

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH INTO CHALLENGES OF TRANSLATING LEGAL TEXTS FOR ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

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Received: 19/12/2023	In the era of global integration, legal professionals currently have to be armed with comprehensive knowledge of different legal jurisdictions. English legal characteristics create significant obstacles in understanding equivalent meanings of legal normative documents, so translation skills are thought to be essential for legal professionals. For the purpose of training current and future legal translators, this study aimed to investigate the difficulties legal English major students might encounter when translating legal documents. The descriptive cross-sectional study employed a mixed-methods approach to examine 151 legal English major students in two courses – K45 & K46 – at Hanoi Law University during the first term of the 2023-2024 academic year. The research results indicate that the main difficulties legal English students face when translating legal texts were mainly due to the lexical characteristics of legal English but not legal English writing styles. To address this problem, legal English students should develop their learning autonomy by either intaking some effective legal English translation techniques which are given in the translated legal normative documents or using information technology, especially utilising Internet resources for broadening their knowledge about source and target laws equivalently.
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NGHIÊN CỨU THỰC TIỄN NHỮNG KHÓ KHĂN DỊCH TÀI LIỆU PHÁP LÝ ĐỐI VỚI SINH VIÊN CHUYÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG ANH

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THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO	TÓM TẮT
Ngày nhận bài: 19/12/2023	Trong thời đại hội nhập toàn cầu, người làm nghề luật hiện nay cần được trang bị kiến thức toàn diện về các lĩnh vực pháp lý khác nhau. Đặc tính của tiếng Anh pháp lý tạo ra những trở ngại đáng kể trong việc hiểu ý nghĩa dịch tương đương trong văn bản pháp luật, bởi vậy kỹ năng dịch thuật pháp lý được cho là rất cần thiết đối với các chuyên gia pháp lý. Với mục đích đào tạo các biên dịch viên pháp lý hiện tại và tương lai, nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu những khó khăn mà sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh pháp lý có thể gặp phải khi dịch tài liệu pháp lý. Nghiên cứu mô tả sử dụng phương pháp tiếp cận hỗn hợp để khảo sát 151 sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh pháp lý trong hai khóa học K45 & K46 tại trường Đại học Luật Hà Nội trong học kỳ 1 năm học 2023-2024. Kết quả nghiên cứu chỉ ra rằng những khó khăn sinh viên tiếng Anh pháp lý gặp phải khi dịch văn bản pháp lý chủ yếu liên quan đến đặc điểm từ vựng của tiếng Anh pháp lý, sinh viên không gặp nhiều khó khăn trong phong cách viết tiếng Anh pháp lý. Để giải quyết vấn đề này, sinh viên tiếng Anh pháp lý nên phát triển tính tự chủ học tập của mình bằng cách áp dụng một số kỹ thuật dịch tiếng Anh pháp lý hiệu quả được thông qua các văn bản pháp lý đã được dịch, hoặc sử dụng công nghệ thông tin, đặc biệt là tận dụng các nguồn tài nguyên Internet để mở rộng kiến thức Luật tương ứng trong và ngoài nước.
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1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, international contracts and treaties have occurred transnational corporations [1], which requires legal professionals to have a profound understanding of multi-English legal systems, which is commonly referred to legal professionalism or so-called legalese – the specialized terminology and phrasing with complex vocabulary, obscure phrasing, and anachronisms used by lawyers and in legal documents which is difficult for lay people to understand [2, p. 64], [3]. Under the impact of increasingly globalized economy, translanguaging is the only means for bridging the gap between legal concepts via the translation among legal professionals. Translation also narrows down differences in the areas of economic, social and technological advancement between developed and developing countries by providing access to concepts and terminology that may be unfamiliar to legal professionals in different jurisdictions. Legal professionals take charge of compromising the diversified legal systems around the world. For this reason, professional learners probably use legal translation skills as a support tool to improve their legal English language as well as professional knowledge [4, p. 103]. For English language teaching and learning (ELT), there is a specialized focus on English for specific purposes (ESP) in relation to General English (GE), and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) [5]. Consequently, ESP is designed to meet students' English language standards in a specific profession [6] - [7]. Legal English is known for its complexity and professionalism including specific technical terms or concepts which are necessary for researching jurisprudence [8]. This specialized language is commonly governed by the resolution of social relations between nations and individuals within nations or at a global scale. However, one of the main difficulties when learning legal English is the complexity of lexical terms and concepts [9] - [10], mostly originating from archaic and Latin expressions [11] - [13]. In other words, legal English translation has imposed significant regulations due to the diversity of legal systems, laws and cultural contexts, which leads to the complexity and possibility of legal English meanings of one legal document to be interpreted differently in another language. Correspondingly, a legal translator is supposed to be an expert in a variety of legal law system and possesses a profound comprehension of legal terminologies to ensure accurate and effective translation. A number of recent scholars have discussed at length the difficulties of the translation of legal documents to date. Although the research findings in the study of [14] in terms of the translating legal documents indicates that Latin juridical expressions along with cultural differences hinder the translation of legal documents, the study does not specify the scope of the differences in translation between learners and professionals. As stated in another study done by [15] in Vietnam on the translation of legal documents, they affirm that significant challenges in the accurate translation of legal terms from English to Vietnamese blame for the inequivalence of legal and regulatory systems, linguistic difficulties and cultural disparities. In this context, the representative respondents were chosen by simple random sampling with legal English major students (LE students) in the courses No. 45 and 46 (hereafter students K45 and K46) pursuing bachelor's degrees at the Faculty of Legal Foreign Languages at Hanoi Law University (HLU) during the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. In particular, this study would pivot on the following questions:

