedagogical one. Lecturers reported that access to institutional technology was limited and that they had received little training in software-based translation teaching. These constraints reflect broader challenges in Vietnamese higher education, where digital transformation in language teaching has not been applied evenly. At the same time, students' positive responses to digital rubrics and accessibility suggest that they are ready to use new platforms if appropriate support is provided.

Improving digital usability therefore requires changes at both the teaching and institutional levels. In terms of materials, translation tasks could be redesigned for digital environments such as LMS, online translation memory tools, and collaborative editing platforms. At the curriculum level, basic training in CAT tools, corpus use, and quality assurance standards could be included to better reflect professional practice. When combined with reflective learning activities, these changes would help students develop digital awareness alongside translation skills.

To sum up, while the course has taken initial steps toward digital integration, this aspect remains limited. A more systematic approach, supported by institutional infrastructure and lecturer training, would better prepare students for translation work in technology-based professional settings.

### **5.4. The Three-Pillar Framework and Its Implications**

Findings from all data sources support the development of a framework built around three connected dimensions: authenticity, professional relevance, and digital usability. This framework was not based on theory alone. It was refined through expert validation, survey results, and analysis of course documents. As a result, it reflects both theoretical principles and actual classroom practice.

Within the framework, authenticity forms the foundation, as it exposes students to real professional language and helps them develop awareness of different business genres. Professional relevance links these authentic texts to workplace purposes and expectations, ensuring that translation tasks develop skills needed in real business settings. Digital usability plays a supporting role by enabling the use of technology in translation training and strengthening both authenticity and professional relevance. When combined, these three pillars interact to guide the design and evaluation of ESP translation materials that are realistic, educationally meaningful, and better suited to the demands of digital working environments.

Furthermore, the framework shows strong practical flexibility. It can be used to evaluate existing teaching materials, support the design of new courses, and inform professional development activities for ESP instructors. The application of the CVI helped confirm that each criterion was clear and relevant, and it also showed that the framework can be adapted to other ESP contexts beyond the Business English Translation course.

From a theoretical standpoint, the framework extends earlier approaches to ESP material evaluation (Tomlinson, 2013; McGrath, 2016) by including digital competence and learner-centered skills as key dimensions. It acknowledges that authenticity and professional relevance alone are no longer enough to prepare students for current translation practices. Today, translation training also requires engagement with digital platforms, collaborative work processes, and reflection on quality through feedback and data.

Practically, it will benefit universities, as well as educators, with more cohesive or forward-thinking course development. Furthermore, periodic checks for authenticity, relevance, as well as the strategic deployment of digital technology, will ensure that educational resources stay updated. Essentially, the framework presents a rounded approach that reunites all three aspects mentioned above. This provides a flexible means for connecting what is learned within the classroom with the practical world of translation within the digital age.

## **6. Limitations of the Study**

This study was conducted with a single course at Thang Long University and involved a small number of expert participants. As a result, the findings may not be fully generalized to other ESP contexts. In addition, data from students and lecturers were mainly based on self-reported surveys, without further triangulation through classroom observation or analysis of students' actual translation products. The statistical analysis was also limited to descriptive statistics, which provides a general overview of the data but lacks the depth necessary for drawing more complex conclusions or inferences. Last but not least, the questionnaires used in the student and lecturer surveys were designed with single-item indicators for each evaluation criterion, rather than multi-item measurement scales. As a result, internal consistency reliability measures such as Cronbach's alpha were not applicable in this study. This may limit the robustness of the quantitative findings. Future research could employ validated multi-item scales to examine the reliability of each dimension more comprehensively.

Despite these limitations, the findings remain informative. The findings help identify directions for future research, which could involve a wider range of institutions, larger participant samples, and more diverse data sources. Future studies may also apply more advanced analytical methods to further develop the proposed framework and improve practical approaches to ESP material design for business translation.

## **7. Conclusion**

The study is carried out to examine the Business English Translation materials used at Thang Long University with the focus on authenticity, professional relevance, and digital usability. The findings of the study are drawn from expert review, feedback provided by lecturers and students, and analysis of course documents. Through these sources, the study points out both the strengths and the limitations of the current course materials and forms the basis for proposing an evaluation framework for further improvement.

In general, the results indicate that the course materials are well aligned with the intended CLOs. Particularly, they effectively support learning outcomes related to genre awareness and translation-specific language skills (CLO1-CLO4). They also show clear strengths in authenticity and professional relevance. Students work with business texts and translation tasks that are commonly used in professional settings. However, they provide limited support for CLO5 and CLO6, which focus on self-directed learning and teamwork. The utilization of technological tools is also limited. Most learning activities are designed for individual work, with few tasks encouraging collaboration, independent learning, or the systematic use of technological tools. As a result, the course tends to prioritize linguistic accuracy over the development of wider professional skills.

To deal with this issue, the study proposes a three-pillar framework that integrates authenticity, professional relevance, and digital usability. The framework was developed by combining insights

from ESP and translation theories with empirical evidence obtained through expert validation, survey data, and course document analysis. Its main contribution lies in bringing together language pedagogy, professional practice, and digital readiness within a single model for ESP material evaluation. Developed from both theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence, the framework can be used to evaluate existing materials and to guide the design of materials for business translation courses in similar contexts.

In practical terms, the study suggests that authentic texts should be updated regularly and that more project-based translation tasks, collaborative activities, and digital tools such as CAT software and electronic rubrics should be incorporated into ESP translation courses. By doing so, the proposed framework offers a practical reference for improving material design and better preparing students for professional translation work in contemporary, technology-based environments.

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