

Dịch mệnh đề quan hệ Một vấn đề trong phiên dịch hội thảo Anh-Việt

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TÓM TẮT

Dịch thuật nói chung và phiên dịch nói riêng đang ngày càng trở nên phổ biến trong xu hướng hội nhập và quốc tế hóa. Vì tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt có hệ thống ngữ pháp và cấu trúc khác nhau, dịch thuật cho hai ngôn ngữ này tồn tại nhiều trở ngại. Bài viết này nghiên cứu về một số chiến lược dịch Anh-Việt cho các mệnh đề quan hệ tiếng Anh với mục đích tạo thuận lợi cho công tác dịch thuật Anh-Việt. Phương pháp nghiên cứu được sử dụng trong nghiên cứu này chủ yếu là định tính. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy chiến lược dịch thuật đối với mệnh đề quan hệ có tỷ lệ câu dịch tốt cao nhất là sử dụng mệnh đề quan hệ tiếng Việt có đại từ quan hệ.

Từ khóa: *Chiến lược dịch thuật, phiên dịch, phiên dịch hội thảo, mệnh đề quan hệ.*

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How to translate relative clauses An issue in English-Vietnamese conference interpretation

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ABSTRACT

Translation in general and interpretation in particular are becoming increasingly popular in the trend of integration and internationalization. Because English and Vietnamese have different grammar and structure systems, translation for these two languages has a number of obstacles. This article is a study on some strategies for English-Vietnamese translation of English relative clauses for the purpose of facilitating English-Vietnamese translation work. The research method used in this study is mainly qualitative. The research findings show that the translation strategy of relative clauses that has the highest rate of good translation is to use Vietnamese relative clauses with relative pronouns.

Keywords: *Translation strategies, interpretation, conference interpretation, relative clauses.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Translation has long been a popular discipline thanks to its practicality. Translation helps people with different languages communicate and exchange, which is considered as a vitally important work, especially in the current trend of globalization and integration. In Vietnam, with the increasing number of international events attended by people from different corners of the world, e.g. scientific conferences, business conferences or simply fan meetings, etc., the societal demand for translation, especially for interpretation, has been increasing. Although translation received attention a long time ago from certain scholars (such as Cicero, Quintillian, 1st BC), it was not until the second half of the 20th century that a lot of research on translation was carried out. Typical were works by Goldman-Eisler (1972),

Barik (1973, 1975), Gerver (1976), Moser (1978), Chernov (1979) and Lambert (1984). It goes without saying that translation study is a big issue covering many aspects, including studying the translation strategy for each specific type of sentence from one language to another. Nonetheless, currently only a few studies are made on how to translate specific types of sentence (e.g. Khalil, 1993; Sultan, 2011; Farrokh, 2011), and there has not been any study on how to translate English relative clauses into Vietnamese. Hence, this study is expected to shed light on the most effective strategies for translating English-Vietnamese relative clauses.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Translation quality assessment approaches

There are numerous approaches used

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by researchers and practitioners to assess translation works.

Sonia Colina (2008) categorized translation approaches into 4 major ones namely experience-based & anecdotal approaches, theoretical & research-based approaches, reader-response approaches, and textlinguistic & pragmatic approaches. Regarding **experience-based & anecdotal approaches**, although being adequate for specific purposes of their users, experience-based & anecdotal approaches are often found difficult to transfer to other environments because they lack a clear theoretical framework or empirical evidence to be based on. Besides, they hardly have replicability and inter-rater reliability due to the lack of an explicitly formulated theoretical model and/or empirical evidence.

With regard to **theoretical and research-based approaches**, despite arising out of a theoretical framework or assumptions, they also have some inadequacies that have frustrated their success and widespread application. Colina (2008) stated that because these approaches focused only on aspects of quality, while translation was an interdisciplinary field, they were often difficult to apply in numerous other areas such as in professional and teaching situations.

