English Major Students' Challenges in Acquiring Translation Skills from the Grammatical Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Translation is a crucial ability for those pursuing linguistics, especially in relation to English. The swift advancement of 4.0 technology and the proliferation of various artificial intelligence apps have conferred signigicant benefits upon language learners. Translation encompasses more than only changing a sentence from one language to another; it involves effectively conveying the speaker's point to the listener. Consequently, the barriers encountered by learners, alongside elements pertaining to vocabular, semantics, and culture which is considered as the initial obstacle faced by translation learners is the gramatical disparity between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). This study utilizes a mixed-method approach, integrating the quantitative method via a mini test and survey and the qualitative method through semi-structured interviews, to identify the types and frequency of grammatical errors commonly made by Vietnamese translation learners; to comprehend learners's perceptions regarding the significance of grammar in translation; and to investigate the grammatical challenges faced by translation learners. The research findings indicate that learners acknowledge the importance of grammar and the grammatical obstacles to producing a natural translation, as well as the prevalence of specific types of grammatical errors occurring more often in Vietnamese – the learners' first language (L1) and English (L2) translaitons compared to L2 to L1 translations.

1. INTRODUCTION

The significance of grammar in language acquisition is indisputable. English is thus not an exception. The role of grammar is shown in its prevalence within educational curricula. Language courses, whether basic, advanced, or part of a bachelor's program, invariably comprise essential grammar content and knowledge that learners are required to acquire and master. Grammar is analogous to a 'skeleton' that assists learners in constructing foundational meaningful notions when engaging with a language. Grammar is the primary foundational factor for learners to engage with a language, in conjunction with vocabulary. It seems to be fundamentally simplistic and rigid in character, while vocabulary demonstrates flexibility and is frequently variable, evolving and being chosen over time. The grammar of a language is unchangeable, unalterable, and persistent. It is a static component. It appears exceedingly straightforward and suggests that there are no impediments for the trainees. In reality, this rigid and immutable element presents significant limitations for learners when attempting to reproduce it, specifically in generating their own linguistic outputs, such as constructing sentences, composing paragraphs or essays, and executing translations.

Relating to the challenges encountered by learners in the study of English grammar, there are some recent researches undertaken in Vietnam often observable and citable. Duc (2024) identified prevalent grammatical faults that learners frequently commit as a result of the influence of their first language (L1), Vietnamese, on the acquisition of the second language (L2), English, covering verb usage, subject-verb

agreement, and preposition usage. A research by Ha (2021) yielded analogous findings with respect to the grammatical errors Vietnamese individuals commit when learning English. The author indicates that these errors come from the effect of L1 and inadequate competency in L2; thus, emphasizing the necessity of grammar instruction for learners is required. This finding is also referenced in research by the authors (Dao, 2008; Nhut, 2020; Ngoc et al., 2022). Hoa & Truc (2020) highlight that the challenges in studying English for specific purposes (ESP) grammar arise from the intricacy of the rules and the lack of frequent practice.

In connection with the hurdles encountered by students in the study of translation in Vietnam. The research conducted by Hoang & Hieu (2023) indicates that the difficulties in translating specialized English into Vietnamese originate from a lack of knowledge with technical terminology and structural disparities between the languages. In their research, Dung & Tran (2023) identified that prevalent faults in learners' translations pertain to grammar, vocabulary, and cultural aspects. The authors noted that the causes of these errors root from linguistic difficulties, together with the learners' restricted cultural understanding and inadequate translation procedures. In examining errors in learners' translations, Cuc (2018) reported findings that align with previous studies, revealing that the learners in her research exhibited linguistic, comprehension, and translation errors, with vocabulary and syntax selection errors being the most prevalent. Hanh & Thao (2022) identify three elements contributing to students' problems in acquiring translation skills namely; deficiencies in background information, disparities between the English and Vietnamese languages, and constraints in grammatical understanding.