1. What are the difficulties associated with translating legal texts?
2. What are the major causes of those difficulties?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research design

The researcher utilised the mixed-methods approach to conduct a cross-sectional study of 151 LE students K45 and K46 at HLU. Approximately 241 LE students who have completed the legal English translation and interpretation modules 1&2 as compulsory subjects at HLU constituted

the study population; whereas the researchers were, under time and budget constraints, unable to gather information from the entire population; thus, they used Slovin's formula with a stratified random sampling method to select a sample of 151 respondents. The researcher-made questionnaires were floated personally at the campus. The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face and telegram interviews with the 30 students with the permission to take note of the interviews to transcribe the response for this research. Lastly, the IBM SPSS v.25 application was used to analyse and synchronise the collected data after going through a screening process from two sources. The researchers were able to articulate the accuracy and reliability of the research findings from the primary sources.

2.2. Research instrument and data collection

The researchers constructed their own researcher-made questionnaires. Specially, the survey questionnaire included 21 statements, dividing into two groups of characteristics namely 11 lexical featured and 10 syntactic featured questionnaires, which were presented in the five-point Likert scales to investigate learners' attitudes towards legal translation difficulties. The 10 semi-structured questions were served as guiding statements to 30 learners. The questionnaires were constructed internally before they were sent to 3 experts on legal English and translation for content validation. After that, the questionnaires were fine-tuned properly, and underwent a pilot study with a group of 17 learners to validate their strengths and weaknesses. The researchers retained the statements in proportion to the confidence level ($\alpha = 0.87$, fairly high [16]). The final research instrument comprised of both the survey questionnaires, particularly lexical features and the syntactic features, and 10 semi-structured interview questions for learners. After obtaining the necessary preparation and permission for conducting the research, the researchers implemented the study in two weeks.

2.3. Data analysis

The collected data were screened, systemised, analysed, and interpreted. The questionnaires were used descriptive statistics to decipher the 5-point Likert scale statements to find out the means and standard deviations relevant to the interval scales such as always or mostly inaccurate (1.0 – 1.80), usually inaccurate (1.81 – 2.60), somewhat accurate (2.61 – 3.40), usually accurate (3.41 – 4.20), and always or almost always accurate (4.21 – 5.0). Additionally, NVivo v.12 application was employed to ascertain the accountability of the qualitative data in the frequency with which the perspectives of responders' transcripts during the semi-structured interviews.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The result of difficulties related to the lexical features