Reader-response approaches are claimed to be controversial because, in addition to the impossibility of capturing/measuring reader response, the reader-response itself is not equally important for all translation cases, especially for those that are not reader-oriented like legal texts, etc. Another problem is that these approaches are concerned with only the equivalence of effect on the reader, ignoring other aspects such as the purpose of the translation, context, etc. Furthermore, it is also challenging to consider whether two responses are equivalent or not because even with a text in the same language, slightly different groups of readers can have non-equivalent responses. Finally, the assessment of

the quality of a translation work based on reader response is a time-consuming activity. Careful selection of readers is required to ensure that they are the intended audience for the translation. Despite all these challenges, the reader-response approaches are given credits for taking account of the role of the audience in translation, and more specifically, of translation effects on the reader as a translation quality measure.

Textual and pragmatic approaches play an important role in the field of translation assessment by changing the focus from counting errors to assessing texts and translation goals, which gives the reader and the communication itself a much more prominent role. However, these approaches have not been widely adopted by either professionals or scholars. Different proposals or models have been criticized because they pay too much attention to the source text (Reiss, 1971, cited in Colina, 2008) or to the target (Reiss and Vermeer, 1984; Nord, 1997; cited in Colina, 2008). House's (1997, 2001) functional pragmatic model is a symbolic example for these approaches. It is based on the analysis of the linguistic-situational features in the original and its translation, the comparison of the original and its translation and the assessment of their match. The fundamental requirement of House's model is that the textual features and function of the translation match those of its original, i.e. the final goal is to create a functional equivalence of the original and its translation.

Nonetheless, textual and pragmatic approaches are also problematic due to their dependence on the notion of equivalence which is often an unclear and debatable term in translation studies (Hönig, 1997, cited in Colina, 2008). This is an obstruction because a particular translation sometimes serves different functions from that of the original depending on the oriented audience and the time it happens. Besides, another impediment in using textual and pragmatic approaches is the fact that there is not clear assessment criteria for making translation decision after the textual features have

been analyzed and the function of the translation has been identified.

The use of **analytic rating scales** is a relatively new approach of assessing translation and interpretation in recent decades. In fact, there has not been absolute certainty about the usefulness of using analytic rating scales in assessing interpreting. This mainly derives from the unavailability of rigorous empirical evidence in available literature (Angelelli, 2009; Bontempo & Hutchinson, 2011; Clifford, 2001; IoL Educational Trust, 2010; Jacobson, 2009; Wang, 2011, cited in Han, 2017) to prove the effectiveness of this approach. Despite the uncertainty about its usefulness, the utility of analytic rating scales to assess translation quality is beginning to increase in interpreter certification testing (Angelelli, 2009; Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters, 2011; Han, 2015a, 2016a; IoL Educational Trust, 2010; Jacobson, 2009; Liu, 2013; Turner et al., 2010; Wu, Liu, & Liao, 2013, cited in Han, 2017), in interpreter educational assessment (Bontempo & Hutchinson, 2011; Lee, 2008; Tisellius, 2009; Wang, 2011; Wang, Napier, Goswell, & Carmichael, 2015; Zhao & Dong, 2013, cited in Han, 2017) and in interpreting research (Cheung, 2014; Lin, Chang, & Kuo, 2013; McDermid, 2014, cited in Han, 2017). The popularity of this approach seems to derive from abundant psychometric evidence of the general value of rating scales reported in psychological, educational and language-testing literature (e.g., Xi & Mollaun, 2006).

2.2. Relative clauses

According to Thomson and Martinet (1986), there are three kinds of relative clauses, viz. defining, non-defining and connective relative clauses. A defining relative clause is the one describing the preceding noun in such a way as to distinguish it from other nouns of the same class. Non-defining relative clauses are placed after nouns which are definite already. They do not therefore define the noun, but merely add something to it by giving some more

information about it. Unlike defining relative clauses, they are not essential in the sentence and can be omitted without causing confusion. Also unlike defining relatives, they are separated from their noun by commas. Connective clauses do not describe their nouns but continue the story. Commas are used as with non-defining relative clauses. The pronouns are who, whom, whose, which. They are usually placed after the object of the main verb.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Data sources and samples

