

Students' Perception of Barriers in Legal English Translation Learning: A Case at Hanoi Law University

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Abstract

Studying legal English translation is considered one of the most challenging subjects due to its distinctive characteristics related to the law field. Because of these differences, English legal majors may encounter many difficulties throughout their learning process. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the perceptions of English-major law students regarding the barriers in the process of studying legal English translation at Hanoi Law University (HLU). This study applied both quantitative and qualitative approaches, using survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as the main data collection instruments to gain a comprehensive insight into the situation. There were 100 questionnaire respondents, together with 10 interviewees, who are enrolled in the courses of K46 and K47 at HLU. This study revealed notable results: students identified the lack of in-depth legal knowledge, limited legal vocabulary, and confusion regarding translation structure as the main barriers. Regarding subjective factors related to students' ability, students struggled to balance message accuracy with translation naturalness and ensure adequate content transfer between languages. Additionally, the lack of English legal dictionaries, outdated materials, and limited coverage of legal topics hindered their learning. In light of these findings, the researchers offer deeper insights into the difficulties law students face and the factors contributing to these challenges as well as suggesting some viable recommendations with the aim of improving the students' translation ability.

Keywords: legal English translation, barriers, perceptions, English major students, legal knowledge, legal vocabulary

Introduction

In the era of integration and development, language is an essential communication tool that helps connect countries and individuals. With the desire for long-term, sustainable business cooperation, the need to understand the laws of other countries has driven the development of legal English translation - a specialized form of translation that focuses on the legal language commonly used in the legal industry. Moreover, the legal system in Vietnam is constantly being updated and changed, which is also a key factor contributing to the growing demand for legal translation. Teaching legal English in legal education is crucial; first and foremost, it equips students with the knowledge of specialized legal terminology, allowing them to understand and accurately translate legal documents such as contracts, laws, and case law

between two languages. The skill of legal English translation provides a competitive edge for students when applying for positions in international law firms, non-governmental organizations, or government agencies related to law. Integrating legal English translation into legal education not only helps students master the legal language but also meets the demands of the labour market in the era of globalization. This being a global trend, many legal training institutions in Vietnam, one of which is HLU, have added legal English translation to their curricula.

Legal translation requires translators to have in-depth knowledge of legal language and a clear understanding of legal concepts to ensure the accuracy and legality of the translation. Therefore, the demand for legal translation is not only increasing in quantity but also requires high levels of quality and accuracy. This underscores the necessity of teaching translation skills from the very beginning of their education, with a team of highly qualified professional lecturers and translators. Subsequently, students need to learn from practical experiences, exposure, and working in a professional environment to enhance their abilities on an on-going basis.

In practice, students often face challenges, which require identifying the difficulties in legal English translation and the factors contributing to these challenges. In the literature, many studies have been conducted to determine the challenges in translating legal English topics (Nhac, 2023). However, only a limited number of studies have been carried out in this realm in the context of HLU. Recognizing this gap, it is essential to conduct research to identify the difficulties faced by learners and find effective solutions to address them. It is hoped that by understanding their problems, students can improve their translation abilities related to Legal English topics.

The study aims to answer the following research questions to fulfil its goals:

1. What difficulties do students face when studying the translation of legal English topics?
2. What are the primary factors that lead to the difficulties students experience in learning translation?

Literature Review

According to Newmark (2001, p.5), “Translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text.” Newmark's assessment of the nature of translation is “a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message or statement in one language by the same message or statement in another language.” (Newmark, 1982, 2001, p. 7).

Legal English is a separate branch of the English language that is used specifically in legal contexts. Crystal (2004) underscores the significance of Legal English as a specialized form of language. It includes specialized terminology, phrases, and grammatical structures applied in legal contexts that require in-depth knowledge of the legal system. This form of English often utilizes complex vocabulary, lengthy sentences, classic grammatical constructs, and high levels of accuracy and precision. According to Garner (2001), Legal English is defined as a language that is used in legal texts with the main goal being accuracy and clarity.

Legal translation is a specialized area of translation activity owing to the fact that legal translation involves the law; such translation can and often does not only have a linguistic but also legal impact and consequence because of the special nature of the law and legal language. Moreover, the translation of legal texts of any kind, from statute laws and contracts to courtroom testimony, is a practice that stands at the crossroads of legal theory, language theory, and translation theory. Therefore, it is necessary that the legal translator have a basic

understanding of the nature of law and legal language as well as the impact it has on legal translation.