Related to the lexical features of legal English, LE students often need help in translating legal texts from Vietnamese to English and vice versa. One typical challenge is the use of technical terminology, which often requires clarification ($M = 3.6$; $SD = 0.891$). This figure denotes that the level of difficulty in translating legal texts varies among the learners according to the standard deviation. Likewise, the mean (3.6) indicates that some responders find it very difficult to translate ordinary words with special meanings ($M = 3.51$; $SD = 0.701$), together with the dissimilar standpoints on this aspect by looking at the standard deviation. Furthermore, the culture-specific characteristic of legal terms possibly constitutes a significant translation challenge ($M = 3.73$; $SD = 0.769$). Legal metaphors and metonymies are considered the most difficult aspects of translating legal texts for these undergraduates, demonstrated by the mean score of 3.9, which is considered pretty high and the highest among the charts ($M = 3.90$; $SD = 0.597$). This issue has the highest mean and is asymptotic to the lower limit of "always accurate". Translating pronominal adverbs is somehow found to be a challenge among the answerers ($M = 3.52$; $SD = 0.855$). It is true to state that foreign words and Maxims stemming from Latin or

French origin are difficult for these students to understand and translate ($M = 3.76$; $SD = 0.809$). Specifically, 36.4% of the total answers consider understanding and translating foreign words or Maxims borrowed from Latin or French to be strongly difficult, which is the highest percentage among all categories, thus showing that most informants find it highly challenging. In a similar vein, the standard deviation illustrates that participants' viewpoints differ. Similarly, legal abbreviations cause obstacles for student translators ($M = 3.54$; $SD = 0.502$). Translating legal texts can be challenging for LE students, primarily due to the use of doublets and triplets that convey a single legal concept ($M = 3.53$; $SD = 0.612$). The informants probably confront difficulties in understanding archaic expressions and words, which are commonly encountered in legal texts ($M = 3.58$; $SD = 0.810$). For instance, the word "hereinafter" can be confusing because the translator may not be able to define the person or thing referred to in the text. The high standard deviation in this statement suggests that many people find archaic words to be obstacles ($M = 4$; $Freq. = 45$; same as 29.8%, and $M = 5$; $Freq. = 39$; equivalent to 36%), while others consider them neutral ($M = 3$; $Freq. = 48$; representing for 31.8%). Phrasal verbs in legal texts are blamed for a cause of trouble for undergraduates, as they are often used in a quasi-technical sense ($M = 3.49$; $SD = 0.710$); on the contrary, phrasal verbs are thought to be the least problem due to the lowest mean score. Additionally, unfamiliar pro-forms in legal texts can create significant challenges for translators ($M = 3.72$; $SD = 0.804$).

In general, LE students genuinely think lexical features of legal English cause hardships in translating. They consider lexical features of legal English, usually difficult to translate. This assertion is in harmony with the findings of the prior study [14], which emphasises the hardships of lexical features in translating legal texts. Particularly, legal metaphors and metonymies are considered the most challenging lexical difficulties for LE undergraduates. During the survey phase, numerous learners insisted on having difficulty in recognising legal metaphors and metonymies during the translation process, thus leading to wrong translations. In contrast, the phrasal verb in a quasi-technical sense is considered the least difficult lexical feature of legal translation. It can be easily understood for the simple reason that phrasal verbs can be either looked up in the dictionary or searched online to find meaning and methods of usage. Some of the statements are strongly agreed by most of the participants, while not a small number of respondents have different perspectives such as foreign words borrowed from Latin or French. It is concluded that the level of linguistics knowledge among responders is significantly different; whereas, HLU LE undergraduates encounter hardships translating legal texts due to archaic language, namely "hereinafter" and "hereto", and the translation of doublets and triplets. This is supported by the finding of [17] that archaic words confuse legal word expressions, while legal student translators often confront difficulties in understanding and translating doublets and triplets. Withdrawal through this study, translating legal texts seems to be challenging for HLU translation collegians due to culture-specific terms. This difficulty has been reinforced by previous studies [1], [8], [12], [17]. These researchers emphasise the importance of cultural knowledge when translating legal texts. Furthermore, the results conclusively show that legal English translation learners have problems with legal concepts and abbreviations while translating legal text. Lastly, ordinary words with special meanings, pronominal adverbs and unfamiliar pro-form pose trouble during the translation procedure for LE undergraduates.

3.2. The result of difficulties related to the syntactic features

Concerning the syntactic features, out of the 6 items of syntactic obstacles in legal translation, three of them are considered somewhat accurate with the means ranging within 3.36 and 3.39, which denotes the truly medium mean scores. Those include "long and difficult structure of legal sentences" with a mean score of 3.39; $SD = 0.809$), "tense" ($M = 3.36$; $SD = 0.789$, and "multiple negatives" with these values ($M = 3.36$; $SD = 0.623$). On the other hand, the findings showed that the LE collegians at HLU usually consider the following issues as problems when

they translate legal texts: “*punctuation and capitalisation*” ($M = 3.42$; $SD = 0.629$); “*binomial expressions and parallel structures*” possessing a typical mean equal to 3.55 ($SD = 0.669$); “*legal text layout*” ($M = 3.64$; $SD = 0.569$), which is the highest average score altogether. Although those constituted the highest mean scores, they are appraised pretty low scores compared to others.