Data for this study were records of presentations at international conferences happening at the International Center for Interdisciplinary Science and Education (ICISE) in Binh Dinh, Viet Nam and their Vietnamese translation records. There were three reasons why only presentations at ICISE were selected for the study. First, other sources of data were inaccessible and only ICISE had the record system that made translation records available for this study. Second, the conferences held at ICISE were scientific conferences which were believed to be a good context for data collection. More specifically, the ICISE hosts between 10 and 12 high level international scientific conferences on an annual basis. Having already covered disciplines in the scope of fundamental or applied science mainly in the field of physics, the program was expected to cover a larger array of scientific disciplines such as biology, medicine, social and human sciences. Finally, the interpreter for the investigated conference was the director of the Vietnamese National Center for Translation and Interpretation, so his translation could be considered as a reliable source of samples, which could be somehow regarded as the model of English-Vietnamese translation for English relative clauses.

3.2. Data collection

First, 9 English records and 9 Vietnamese records for 4 conference days (8-11th May, 2018) were collected upon permission of the ICISE

manager. Next, the records were transcribed into written form, after which English relative clauses and their translations were identified for analysis.

3.3. Research methods

The qualitative method was used to analyze collected data in this study. For translations which were given “average” or “poor” assessment, translation suggestions would be provided. Besides, the author of this study also made use of the descriptive method in order to gain an insight into the investigated grammatical unit. From the findings of the descriptive method, outstanding and significant points were highlighted and discussed, after which conclusions were drawn.

3.4. Translation quality assessment approach

The study made use of an analytic

rating scale to assess the quality of Vietnamese translations of 120 English relative clauses spoken by European scholars and scientists. After reviewing the assessment criteria of previous literature by Llewellyn-Jones (1981), Strong & Rudser (1985), Gile (1999), Brunette (2000) and Chao Han (2018) and considering the research conditions, three criteria among 4 criteria of Brunette (2000) were chosen for the study after some adaptation, namely “message” (i.e., the content of the original sentence is the same as the content of the translation, in other words, the sentence translates correctly and sufficiently the content of the original sentence), “context” (i.e., the word selected in the translation is appropriate to the context of the original sentence), and “language norm” (i.e., the sentence is easy to understand and familiar to Vietnamese people). Table 1 is the trigger for assessing the quality of translations.

Table 1. Trigger table

Quality	Criteria		
	Message	Context	Language norm
Good	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
Average	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Violated
		Violated	Fulfilled
		Violated	Violated
Poor	Violated	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
		Fulfilled	Violated
		Violated	Fulfilled
		Violated	Violated

“Good” assessment was given upon the observation of all the three criteria, while “poor” assessment was made when the most important criteria (i.e. message) was violated. The reason for this strictness is because conveying the message of the original sentence to the audience of the target language is considered the goal of interpretation. Therefore, if the translation does not have the same message with the original, it is a failure in interpretation. For the remaining

cases, the translation would be assessed as “average”, i.e., when the “message” criterion was satisfied but at least one of the other two criteria was violated.

4. FINDINGS

Although sentences which contain relative clause(s) are complex sentences, the rate of good translations for this kind of sentence is very positive. In general, the relative clauses surveyed in this study are successfully translated with 82

“good”, 26 “average” and 12 “poor” assessments. To translate relative clauses, the interpreter utilizes several different strategies, in which the “use of Vietnamese relative clauses without relative pronouns” is the most popular one with 55 times used. Next is the “use of Vietnamese relative clauses with relative pronouns (người/ thú/ cái/ vật (mà), đó, mà)” with 28 times. The next strategy is the “use of an independent clause” with 14 use times. In addition to these three major strategies, the interpreter also uses “other strategies” to translate relative clauses such as using adverbial clauses (of purpose and

of manner), reorganizing the elements of the whole sentence or eliminating certain parts of the relative clause, etc.