1. Suitable Translation Methods for Legal Context Documents

Based on the characteristics of legal documents when translating and ensuring accuracy and clarity, the author finds some of these methods suitable for consideration and application in legal documents. Firstly, in many circumstances, a *literal approach* is required to maintain the legal meaning of the original text. The translator should aim to adhere as near to the original text as possible while still guaranteeing readability in the target language. This is helpful for legal documents and texts such as contracts, statutes, and constitutions. *Faithful translation* is commonly used when translating legal English topics because of the high demand for precision. The next is *equivalent translation*; according to Nida (2004), this method ensures that the translation not only conveys the meaning of the source text but also elicits the same response in the reader as the original text did. Venuti (2018) clarified and developed the concept that *cultural adaptation* involves changes in cultural elements, including cultural references, customs, local expressions, and related information, thereby relating to the readers' cultural context. In a legal context such as in legal documents and contracts, there are many highly technical terms, therefore, a *clarification method* is appropriate and essential. With this method, the translator will add explanations or annotations to clarify ambiguous terms or concepts that may not be immediately clear in the target language. Furthermore, *standardization* in translation is the process of establishing and applying common standards and rules to ensure translation consistency, quality, and accuracy. This process helps translators maintain a consistent style, terminology, and expression throughout the translation process. This is particularly important when working with legal documents. Finally, *legal term substitution* is a concept in legal translation theory that involves replacing a legal term in the source language with its equivalent or closest equivalent term in the target language. This substitution ensures that the translation accurately conveys the legal meaning and maintains the legal value of the source text.

2. Complexities in Translating Legal English Topics

Legal English translation is a unique field, facing many challenges due to the complexity of the legal system, language, and culture. Each of these factors has its own characteristics, profoundly affecting the quality and accuracy of the translation.

In terms of the legal system, each country has its own legal system, with different regulations and legal concepts. When translating, the translator must master both source text and target texts' legal systems to ensure that terms are translated accurately. For example, a legal concept such as "contract" in the English legal system may not be completely equivalent to similar concepts in other legal systems. This lack of similarity can lead to misunderstandings or errors in the translation process. This requires the translator not only to understand the language but also to have in-depth knowledge of the laws of both countries. The second issue is language. Legal language is often complex and contains many specialized terms. Sentence structure and expression in legal documents are often different from everyday language, with many strict grammatical rules. Translation requires high levels of accuracy because just one incorrect word or sentence can cause serious legal consequences. Translators need to choose words carefully to ensure that the content and meaning of the source text are conveyed fully and clearly.

The complexity of legal English translation also lies in legal culture. Culture plays an important role in forming and expressing legal concepts. Some legal concepts may not exist in another culture or may be understood in different ways. This creates a major challenge for translators, as they need to understand the cultural context of both languages to ensure that

the translation is not only accurate but also culturally appropriate to the reader. Cultural sensitivity is necessary to avoid misunderstandings or discrepancies that may occur during the translation process.

3. Studies on Challenges in Legal Translation

Cao (2007) emphasized that legal translation requires not only linguistic skills but also a deep understanding of both the legal and cultural contexts of the source and target languages. Also mentioned are the challenges of balancing accuracy and fidelity to the original text, while avoiding ambiguity which could lead to legal issues.

One of the previous studies related to this topic is that of Nguyen in 2018. This study focuses on identifying potential challenges in the process of translating legal terminology and proposing appropriate translation strategies and processes when translating into Vietnamese. These difficulties mainly stem from two reasons: (a) the problem of non-equivalence between terms and (b) the translator lacks linguistic ability and background knowledge. Research has shown that in translating legal terms, strategies such as transposition, omission, and paraphrasing are increasingly used, especially for terms in public documents, whether at the word or phrase level. Another survey related to this issue is by Nguyen (2018). This study provides an in-depth analysis of the main difficulties that ESP teachers may encounter due to issues related to language, culture, and especially the legal system. Based on these findings, researchers have proposed solutions to help Legal English teachers effectively communicate legal documents in a bilingual legal environment, based on a three-dimensional model (Language-Concept-Reference) proposed by Cao (2007). This relates to applying translation principles and strategies such as literal translation, functional equivalence, borrowing, descriptive equivalence, and creating new terms.