Overall, not all syntactic difficulties in translation impact legal English the same way. While some of them are usually accurate, others' accuracy depends on contexts and people. Specifically, based on the above results, it is logical to articulate that learners who are learning legal English translation encounter difficulties when translating legal texts. The primary reason for their struggle is legal text layout, while the subject, object, and adverbs of the texts can be shuffled in order to make legal text impersonal and raise the level of formality in legal texts. This finding is understandable because decoding SL is a must, which is reported in [7]. Next, the second problem they encounter is translating legal binominal expressions and parallel structures, which is difficult for translators, especially those with limited skills, to comprehend without understanding the entire text. This conclusion is in agreement with the previous studies [1], [6], [9], which assert that complex legal sentences and expressions pose significant challenges to translation undergraduates. Punctuation and capitalisation are considered the third most difficult factors of the syntactic group. These findings are in line with the research of Taamneh [13], who confirms that punctuation and capitalisation are sources of difficulty facing legal translators when translating from English into other languages and vice versa. What is more, the difficulty in the structure of long legal sentences poses an obstacle to novice translators like LE students, which does not fully agree with the findings of [6], [9], which conclude that complex legal sentences are a major challenge to HLU LE undergraduates when translating legal texts; nonetheless, this difficulty only negatively impacts them a little. Tenses and multiple negatives are the two least difficulties of the syntactic group. On the one hand, tenses cause a little problem that can be fully understood due to the cleanliness of tenses in English. It is possible to minimise multiple negatives by paying slight attention. Taamneh [13] affirms that legal texts are difficult to translate due to their complex tense and grammar structures, requiring translators to have extensive knowledge of both the source and target languages. Similarly, this finding is consistent with [18] on interrelated negatives that pose difficulties.

The only obstacle that is considered somewhat accurate in this group is the concept or norms, which holds the lowest mean ($M = 3.36$; $SD = 0.549$). LE undergraduates often seek for suitable equivalents to terms ($M = 3.53$; $SD = 0.751$). Addressing the degree of formality in word choice raises a significant issue in translating legal text for LE learners, which is usually a true statement for HLU ($M = 3.52$; $SD = 0.695$). Lastly, “*the lack of equivalent knowledge relating to legal texts poses many difficulties in translating legal texts properly*” is considered a commonly accurate statement for LE undergraduates, which holds the highest mean score of the group (3.70) and the standard deviation is 0.624. Generally, HLU learners opine that concepts or norms experience the least difficulty for LE students when translating legal texts. As stated in [7], the legal system is connected to the content and characteristics of law, and Taamneh [13] further clarifies that legal English is associated with common law, where concepts can only be comprehended in the context of common law; in contrary, Vietnamese legal system is inheriting the civil law tradition. As a result, the differences between the legal systems in Vietnam and English-speaking countries create challenges in translating legal terms between the two languages. Despite that, LE undergraduates have different viewpoint, which is because of the help of law dictionaries and legal textbooks commonly used by not only undergraduates of legal English majors but HLU learners in general. Hence, translation of legal texts can be facilitated by those methods, which enables them to alleviate fewer obstacles than others. Moreover, the results indicate that LE students encounter various hurdles when translating legal texts. These findings are supported by the findings of [17], [19], who conclude that the lack of suitable equivalents of legal terms is their

major difficulty when translating legal texts. The degree of formality in word choice in translating legal texts causes a significant problem for undergraduates as translators. As mentioned earlier, legal texts are widely known for their formal and professional style. On this account, it is crucial to use appropriate and formal words to create the unique characteristics of legal texts. This formality in word choice often makes it difficult for translators to translate legal texts between languages accurately. HLU legal English certainly needs help with a similar problem during translation. The last problem that the researcher personally appraises the most important, not only in this group but also among all statements, is the problem of lack of respective knowledge of legal texts. Accordingly, a deficiency of legal knowledge can misguide translation procedures, thus leading to challenges in finding suitable equivalent terms. LE undergraduates obviously contemplate it as a notable problem. During the procedure of conducting the questionnaire and the process of learning, the absence of legal knowledge caused multiple problems in learning legal English and translating legal texts, as they needed help comprehending and fully using the legal terminology in both languages. This problem is the consequence of the deficit of legal credit from 25 to 12 (for the K46 students; Decision 2719/QD-DHLHN [5]) and 16 (for the K45 undergraduates; Notification 3207/TB-DHLHN [5]) in the legal English major study programme at HLU.