Despite not being used the most, the “use of Vietnamese relative clauses with relative pronouns” is the most successful strategy to deal with relative clause translation with the highest rate of good assessment (82.1%) and the lowest rate of poor one (3.6%), while “other strategies” is the least successful one with the lowest rate of good assessment (47.8%) and the highest rate of poor one (21.7%). Details are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Occurrence times and occurrence rate of different assessment types

times = number of times that the assessment type occurs for each strategy

rate = occurrence times/total times that the strategy is used

	Good times (rate)	Average times (rate)	Poor times (rate)	Total times
Use of Vietnamese relative clauses without relative pronouns	39 (70.9%)	11 (20%)	5 (9.1%)	55
Use of Vietnamese relative clauses with relative pronouns (người/ thú/ cái/ vật (mà), đó, mà)	23 (82.1%)	4 (14.3%)	1 (3.6%)	28
Use of an independent clause	9 (64.3%)	4 (28.6%)	1 (7.1%)	14
Other strategies	11 (47.8%)	7 (30.4%)	5 (21.7%)	23
Total	82 (68.3%)	26 (21.7%)	12 (10%)	120

Regarding types of violation, language norm violation is the most popular one with 31 occurrence times, and “other strategies” is

the most troublesome strategy with the highest rate of violation in total. Details are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Occurrence times of different violation types and their occurrence rate

times = number of times that the violation type occurs for each strategy

rate = occurrence times/total times that the strategy is used

	Message times (rate)	Context times (rate)	Language norm times (rate)	Total times (rate)
Use of Vietnamese relative clauses without relative pronouns	5 (9.1%)	3 (5.5%)	13 (23.6%)	21 (38.2%)
Use of Vietnamese relative clauses with relative pronouns (người/ thú/ cái/ vật (mà), đó, mà)	1 (3.6%)	0 (0%)	5 (17.8%)	6 (21.4%)
Use of an independent clause	1 (7.1%)	0 (0%)	4 (28.6%)	5 (35.7%)
Other strategies	5 (21.7%)	1 (4.3%)	9 (39.1%)	15 (65.2%)
Total	12 (10%)	4 (3.3%)	31 (25.8%)	47 (39.1%)

4.1. Use of Vietnamese relative clauses without relative pronouns

Despite the fact that there is not a so-called “relative clause” in Vietnamese grammar, there exists a term “cụm từ chủ vị” (subject-predicate phrase) which belongs to a bigger grammatical unit “phần phụ sau của danh từ nêu đặc trưng miêu tả” (the noun phrase postmodification which expresses descriptive features) (Ban, 1992, p.58). Such Vietnamese subject-predicate phrases work in relatively the same way with English relative clauses, so they are called “Vietnamese relative clauses” for the purpose of this study only.

In the total number of 120 investigated cases of translating English relative clauses, the interpreter is found to use this strategy 55 times in which 39 cases are assessed to be good, 11 are average and the other 5 are poor.

The first advantage of this strategy is that the interpreter only needs to follow the idea flow of the originals without worrying about how to reorganize ideas in his translations. This helps the interpreter process information faster and have a better chance of completing the translation of the full sentence. The second advantage is about the structure itself. Besides being similar to English relative clauses, Vietnamese subject-predicate phrases are also very common in Vietnamese language, so when the interpreter uses them to translate English relative clauses, the listeners can easily comprehend the idea that the interpreter wants to convey.

In the case of good translations, the majority of the sentences that need to be translated have a straightforward wording and simple structure which pose no impediment to the listening comprehension of the interpreter. It means that elements of those sentences have not many meanings to be chosen and the whole sentences themselves do not have tricky ambiguous meanings, so that the interpreter can understand the original sentence at once which in turn facilitates his translation process.

Additionally, almost all of the relative clauses in this case are located at the end of the sentence. This actually enhances the quality of the translations because if the relative clause is in the middle of the sentence, especially in Vietnamese, the meaning of the whole sentence is very likely to be crushed, awkward and even incomprehensible to Vietnamese listeners. Following is an example of a good translation using this strategy.

1. I'm not directly a scientist who studies how development will go.

-> Tôi không phải là một nhà khoa học nghiên cứu về mặt phát triển. (I am not a scientist studying development aspect)

Besides good translations, there are also 11 translations assessed to be “average”. In most of these cases, the originals have a long structure with numerous sub-ideas. Sometimes, the originals also contain multi-meaning words and ambiguous expressions. Moreover, there is a case in which the relative clause is located in the middle of the original sentence. These cases are certainly challenging for the listening comprehension and the translation process of the interpreter because he has to cope with a number of tasks simultaneously. First, he must keep in mind all the sub-ideas so that he does not lose track of the idea flow of the whole sentence. Second, he must process heard information and truly understand them to make a decision on which meaning is suitable for each certain case. Finally, he must pay attention to his wording so that although he produces translation for a long and complicated sentence, the translation itself is still understandable to the audience. Following is an example of an average-quality translation using this strategy.