Published researches indicate that learners face numerous challenges, including vocabulary-semantics, grammar, syntax, rhetoric, address forms, and cultural nuances, during the processes of learning, practicing, and entering the field of translation. This article will exclusively examine the difficulties from a grammatical standpoint. Grammar concerns may encompass inquiries regarding time and perspective, such as whether action verbs denote ongoing or concluded activities, and whether pronouns function as subjects inside a sentence; these exemplify grammar-related obstacles in the translation process. What is the importance of grammar in language learning activities, and what struggles do learners have in mastering and applying grammar? This study solely reviews the grammatical component in the language acquisition process of learners, with the objective of addressing the following three questions;

1. What errors do students frequently commit while translating texts between English and Vietnamese?
2. In what manner do students assess the significance of grammar in translation?
3. What are grammatical challenges encountered by learners while translating from English to Vietnamese and vice versa?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Translation

Translation is a domain that captivates the attention of linguists. The notion of translation is not uniformly delineated by scholars owing to their diverse methodologies. Translation can be examined from the following perspectives:

Translation is investigated via linguistic lens. Jakobson (1959) defines translation from an interlingual perspective as the substitution of a sign, in the form of a word or phrase, in one language with an analogous sign in another language. Sokolovsky (2010) characterizes translation as a mediating procedure between languages that entails the transfer of meaning while preserving equivalence and completeness between the source and target texts. He underscores the significance of the constitutive traits of translation activity (CTTA) and the notion of translation category of correspondence (TCC) to access the

relationship between the source text and the target text. The definition of translation in the language and linguistics dictionary by Hartmann & Store (1972) asserts that translation involves substituting the expression of a text in one language with the expression of an equivalent text in another language. They reinforce the accurate transference between languages, guaranteeing the equivalency of meaning, feeling, and sentiment. In 'Theory and Practice of Translation', Nida & Taber (1969) define translation as the reproduction of words in the target text to achieve the closest natural equivalent to the source text, prioritizing meaning over style. This definition embraces three crucial terms: nearest, natural, and equivalent. The writers assert that translation is an art form, and the most exemplary translations are those perceived as originals rather than translations. Newmark (1988) posits that translation involves conveying the meaning of a text into another language as intended by the author. He characterizes translation as 'a art' that entails the endeavor to substitute a message or statement in one language with an equivalent message or statement in another language.

Translation is observed via cultural lens. Lefevere (1992) typifies translation as a process of reinterpreting the source material, shaped by two determinants: ideology and style. Ideology is articulated through beliefs, regulations, and social authority, whereas style encloses genre, theme, attributes, images, and the societal function of the text genre. Lefevere's approach highlights the impact of cultural elements on the translation process. Apter (2006) redefines translation, positing that it transcends mere linguistic accuracy to include cultural, political, and ideological aspects. She contends that translation transcends mere linguistic activity, serving as a crucial instrument for comprehending global cultural interactions and power relations. Apter has redefined translation as central to the evolution of comparative literature, promoting a more expansive interdisciplinary framework that elucidates the intricacies of language politics in a globalized context.

Translation is analyzed from a functional standpoint. Vermeer (1989) characterizes translation effort by its goal, indicating a transition from conventional theories centered on the source text to an audience- and function-oriented perspective. He asserts that translation transcends mere linguistic equivalency, functioning as a deliberate endeavor to modify the source text to satisfy the requirements of the target audience and context. He formulated the Skopos theory, which encompasses three principal tenets: purpose dictates strategy, the coherence rule, and the fidelity rule. He contends that the translator serves as a mediator, making decisions informed by Skopus and the anticipations of the target audience. In developing Vermeer's concept, Nord (1997) represents translation as a communicative endeavor directed by the intended purpose of the translated text inside the target culture. She stresses the significance of a technical synopsis that explicitly articulates the goal, audience, and context of the translation. This summary functions as a reference for the translator's choices. Nord's methodology is pragmatic and adaptable, emphasizing the communicative function of translation over strict equivalence by categorizing it into instrumental translation, which functions autonomously within the target culture, conforming to its norms and expectations; and documentary translation, which retains its connection to the original, maintaining its context and intended purpose. Nord further emphasizes two concepts in the translating process. The first principle is fidelity, which stipulates that the translator must honor the goals of both the original text's author and the target audience. Secondly, the notion of cultural adaptation refers to the translator's cultural awareness to guarantee that the translation is significant and effective inside the target culture.

Translation is inspected from a comprehensive viewpoint. Pym (2010) offered an extensive examination of translation theories, highlighting the dynamic and complex characteristics of translation. He outlines translation as an intercultural communication process that entails the transfer of meaning across languages, cultures, and settings. Pym draws attention to the significance of equivalence, intent,

and localization in translation endeavors. Pym categorized translation theories into principal models, including the natural equivalence model, the oriented equivalence model, cultural translation, and the indeterminacy and risk model. Toury (1995) distinguishes translation as a norm-regulated activity, intricately situated within the socio-cultural framework. He asserts that translation transcends mere verbal activity, functioning as a socially regulated endeavor shaped by the norms of the destination culture. He delineated three norms to direct the translator: the initial norm, which pertains to compliance with the norms of the source text or the target culture; the preliminary norm, which involves the selection of the translation method; and the operational norm, which encompasses the strategies and practical techniques employed during the translation process. Toury accentuated the significance of equivalence in translation, viewing it as a relative notion contingent upon context rather than an absolute one.

