
Difficulties and Some Solutions for Vietnamese – English Translation of English Majored Juniors at Tay Do University in Viet Nam

Nga H.T. Nguyen

Tay Do University, Vietnam
nhtnga@tdu.edu.vn

Uyen Thi Minh Phan

Tay Do University, Vietnam
ptmuyen@tdu.edu.vn

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0101>

Published: 11th January 2023

Citation: Nga H.T. Nguyen and Uyen Thi Minh Phan (2023) Difficulties and Some Solutions for Vietnamese–English Translation of English Majored Juniors at Tay Do University in Viet Nam, *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies: English Language, Teaching, Communication, Literature and Linguistics* 4(1),87-110

ABSTRACT: *The research studies the difficulties and some solutions for Vietnamese – English translation of English majored juniors at Tay Do University. The participants are one hundred third year students. Thanks to the questionnaire and translation test, the study finds out the common translation problems that almost students face in translation process. They are vocabulary, grammar and culture. Thus, it is very essential to have some solutions for students to improve translation skill. This paper might be useful to help students recognize their common mistakes and then apply the suitable solutions to improve translation.*

KEY WORDS: translation, difficulties, solutions, students, university

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English has become an international language. It is used all over the world. It requires that people around the world need to know English to cooperate with other countries in business, culture and other fields especially in education.

However, how to study English well is a great concern for learners, teachers and researchers; learners need to train four basic skills: speaking, listening, writing and reading. Besides, translation is also an important skill for English majored students. Translation is one of the most indispensable English skill for learners. "It is general believed that translation plays a key role in the universalization of human knowledge. It helps to improve international understanding, socio - cultural awareness professional communicative activities and so much more." (Le, 2006). In fact, Vietnamese – English translation is not easy for Vietnamese students to master. Thus, they cannot avoid mistakes in the translation practice.

There are many difficulties in translation such as vocabulary knowledge, grammatical structures, and difference about culture between two countries. Thus, the research “Difficulties and some solutions for Vietnamese – English translation of English majored juniors at Tay Do University” is carried out. The primary aim is to find real difficulties that majored juniors have to face in Vietnamese – English translation then give some solutions to improve this important skill. It is expected that the study could contribute a small part of usefulness to both students and teachers. Maybe it makes to interest for learners. Especially, the result of the study will help students be able to overcome the difficulties.

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of translation

According to Bui and Dang (1977), translation has always been done by somebody for somebody. Translation has played a key role in the development of world culture. It is common to think of culture as national and absolutely distinct. The history of translation is the history of the crucial but often invisible intersections in world culture. Translation was a prestigious activity in Britain in the eighteenth century, and the field was divided into two distinct areas: translation from the classics (focusing on Latin and Greek authors) which was a male-dominated territory, and translation from modern languages (French, German, Italian and Spanish).

Definition of translation

Translation has been variously defined. Translation is the communication of the meaning of a source-language text by means of an equivalent target-language. That means its transfer language into another language without changing the meaning. In addition, “Translation is a transfer process which aims at the transformation of a written source language text into an optimally equivalent target language text, and which requires the syntactic, the semantic, and the pragmatic understanding and analytical processing of the source text.” (Wilss, 1982). Besides, the other definition is presented by Catford (1965) he states that, “Translation is the replacement of textual material in another language.” Translation is a kind of activity which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions. Also, translation is activity of constituting a representation in a certain language and culture into another. In the process of translation, the translator contacts both the two languages and the two cultures. Vietnamese - English translation is rendering a Vietnamese written text into an English one in the way that the author intended the text. Translators are concerned with the written words. They render written texts from Vietnamese into English.

Translators are required to undertake assignments, which range from simple items as birth certificates and driving licenses to more complex written material as articles in specialized professional journals, economical article, legal documents.

In translation, the form of the source language is replaced by the form of the target language. The purpose of translation is to transfer the meaning of the source language into the target

language. This is done by going from the form of the first language to the form of a second language by way of semantic structure. It is transferred and must remain unchanged. Moreover, translation not only involves understanding the general meaning of the communication, but calls upon the ability to understand the culture of the communication.

The importance of translation in current society

From all the above definitions, and history of translation, it is easy to realize that every translation activity has one or more specific purposes. Newmark (1988:6) indicates, "The main aim of translation is to serve as a cross-cultural bilingual communication vehicle among peoples." Indeed, translation plays a crucial role in effective communication. In addition, translation helps to remove the language barrier and make people closer to each other.

Bui and Dang (1997) demonstrate, "Translation may be considered as the most universally accepted solution for surmounting the obstacle. Thus, there is a need for professional translators." In fact, translation becomes necessary and significant when all countries in the world have cooperated in variety aspects like business, education and so on. Nowadays, in business, when the country is in cooperation with foreign investors, contracts, emails, agreements or conventions and so on. These require translating effectively. Thus, the role of translation is very important to every field in society.

Translation is one of the most necessary factor in education. Translation is considered as a compulsory subject for Bachelor of English in almost university. Today, thanks to translation skill, students are able to communicate with foreigner easily. In addition, translation can be support for the writing process, especially at lower levels; this helps students to improve learning English.

For these reasons, translation is an important subject for learners of English. Especially, English majored juniors at Tay Do University. Certainly, almost no translation is perfect even when the general message is conveyed. This is due to many linguistic and cultural differences between one language and another. Hence, students are not very easy to overcome the differences in translation process.

The difficulties in Vietnamese – English translation

There are lot of difficulties in translation of English majored students. The most typical difficulties in Vietnamese – English translation are vocabulary knowledge, grammatical structures, and difference about culture between two countries.

Vocabulary

English vocabulary is regarded as the greatest language problems of students. Vocabulary is all the words we must know to communicate effectively. No matter how well students learn grammar, no matter how successfully the sound of second language are mastered without words to express wide range of meaning, communication in a second language just cannot happen in any meaningful way. Besides, "without grammar, very little can be conveyed,

without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed” (Wilkins, 1972). In fact, vocabulary plays important learning process new language. For this reason, the problems about vocabulary cause many difficulties for students in translation process. The biggest problem that students have to face are lack of vocabulary, word choice, and word spelling.

Lack of vocabulary

Lack of vocabulary causes many difficulties in learning a new language because vocabulary is body of word that makes up a language. At the same time, “Vocabulary is also an indispensable factor in translation. If translator lacks new words, he cannot clearly understand the content of target text and it is not easy to have a good version.” (Le, 2006). Moreover, lack of vocabulary makes translators spend most of time to look up the new words in dictionary. Generally, lack of vocabulary is one of the difficulties in translation of translators as well as English majored juniors.