2. There is another important element which is linked to all the other I said before.

-> Và một yếu tố quan trọng khác liên kết với tất cả yếu tố mà tôi đã nói. (And another important element linking to all the elements I said before)

Suggestion: Có một yếu tố quan trọng khác liên quan đến những gì tôi đã nói. (There is another important element related to those I said before)

In the example above, the problem is in the translation of the word “link”. In his translation, the interpreter uses the word “liên kết” (link); however, the word “liên kết” (link) when used in this case makes the audience (including the translation assessor) think of a “connection” not a “relation” which it is supposed to indicate by the speaker of the conference. In short, the choice of a precise meaning for the word “link” in the translation is not suitable for this situation, so it violates the context criteria.

Regarding cases that the translations are assessed as “poor”, the main factors that lead to poor assessment are firstly the original sentences contain many sub-ideas, secondly the original sentences have specialized terms, and thirdly the original sentences contain a long noun phrase. In English, the adjective phrase that modifies a noun often comes before the noun, while in Vietnamese, all the modification elements of a noun come after it. This results in a possible problematic situation that when a long noun phrase is uttered, not until the completion of the utterance the interpreter is able to begin the translation. This delay not only causes trouble to the translation of the noun phrase itself, but it also poses impediments to the translation of the whole sentence and even of several following sentences. Similarly, if the original sentence contains specialized terms or/and have a complex flow of ideas, it is also troublesome for the interpreter to carry out the translation work. Let us look at the following translation for example.

3. You are using a methodology which is based on the final input in terms of richness, of the development of the country.

-> Ông đây sử dụng 1 cái phương pháp dựa trên tác động cuối cùng xét từ sự phát triển của đất nước. (This man uses a method based on the

final impact considered from the development of the country)

Suggestion: Bạn sử dụng một phương pháp dựa trên đầu vào là sự thịnh vượng và mức phát triển của một quốc gia. (You use a method based on the input that is the richness and the development of the country)

The translation of the example is obviously problematic. First, it has a different meaning compared to the original due mainly to the translation of the phrase “based on the final input in terms of richness, of the development of the country”. Second, the use of “ông đây” (this man) and “cái phương pháp” (method) are inappropriate for a formal context. Instead, “bạn” (you), “các bạn” (you), “quý vị” (you distinguished guests) should be used to replace “ông đây” (this man) and “phương pháp” (method) should replace “cái phương pháp” (method). The final problem is in the structure of the translation because the translation sentence sounds meaningless. This may be due to the word-by-word translation strategy and the mistaken choice of meaning of certain words.

4.2. Use of Vietnamese relative clauses with relative pronouns

This strategy has the highest rate of good translations with 23 translations assessed to be good in the total number of 28 times this strategy is used.

Similar to the previous strategy, the first advantage of this strategy is that the interpreter only needs to follow the idea flow of the originals without worrying about what structure should be utilized in his translations. This helps the interpreter process information faster and have a better chance of completing the translation of the full sentence. The structure itself is also an advantage of this strategy. Because Vietnamese subject-predicate phrases are similar to English relative clauses and they are also very popular in Vietnamese language, when the interpreter uses them to translate English relative clauses, the listeners can easily comprehend the idea that

the interpreter wants to convey. In addition to these two advantages, this strategy also has an advantage that the previous strategy does not have, it is the advantage of having a relative pronoun. Thanks to the relative pronoun, the listeners are able to identify the relative clause and keep track of the idea flow of the sentence. Accordingly, the translations are more understandable to the listeners.

The cases of good translations seem to be similar to those of the previous strategy which are the result of straightforward wording and simple structure of the original sentences. An example of this case is shown below.

