

# PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATION ENCOUNTERED BY STUDENTS OF FACULTY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDIES

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**Summary:** *Translator should be the one to deliver the precise meaning written in the source text to the target text without changing its purpose. The inceptive observation in this paper discovered that most of the beginning translator students tend to render word-by-word and translate without reading the whole text first. As the results, the low-quality output of the translation students is inevitable, along with numerous problems encountered during the translating procedures. The findings will be analyzed and recommendations will be given to improve student's translation skills.*

**Key word:** *translation, problem, culture, tense, idiom.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Translation is a pivotal skill to language learners that requires deep knowledge as well as the passion to be professional translators in the future. Translation demands not only good understanding of the language, but also the culture as well as comprehension of related fields or related social events. Mastering English translation will take a huge amount of time to achieve, therefore being well-prepared is essential for all students during their courses at university. Unfortunately, most students are not familiar with this subject so limitation in translating skills is often unavoidable.

This paper will identify and analyze difficulties in English translation and give recommendations on how to overcome these problems.

## II. DEVELOPMENT

### 1. Translation theory

According to Ghazala (1995),

“Translation is the term refer to all the process and methods used to convey the meaning of the source language into the target language.” The purpose of the translation work is the precise meaning of the target text that supposes to be conveyed from the source text.

Waldorf (2013) considers translation to be a process of mobilizing the meaning of a particular text from one language to the close equivalent of the target language. Furthermore, according to Malkjaer and Waldorf's explanations, translation can also be understood as the process of transferring ideas from one language to another language, which means translators only transfer the original ideas without making any changes to the purpose of the source text.

Thanks to the work of European Commission (2009) on pointing out what defines a qualified translator, we are now aware that a good translator should be the

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one who deeply understands the message as well as have acknowledgment of any cultural REFERENCES regard to what they are translating or interpreting.

In order to successfully complete that task, translators are expected to have good understanding of the source text so that they can deliver its intended meaning to the target text. Unfortunately, most beginning translator students tend to translate word-by-word without reading and understanding the whole text beforehand. In addition, the length of the English course at university is not enough compared to the amount of knowledge and skills required to be a professional translator, plus the fact that most students are not aware or are unable to self-practicing outside of school. These elements can be considered to be the causes of the low-quality output of the translation students.

## 2. Research methodology

A questionnaire survey was carried out on 20 students from K22 of Faculty of English Language Studies, HUBT to have a clearer vision of problems encountered during their translation process. They were asked to translate texts or articles extracted from reliable sources in English and Vietnamese. Results were analyzed to identify what are the shortcomings during students' translation tasks.

## 3. Translation problems

### a. Cultural issue

Of all the translation procedures, research is one of the key steps to perfect the result. Translators must find a way to shorten the gaps between the cultural background of the two countries. They also have to carefully inspect any cultural terms existing in the source language to properly translate into the target language.

For example, in Vietnamese, the term “*Duyên âm*” should be understood as “*Relationship with the dead*”. These types of relationship belong to the mental and religious states, not the physical. Although 70% of the students merely understand the basic concept of “*Duyên âm*”, they could not properly translate as well as provide the definition for this term in English.

### b. Tense problem

Tenses are used to identify the time when the events occur. This problem is actually quite common yet often be overlooked. In Vietnamese, tenses don't usually have many influences on the whole meaning of a sentence so when translating into the target language, students will more likely not pay enough attention to tenses, which sometimes can change the whole purpose of the source text.

*“Việt Nam nói chung và TP HCM đã rất nỗ lực kiểm soát dịch bệnh trong bối cảnh Covid-19 trên thế giới rất phức tạp.”*

In the above extract, up to 70% of students translate as “*Vietnam in general and HCM city, in particular, took strong efforts to control the pandemic, given the complexity of Covid-19 developments in the world*”. The pandemic has not over yet, Vietnam still has an ongoing fight with the virus so the past tense “*took*” must not be used here and have to translate as “*have taken*” instead.

### c. Idiom problems

Idioms richen the meaning of a language. Idioms are not the same in each language and cannot be translated word-by-word. Learning idioms should be considered as an integral part of vocabulary learning. There is no shortcut to learn them, you have to learn by heart and learn the meaning behind it. While as important as

it is, 80% of the students surprisingly have little to no knowledge relating to idioms, when stumble upon an idiom, they tend to translate word-by-word.

For example, “*Go bananas*” is the idiom describing someone who becomes very excited or angry. This confused all students, some of them even blindly translate the literal meanings into Vietnamese. This example is to show how important it is to learn idioms as both of idioms and cultural issues are related to each other.

#### d. Word form

Word forms are varieties of a word existing in the context of language. Each variety will have different role as well as position in a sentence hence they are not interchangeable.

“*Theo ông, các hiệp hội, hội của ngành chưa dành mối quan tâm thích đáng cho thị trường nội địa.*”

About 45% of students used incorrect word form when translated the example above:

“*In his opinion, **business -associated and trade society** have not properly attended to the local market*”

While the idea was quite good, there are some mistakes about the word forms above: “*business **associated***” must be replaced with “*business **association***”, “*trade **society***” must be “*trade **societies***”. Using incorrect word form is usually less likely to be noticed so students should pay more attention when translating.

#### 4. Some recommendations for students as beginning translators

The limitations on English skills of beginning translators are visible through some analyzations above, it is better for students to actively improve their skills even outside of university. A few simple but effective suggestions such as reading books related to translation fields, making the most use of the access to the internet by finding more information and articles on the cultures around the world, the people as well as their countries. If it is possible, travelling will be the best way for improvements. Students should also practice translating more often, no matter it is a job or a personal project and ask for reviews from their teachers.

### III. CONCLUSION

Translation can be strenuous with its complex procedures, even to the professional translator. The length of English course in university, alas, does not provide students enough time to cultivate their translating skills, which is the main reason for the limitations of their language skills, alongside to the fact that students are still slothful, lethargic in their education. Therefore, in order to improve the situation, students should improve their mindset first, make efforts on mastering the language. Together with teacher’s enthusiasm and effort, the problem would be solved in the near future and student’s interest in learning translation will be significantly raised./.

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## NHỮNG KHÓ KHĂN SINH VIÊN NGÀNH NGÔN NGỮ ANH GẶP PHẢI TRONG DỊCH THUẬT

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**Tóm tắt:** Người dịch phải là người chuyển tải ý nghĩa chính xác nội dung được viết trong văn bản nguồn sang văn bản đích mà không thay đổi mục đích của văn bản. Bài viết này đã chỉ ra rằng hầu hết các sinh viên mới bắt đầu dịch có xu hướng diễn đạt từng từ một và dịch mà không đọc toàn bộ văn bản trước. Do đó, chất lượng đầu ra thấp cùng với vô số vấn đề gặp phải trong quá trình dịch thuật là điều không thể tránh khỏi đối với sinh viên mới ra trường. Các vấn đề này sẽ được phân tích và các đề xuất sẽ được đưa ra nhằm cải thiện kỹ năng dịch của sinh viên.

**Từ khóa:** dịch, vấn đề, văn hóa, thì, thành ngữ.