In conclusion, the translation process entails more than merely converting text from one language to another; it necessitates the translator's profound understanding of both language and culture. Translation is an action that guarantees the closest alignment in meaning and emotion between the source text and the destination text, irrespective of the perspective adopted.

The grammatical distinctions between English and Vietnamese

While engaging in the study and practice of translation, both learners and professionals in the English-Vietnamese translation domain face numerous difficulties, including comprehending the cultural nuances of both nations, possessing comprehensive knowledge of translation subjects, and achieving proficiency in both English and Vietnamese to produce translations that are semantically precise, natural, and emotionally resonant, thereby ensuring the highest degree of equivalence to the original text in the target language. One of the problems is the grammatical disparities between English and Vietnamese. The grammatical disparities between English and Vietnamese pose significant obstacles in translation tasks, particularly when translating from English to Vietnamese or the reverse. The disparities exist not only in sentence structure and parts of speech but also in the articulation of time, quantity, and other grammatical components. These obstacles necessitate the translator's comprehensive understanding of both languages and the adaptability to manage their distinct grammatical characteristics.

The primary distinction is in the arrangement of words. Ham & Quyen (1997) asserts that in English, sentences often conform to the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) structure, although this structure exhibits greater flexibility influenced by determiners and contextual factors. For instance, in English, to convey the intended meaning, the sentence must be structured as 'The cat eats the fish.' In Vietnamese, the statement can be articulated as "Con mèo ăn con cá" (The cat eats the fish), but it may also be restructured to "Con cá, con mèo ăn" (The fish, the cat eats) to stress the object impacted by the subject without altering the fundamental sense of the sentence. The adaptable alteration of sentence structure in Vietnamese presents considerable hurdles for translators when deciding between preserving the original order and modifying it to align with the expressive style and context of the sentence.

Secondly, a disparity is present in the expression of time (tense and aspect). Huddleston & Pullum (2002) assert that English has a sophisticated verb conjugation system to convey tense and aspect. The verb "to eat" exhibits various forms: "eat" (present), "ate" (past), and "will eat" (future). Furthermore, English employs auxiliary verbs like "have" and "be" to form perfect and progressive tenses, exemplified by "I have eaten" or "I am eating." Conversely, Thompson (1965) depicts Vietnamese as lacking verb conjugation by tense, instead utilizing temporal indicators or contextual cues to convey the timing of acts. The statement "Tôi ăn cơm" can be interpreted as "I eat rice," "I ate rice," or "I will eat rice," contingent upon contextual cues or temporal indicators such as "hôm qua" (yesterday) or "ngày mai" (tomorrow). The

translator must comprehend the context and incorporate temporal cues as appropriate to accurately express the original sentence's meaning.

Thirdly, there is a divergence between number and articles (pluralization and articles). Quirk and his colleagues (1985) demonstrated that English employs grammatical markers to signify quantity, exemplified by the addition of "-s" or "-es" to create plural nouns (e.g., "cat" → "cats"). Furthermore, English employs the articles "a," "an," and "the" to signify the definiteness or indefiniteness of nouns. For instance, "a cat" (an unspecified cat) and "the cat" (a specific cat) has distinctly different meanings. Ham & Quyen (1997) states that in Vietnamese, nouns remain unchanged to denote plurality. Quantity is conveyed with demonstrative terms such as "những" or "các." For instance, "con mèo" may be interpreted as "the cat" or "the cats" contingent upon the context. To specify the plural, the speaker may include "những con mèo". Furthermore, Vietnamese lacks articles akin to those in English, complicating the translator's task of determining the necessity of including terms such as "a" or "the" for clarity.

Fourthly, a contrast can be found in parts of speech and sentence structure. Ham & Quyen (1997) highlighted the distinctions in the creation of parts of speech and sentence structure between English and Vietnamese. English possesses a distinct system of parts of speech, incorporating nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and others, with each category often occupying a certain position inside a phrase. In English, adjectives typically precede the nouns they modify (e.g., "a beautiful house"). In Vietnamese, the arrangement of parts of speech is more variable, allowing adjectives to precede or follow nouns based on context (for instance, "ngôi nhà đẹp" or "đẹp nhà"). This flexibility may provide difficulties for translators in determining the optimal arrangement of words to conform to the grammar and context of the target language.