4. Method Design

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach and involved the participation of 110 English-major undergraduates enrolled in K46 and K47 courses at HLU who have attended the legal English translation course. Of these, 100 participants completed the survey, and 10 participants were interviewed. The questionnaire survey was constructed using Google Forms sent through the network platform. There was a completion deadline of two weeks. Face-to-face interviews were also conducted with the permission of the participants. During the interviews, detailed notes were taken to record their responses accurately. These were only for research purposes

Participants

Participants of the survey in this research were 100 students chosen randomly from K46 and K47 of the Faculty of Legal Foreign Languages of HLU. This group of K46 and K47 students were selected mainly because at the time they had been studying translation with legal topics. Thus, their responses to a survey relating to these courses would be a reliable source of information for conducting this research. Furthermore, 10 individuals voluntarily attended the semi-structured interviews. Hence, the research was carried out with the involvement of 110 English-major legal students at HLU.

Procedure

With the assistance of the supervisor, the survey questionnaire was carefully designed before it was uploaded onto Google Forms. To ensure clarity and precision, the questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese, which facilitated more accurate responses from the participants. Class monitors of five classes of the Legal English Faculty (K46 and K47) assisted in delivering

the questionnaire to their classmates. The respondents were asked to return the questionnaire within two weeks.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 students through purposive sampling, ensuring a diverse representation of gender and academic performance. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in a quiet, private setting at the university campus. All the interviews were recorded for later analysis and participants' responses were translated into English to facilitate analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was collected from a survey of English major students in K46 and K47. The survey questions were designed using a Likert scale (1-5) via a Google Forms questionnaire to measure the level of difficulty in aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, legal system, and cultural understanding. The questionnaires were then coded for the purpose of data treatment by exporting the results into an Excel file. IBM SPSS software version 28.0.0 was used to analyze the data. A descriptive analysis tool was used to calculate the mean, range, and standard deviation values of students' responses relating to the barriers of legal English translation learning. The results are depicted in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Barriers to English Translation Learning

Limits of Description			Quantitative Interpretation
1	1.0 - 1.8	Strongly disagree	Very low
2	1.9-2.6	Disagree	Low
3	2.7-3.4	Neutral	Normal
4	3.5-4.2	Agree	High
5	4.3-5.0	Strongly agree	Very high

The qualitative data of the semi-structured interviews was transcribed in writing in English. Based on the interview transcript, the researcher conducted an analysis of the results to uncover the common tendencies among participants' answers to each question.

5. Results and Discussion

The overall frequency of barriers in legal English translation learning related to legal topics were collated and put to the SPSS.

5.1 Legal knowledge

Understanding legal concepts and terminology must come as second nature to move on to a career as a professional translator in the field of legal English. Legal competency is one of the most critical elements for any legal practitioner to thrive in this field. By assessing students' understanding of legal language, we gain deeper insights into the hurdles they must overcome and how to address their needs (Table 2):

Table 2: Students' Perceptions of Legal Knowledge

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
I understand the differences between the legal system in Vietnam and legal systems in other countries.	110	2.45	.950	Low
I have adequate fundamental knowledge of legal to study the translation of legal topics	110	3.05	.730	Normal
I understand the intersection of legal knowledge with economics, politics, and society	110	2.50	.835	Low
I understand the common law system	110	2.59	.921	Low
Valid N	110			

The need to assess students' understanding of legal language is invaluable for understanding the challenges they face. Participants' responses reflected a low standard deviation of below 1.0%. Some aspects of knowledge such as the differences between the legal system in civil law and common law (M=2.45; SD=0.950); the intersection of legal knowledge with economics, politics, and society (M=2.50; SD=0.835), and the specific knowledge of the common system (M=2.59; SD=0.921) are the most challenging as indicated by their low mean scores. This shows that students do not have a high level of knowledge regarding the legal system. Schauer (1989) also shares the same perspective about the knowledge of the common system, arguing that, despite its popularity, the common law remains uncommonly incomprehensible. On the other hand, almost all students grasp adequate foundation knowledge of the law to study translation with the normal mean (3.05).