3.3. The summative analysis of students' semi-structured interviews about solutions to overcome difficulties in translating legal texts

There are seven answers which suggest solutions to handle non-equivalence in legal translation. Interpreting or using parallel texts are widely chosen (*Freq.* = 12), which is in accordance with [1], which previously found out that students mostly use parallel texts to overcome hardships in legal translation. In the same vein, Elmahdi [12] suggests that to improve their skills in legal translation, translation students should receive training that involves comparative legal texts. This would enable them to understand how translation is made and to compare two translated texts in terms of their expressions, structures, and meaning. Holding 40% of the responders, the number of people who chose parallel texts as the solution is two times the first runner-up, which is "using dictionary" (*Freq.* = 6; 20%). "Looking up the Internet" and "Ask experts, teachers and friend" is also recommended by semi-structured interviewee (*Freq.* = 3; 10%). Unfortunately, for this problem, three informants do not know how to alleviate this hardship (10%); meanwhile, this proportion is an acceptable rate. Referring to legal documents to help tackle problems is proposed by a small number of LE undergraduates (*Freq.* = 2; 6.7%). The most outstanding and unique solution, which one respondent suggested, is to "find an equivalent in a third language". It is considered surprisingly unreasonable but still proposed by a student respondent (*Freq.* = 1; 3.3%). This solution cannot be applied publicly due to the lack of three languages influenced people; however, it is proven that LE undergraduates can be creative with solutions and fancied at linguistics other than English in line with the university's training goals. Other problem presents a detailed breakdown of the various strategies used to handle the challenges of translating legal texts containing ordinary words with special meanings. A majority of respondents (*Freq.* = 13; 43.3%) suggested using a dictionary, with Black's Law Dictionary being highly recommended by students. This strategy is particularly useful in helping to understand complex legal jargon. Another common solution among LE students is to refer to legal documents (*Freq.* = 7; 23.3%), which provide a framework for interpreting legal terminology in context. Interestingly, there is a small number of undergraduates (*Freq.* = 4; 13.3%) choosing interpretation or seeking help as a viable solution during the translation process. This denotes that many undergraduates prefer to rely on their own abilities and resources when translating legal texts. Only one person (*Freq.* = 1; 3.3%) is unsure of how to conquer the difficulties of translating legal texts, while another participant suggested persistently guessing as a solution to the problem. This approach may be seen as risky, as it could lead to errors or