Last but not least, a difference exists in the application of conjunctions and particles. Vietnamese employs numerous particles and conjunctions to articulate the links among sentence components, whereas English frequently depends on sentence structure and more straightforward conjunctions. For instance, in Vietnamese, terms such as "mà," "là," and "thì" frequently serve to link sentences or elucidate meaning, whereas in English, conjunctions like "and," "but," or "because" may be employed (Thompson, 1965). This distinction necessitates that the translator possesses a comprehensive understanding of the adoption of function words in Vietnamese and is adept at converting them into suitable conjunctions in English.

In summary, grammatical disparities in elements such as word order, verb tense and aspect, pluralization and articles, parts of speech, sentence structures, and the implementation of conjunctions and particles between English and Vietnamese have posed significant challenges for learners and translators in producing the most natural and precise translations. The linguistic distinctions between English and Vietnamese pose numerous obstacles in the translation process. The translator must not only grasp the grammar of both languages but also possess the ability to adeptly manage contextual aspects, parts of speech, and sentence patterns. Comprehending these distinctions will enable the translator to provide precise and authentic translations, so guaranteeing the original meaning of the text is accurately transmitted.

3. METHODS

Research design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative techniques (via questionnaires and error analysis of students' translation exercises) and qualitative methods (through semi-structured interviews) involving 137 students from the 47th cohort of the English Language major

with a specialization in Legal English at Hanoi Law University. The acquired data were processed with suitable technologies to yield the most precise findings.

Research participants

The research participants consist of 137 third-year students from the K47 cohort majoring in English Language at Hanoi Law University, all of whom have completed and are presently enrolled in Translation 1, Translation 2, and Advanced Translation, categorized into three classes: 4726, 4727, and 4728. Exhibiting the subsequent distinct attributes;

Concerning English proficiency. The findings of the survey statement 1 reveal that at the commencement of the translation course, the English proficiency levels of the students, as per the 6-level foreign language competency framework for Vietnamese, are as follows: Nine students (6%) attained level 3/6, similar to B1; seventy-six students (55.5%) achieved level 4/6, equivalent to B2; and fifty-two students (38.5%) earned level 5/6, corresponding to C1.

Concerning the frequency of executing translation assignments. The results from statement 2 reveal that 79 students (57.7%) occasionally participate in translation activities, whereas 58 students (42.3%) engage in translation more regularly.

Concerning the objective of doing translation activities. According to the findings of survey statement 3, 58 students (42.3%) engage in translation efforts to fulfill assignments and course obligations; 57 students (41.6%) do so to locate materials that aid in assignments for other disciplines; only 22 students (16.1%) do this activity out of personal interest.

Research instruments

The mini translation test is a research technique chosen to identify the grammatical faults that students make during the translation process. The test comprises of two texts. In which, the first paragraph has a length of 185 words with the topic 'legal system', necessary to be translated into Vietnamese, and the second paragraph has a length of 187 words with the topic 'Civil Law', required to be translated into English.

The questionnaire was created with 2 main parts comprising of 46 statements. In which, Part 1 about general information aims to determine the learners' English proficiency when starting translation studies, the frequency, and the purpose of the learners performing translation tasks; Part 2 about the interview content is divided into three sections; first, to explore the learners' assessment of the role of grammar in translation studies, including 9 statements from 1 to 9; second, to investigate the difficulties related to grammar when learners translate texts from English to Vietnamese, including 16 statements from 10 to 25; third, to identify the difficulties learners face when translating a text from Vietnamese to English, including 18 statements from 26 to 43. However, in data analysis, the statements from 10 to 43 combined in one table 3 to create a comprehensive and clear comparison of the difficulties students encountered between the English – Vietnamese and Vietnamese – English translations.

The semi-structured interview consists of 4 questions used to compare with the findings obtained from the questionnaire relating to the actual grammar concerns that students confront during their study and practice of translation.