4. You could learn the language of science, which are Latin and Greek.

-> Bạn có thể học được ngôn ngữ của khoa học đó là tiếng Latinh, tiếng Hy Lạp. (You can learn the language of science which is Latin, Greek)

As revealed clearly above, the translation does not have any kinds of violation. The translation seems to be the Vietnamese equivalent of the original sentence in terms of not only meaning but also function and word order.

Regarding average translations, the main source of difficulty is the use of specialized words and complex structures in the original sentences. Take a look at example 5.

5. Sustainable development of society can only be reached if another very important perimeters guaranteed which is peace.

-> Sự phát triển bền vững của xã hội có thể đạt được nếu như mà một yếu tố khác quan trọng đó là hòa bình phải có được. (Sustainable development of society can be achievable if another very important element which is peace is guaranteed)

Suggestion: Chúng ta chỉ có thể đạt được sự phát triển bền vững của xã hội nếu chúng ta có hòa bình, một yếu tố cũng rất quan trọng khác. (We can only achieve the sustainable development of society if we have peace, one

other important element)

First, take into account the clause “sustainable development of society can only be reached”, it is unnatural to use “achieve” in adjectival form (be achievable - có thể đạt được) or even in passive form (be achieved - được đạt). Vietnamese people often use a subject before the verb, so it is better to use the pattern “S + achieve + O” (we can only achieve the sustainable development of society - chúng ta chỉ có thể đạt được sự phát triển bền vững) than “S is achievable” or “S can be achieved” in Vietnamese. With regard to the “if clause”, the clause “một yếu tố khác quan trọng đó là hòa bình phải có được” (another very important element which is peace must be guaranteed) is also unnatural in Vietnamese. A generic noun should be added to the sentence as the subject to make it more natural as in “Chúng ta chỉ có thể đạt được sự phát triển bền vững nếu chúng ta có hòa bình, một yếu tố quan trọng khác” (We can only achieve the sustainable development of society if we have peace, one other important element). As a result, the relative structure should be replaced for the naturalness and comprehensibility of the whole sentence.

Using this strategy to translate of relative clauses, the interpreter also receives one “poor” assessment. This happens when he is confronted with a long ambiguous sentence containing an unusual specialized term as in example 6.

6. Companies, often large, often international eager to access developing markets or nations with geopolitical interests and actors which actually show little concern for local development.

-> Công ty đa quốc gia muốn tiếp cận các thị trường phát triển hay các quốc gia với những lợi ích địa chiến lược và những người chơi những đối tượng mà không mấy quan tâm đến sự phát triển địa phương. (International companies want to access to developing markets or nations with geostrategic interests and players, subjects that do not really concern the local development)

Suggestion: Các công ty đa quốc gia muốn tiếp cận các thị trường hoặc các nước đang phát triển với những lợi ích về địa lý chính trị và những nhân tố không bận tâm đến sự phát triển của địa phương. (International companies want to access developing markets or nations with geopolitical interests and people not concerning the local development)

The first problem with the translation of this sentence is about the language norm. The translation has many redundant words (e.g. “những người chơi những đối tượng mà” (players, subjects that)) which makes the whole sentence clumsy. The second problem is that the meaning of the original sentence is changed after being translated. “Developing markets or nations with geopolitical interests” is supposed to mean “developing markets with geopolitical interests” or “developing nations with geopolitical interests” in a common sense; nevertheless, it is translated as “markets which are developing or nations which have geostrategy interests” by the interpreter. Moreover, the word “geopolitical” is mistranslated into “địa lý chiến lược” (geostrategic). All of these problems make the meaning of the translation totally different from its original sentence.

4.3. Use of an independent clause

This strategy means that the interpreter replaces a relative clause with an independent clause by using a noun for the subject position of the relative clause with or without a coordinator to separate the clauses. Using this strategy 14 times, the interpreter receives 9 “good” assessments, 4 “average” assessments and 1 “poor” assessment.

The advantage of this strategy is that the translation is more comprehensible to the audience because unlike relative clauses whose meaning are dependent on other clauses to be understood, independent clauses are fully comprehensible on their own. Nonetheless, this strategy is not always applicable to the translation of relative-clause sentences and it can only be applied when

a noun modified by a relative clause is located at the end of the sentence, otherwise, the translated sentence will become even more complicated than the original sentence and consequently become really awkward to the audience in the target language. Second, a relative dependent clause and an independent clause cannot be used interchangeably in any cases because anyway they have different functions, i.e. while a relative clause is used to modify a noun, an independent clause modifies nothing.