Word choice

According to Lewandowska (2010), “One word in one language may represent one meaning, whereas in another one word may represent more than one meaning.” Thus, choosing suitable words is very important in translation because it makes the version become more interesting and colorful. In addition, Nickelsen (2001) affirms that, word choice is used to create the desired meaning. Besides, he also states that, “Word choice is choosing word that can make writing a masterpiece.” In translation process, word choice is the greatest problem. Although juniors have vocabulary, their version is also less flexible because they do not know how to choose suitable words. Hence, if juniors want to be smooth and fluent in translation, they must choose the correct word according to theme of the article, its style and target readers, to make translation appropriate and concise.

Word spelling

When juniors have to translate a text in a short period, surely they do not have much time to read their translation products again before they submit it. Hence, spelling error is unavoidable, especially, in Vietnam – English translation. According to Hornby (2005), “Spelling is the act of forming words correctly from individual letters.” therefore, word spelling is concern with incorrect writing. Juniors often misspelling because they drop or add a letter inside a word, e.g. a wrong word “contemtous” for “contemptuous”. On the other hand, the confusion among noun, verb and adjective is another common mistake since they sometimes differ in only one letter. Other minor cause of misspelling is the large number of letter in the English language because juniors cannot visualize long words.

Grammar

According to William (2005), “Grammar is a study of the structure of the language and describes the way of putting words together to make meaningful sentences.” Therefore, grammar is concerned with how students combine words to make a sentence. In addition, if

there was no grammar, language would simply be a chaotic collection of separate words. Grammar is considered as the glue to combine words in other to make meaningful units in a language. However, English grammar is so complicated and different from Vietnamese one. There are grammar errors when students translate a text as tense, clause, form of sentence and word order.

Tense

Tense plays an important role in learning English and especially in translation. The system of tense in English is quite complicated, “There are 12 tenses in English which have resulted from the combination of both tense and aspect system.” (Celce and Larsen-Freeman, 1999). To express tense in English, we must change the verb-form while there are no rules of using the different verb forms to express the time when an action happens in Vietnamese. It can be seen that English has a very clear distinction between tenses whereas tense is not usually required in Vietnamese. For this reason, students usually meet the problems about tense in translation process.

Clause

A clause is “A group of words that includes a subject and a verb, and forms a sentence or part of a sentence.” (Hornby, 2005). Moreover, a clause is composed of a minimum of a subject and a predicate. Without one of these elements, the clause is ungrammatical. A subject of a clause is an entity such as a person, a place, an object, or an abstract concept, which acts, is described or is acted upon. The subject usually answers the question Who/What is the sentence about? A predicate of a clause gives information on the subject, either describing it or identifying the action it performs or that is performed upon it (its predicament). The predicate contains the verb in the sentence and objects that are affected by the subject's actions. It usually answers the question What happens/ is described? It is considered as the most complicated aspect in English grammar, especially relative clause. In Vietnamese, a word “mà” is often used to introduce all kinds of relative clause. In contrast, English relative clause is introduced by relative pronouns (who, whom, which and whose). Therefore, it is hard to distinguish among these kinds of relative clause when students a clause from Vietnamese into English.

Form of sentence

A sentence is the largest grammatical unit in language. The sentence is a combination of words that expresses a complete thought. Moreover, sentence is a group of words that usually contains a subject and a predicate, and expresses a complete idea. The words in an English sentence have a certain order and rules regarding ways to either expand or shorten it. The boundaries of a sentence are easily recognized, as it begins with a capital letter and ends with a terminal punctuation mark (period, question mark or exclamation point).

The basic parts of a sentence are the subject, the verb, and (often, but not always) the object. The subject is usually a noun - a word that names a person, place, or thing. The verb

(or predicate) usually follows the subject and identifies an action or a state of being. An object receives the action and usually follows the verb. All sentences are about something or someone. The something or someone that the sentence is about is called the subject of the sentence. The predicate contains information about someone or something that is the subject. Of course, a sentence can be longer and more complicated, but basically there is always a subject and a predicate.

There are four basic sentence structures as the simple sentence, the compound sentence, the complex sentence, and the compound-complex sentence.

First, simple sentences have one clause. The simple subject is the main word in the subject, and the simple predicate is the main word in the predicate. The simple subject is always a noun/pronoun and the simple predicate is always a verb.

Next, compound and complex sentences have two or more clauses. Compound sentences contain two independent clauses that are joined by a coordinating conjunction. (The most common coordinating conjunctions are: **but**, **or**, **and**, **so**). Complex sentences contain an independent clause plus one or more dependent clauses. (A dependent clause starts with a subordinating conjunction. For examples they are that, because, while, although, where, and if.)

Finally, compound - complex sentences contain 3 or more clauses (of which at least two are independent and one is dependent). Sentences can contain subjects and objects. The subject in a sentence is generally the person or thing carrying out an action. The object in a sentence is involved in an action but does not carry it out, the object comes after the verb.

In brief, form of sentence is complicated units of grammatical structures. The learners have to follow the rules in every grammatical structures to become good translators.

Word order

Word order is the order or arrangement of words in a phrase, clause, or sentence. In many languages, including English, word order plays an important part in determining meanings expressed in other languages by inflections.

The translators depend heavily on word order because there are so few inflections in English sentences. In fact, as inflections have gradually disappeared over centuries, word order has become more and more rigid. For instance, there is a great difference in meaning between “happy she died”, and “she died happily”.

Most English sentences (clauses) conform to the subject-verb-object word order. This means that the subject comes before the verb, which comes before the object. However, it is more complicated as other elements are added to the sentence. When we make a sentence in English, we normally follow the following order. Subject + Verb + Object + Adverb of Place + Adverb of Time.

The verb and the object of the verb normally go together. For example: Susan likes children very much. Moreover, in sentence, it is believed that, the place before the time. For example, we arrived at the airport early or I'm going to Paris on Monday. When there is more than one verb, it puts an adverb after the first verb. For example: I can never forget her. (can = the first verb, forget = the second verb), or She has always loved him. (has = the first verb, loved = the second verb. Besides, when there are two or more adjectives before a noun there are some complicated "rules" for the order in which they should appear. These are the most important: opinion adjectives come before fact adjectives fact adjectives appear as follows: size - age - color - origin – material.

In brief, English word order is strict and rather inflexible. Word order arranges separate words into sentences in a certain way and indicates where to find the subject, the predicate, and the other parts of the sentence. Word order and context help to identify the meanings of individual words. Thus, learners have to understand deeply to become good translators.