Data collection procedure

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Analytical instruments

The questionnaire data and error collection results from the test were analyzed using SPSS v.26.0 software, employing statistical techniques including frequency calculation, descriptive frequency analysis, and correlation comparison. Descriptive frequency analysis was utilized to examine the data of survey participants and the categories of grammatical faults in students' translation assessments. Descriptive statistics are applied to delineate the viewpoints of interview participants based on a 5-point Likert scale as follows:

Limit	Description	Quantitative Interpretation
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly disagree	Very low
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Low
2.61 – 3.40	Neutral	Normal
3.41 – 4.20	Agree	High
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly agree	Very high

The qualitative data of the semi-structured interview were transcribed in writing. Based on the interview transcript, the researcher conducted an analysis of the results to uncover the common tendency among participants' answers to each question. The students included in the interview are encoded with the numbers ranging from 1 to 9, rather than their actual names.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The acquired data were processed, analyzed, and provided in the form of tables. The research findings are discussed under the title of each research question to concentrate on the answer for each specific aim that the study carried out to explore.

Reseach question 1: What errors do students frequently commit while translating texts between English and Vietnamese and vice versa?

Table 1 presents data concerning students' grammatical mistakes assessed via the short test. Seven categories of errors were examined based on the students' work involved in the study under the issue namely; comprehending sentence structure; identifying verb tenses and aspects; the understanding

and application of prepositions and determiners; word arrangement and comprehension; interpreting idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs; grasping contextual and grammatical meaning; and morphology and grammar. The examination of grammatical faults among learners via the translation test is classified into two distinct dimentions of translations.

Table 1. Grammatical errors in the students' translations

Catergories	Number	English - Vietnamese Translation		Vietnamese – English Translation	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Sentence structure understanding	31	63	16.67%	17	3.64%
Tenses and Aspects of Verbs	31	0	0%	0	0%
Articles and Determiners	31	182	48.15%	215	46.04%
Word order	31	29	7.67%	7	1.50%
Idiom and phrasal verbs	31	12	3.17%	32	6.85%
Contextual and grammatical meaning	31	92	24.34%	62	13.28%
Morphology and grammar	31	0	0%	134	28.69%
Total	31	378	100%	467	100%

The English – Vietnamese translation reveals that inaccuracies associating to verb tense and aspect are absent, with a reported frequency of 0%, while those relating to articles and determiners were documented with a notable frequency of 182 instances, accounting for 48.15%. Analysis of students' work indicates that the translated segments featuring articles and determiners are frequently rendered inaccurately, with students often preserving the English text during the conversion to Vietnamese, leading to unnatural translations. 'A legal system' is translated as 'Một hệ thống pháp luật' in stead of ' Hệ thống pháp luật' when discussing a general concept, it is important to note that Vietnamese lacks an article system to indicate quantity and differentiate between singular and plural nouns, as well as countable and uncountable nouns. This results in frequent mistakes with articles among Vietnamese individuals. The subsequent category of errors belongs to the contextual meaning and grammar of words, with 92 occurrences (24.34%) noted in the students' papers. For instance, 'the framework of rules, institutions, processes established' was rendered as 'a framework of rules, institutions, and established processes' rather than 'a foundation of rules, organizational techniques, and established processes.' Misunderstandings of the structure during the translation process resulted in 63 occurrences (16.67%). Word order faults constituted 29 occurrences (7.67%). Ultimately, there are 12 faults (3.17%) associated with comprehending phrases during the translation process.

The translation from Vietnamese to English discloses that the predominant error group is articles and determiners, with 215 instances (46.04%), followed by morphology and grammar, which has 134 instances (28.69%). The two types of mistakes are prevalent in most assignments due to students' lack of knowledge regarding article usage and their confusion between various articles during the translation process. In addition, many students do not identify the plural form of nouns by adding the corresponding -s/-es, or the gerund forms used after prepositions, or the reduced relative clauses in the active or passive voice. Among the errors connecting to contextual and grammatical meaning, there were 62 occurrences (13.28%), where numerous students failed to select the appropriate sentence structure for translation or needed to revise the sentence in Vietnamese when translating into English. The group of errors related to phrasal verbs and idioms only accounts for 6.85% (32 instances), and errors in understanding sentence structure only make up 3.64% (17 instances). Because the offered text is about the topic of law, there is no variation in terms of verb tenses and aspects, nor does it pose challenges for students in detecting the state of verbs throughout the translation process, so no errors were recorded from students on this issue.

However, there are still a few instances of errors linked to word order, with a total of 7 occurrences (1.50%).

In summary, the analysis of errors in the English-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-English translations by students demonstrates that with texts not using a diversity of tenses, such as the specialized texts presented in this study, no errors were documented in the translations. The predominant error category in both English-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-English translations is the incorrect application of articles and determiners. Nonetheless, when translating from English to Vietnamese, comprehending sentence structure along with contextual and grammatical value continues to pose a remarkable challenge for learners in producing a natural translation. Conversely, when translating from Vietnamese to English, the influence of the native language frequently leads students to misunderstand the context, resulting in the improper use of words, phrases, and structures, as well as a failure to adhere to rigorous grammatical standards in English concerning word morphology and grammatical expression.