Good translations using this strategy results from the fact that all the originals are not too long, they do not contain many multi-meaning words, they do not have tricky structure for the main clause and they all have the relative clause at the end of the sentence. Let us have a look at the following example.

7. This natural brings us to the ancient Greeks who had a terrific period of activities in basic science.

→ Điều này mang chúng ta quay lại những người Hy Lạp cổ đại, và họ đã có những thành tựu vô cùng xuất sắc trong khoa học cơ bản. (This brings us back to the ancient Greeks, and they had excellent achievements in basic science)

In this example 7, the translator transforms the relative clause, i.e. a dependent clause, into an independent clause by adding the coordinator “and” and giving the subject “they” to the used-to-be relative clause. The meaning of the sentence does not change after being translated because despite having different structures, the two clauses (relative clause before translating and independent clause after translating) are both used only to give more information about “the ancient Greeks”. This translation strategy seems very practical in long and complicated sentences with dependent clauses and several interconnected relationships. By separating those complex (or complex compound) sentences and transforming dependent clauses into independent clauses, it is believed to be better for the understanding of the audience.

Regarding 4 cases of average translations, the originals of those translations are long in one case, have tricky structures in two cases, and have the relative clause in the middle of the sentence in the other case. Following is an example of an average-quality translation for this strategy.

8. One of the first to say heretic things made heretic new discoveries was Galileo Galilei who realized, who found out that the laws of motion are not the way the Greeks told us they are.

-> Một trong số những người đầu tiên nói những điều được coi là dị giáo đó là ông Galile, ông đã phát hiện ra rằng là những, là định luật về vận động, không phải những định luật mà người Hy Lạp đã nói cho chúng ta. (One of the first people to say so-called heretic things that is Galile, he discovered that the laws of motion, not the laws the Greeks told us)

Suggestion: Một trong những người đầu tiên nói những điều dị giáo là ông Galile, người đã phát hiện ra rằng phần lớn vận động không vận hành theo cách mà người Hy Lạp đã cho chúng ta biết. (One of the first people to say heretic things is Galile, he discovered that most of the motions did not operate in the way that the Greeks told us)

It can be seen that the first part of the sentence is very well translated, while the translation of the second part is not quite successful. May be the length of the original sentence made the interpreter lose track of what he needs to translate.

The only case of poor assessment occurs when there are two relative clauses in a sentence as in example 9.

9. There was one statesman who was very insightful, who decided that there should be a new school system for civilians.

-> Có một nhà chính trị, ông rất là hăng hái và ông đưa ra chúng ta phải có một hệ thống giáo dục cho người dân. (There was a statesman, he was very ardent and he showed that we had to have an educational system for people)

Suggestion: Có một nhà chính trị rất sáng suốt quyết định rằng nên có một hệ thống giáo dục mới cho người dân. (There was a very insightful statesman deciding that there should be a new educational system for people)

The translation is assessed as poor because it is much different from its original. The reason for this may be because the interpreter is confused when he is confronted with two relative clauses in succession. Consequently, he cannot produce the correct translation for the words "insightful" and "decided".

4.4. Other strategies

Besides the three mentioned-above strategies, the interpreter also applies a number of other strategies to cope with the translation of relative clauses. The first strategy is to use an adverbial clause to replace the relative clause. Sometimes it is the adverbial clause of purpose with the "to_infinitive" structure, and sometimes it is the adverbial clause of manner with certain prepositions like "like, as, the way, etc". Besides the use of adverbial clauses, the interpreter also utilize prepositional phrases to translate relative clauses. Additionally, the interpreter also reorganizes the elements of the original sentence and produces its idea in a different way. There are 11 good translations, 7 average translations and 5 poor translations when the interpreter uses these strategies to translate relative clauses.

In 11 good translations, the original sentences of those translations are all not long and they all have simple structures with an obvious meaning, as in example 10.