Culture

Culture is one of the biggest barriers while communicate on an international level. Bhabha (1994) defines, “Translation is the performative nature of cultural communication.” Thus, to communicating effectively with people of different culture, it is necessary to learn about culture. Translation between English and Vietnamese which belong to two different cultures (the Western and the Eastern). Therefore, students often meet the cultural problem in translation. There are lack of cultural knowledge, idioms and fixed expression and cultural untranslatability.

Lack of cultural knowledge

Anderson and Lynch (2000) mention that, “Lack of social-cultural, factual and contextual knowledge of the target language can also present an obstacle to comprehension because language is used to express culture.” Cultural knowledge, including knowledge of various subcultures, has long been recognize as indispensable for translation, as it is knowledge of the application that linguistic units have in particular situational and socio - cultural context which makes translation possible in the first place. Cultural knowledge is indispensable for translation since it makes translation possible in the first place. Besides, the lack of cultural knowledge is due to incapacity of knowing and recognizing the specific of the own cultural. When students have a limited understanding of cultural, they are incapable of knowing and recognizing the specific among different cultures. Therefore, they feel difficult to express the message of a language appropriately in accordance with the literary style of a language.

For example, Vietnamese people prefer using the buffalo in idiom “ngưu tầm ngưu, mã tầm mã” but the English one would like to use “bird” as in “bird of the same feather flocks together”. One other example may be “hiền như củ khoai” or “hiền như cút đất” for Vietnamese people, but their English counterpart would like to say “as mild as a lamb” (hiền như một chú cừ non). Therefore, if students do not gain enough background knowledge and understand about the cultures, they can face difficulties in translation.

Idioms and Fixed Expression

Idioms are one of the most important aspects of English. “An idiom is a group of words with a different meaning of its constituents.” (Longman Pocket Dictionary, 2001). Translating idioms is one of the most difficult tasks for students. According to Baker (1992) “The first difficulty that a translator comes across, while translating idioms, is the ability to recognize and distinguish idiomatic from non-idiomatic usage.” Idiom is a word, phrase or expression that cannot be literally. In other words, idioms have meanings that cannot be figured out by looking up the word in the dictionary. They have meanings that are understood by people who speak that language.

Every language has a set of idioms and fixed expressions of its own, which have been created and developed throughout history. It is profoundly influenced by the geographical position, natural and social conditions of the culture in which the language is used. Thus, the sets of idioms and fixed expressions in different languages varies in many ways. Fixed expressions are different from idioms in the way that they have almost transparent meanings. An idiom or fixed expression has been recognized correctly, the next step is to decide how to translate it into the target language. The difficulties involved in translating an idiom are totally different from those involved in interpreting it.

Cultural untranslatability

Facing cultural untranslatability is problematic due to differences that cannot be described directly. Cultural untranslatability is mentioned as “situational text that are referred to in an original are absent in the culture of the translating language.” (Mona and Gabriela, 2012). In fact, cultural untranslatability is one of the complicated factors in translation. When the target language and its culture lack relevant situational features for symbols of the source text, students will find it difficult or impossible to translate the language into another culture. However, cultural untranslatability is unavoidable in translation.

In addition, cultural untranslatability is also mentioned when translating texts contain proper names. Some typical names like Peter, Moskva, Washington, Yunnan and Thames, in fact cannot be translated satisfactorily into Vietnamese even when they are transcribed as Pi-to, Máx-cơ-va, Oa-shing-ton, Van-nam and Them. All the names are also the same as the original in English; therefore, Vietnamese can immediately relate them to some images on their mind. It can be said that these names have been made in Vietnamese.

Some solutions to improve Vietnamese – English translation

Some solutions dealing with vocabulary difficulties

In general, vocabulary is linked strongly to academic success because students with large vocabulary who can understand new words and concepts of lessons more quickly than students with limited vocabulary size. There are some ways to study and remember

vocabulary. First, flash card is writing words on one side and definition on another. Second, word structure is analyzing the word's structure and properties is a vocabulary strategy. Third, word sort is studying the definitions and spelling patterns and trying to make relationships among the word sort or group words by first letter, prefix, suffix, meaning, or by part of speech. Next, word mapping is a vocabulary in word map is a graphic organizer that helps learners think about new words or concepts in several ways. Also, visual imaging is thinking of the picture of the look like word and imagine will help learners remember the word and its meaning.

Besides, reading many books in English every day will help to keep English in brain fresh. It is important to study English every day. There are various ways learners can study new words. The important thing to remember is to use new words as soon as learners have studied them. If learners practice saying, and writing the new words throughout the day, they will start to remember its meaning and the new vocabulary word becomes a part of learner's common knowledge. Using the new word in emails, blog posts, or other forms of writing will also cement the new word into the memory bank.

Some solutions dealing with grammatical difficulties

There are many ways to improve grammar such as read grammatical books, ask teachers, practice exercises, and study in group. Reading is an extremely importance because when reading, learners can study much of what they need to know for their different subject. It is also an excellent way to improve English skill. Read more in grammatical books may be tiring, and it may be difficult to understand everything. However, this is a step that learners cannot skip if learners want to get better at grammar. Reading helps learners see how English works or how the grammar works. That knowledge can transfer to their writing. Find something learners like to read, and then keep on reading! Also try to read as many different genres. Learning English grammar and using it correctly takes a lot of time, effort, and practice. Be positive and proactive about practicing grammar, reading, and writing skills and learners will begin seeing more improvement.

In addition, if the learners are not sure whether learners have correct sentences, ask teachers, and remember the more learners read grammatical books, study in group, the better a translator learner will become. There are many ways to improve grammatical difficulties but learners should choose suitable ways to study effectively.

Some solutions dealing with cultural difficulties

Cultural substitution

One of the difficulties in translation is to translate culture words or concepts because every country has its own culture: it is not easy for students to translate when day do not know clearly both languages. Cultural substitution is one of effective methods in this case. The strategy of translating using cultural substitution is used to replace "A culture-specific item or

Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK
expression with a target language item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to similar impact on the target reader.” (Baker, 1992)

Cultural substitution refers to the translation of some known or unknown concepts in the source language by using the substitution from the cultural of the receptor language rather than by other available means of meaning equivalence. It involves replacing a cultural specific item or expression with a target language item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target. The obvious advantage of using this strategy is that it gives the translators a concept which they can identify and it is easy to understand, familiar to them. This strategy can help the target reader understand the meaning of cultural concept by substituting the source language with equivalent meaning in the target language.