inaccuracies in the translation. Overall, the findings suggest that the most effective strategies for translating legal texts involve the use of specialised dictionaries and reference materials, as well as seeking assistance from relevant experts in the field. Doublets and triplets are multiple terms that convey a single legal concept, and it is essential to handle them correctly to ensure accurate translation. The study reveals that 19 out of 30 responders (*Freq.* = 19; 63.3%) know how to handle these terms correctly by translating them into a single word that encompasses the entire concept. Otherwise, the remaining learners (*Freq.* = 11; 36.7%) do not know how to handle this task effectively. The fact that over a third of the answerers are unsure of how to deal with doublets and triplets highlights the difficulty of this aspect of translation. Despite this challenge, it is gratifying to learn that a majority of responders know how to handle doublets and triplets in legal texts. Nevertheless, the study indicates that some seniors and juniors still struggle with this task despite having studied translation and interpretation modules. Therefore, there is a need to provide additional support to informants to ensure they can accurately translate doublets and triplets into legal texts. Six different strategies for translating archaic expressions in legal texts are reported from the respondents. Specially, there is no clear winner among these strategies, as the frequency of their usage is quite even. The most commonly used strategies are "use dictionary", "use reference legal documents", and "interpret", each with a frequency of 7 (23.3%). In some special circumstances, looking up the Internet is considered a viable method of legal translation (*Freq.* = 6; 20.0%). Two interviewees confessed to seek for help from experts, teachers, and friends, representing 6.7% of the total responses. Notably, one respondent does not know how to confront the challenge of translating archaic expressions in legal texts, constituting 2.2% of the total responses. The data proves that there is no significant solution for the translation of archaic expressions in legal texts. The results demonstrate feasible solutions to the hardships of phrasal verbs in a quasi-technical sense when translating legal texts. Similar to some previous findings, interpreting is considered the chosen answer to manage problems of phrasal verbs in a quasi-technical sense (*Freq.* = 9; 30.0%). Typically, nine learners have not controlled the situation yet, comprising 30.0% of the participants, this percentage holds the highest proportion of the chart. LE undergraduates use the Internet and dictionary as a source of addressing phrasal verbs in a quasi-technical sense when translating legal texts, with the frequency consecutively line up as *Freq.* = 5; (16.7%) and *Freq.* = 4 (13.3%). Lastly, asking for help is the last option for this problem (*Freq.* = 2; 6.7%). Similarly, the researchers examine six solutions to address the degree of formality in word choice when translating legal texts, as suggested by students. "Use dictionary" is the answer that outweighs the others with a frequency equal to 16 (53.3%). It can be seen that this solution is used by more than half of the interviewees. The two following answers are only one different from each other, which include "ask experts, teachers, and friends" (*Freq.* = 5; 16.7%) and "looking up Internet" (*Freq.* = 4; 13.3%). Three informants answer that they do not have any solutions to address the degree of formality in word choice when translating legal texts, which consists of 10% of the respondents who are junior or senior LE students. During the interview process, one LE student expresses that addressing the degree of formality in word choice is not her difficulty when translating legal texts; thereby, she suggests using clear and concise language that avoids complex vocabulary, making it easier for readers to understand. It can be considered a usable solution; in spite of this, it can only be applied in the case of translators with efficient legal terms in both Vietnamese and English, hence choosing the precise words. Sharing the same frequency, in this case, using documents, is the bottom solution, which was voted by students (*Freq.* = 1; 3.3%).

On questioning the use of metaphors and metonymies when translating legal texts, it is clearly illustrated that with a frequency of 12, looking up the Internet is the top solution chosen by LE students (40.0%). It can be seen as a pretty high percentage. "Use dictionary" (*Freq.* = 5; 16.7%) and "use documents" (*Freq.* = 4; 13.3%) are continuously recommended by student translators. Besides, three people do not have any solution to deal with the use of legal metaphors and

metonymies (10%), there are three answers which are similarly stated by respondents who do not contemplate metaphors and metonymies as obstacles. They propose that in order to deal with the use of legal metaphors and metonymies, LE students should understand the context of the legal texts and try to understand the meaning of these words, which is suitable for the context. The solution can only be employed for undergraduates who highly comprehend legal English. Strangely, seeking help is not widely recommended for this problem (*Freq.* = 2; 6.7%). Using parallel paragraphs is suggested by one respondent (13.3%). It can be fully understood as metaphors and metonymies hardly and even impossible to interpret. The problems of doublets and triplets conveying a single legal concept when translating legal texts comes out that up to 18 informants, which accounts for 60%, do not have any solution to subjugate the problems of doublets and triplets. However, the number of people who do not have a solution is relatively identical to the number of answerers who know how to translate doublets and triplets. This can explain the reason these categories hold such a large frequency, as they already know how to deal with doublets, and triplets do not consider it a hardship, thus not propose any solution to eliminate hurdles. “*Looking up the Internet*”, “*using reference legal documents*”, and “*asking experts, teachers and friends*” are the three bottom options, which serially constitute a frequency of 10% - ranked the third, 6.7% - the second, and 3.3%, the first. Suggested by six participants, “*learning by heart*” is thought to be a solution (20%). By contrast, the researcher considers that this solution can only be used after the three previous solutions have been successfully employed. Solutions to address Foreign Words/Maxims borrowing from Latin or French origin in legal texts are reported that other than 12 participants who do not have any solution to settle, which equals 40% of the whole, five remaining solutions are genuinely evenly in scores of frequencies. “*Using dictionary*” (*Freq.* = 5; 16.7%), “*looking up the Internet*” (*Freq.* = 4; 13.3%), “*using parallel documents*” (*Freq.* = 3; 10%), and “*using reference legal documents*” (*Freq.* = 2; 6.7%) are one digit different from the next one. “*Do not translate*” is anyway recommended as a solution (*Freq.* = 4; 13.3%). On the one hand, it can be concluded as an opposing answer; nonetheless, in the researcher’s opinion, on some special occasions, keeping foreign Words/Maxims borrowed from Latin or French origin in their original form is the best method. Some Maxims are widely used in Vietnamese and English; in that event, translation is unnecessary. For instance, “*pacta sunt servandas*” can be understood as “*treaties shall be complied with*” (American Society of International Law and the International Judicial Academy, [2]) or “*agreement must be kept*” in English and Vietnamese as “*tận tâm, thiện chí thực hiện cam kết quốc tế [dedication and goodwill in implementing international commitments]*” [15]. Nevertheless, the terminology is practically kept under the Latin word, as it can be used and understood in the original form; thus, translating is unnecessary. The issues of reciprocal words in translating legal texts demonstrate that the usable answers are extremely low, which accounts for only 20% of the whole. Therefore, it can be seen that 80% of the answers claims that they do not have any solution to address the issue of reciprocal words, which is proved high (*Freq.* = 24). This result shows that students tend to avoid learning the translations of reciprocal words; despite recognising it as a difficulty, searching for translations in dictionaries or online is not overly challenging. Of the remaining six answers, LE students often use legal dictionaries (*Freq.* = 2; 6.7%), constituting a third of the usable answers. Only one participant is selected to look up online information (*Freq.* = 1; 3.3%) and ask people (*Freq.* = 1; 3.3%). Likewise, they intentionally choose to select a precise equivalent in the target language (*Freq.* = 2; 6.7%). Notwithstanding, this solution only applies to those with prior knowledge or after consulting mentioned resources.