"The common law system is quite different from the legal system in Vietnam, so when studying common law, I often find it difficult to understand its nature. This requires reading many books, articles, and related materials, and reflecting on them in order to grasp the concept." (Interviewee 8)

5.2 Culture knowledge

To determine the way to improve the quality of translation for language students at HNLU it is essential to establish the level of grasp on students' understanding of knowledge culture (Table 3):

Table 3: Students' Perceptions of the Knowledge Aspects of Culture

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
I am aware of the differences in customs between Vietnam and Western countries	110	3.53	.929	High
I can distinguish the differences in structure and style in legal documents and texts	110	3.15	.891	Normal
I understand the fundamental differences in the historical and political nature of each	110	3.88	.959	High
I am familiar with culturally specific legal terminology.	110	2.35	.913	Low
I understand the social norms and values that influence legal outcomes.	110	3.08	.733	Normal
Valid N	110			

Table 3 illustrates five aspects of legal culture knowledge that students need to understand while studying the translation of legal topics. The awareness of culture-specific legal terms is the biggest problem of most students with a low mean (M=2.35). This suggests that participants may have challenges understanding and using legal terminology, which may impact their ability to apply the law in practice. One of the reasons why students experience this difficulty is that those terms have deep meaning, closely linked to the history, customs, and social values of each country.

The results of the knowledge of most students in terms of societal norms and values affecting legal outcomes (M=3.08; SD=0.733), together with the difference in structure and writing style of legal documents and texts (M =3.15; S=0.891) show that most students do not experience difficulty and have a fair awareness of those, but not at a high level. The differences include customs and traditions (M=3.53; S=0.929), and history and politics in Vietnam and some other countries (M=3.88; S=0.959), indicating the level of students' awareness and comprehension of those fields is good as reflected by the high mean.

“Lack of cultural knowledge is also one of the serious obstacles affecting the quality of translation. For example, the terms "equity" in the Anglo-American common law system not only means [công bằng] but is also a separate branch of law. Simply translating into Vietnamese as [công bằng] can cause readers to misunderstand. Because of my lack of knowledge of the culture, I encountered many difficulties in translating. I often misunderstand legal contexts, fail to reflect language styles, mistranslate culturally specific concepts, and fail to convey cultural implications.” (Interviewee 7)

“I really feel a lot of pressure every time I have to pay attention to the differences between Vietnamese culture and other cultures to be able to translate in the most meaningful and best way. Sometimes a word or phrase is understood in a normal and positive way by another country, but Vietnam will understand it in a negative way and vice versa. "Blacklist" is a widely used legal or administrative term to refer to a list of individuals and organizations that are prohibited from participating in an activity or have their rights restricted. When translated into Vietnamese, the word [danh sách đen] is often understood in a negative, harsh, even offensive tone because the word [đen] in Vietnamese culture is often related to bad omens and misfortune.” (Interviewee 9)

5.3 Legal Linguistic Terminology

Legal linguistics is an indispensable aspect when it comes to evaluating the difficulties of legal English translation learning that English-major encounters. Table 4 clearly displays the result of students' evaluation of the difficulties in the legal linguistics, that is the diversity of algorithmic terminology in legal documents.

Table 4: Students' Perceptions of the Legal Linguistic Terminology

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
Nuances and terminology specific to legal English texts	110	4.43	1.051	Very high
Using terms that have special meanings	110	3.55	.964	High
Semantic distinctions in lexicography (“shall”)	110	3.40	.863	Normal

Using Latin and archaic language, the terms seem to be used in the present. (“ab initio”, “ad hoc, bona fide”)	110	2.36	1.047	Low
Semantic distinctions in lexicography	110	3.01	.946	Normal
There are non-equivalent meanings in Vietnamese and English legal terms (“common law”)	110	3.56	1.009	High
There are pronouns and adverbs. (“Herein”; “thereunto”)	110	2.4	.980	Low
Using of highly technical terms due to their legal nature (“Jurisdiction”)	110	3.55	.945	High
Using legal synonyms (“Contract” - “Agreement”)	110	3.55	.935	High
Using terms and titles that are mutually compatible in legal documents, contracts, or regulations. (“employer-employee”)	110	3.52	.832	High
Using legal abbreviations (“1A- First Amendment”)	110	2.5	.895	Low
The existence of many pairs of rules that do not exist in Vietnamese	110	2.9	.905	Normal