Free translation

This is another method for students when they meet cultural difficulties. A free translation is a translation the reproduces the general meaning of the original text. It may or may not closely follow the form or organization of the original. This method is difficult to use because it requires students to know well the cultural of both source and target language, translators focus the content of the target text rather than the form, which means that the same content is expressed in the target text but with very different grammatical structures. Free translation reproduces the matter without the manner or the content without the form of the original. By free translation method translators can translate by many ways and the expressing ways are closest in meaning with the original language. Hence, this is one useful method for students in translation.

Borrowing

Borrowing is not a new method. It has been discussed in many books on lexicology and translation. Translation by borrowing is another of the possible way in coping with problematic items is translation. This case often happens in translation when the original document language has a word but language word is translation piece has no similarity. Borrowing is a method that the source language word is transferred directly to the target language without being translated. Besides, borrowing is also called translation loan. Translation - loans “are not taken into the vocabulary of another language more or less in the same phonemic shape. In which they have been functioning in their own language, but undergo the process of translation.” (Nguyen and Le, 2003). The main advantage of translation by borrowing is that it is possible to achieve a high level of precision in specifying the meaning of a word or concept that poses difficulties in translation.

Adaptation

Adaptation involves the use of the equivalent word in the target language culture for the word in the source language text. This procedure is used as an effective way to deal with cultural difficulties by rewriting the source language according to the characteristics of the target

Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK language. According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, an adaptation is a translation procedure that translators use to replace a social or cultural reality in the source text with a corresponding reality in the target text. The target text would be more correct and perfect by using adaptation method. This procedure is used in those cases when the translation involves the rendition of a source language culture which does not match the target language culture. Otherwise, adaptation involves changing the cultural reference when a situation in the source cultural does not exist in the target culture.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research aims, research questions, and hypothesis

Research aims

The research aims to find real difficulties that the juniors at Tay Do University face in Vietnamese – English translation then give some solutions to improve this important skill. The result of the study will help students be able to recognize their difficulties in translation process to translate successfully.

Research questions

The study is expected to use some solutions to improve translating English skill of majored juniors. The study is conducted to deal with the following research questions:

1. What difficulties do English majored juniors at Tay Do University face in Vietnamese – English translation?
2. What solution do English majored juniors apply to improve translation?

Hypothesis

According to the literature and the research questions, it is hypothesized that English majored juniors at Tay Do University recognize their difficulties in Vietnamese - English translation. The study can help students overcome the difficulties to improve translation skill.

Research method

Design

The research is based on the questionnaire and the translation test to gather the information. The study will support to find out the elements and ways which are necessary for students to improve translation skill.

The translation test and the questionnaires are used to find out the difficulties of English majored juniors at Tay Do University and some solutions for these problems.

Participants

The populations of the study are one hundred English majored juniors at Tay Do University. Their ages vary from 20 to 22 and they are of equal level. Participants all speak Vietnamese as their mother language and English is considered as their foreign language. They have been studying English for ten years. In addition, they start translation skill in the third year. They have been studied Translation in Practice I for the previous course and Translation in Practice II for the current one. It helps the study more easily and the result will be more objective.

Instrument

The questionnaires and translation test are used to collect information from the participants to find out the difficulties while translating then give some solutions to improve these problems.

Questionnaire

One of the most commonly used techniques to collect data is questionnaire because it can be objectively scored and analyzed. Questionnaire is the most useful way when employed systematically and uniformed feedback from students. Therefore, questionnaire is chosen as the first instrument to collect the quantitative data for this study. The questionnaire is divided into two parts: part 1 mentions to students' attitudes to translation, part 2 is about the difficulties in translating and some solutions to improve Vietnamese – English translation.

The translation test

The test paper was made of twelve sentences with the requirement of translating from Vietnamese into English in order to find out the problems that the students are facing when learning Vietnamese – English translation, especially concentrating on vocabulary, grammar and cultural difficulties. All test papers were collected for analysis under the guidance of the experienced teacher. The purpose of the test is to help students to recognize their problems in Vietnamese – English translation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Students' background

Students' opinion about the importance of Vietnamese - English translation

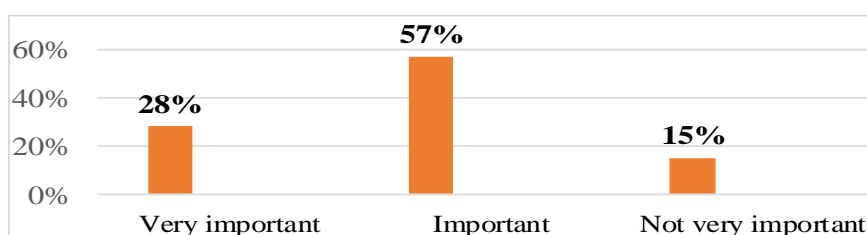


Figure 1: The importance of Vietnamese - English translation

It is seen that 28% think that learning English is very important, 57% consider it is important, and 15% agree that it is not very important.

The juniors think that translation is an important subject because of many typical reasons. First, English has become the dominant language in many fields of life. English really becomes a key to success in life. In Viet Nam, English is more and more widely used in tourism, politics, economics, telecommunication, culture, technology and so on. When students learn English at university, they learn many skills such as listening, speaking, writing, reading and translation; among them translation is related to others skills so it plays an important role in helping juniors to learn the others effectively. In addition, translation is an interesting subject. Through each lesson juniors can extend vocabulary, social and cultural knowledge from different countries.

Students' attitude towards Vietnamese - English translation

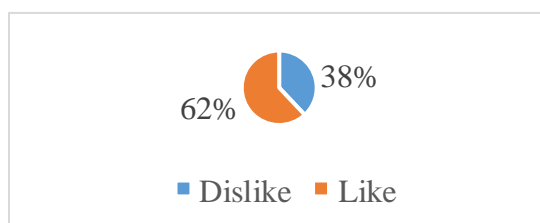
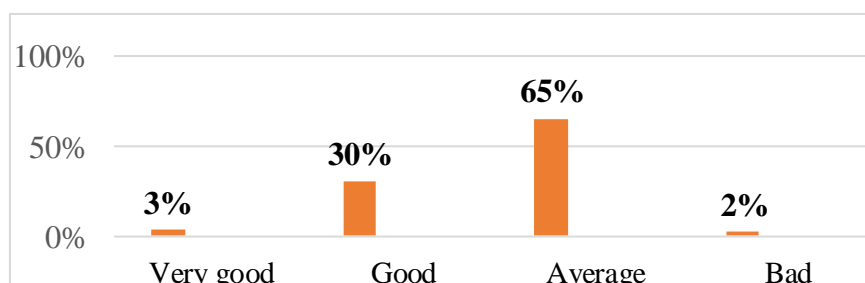


Figure 2: Students' attitude towards Vietnamese - English translation

62% say that they like translation because it is an interesting. Translation helps them to learn vocabulary and grammatical structures. Besides, they can learn cultural and social knowledge from many different countries around the world. Especially, they like translation because it is related to the job in the future.

