

Some written translation errors of the Chinese language students - Dong Thap University

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Abstract: *This paper focuses on the study of common written translation errors of Chinese Language students at Dong Thap University. Through survey and interview methods, students took a written translation test in class, with each student translating two paragraphs (from Chinese to Vietnamese and Vietnamese to Chinese). In addition, interviews were conducted to learn about the methods of learning and practicing written translation skills, as well as the training orientation of students. At the end of the semester, students will be interviewed again to evaluate the impact of the applied solutions. Finally, the paper synthesizes and analyzes the results of previous studies to determine the causes of common errors in written translation, thereby providing some recommendations to improve basic errors and enhance students' written translation skills.*

Keywords: *Written translation; errors; skill; Chinese language*

1. Problem statement

Chinese is becoming increasingly popular in international communication, with many people around the world choosing this language as their second language. During the learning process, written translation skills are considered one of the most difficult and complex skills, requiring learners to have a deep understanding of rules, grammar and sentence structure. Through the experience of teaching Chinese to students majoring in Chinese Language, the author found that students often make many mistakes in the process of written translation. These mistakes not only make the content of the writing not conveyed accurately but also affect the quality of students' studies and future work. If students are not aware of these mistakes, they may have difficulty writing job applications and resumes, thereby affecting their career opportunities after graduation. Therefore, improving students' written translation errors is very necessary for their studies, research and future work in Chinese Language.

2. Contents

2.1. Characteristics of Chinese Language students and factors affecting the improvement of written translation skills

Chinese Language is a major that studies the use of Chinese language in all fields: economics; trade; tourism; diplomacy. This major provides in-depth training in the necessary skills for students to quickly integrate into new work environments.

During the study process, students will learn the main subjects such as Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Phonetics, Grammar, Spoken Translation, Written Translation, Journalism, Business Language, Vocabulary, and Chinese Country Studies.

Before entering school, most of Chinese Language students at Dong Thap University had not yet been exposed to Chinese in high school. Therefore, they put a lot of effort into learning this new language. In the first year, they spend more time studying four skills to prepare a basic knowledge base before approaching the subject of Written Translation. When entering the second year, they will study Written Translation 1 and Written Translation 2, which is an extremely important subject for students majoring in Chinese Language, because after graduation, most of their jobs are related to written translation. Having only been exposed to Chinese for a year, when entering the second year, they also encounter many difficulties in getting used to this subject, and in the process of studying and practicing translating from Chinese to Vietnamese and vice versa, it is difficult for them to avoid mistakes and basic errors in written translation.

2.2. Common mistakes in the translation process of Chinese Language students

The article mainly uses two methods: survey and interview. First, a survey was conducted on 80 students taking a written translation test in class. Each student translated two passages from Chinese to Vietnamese and from Vietnamese to Chinese.

Next, interviews were conducted with students to understand their methods, learning styles, and writing translation skills as well as their orientation in practicing Chinese writing translation skills. Then, interviews were conducted with these students again at the end of the semester to check whether the above solutions had any impact on the students. Through the two survey methods above, the author also found that there were many errors that students encountered in the process of writing translation. Including the following common errors:

Table 2.1: Some mistakes in the translation process of Chinese Language students

Written Translation Errors	Translated from Chinese to Vietnamese		Translated from Vietnamese to Chinese	
	Number of Errors	Rate (%)	Number of Errors	Rate (%)
Incorrect Translation of Adjectives and Pronouns	15	18,7	23	28,7
Not Remembering Chinese Vocabulary	21	26,3	22	27,5
Incorrect Translation of Information (Numbers, Names of People, Titles of Works)	7	8,8	15	18,8
Language Expression Errors	17	21,3	21	26,2

2.2.1. *Incorrect translation of the central position of the sentence and the adjective*

This translation error is very common among students when they first approach the subject of Written Translation, because they are influenced by their mother tongue, most students make this error. The adjective in Chinese holds a very important position in the sentence, this component has a different position from that in Vietnamese. Many students learning Chinese encounter many difficulties with adjectives, as well as when translating sentences from Chinese to Vietnamese or from Vietnamese to Chinese.

2.2.2. *Not remembering Chinese vocabulary*

This is a mistake that many students make, because there are many words in Chinese, today China uses the simplified alphabet of 8,105 characters, divided into three levels. Level 1 has 3,500 characters, meeting the needs of using characters in basic education and popularizing culture. Level 2 has 3,000 characters, which are only less popular than level 1. Knowing 3,500 characters of level 1 is enough to read modern Chinese books and newspapers; graduating from primary school must know 3,000 characters; citizens need to know 6,500 characters. Level 3 has 1,605 common characters in fields such as names, place names, scientific and technical terms and classical Chinese in the middle and primary school literature

curriculum. Chinese characters have many strokes, the smallest unit that makes up a Chinese character is a stroke.