10. To make machines that could be used as a weapons in war time.

-> Để chế tạo những cỗ máy để sử dụng vào lĩnh vực quân sự. (To make machines to use in military field)

In this example, the translator converts the relative clause into a to-infinitive clause to indicate a purpose. The general ideas of the original sentence and the translated sentence are

similar, so the message criteria is not violated. Concerning the other two criteria, the meaning selection for words in the translation is suitable and the sentence itself is usual in the target language norm. Thus, in general, that is a good translation.

In case of average translations, the originals often include proper nouns, numbers and complex structure in the main clause. Take a look at example 11.

11. The beginning of the 20th century also marked with the time that the Nobel Prizes were handed out.

→ Khi thế kỉ XX mở màn đó cũng là lúc bắt đầu của giải Nobel. (When the 20th century begins that is also the beginning of the Nobel Prize)

Suggestion: Thé kỉ XX mở màn đánh dấu sự ra đời của giải Nobel. (The beginning of the 20th century marks the birth of Nobel Prize)

This translation has a problem in its structure. It violates the language norm criteria. While the original is a sentence, the translation is in the form of a dependent clause indicating the time of an action leading to the consequence that after hearing the translation, the audience are very likely to keep waiting for the rest of the sentence. This makes the translation incomprehensible to them.

With regard to poor assessment, the two main problems are the uncommon words and tricky complicated structures used in the original sentences. Following is an example of poor translation.

12. You will see that actually there are three views that are actually quite convergent.

→ Các bạn có thể thấy là 3 cách nhìn này mỗi cái có một điểm tách riêng. (You can see that these three views each one has a distinguished point)

Suggestion: Các bạn có thể thấy có 3 cách nhìn có điểm tương đồng. (You can see that there are 3 views having similarities)

The translation is well organized and understandable. However, the translator misunderstands the word “convergent”. As a result, this changes the meaning of the original. Accordingly, the criteria of message is violated.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Conclusions

Among the strategies that the interpreter uses to do English-Vietnamese translation of 120 sentences with English relative clauses, the “use of Vietnamese relative clause with relative pronouns” has the highest rate of good assessment (82.1%) and the lowest rate of poor one (3.6%), under which 3 reasons are believed to lie. Firstly, the identical idea arrangement of the original sentence and the translation facilitates the information processing process of the interpreter, giving him a good condition to catch up with the pace of the speaker. Secondly, the familiarity with the “Vietnamese relative clause” of Vietnamese people makes it comprehensible to them. Thirdly, this comprehensibility is further enhanced with the use of Vietnamese relative pronouns (người/ thứ/ cái/ vật (mà), đó, mà) which serve as a signal telling the audience that the following information that they are listening is going to modify the information just mentioned before.

The strategy that receives the second highest rate of good assessment (70.9%) and third lowest rate of poor assessment (9.1%) is the “use of Vietnamese relative clauses without relative pronouns”. The success in the use of this strategy seems to have similar reasons as the “use of Vietnamese relative clauses with relative pronouns” except for the third one.

The other two strategies do not have such positive assessment. Although the underlying factors for this cannot be clearly revealed via this study, reasons for some poor assessment of this strategy are believed to be because the original sentences include uncommon words or have complicated structures. However, the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a strategy

cannot be simply stated by merely considering the original sentence of poor-assessed translations using that strategy. Thus, more studies considering the interrelationship between different factors in translation works are needed for further clarification.

With regard to factors of mistranslation, average translations and poor translations are mainly found when the original sentences are long, they have complicated structures, they contain uncommon words or they bring ambiguous meaning. Unfortunately, these are all external factors that the interpreter cannot manipulate. However, findings of the study have a positive indication that although average translations and poor translations of the four strategies have relatively the same factors, the rate of good translations, average translations and poor translations of those strategies are totally different.

5.2. Recommendations

Obviously, there are a lot of things to do to optimize the translation work, but based on the findings of the study, it is highly recommended to utilize Vietnamese relative clauses, especially with relative pronouns to translate English relative clauses.

As regards the factors of mistranslation, more studies on the interrelationship of different translation factors are suggested to be carried out to gain more insight into advantages and disadvantages of each strategy for English-Vietnamese translation of English relative clauses.

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