Research question 2: In what manner do students assess the significance of grammar in translation?

Table 2. Students' perspective on grammar importance in translation

Statements	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Description
In your opinion, what role does grammar knowledge play in translation?				
1. Grammar is a crucial element for ensuring the precision of the translation	137	4.33	.859	Strongly Agree
2. Grammatical inaccuracies in the translation can substantially alter the original meaning	137	4.33	.859	Strongly Agree
3. The accuracy of grammar is more important than the translator's style.	137	3.23	.981	Neutral
4. Grammatical inaccuracies undermine the translator's credibility and professionalism.	137	4.11	.838	Agree
5. Grammar plays an important role in preserving the tone and clarity of the original text	137	4.33	.859	Strongly Agree
6. Neglecting grammar in translation may result in misconceptions in the target tongue	137	4.33	.859	Strongly Agree
7. Paying attention to grammatical details will enhance the overall quality of the translation	137	3.99	.865	Agree
8. The significance of grammar in translation is equivalent to that of vocabulary and cultural context	137	4.33	.859	Strongly Agree
9. Grammar must be regarded as an essential competency for translators	137	4.08	.847	Agree
Valid N (listwise)	137			

The evaluation of the importance of grammar in the translation process is reflected through the results of the 9 statements described in Table 2 above. In statement 8 with M=4.33 & SD=.859, learners affirm that the grammatical aspect is as substantial as vocabulary and culture, being one of the fundamental elements to create the most perfect translation. Statements 1, 2, 5 & 6 focus on the role of grammar in the accuracy of the translation in terms of meaning content (statements 1, 2 & 6, M=4.33; SD=.859); the tone of the text (statement 5, M=4.33 & SD=.859). These statements are further confirmed in statement 7 with (M=3.99 & SD=.865), indicating that learners 'agree' that if grammatical details are attended to comprehensively, the overall quality of the translation will be enhanced. Although students

do not provide a clear opinion on whether grammatical features play a more pivotal role than the translator's style (statement 3, M=3.23; SD=.981), they are certain that grammatical errors can diminish the translator's credibility and professionalism, as indicated by the results of statement 4 (M=4.11 & SD=.838). From here, learners also affirm that grammatical knowledge and proficiency in grammar are essential skills that every translator needs to possess (statement 9, M=4.08 & SD=.847).

The results from the above survey also align with the results of the semi-structured interviews, as all 9 out of 9 students who participated in the interviews acknowledged that grammar is the first factor they pay attention to when determining the meaning of a sentence before proceeding with the translation. The students' sharing also showed that their difficulties depended heavily on the translation topic. However, they seem to make more grammatical errors in the translation from L1 to L2 due to the differences. The group of errors that learners find most demanding is understanding the meaning of sentence structures and accurately and naturally understanding and translating articles and determiners from English to Vietnamese. Specifically;

(1) "With complex sentence structures containing various types of clauses, the subject and main verb are too far apart, making it difficult for me to fully and accurately understand or interpret the sentence when translating." (Student 1);

(2) " Sometimes I find it difficult to maintain the structure of English sentences while ensuring the meaning is accurate in the Vietnamese translation. I often have to break it down into simple sentences in Vietnamese to make the meaning clearer." (Student 8);

(3) "I get confused when using articles while translating from Vietnamese to English, either missing articles or misusing definite and indefinite articles." (Student 3);

(4) "In the process of translating from English to Vietnamese, I usually translate all the articles used in the English version into Vietnamese, but sometimes this makes the Vietnamese translation seem unnatural." (Student 9).

Students 2, 4, and 6 believe that verb tenses and aspects often cause them to lose points in translation tests or exams because, under time constraints, they often forget to conjugate verbs or determine the correct tense needed in translating from Vietnamese to English.

(5)"Almost every assignment, I lose some points because I forget to conjugate the verbs or mistakenly use the verb 'to be' in the sentences." (Student 2);

(6) "A single word 'đã' in Vietnamese text does not completely convey the past tense in English, so sometimes I feel quite confused about choosing the right tense to express it accurately." (Student 4)

(7) "I find tenses and aspects in English too complicated, with four to five, sometimes even more, different states of actions in the present; therefore, I encounter a lot of difficulties in accurately determining the tense in translations from Vietnamese to English." For example, in the future tense, there is the simple future tense (will + V), the future continuous tense (will be + V-ing), the future perfect tense (will + have + p2), the future perfect continuous tense (will + have been + V-ing), but there is also the near future (to be going + to V), the definite future (is/am/are + V-ing), or the future timetable (Vs/es)." (Student 6).