On the other hand, 38% say that they do not like translation because it is a difficult subject. Many new words and strange structures make students confused when they try to translate a text. Moreover, cultural differences between two languages may cause difficulties for students to translate. It is difficult to study translation if juniors have no basic knowledge such as: reading, writing and grammar.

Students' self-evaluation on Vietnamese - English translation**Figure 3:** Students' self-evaluation on Vietnamese - English translation

Only 3% affirm that they are very good at translation. They can easily translate a text thanks to basic knowledge. While 30% think that they are good at translation. Lack of vocabulary is the major problem; juniors have to spend a lot of time to look up the words they do not know in the dictionary. Word choice is also another issue because there are a lot of words having the same meaning, but each word has different usage depending on the content of the text so it is difficult to look up suitable words. Besides, students have to face a grammar problem. Poor grammar is also difficult for many juniors.

The remainder (65%) of the students are at average and 2% admit that they are bad. Translation is always not simple. It requires the students to have a good knowledge about linguistic and general knowledge to transfer the message exactly. It is difficult to study translation. Maybe juniors lost basic knowledge when they were studying at high school. They usually cannot translate smoothly long sentences or paragraphs, and they often get grammar structure mistakes. Moreover, they admit that Vietnamese includes words that they do not have a simple counterpart in English. When translators come across such a word, it does not make sense in the target language. In addition, some words pose more difficulty than others due to interesting cultural differences. Besides, the most difficulty in translation is idiom and fixed expression. They believe that idioms and fixed expressions which contain culture-specific items are untranslatable. It is the specific items which can make it untranslatable or difficult to translate.

The difficulties in translation of juniors majoring in English

Translation is a complex process. There are lots of problems that juniors face in Vietnamese - English translation. The common translation problem in students' view in questionnaire are vocabulary, grammar and culture.

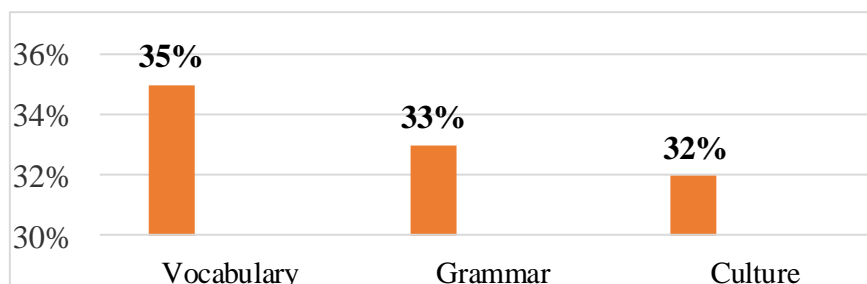


Figure 4: Difficulties in learning translation

It is indicated that students are aware of their problems in translation. There are three main kinds: vocabulary, grammar and cultural. Upon analyzing and considering the mentioned data, it is founded that vocabulary (35%) is the most difficulty in translation; grammar and culture are also the big problem in process in translation accounting 33% and 32% respectively.

In fact, vocabulary was the most comprehensive and difficult aspect. In which vocabulary difficulties accounted for the highest rate with 35%. There were a lot of problems relating to vocabulary such as lack of vocabulary, word choice, and word spelling that caused difficulties for juniors in translating process. Grammar is the set of rules that are applied to the correct usage of a language. Grammar also accounted for the high rate. It was only lower than vocabulary 2% (33%). Each language has its own grammar; therefore, many difficulties also arise from it. However, this study only focused on four aspects as tenses, clauses, forms of sentences and word orders. The last difficulty was culture with 32% including lack of cultural knowledge, idiom and fixed expression and cultural untranslability.

Continuously, the next section will clearly identify the mistake that the students make in translation test.

Problems about vocabulary

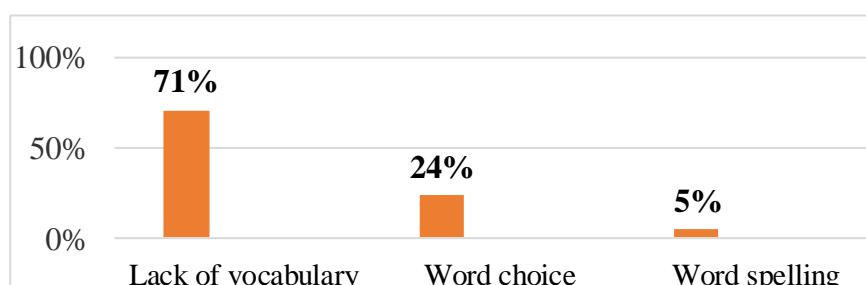


Figure 5: Students' vocabulary problem

Vocabulary is an indispensable part in learning a foreign language. If having a good knowledge about vocabulary, it helps students to understand a language better. In fact, more

than half of students (71%) admit that lack of vocabulary is one of the most important problems. Besides, 24% of the students who think that word choice is also an element that leads to difficulties in translation process and word spelling accounts for 5%. Let's go through each detail.

Lack of vocabulary

Lack of vocabulary causes lot of problems in Vietnamese – English translation process. In fact, lack of vocabulary is the most important factor that effects to learn translation of the students. In figure 5, 71% have problem about lack of vocabulary. Obviously, when doing the translation test almost students translate incorrectly.

For example, in translation test there is a phrase “sự rung động”; most of students translated it into “affect”, “sensitive” “moving” and “motion”. There are a few students who have right translation “the vibration”. In fact, it is seen that lack of vocabulary is one of factors causing obstacles for students in translation process. It is very difficult to find the exact equivalent words to convey the Vietnamese into English.

Word choice

In figure 5, 24% think that word choice is their problem. Word choice plays an important role in translation process. There are lot of words that have the same meaning so it is very difficult for students to choose the suitable words for the translation scripts. It spends a lot of time for students to look up in a dictionary when they translate both a text and a sentence.