2.2.3. *Mistranslating information*

Mistranslating numbers is a very common mistake for students when they first start learning written translation when translating tens of thousands (万) and hundreds of millions (亿) into Chinese and vice versa. Most students confuse 亿 with billions.

2.2.4. *Language expression errors*

When translating sentence components and subordinate units, many students are still familiar with Vietnamese expressions but do not understand Chinese expressions. Many students do not clearly understand the specific meaning of the original text, so they use vocabulary that does not follow the original. Therefore, beginners in translation writing must improve their ability to perceive Chinese and Vietnamese, and at the same time practice expressing the language clearly, coherently and conveying the exact content of the original text. For example:

2.3. *Causes of students' written translation errors*

2.3.1. *Not having a good grasp of Chinese grammar*

A good grasp of Chinese grammar is an important factor in being able to translate Chinese writing accurately and effectively. If students do not have a good grasp of grammar, they may encounter some difficulties in the translation process, including: Using the wrong sentence structure: Not having a good grasp of grammar can lead to using the wrong sentence structure, making the translation inaccurate or difficult to understand, which can lead to not knowing how to express the meaning accurately in the translation; Not knowing how to use word types and word order: Lack of understanding of word types and word order in Chinese can cause misunderstandings or unnatural translations.

2.3.2. *Lack of understanding of context*

Not understanding the context of the original text can lead to incorrect or ambiguous translations. Students need to have a clear understanding of the content, purpose, and audience of the text in order to translate accurately and clearly. It can also lead to misinterpreting the meaning of words or phrases in the original text. This reduces the accuracy and effectiveness of the translation. Context often provides important information about the purpose, audience, and setting of the text.

Students may lack knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure in both Chinese

and their native language, leading to incorrect or inaccurate translations. When the understanding of the language is not enough, students will encounter some difficulties in the process of writing Chinese translation.

2.3.3. Poor Vietnamese expression

Because of focusing too much on the meaning of each word in Chinese and trying to translate as closely as possible without paying attention to the criteria of the translation being fluent and consistent with the expressive style of the target language. In addition, students often bring colloquial writing into translating texts from Chinese to Vietnamese, leading to the translated text being close to the content but lacking formality and not suitable for the written style.

Students should not skip the step of checking and reviewing the translation. This checking and reviewing allows students to promptly detect errors in translation that lack information, errors in expressing the wrong style of expression and proceed to complete and edit the translated text.

2.4. Proposed solutions to improve students' written translation errors

After analyzing the results of the student translation survey, some common errors of students in the process of translating and writing Chinese were found. The author also proposed some solutions to help overcome written translation errors for Chinese language students.

Solution 1: Strengthening grammar knowledge for students. Students in the translation learning stage have passed the language practice stage, basically forming grammar knowledge. In the translation subject, the prerequisites are solid grammar and a wide vocabulary. When in class, lecturers also need to continue to strengthen grammar, spend time to give many illustrative examples, emphasize the order of sentence components in Chinese such as adjectives, center words, adverbs, complements. Lecturers can also give some examples of the same idea but can be translated in many different ways. In addition, students need to try to improve their Chinese language skills from the elementary stage, need to grasp the way to divide sentence components in learning Chinese grammar and theory.

Solution 2: To help students memorize more vocabulary, first of all, lecturers provide and guide students to apply through many different memorization methods such as memorizing Chinese characters through pictophonetic characters. In

Chinese characters, about 80% are pictophonetic characters, pictophonetic characters are characters in which a radical represents the meaning, a radical represents the pronunciation. When students grasp the meaning of the radicals and their pronunciation, we can easily deduce and memorize to write other Chinese characters. Lecturers should also choose attractive, up-to-date topics to increase students' interest, increase writing activities in class as well as at home but with a suitable length.

Solution 3: Numbers in Chinese have many units, so it is easy to use them incorrectly if not careful. To avoid incorrect translation of numbers in Chinese, it is necessary to give students specific instructions from the very beginning about the numbers.

3. Conclusion

The article was conducted to investigate errors in the writings of Chinese Language students, to find out the causes of basic errors in the written translation process such as mistranslation of the position of the adjective and the center of the word, not remembering Chinese vocabulary, mistranslation of information about numbers, names and language expression errors. On that basis, some solutions are proposed to improve common written translation errors of students, at the same time improving the quality of teaching Written Translation. At the same time, the article also helps to support the orientation in the process of teaching and learning written translation skills of Chinese Language students as well as motivating students to actively practice written translation skills. The research contributes to the basis for lecturers to build and implement the written translation program in the teaching process.

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