The figures in Table 4 show that most students agree that the nuances and specific terminology of legal English texts present the biggest difficulty in translating legal English (M=4.43; SD=1.051). The next ranking is for terms with special meanings (M=3.55; SD=0.964), semantic non-equivalence between Vietnamese and English legal terminology (M=3.56; SD=1.09), highly technical terms due to legal nature (M=3.55; SD=0.945), legal synonyms (M=3.5; SD=0.935) and terms and titles that are mutually or mutually compatible in legal documents, contracts or regulations (M=3.52; SD=0.832). This is an obstacle that is rated highly by learners in terms of vocabulary. Semantic distinctions in dictionaries (M=3.4; SD=0.863) and semantic distinctions in lexicography (M=3.01; SD=0.946) were considered to be of average difficulty. In general, the standard deviation of the table is almost less than 1%; therefore it can be seen that students are of much the same opinion. Such views were affirmed in the follow-up interview.

“One of the biggest challenges in legal English translation for me is the difference in legal systems. There are many terms in common law English that do not exist or have no direct equivalent in the civil law system which made me really confused. For example, the term “trust” is a legal mechanism that allows one person (the trustee) to manage assets for another person (the beneficiary). There is no exact equivalent term in civil law systems. Similar concepts may exist (such as “trust”), but the methods and legal rights may differ, making translation challenging.” (Interviewee 4)

“I often confuse legal terms because they have similarities but differ in meaning. For example, ‘negligence’ and ‘tort’ both relate to wrongful acts, but ‘negligence’ is a type of ‘tort’ (acts that cause harm due to a lack of care and failure to adhere to a reasonable standard of conduct). Confusing these terms can lead to errors in translation.” (Interviewee 5)

According to Mellinkoff (1963), legal terminology is often too complex and difficult for non-specialists to understand because it requires high levels of preciseness and specificity, making it difficult for both learners and users. Thus, it can be said that one of the main causes of

difficulties in legal terminology is its nature. Legal terms are often diverse, have multi-meanings, and are complex to understand. Therefore, it is difficult for students to translate complete legal documents. In short, the survey results show that nuances and terminology specific to legal English texts, terms that have special meanings, non-equivalent meanings in Vietnamese and English legal terms, highly technical terms due to legal nature, legal synonyms, and terms and titles that are mutually agreeable or mutual compatibility in legal documents, contracts or regulations are the biggest difficulties learners experience in legal linguistics.

5.4 Translation Structure

To compile a good translation, the first thing a translator needs to do is analyze the structure of the translation. This helps the translator determine the purpose of the text in order to choose the appropriate translation method and style. However, analyzing the structure of a translation is also difficult. Table 5 shows the common difficulties in analyzing a translation and the learners' assessment of each difficulty.

Table 5: Students' Perceptions of the Translation Structure

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
The sentence structure is long, using many subordinate clauses, and is complex.	110	4.62	.898	Very high
Using multiple phrases that include words that have the same or similar meanings (“Will and testament”)	110	3.56	.723	High
Using long noun phrases, many conjunctions, and complex inversion structures	110	3.53	.936	High
Using binary expressions and parallel structures. (All or nothing)	110	3.01	.984	Normal
Using ambiguous pronouns (it, they, relative pronouns) in legal documents	110	2.45	.915	Low

Table 5 shows the common difficulties in analyzing a translation and the learners' assessment of each difficulty. In the first place were long sentence structures and the use of many complex subordinate clauses (M=4.62; SD=0.898). The use of many phrases consisting of words with the same or similar meanings (M=3.56; SD=0.723), and the use of long noun phrases, many conjunctions, and complex inversion structures (M=3.53; SD=0.936) were also major challenges for students in determining the structure of the translation. The use of binary expressions and parallel structures was rated at an average level (M=3.01; SD=0.984). Students considered the use of ambiguous pronouns in legal documents to be the least difficult (M=2.45; SD=0.915).

“Long and complex sentence structures cause me considerable difficulty in learning to translate legal English topics. I often do not know how to convey them into the target language logically and smoothly because long and complex sentences often contain multiple layers of meaning, leading to ambiguity and difficulty in maintaining the accuracy of the translation.” (Interviewee 1)

“I find it difficult to understand when the translated text uses inversions, and conjunctions, especially long noun phrases. They often include many modifiers, and relative clauses, making the sentence complex and

difficult to understand. When translating into the target language, I find it difficult to restructure the sentence to ensure understanding.” (Interviewee 2)

Alcaraz and Hughes (2014) commented that the syntax of legal documents is often very complex, characterized by long sentences, use of passive structures, and many nested clauses, making conversion to another language challenging. It is true to say that the complex sentence structure of legal texts is a major barrier for translators. The survey results show that students have the hardest time with translation structures that involve long and complex sentences, multiple phrases containing the same or similar words, and many conjunctions.