For example, almost students translated incorrect the phrase “loại trái cây”. They translated it into “one of the fruits” and “kind of fruits” and “type of the fruits”. In fact, there are two ways “kind of fruits” and “type of fruits”. However, many students used “type of the fruits”. While type is used to differentiate one group from the rest and kind is used to link an individual to a group. Type refers to clearly distinguishing and essential characteristics or traits shared by members of a group. In addition, kind is used in many situations such as a category or sort as different kinds of furniture; a new kind of politics.

From the result above, it is drawn that choosing suitable words also depends on the context of the translation scripts.

Word spelling

In figure 5, only 5% make some problems in word spelling. The common mistake of word spelling is misspelling; it happens when students translate from Vietnamese to English. In reality, there are many causes for misspelling a word but there is not participant makes this kind of mistake in the translation test.

The problem about grammar in translation

It is difficult to transfer a text from Vietnamese into English accurately if they lack of grammar knowledge. In translation process, students often make lot of grammatical errors such as tense, clause, form of sentences, and word order. This is typical mistakes for majored juniors.

On questionnaire data, tense is accounts 24%, clause is 6%, form of sentences occupies 48% and word order is 22%.

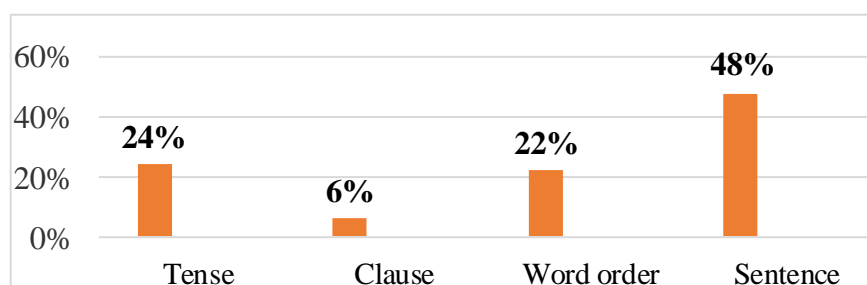


Figure 6: Some common grammatical mistakes

Most of students say that grammatical knowledge is very difficult, they have not enough grammatical knowledge, so they make mistakes easily in translation process. In addition, Vietnamese grammar and English grammar are different. The causes lead these troubles because of the big differences between two languages for students. There are many grammatical mistakes in translation process but the popular mistakes are tense, clause, form of sentences, and word order.

Tense

In figure 6, tense accounts 24%. It is not easy to choose suitable tenses in the sentence or text; it depends on the context to translate exactly. It is one of the largest difficulties that students worry too much in grammatical problem. According to translated test, more than half of students use wrong tense in their translation. Students are usually confused and they do not know how to use the suitable tense for sentences.

For instance, in translation test there is a sentence, “Tôi và Anna sẽ đi du lịch vào thứ bảy.” The correct sentence should be “Anna and I are going to travel on this Saturday.” This is a simple and easy sentence. There are many students who translated into “Anna and I will go shopping on this Saturday.” In this sentence, students are confused by structure “will” and “be going to”. Both are future tenses but they have different uses. In this case, we use “be going to” because “be going to” is used in the near future tense, whereas, “will” is used when we have decided to do something before talking about it (something is planned or arranged before).

Another example, in translation test there is a sentence, “Trời mưa tầm tã ngày hôm qua.” 62.5 % of students used wrong tense, they used present tense, and past progressive. The correct tense is simple past. From these, it is found that tense plays an important role in English grammar. Therefore, students should be careful before choosing the correct tense.

Clause

In figure 6, clause accounts 6% in common grammatical mistakes. In translation test there is a sentence, “Anh ấy là trụ cột của gia đình, người có ảnh hưởng đến các thành viên.” There are 17.5 % of students who made the mistakes in translation. Most of students translated this sentence as “He is the bread - winner of family the person affects to every member.” or “He whom has influences on other members is the head of his family.” The correct sentence is “He is bread - winner who affects to other members in his family.” There are many clauses in English, especially relative clauses. It is difficult for students to distinguish these kinds of relative clauses. Thus, juniors have to understand deeply issues to avoid mistakes.

Form of sentences

In figure 6, form of sentence is considered as the highest mistakes of students in translation with 48%. There are many types of sentences in English, so it is difficult for students to remember all structures and usages. 90% of students made the mistake in translation test. Most of students translated sentence, “Điều đó khiến mọi người ngại tiếp xúc với anh ấy.” as “That makes everyone afraid of communication to him.” The correct sentence must be “It makes everyone to be afraid of communicating with him.” Form of sentences is the most difficulties in grammar because they are so complicated to distinguish. Thus, students get mistakes easily if they do not have enough knowledge about them.

Another example, in translation test there is a sentence, “Giỏ hoa lớn nhất Việt Nam tại thành phố Sa Đéc, tỉnh Đồng Tháp được làm từ nhiều nghệ nhân nổi tiếng của làng hoa Sa Đéc.” Most of students translated this sentence, “The largest fresh flower baskets in Vietnam at Sa Dec city, Dong Thap province made many famous artists of flower village in Sa Dec town.” While the correct sentence is “The largest fresh flower baskets in Sa Dec city, Dong Thap province in Vietnam is made by many famous artists of flower village in Sa Dec town”. Only 22.5 % of the students translated this sentence correctly. This is one of the most frequently seen problems in translation process. This kind of mistake still occurs regularly. Translators should always keep in mind that the use of the passive voice in English language. Thus, form of sentence is very complicated, learners have to study and practice exercise more.

Word order

In figure 6, word order accounts for 22% in grammatical mistakes. The main reason is that English word order is quite different from the Vietnamese one and most students are affected by their first language. For instance, in translation test, there is a sentence, “Xuân Diệu được xem là một nhà thơ trữ tình nổi tiếng của nền văn học Việt Nam.” The correct sentence is that “Xuan Dieu is considered that is a famous lyrical poet of Vietnam literature.” Most of

students translated it into “Xuan Dieu is considered that is a lyrical poet famous of literature Viet Nam.” When there is more than one adjective in a sentence, the word order of sentence follows the rules S + Adjective + N. The word “lyrical” “famous” are the adjectives following noun and “Viet Nam” is the name of country. It follows the noun “literature”. Therefore, the correct sentence should be “Xuan Dieu is considered that is a famous lyrical poet of Vietnam literature.”

An another phrase is “lễ hội truyền thống”, 85% of students translated “festival tradition” they are misunderstanding “festival” is an adjective but it is a noun, the adjective of “festival” is “festive”. Thus, the correct this phrase is “traditional festival”.