Translating the exact level of politeness and tone from English to Vietnamese also poses many difficulties for students.

(8) "I often cannot accurately convey the pronouns from English to Vietnamese, resulting in the Vietnamese translation losing its formality and not accurately reflecting the speaker's perspective." (Student 5).

Regarding idioms and phrasal verbs in the translation process, students 7 and 8 shared that they often avoid using them in Vietnamese to English translations; whereas, if they appear in English to Vietnamese translations, they often make mistakes if they do not have tools to look them up.

(9) "I often can't remember the meaning of special phrases when they are idiomatic." (Student 7);

(10) In Vietnamese-English translations, I usually limit the use of phrasal verbs. As for idioms, I have never used them because they are very difficult and I'm afraid of being misunderstood!" (Student 8).

Research question 3: What are the grammatical challenges encountered by learners while translating from English to Vietnamese and from Vietnamese to English?

Table 3. Students' encountered grammatical challenges while doing translation

Statements	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
I have difficulty		Translate from English to Vietnamese		Translate from Vietnamese to English	
Sentence structure understanding 10. choosing the sentence structure in English that reflects the sentence structure of the original Vietnamese text.	137	3.94	.895	4.00	.877
11. translating long and complex sentences from English to Vietnamese clearly and accurately.	137	4.11	.838	3.40	.862
12. maintaining the original meaning while adjusting the sentence structure.	137	4.08	.847	4.08	.847
Tenses and aspects of Verbs 13. translating verb tenses from English to Vietnamese (simple future, near future, present continuous, …)	137	4.33	.859	4.33	.859
14. describing the tense of verbs from English to Vietnamese accurately.	137	4.33	.859	4.33	.859
15. translating auxiliary verbs from English to Vietnamese.	137	3.99	.865	3.56	.882
Articles and determiners 16. translating the articles 'a/an/the' into Vietnamese accurately.	137	4.11	.838	4.08	.847
17. I often overlook or misuse determiners during the transaltion process.	137	4.11	.838	4.08	.847
Word order 18. adjusting the word order from English to fit Vietnamese grammar.	137	3.94	.895	3.94	.859
19. translating prepositional phrases naturally into Vietnamese.	137	4.33	.859	3.94	.859
Idioms and phrasal verbs 20. understanding the meaning of idioms and translating them accurately into Vietnamese	137	4.33	.859	4.00	.877
21. translating phrasal verbs into equivalent expressions in Vietnamese.	137	4.33	.859	3.73	.981
Contextual and grammatical meaning 22. maintaining the accuracy of sentences in Vietnamese while preserving the meaning and context in English.	137	4.33	.859	4.11	.838
23. identifying the implicit meaning in English to be able to adjust the specific grammar in Vietnamese.	137	4.33	.859	3.89	.928
24. distinguish English parts of speech while translating.	137	3.56	.882	3.56	.882

	25. Ensuring Subject – Verb agreement in Vietnamese translations.	137	2.54	.918	3.99	.865
	26. translating pronouns or levels of politeness from Vietnamese to English appropriately.	137	4.11	.838	2.54	.918
Politeness and Intonation	27. maintaining the tone and level of formality of the original Vietnamese text in English.	137	4.08	.847	2.50	.932
	Valid N (listwise)	137				

Overall, students indicated agreement or strong agreement with the majority of the grammatical factors presented in Table 3 as contributing to their problems during the translation process. Each of the aforementioned constituents is scrutinized through two translation processes: from English (L2) to Vietnamese (L1) and conversely. Nonetheless, certain criteria suggest that their influence on the translator varies across translations from L2 to L1 and L1 to L2. In statement 11, surveyed participants concurred that "comprehending and translating a lengthy sentence" from L2 to L1 presents considerable challenges (M=4.11, SD=.838), whereas the research participants did not distinctly articulate their views on the impact of this point on the L1 to L2 translation process (M=3.40, SD=.862). Statements 25, 26, and 27 reflect the divergent perspectives of the respondents. Statement 25, which addresses 'ensuring subject-verb agreement' in Vietnamese-English translation, presents greater challenges for learners (M=3.99, SD=.865), whereas L2 to L1 translation does not pose any difficulties (M=2.54, SD=.918), as verbs in Vietnamese do not alter to reflect variations in tense and aspect. In statement 26, the translators noted that translating pronouns or conveying levels of politeness in the English-Vietnamese translation presents a significant challenge, as Vietnamese pronouns are diverse and employed in distinct ways for particular contexts (M=4.11, SD=.838). Nonetheless, in the Vietnamese-English translation, this does not pose any obstacles as the quantity of pronouns in English is restricted and does not distinguish between subjects or forms of address. (M=2.54, SD=.918). Consistent with statement 26, statement 27 indicates that learners encounter greater barriers in preserving tone and formality in English-Vietnamese translation (M=4.08, SD=.847). Conversely, they exhibit greater confidence when articulating this in the Vietnamese-English translation (M=2.50, SD=.932).