Overall comments have been drawn that HLU student translators commonly use legal dictionaries, particularly Black’s law dictionary, to address difficulties - contrary to [1]. The findings clearly presented in this study are in line with the conclusions drawn by [11], who emphasises the importance of using the Internet as an aid for legal translators who experience difficulty in composing complex legal structures between two languages. Elmahdi [12]

recommends training undergraduates in legal translation by using comparative legal texts to help them understand how translation is done and compare the translated texts in terms of expressions, structures, and meaning. Although translation students potentially use other strategies, such as consulting legal people, they are less preferred due to their being time-consuming. In some cases, they may not be easily accessible, and students tend to be afraid of showing a lack of their knowledge. This is found in [17], which states that translators need to be exposed to various legal texts translated by professional translators to enhance their performance and should consult relevant resources, whether they are experts or online resources.

4. Conclusion

LE undergraduates believe that lexical characteristics of legal English usually pose significant difficulties. Those include technical terms, words with special meaning, culture-specific metaphors and metonymies, pronominal adverbs, borrowed words, abbreviations, doublets and triplets, archaic words, phrasal verbs in a quasi-technical sense, and unfamiliar pro-forms. Among all, metaphors and metonymies are considered the main obstacles for almost all LE students. Texts layouts, punctuation, capitalisation, and binominal expressions remarkably cause major problems for LE learners. To some extent, HLU translation students run into other challenges in translating legal documents, including long and complex sentences, confusing tenses, and multiple negatives. Those can be grouped as syntactic-related hardships. Non-vocabulary problems are believed as obstacles when translating legal texts of LE learners. Those can be listed as finding suitable equivalents, legal jargon, addressing degree of formality and finding equivalent knowledge. On the other hand, legal dictionaries and the Internet have been reported as strategies used by HLU legal English students to get the better of the difficulties they experience when translating legal texts. Among the available options, three dictionaries stand out - the English-Vietnamese Legal Dictionary, a bilingual dictionary, and Black Law's Dictionary, an English-English dictionary. These two dictionaries can aid undergraduates in comprehending legal terminologies and concepts and assist them in finding equivalent concepts in Vietnamese. To some degree, a Vietnamese-Vietnamese legal dictionary is necessary for legal student translators. Jurisprudence dictionary [Từ điển luật học] [10], jointly published by Judicial Publishing House and Encyclopedia Publisher, becomes apparent that this is a prestigious dictionary for legal students. In other respects, in the era of rising technology, digital dictionary such as the Glosbe dictionary is considered helpful translation tool. At the same time, legal references and asking people are commonly used by LE students to translate legal texts.

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