In brief, English grammatical structures are inflexible, word order has its own rules, students can base on its rules to translate easily. Moreover, it requires the learners have to find an effective way of learning to study and practice more if they want to limit grammar errors in using English in general and specially in translation subject as skilled translators.

The problems about culture in translation

Culture is one of the biggest barriers while communication is at an international level. Translation of cultures cannot be as equal as it should be, as some cultures and societies remain dominant compared to others, therefore power is a limit to translation of cultures. Indeed, within a translation of cultures, the target language may dominate the source culture in order to make the text comprehensible in a sense of culture for the readers. The meaning of culture is quite difficult to understand, therefore translation of cultures is certainly limited, all the more so borders exist between cultures, which must be thus distinguished.

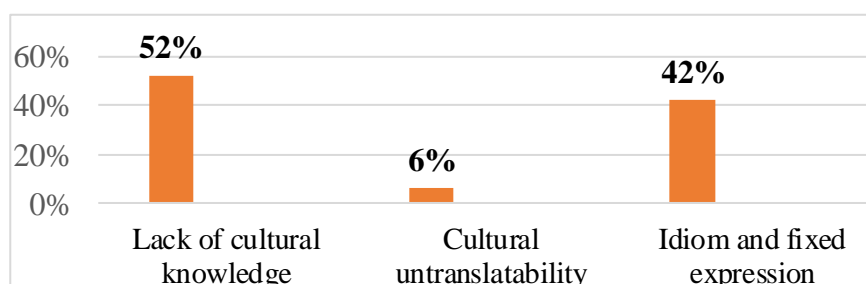


Figure 7: Some common cultural difficulties

The common cultural difficulties involve lack of cultural knowledge, cultural untranslatability, idiom and fixed expression. According to gather figure from questionnaire, lacking of cultural knowledge is the biggest obstacle in translation, it accounts for 52% of the students. Besides, 6% of the students agree that cultural untranslatability is also one of difficult causing many mistakes in translation and the last one problem is idiom and fixed expression with 42%.

Lack of cultural knowledge

In figure 6, lacking of cultural knowledge accounts for 52%. In translation test, 80% of students make this mistake. In fact, every country has different cultures and it is not easy to translate if students meet cultural issues in their translation.

For example, when translating the sentence, “Bánh chưng là loại bánh truyền thống của dân tộc Việt nhằm thể hiện lòng biết ơn của con cháu đối với cha ông và đất trời.” In this sentence, almost 70% of the students translated into “rice cake and rice pie”, “chung cake”, or “rice cake”. But this phrase should be translated into “square sticky rice cake”, “stuffed sticky rice cake”. Therefore, lack of cultural knowledge can lead to misunderstand and it causes troubles. In addition, cultural knowledge includes knowledge on almost all aspects such as religions, traditional customs, social norms and historical awareness etc. Besides, in the process of translation the form-content unity of the source text is disrupted. Inevitably some pressure is exerted upon the target language, as the transfer of foreign elements is impossible without a certain ‘violence’.

The translators, as it has been proved, should be an intercultural mediator. Such intercultural activity requires a carefully considered choice of cultural strategy. Thus, a creative translator should be always mindful of the best solution available.

Idiom and fixed expression

In figure 6, idiom and fixed expression take 42%. Indeed, idiom and fixed expression are very difficult to translate because they do not follow any rules. In translation test, idiom and fixed expression are also problems of students in culture difficulties; 75% of the students cannot translate it.

For example, there is an idiom “Cố công mài sắt, có ngày nên kim.” The correct sentence should be “Practice makes perfect.” but there are only a few students who give the correct sentence. Almost students translated “Deligence is the mother of good fortune.” or “Have iron grinding makes perfect.”

Another example, there is an idiom “Anh ấy mặt lạnh như tiền.” Almost students who translated as “He is face like cold cash.” or “His face is as cold as money.” The correct sentence must be “He is as cold as ice.” or “He is as cool as a cucumber.” From the result above, it is seen that idiom and fixed expression are complex and students hardly translate them exactly.

Cultural untranslatability

In figure 6, 6% get difficulties in cultural untranslatability. Cultural untranslatability is unavoidable difficulty in translation. It seems to be very difficult to convey the meaning from one language into another since students cannot find the suitable word or structure for source language.

For example, when translating the sentence, “Bánh xèo là một trong những loại bánh đặc trưng của người dân Nam Bộ.” In this sentence, almost 30% of the students translated into “xèo cake”, the remainders “pancake” or “halfmoon cake”. Every culture has typical culture aspects to differentiate with countries around the world.

Some solutions to improve Vietnamese – English translation

Some solutions dealing with vocabulary difficulties

Students think that in order to have good vocabulary, learners have to study and have review ways effectively. The following table shows the results.

Table 1. The ways of learning vocabulary

The ways of learning vocabulary	Percentage
Use flash card	5%
Learn by the pictures, and games	18%
Learn about 5 to 10 new words everyday	10%
Write new words in a small paper, and stick anywhere	11%
Learn in topics	17%
Talk with friends or foreigners	10%
Add prefix and suffix	8%
Get synonyms and antonyms	7%
Read books in English	14%

The ways of learning by pictures and games, learn in topics and read many books in English are considered effective way to improve the vocabulary. First, learn by pictures and games is a way that students agree to improve vocabulary effectively, it accounts 18%, the highest percentage. There are many colorful pictures or while playing games to relax helps students deep remember the new words. Next, study English using topics that learners like. This will help to motivate learners because it will also be learning about a topic they find interesting while they study English, 17% of the students admit. Moreover, read many books in English accounts 14%. This habit of studying English will help to keep English in brain fresh. It is important to study English every day.

Besides, learn about 5 to 10 new words every day, talk with friends or foreigners and write new words in a small paper and stick anywhere, are also good ways to support of learning

Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK
vocabulary, each takes about 10%. The others are about 5% to 7%. In brief, these above popular ways help students improve vocabulary quickly.