In summary, grammatical elements present considerable hurdles for students involved in the study and practice of translation. Criteria that present challenges for learners in English-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-English translations include comprehending sentence structure, the application of articles and determiners, accurately interpreting and articulating verb tenses and aspects, maintaining appropriate word order while preserving the meaning of the source language, as well as idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs. Nonetheless, certain grammatical issues that complicate one form of translation, such as subject-verb agreement, frequently result in problems during the transition from L1 to L2. Conversely, the variables contributing to errors in the translation from L2 to L1 surround the translation of intricate, lengthy phrases and the accurate application of personal pronouns in Vietnamese to preserve the tone and degree of politeness of the original text.

5. CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Conclusion

In conclusion, grammatical inaccuracies in English-Vietnamese translations stem from disparities in linguistic structure and cultural norms. The research findings indicate that students majoring in English

with a specialization in legal English confront difficulties in comprehending sentence structure, identifying verb tense and aspect, utilizing and interpreting articles and determiners, arranging word order, understanding idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs, discerning contextual and grammatical meanings of words, as well as grappling with word morphology, grammar, politeness, and tone in the translation process between English and Vietnamese. The incidence of errors varies between English-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-English translations, as well as across different translation subjects. This conclusion can be substantiated through the translation assignments mandated in this study. Both the English-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-English translations reveal that students frequently err in the application and translation of articles. In the English-Vietnamese translation, the most frequent errors, following those associated with articles and determiners, are to contextual meaning and grammatical usage, succeeded by challenges in comprehending sentence structure to achieve the most precise and natural Vietnamese translation. Conversely, in Vietnamese-English translation, the predominant errors pertain to word morphology and grammar, indicating that students make mistake frequently in identifying the plural forms of nouns and conjugating verbs to align with tense and aspect, as well as in the contextual meaning and grammatical structure of words and sentences. Nonetheless, as the subjects necessitated for translation in this study exclusively relate to the legal domain, there is a lack of diversity in acts and stages of activities, resulting in no errors associated with this matter being documented. The study indicates that learners acknowledge the significance of grammar in translation tasks, along with the grammatical challenges faced during the learning and practice of translation. The imperative to fortify and augment grammatical proficiency to fulfill the prerequisites for enhancing translation abilities.

Pedagogical implications

Grammatical errors are an inherent aspect of the learning process, particularly for Vietnamese individuals acquiring English translation skills, owing to the disparities between the two languages. Grammatical mistakes can hinder learners' ability to express their thoughts accurately, resulting in misunderstandings; they may diminish learners' confidence, causing reluctance to communicate in English; and specifically, they can adversely affect exam and test outcomes in the study of English subjects, particularly translation. To rectify grammatical errors in the process of learning and practicing translation, learners must recognize their own deficiencies, exercise patience, and engage in regular practice to progressively enhance their grammatical proficiency, thereby attaining greater accuracy and fluency in translating between English and Vietnamese.

Students must focus on particular English grammar rules, including verb tense and aspect, article usage, and sentence structure; they should augment their grammar practice through rigorous exercises concentrating on verb tenses, articles, and prepositions to enhance their grammatical comprehension.

Students must participate in consistent practice of translating texts between English and Vietnamese, analyze the distinctions between English and Vietnamese grammar, and obtain feedback from instructors and peers on their translations to recognize and correct prevalent errors. Students must interact with diverse text types on various subjects, while reading English texts and listening to native speakers, to instinctively and naturally comprehend the use of grammar in context.

Students must understand how to utilize and capitalize on the advantages of technology via translation tools to cultivate technological proficiency and learn to rectify grammatical inaccuracies in translated writings with technological assistance. This practice enhances learners' ability to leverage technology in translation while simultaneously refining their grammatical proficiency.

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