Some solutions dealing with grammatical difficulties

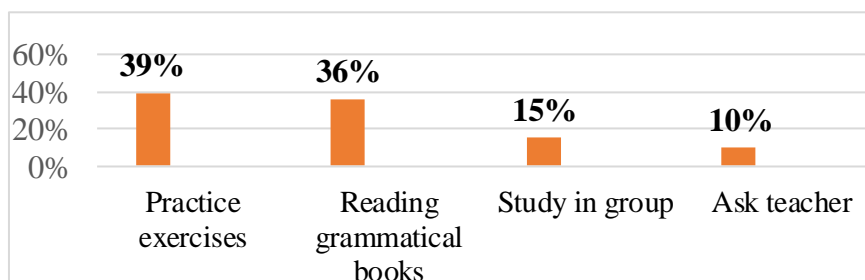


Figure 8: Some solutions dealing with the grammar difficulties

Grammatical structures in Vietnamese is different from the others. Thus, there are many students who agree some solutions to improve grammar. There are 39% of the students who admit that practicing exercises is the way to improve grammar effectively. Moreover, reading grammatical books is a main aspect that 36% admit. Besides 15% of the students say that studying in group also improves grammar ability. Only, 10% agree that asking teacher is the necessary way to improve grammar.

In short, if learners are not sure whether they have correct sentences, they should ask teachers, or they, themselves can read grammatical books, study in group and do more exercises to get a better a translating version.

Some solution dealing with cultural difficulties

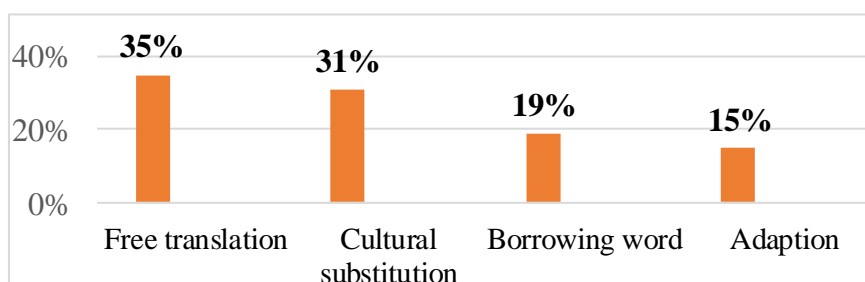


Figure 9: Some solutions dealing with the cultural difficulties

There are some solutions to deal with cultural difficulties. From the result above, it is seen that free translation method to solves cultural difficulties accounts for 35%. The translated script is very familiar to the translating language in expressing way containing both cultural and language factor. It is used in document that semantic content is not as important as the message to be transferred for the speakers such as oral, document, advertisement, poem, plays, and songs.

Besides, there are also some other methods such as cultural substitution (31%), to avoid unnaturalness over issues of culture, translators should keep in mind that sometimes an effort to translate correctly is not as valuable as a suitable substitution when translating idioms and fixed expressions. Things unfamiliar with cultures have been altered with ones that are close to people's daily life. Moreover, things that may seem improper or unpleasant due to cultural norms are also replaced so as to avoid causing any aversion to readers.

Borrowing word takes 19%. The main advantage of translation by borrowing is that it is possible to achieve a high level of precision in specifying the meaning of a word or concept that poses difficulties in translation. Adaption (15%) is completely rewritten basing on the topic, plot, characters in the original.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Translation is considered as a bridge between people who live in different nations. In other words, translation helps to remove the language barrier and make people closer to each other. Thanks to translation, people understand each other more in the process of diplomatic relations and economic cooperation. As a result, translation has gradually become an indispensable and pressing tool which set the path for the global success of individuals, organizations, and even businesses in the modern time when society is more developed and competition is relentless. Nowadays, when Vietnam becomes one of the members of World Trade Organization, it is necessary for Vietnamese students to have translation skill in order to meet the demand of integration into the world economy as well as exchange culture with other countries.

English is very necessary in foreign language learning. Especially, translation is an important skill but it is also a difficult activity for many students. After the study is accomplished, the result shows that students still meet many difficulties when translating from Vietnamese into English sentences.

The biggest difficulty is vocabulary in which lack of vocabulary, word choice, and word spelling are the main problems. Besides, grammar is the second obstacles in translation for students because they do not have enough grammatical knowledge; they easily make mistakes in translation. The common errors which students make in translation test are tense, clause, form of sentences and word order. The last difficulty is culture in which lack of cultural knowledge, cultural untranslatability, idiom and fixed expressions are reason causing problems.

From the above issue, it is seen that vocabulary, grammar and cultural knowledge are very important in translation. If students cannot overcome problems, they meet a lot of difficulties in translation. Therefore, they need some solutions to solve their difficulties. Some solutions relating to vocabulary are given as using synonym, antonym, reading English – Vietnamese books, and learning in topics, and so on. Besides, there are some solutions for grammar as practice exercises, read grammatical books, study in group and ask teacher. And the final one is cultural solutions including cultural substitution, free translation, borrowing and

Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK
adaptation. The researchers hope that students can choose some suitable solutions to solve their difficulties.

Recommendations

Many further studies should investigate with the aim at finding out difficulties in translation. Particularly, the difficulties and some solutions for English - Vietnamese translation of English majored to help students understand the translation process completely, or if it is possible the researchers in the future will have condition to research this fields deeper. Thanks to these studies, students can recognize their own problems and find the way to improve their translation skill. From that, they find a suitable method for them to improve their translation ability.

References

- Anderson, A., & Lynch, T. (2000). *Listening*. Oxford University Press.
- Baker, M. (1992). *A course book on translation*. London: Routledge.
- Bhabha. (1994). *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- Celce-Murcia, M. and Larsen-Freeman, D. (1999). *The grammar book: an ESL/EFL teacher's course*. Boston, Heinle & Heinle.
- Bui Tien Bao & Dang Xuan Khu. (1997). *Interpreting and translation course book*. Education Publishing House.
- Catford, J. C. (1965). *A linguistic theory of translation*. London: Longman. England.
- Hornby, A. (2005). *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary*, Oxford University Press.
- Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha. (2012). *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies*. ResearchGate.
- Le Phuong Lan (2006). *Unnaturalness in English- Vietnamese Translation: Cause and Cure*. Ha Noi University of Foreign studies.
- Lewandowska, Barbara (2010), *Meaning in translation*. Peter Lang Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften.
- Longman Pocket Dictionary. (2001). Pearson Education Limited. University of Menouba.
- Nickelsen, Leann (2001). *Teaching elaboration and word choice*. New York.
- Nguyen Manh Hung, & Le Quoc Hanh (2003). *English lexicology*. Hanoi: Education Publishing House.
- New mark, Peter. (1988). *A textbook of translation*. London and New York: Prentice Hall International (UK).
- Wilkins D. A. (1972). *Linguistics in language teaching*. London: Edward Arnold. England.
- Wilss, W. (1982). *The Science of Translation. Problems and Methods*. Tübingen: Narr.
- William, J.D. (2005). *The teacher's grammar book*. Routledge.