6. Factors Causing Difficulties in Studying Translation Legal English topics

6.1 Students’ ability in legal English translation learning

Having faced challenges in learning the translation of English topics, it is crucial to identify the underlying reasons. Table 6 indicates the subjective factors related to students that affect their learning and translation of legal English topics.

Table 6: S t u d e n t s ’ P e r c e p t i o n s o f t h e T r a n s l a t i o n S k i l l s

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptio
I understand how to balance between transferring an accurate message and creating the natural	110	2.28	.916	Low
I understand ways to analyze and approach	110	3.67	.876	High
I can effectively apply translation methods.	110	2.89	.914	Normal
I understand many conditions to the specific assessment of legal English translation	110	2.93	.902	Normal
I have translation skills to transfer accuracy and adequate content from source language to target language.	110	2.56	.849	Low
I meet all requirements of English skills to study translation of legal topics.	110	4.15	.907	Very high
I understand steps to apply technological translation flexibly in various legal texts.	110	3.52	.751	High
Total	110			

When determining the students' capacity of translation regarding legal topics, the results indicate that almost all the students meet the English skill requirements to learn legal English translation extremely well (M=4.15; SD=0.907) as it has the highest mean. Ranked second is the analysis and approach to translation with a high mean (3.67), which indicates that students firmly comprehend this. Applying appropriate, flexible translation techniques skill is ranked third, according to the view of students (M=3.52; SD=0.751). These figures denote that almost all students have a good capacity at this skill with a high mean. Next, the ability to understand specific assessment criteria of translation (M=2.93; SD=0.902), together with the way to apply translation methods effectively (M=2.89; SD=0.914) are reported with a normal mean, showing that the students need to make a greater attempt to understand and use aspects of knowledge. The other translation skills, such as translation of adequate content (M=2.56; SD=0.849) and balance between transfer accuracy message of the source text and creating a smooth naturalness translation (M=2.28; SD=0.916), reflect a low mean which means that they raise many concerns with almost legal language students. This view is similar to Rogers's (1999) view,

who argues that “accuracy” is often implied as some stress-inducing factor, which needs to be addressed in order to produce a “natural” translation. To account for the emphasis on creating accurate and natural translations is a significant obstacle with students when studying translation.

“I feel my translation skills are not enough to produce a complete translation. Typically, I often get confused about translation methods so I don't know how to choose the appropriate translation method for each case. Many times, my translations are not natural and do not convey the spirit of the original.” (Interviewee 6)

“I think one of the reasons for the difficulties in learning to translate legal topics is my translation skills and knowledge. My English level is average so my English vocabulary is limited. I also do not have the ability to take advantage of translation technologies to translate different types of documents.” (Interviewee 9)

6.2 Learning conditions related to legal English translation learning

Learning conditions are considered as one of the objective factors affecting the quality of a legal translation which include learning materials, learning environment, friends, colleagues, and teaching methods of teachers. Table 7 shows students’ perceptions of objective factors such as learning conditions affect the learning of translating legal English documents:

Table 7: Students’ Perceptions of Students of Learning Conditions

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
I received support from my teachers in finding materials related to my study of Legal English	110	3.56	.945	High
The Legal English reference book supply meets my learning needs.	110	3.53	1.121	High
The topics covered in the document are rich, the updated information is fresh and engaging.	110	3.04	1.091	Normal
There is a complete and bilingual English Legal dictionary.	110	2.54	1.167	Low
Specialized topics are interrelated with knowledge of law courses.	110	3.11	1.128	Normal

Table 7 shows how learning conditions affect the learning of translating legal English documents through students' evaluation. First, students highly appreciated the provision of Legal English reference books (M=3.531; SD=1.121) and the support from teachers (M=3.56; SD=0.945). This means that students received assistance from teachers in locating materials related to learning Legal English and found the provision of Legal English reference books to meet their academic requirements. The richness of topics and the novelty of information (M=3.041; SD=1.091) together with the connection between specialized topics and knowledge of law courses were only rated at an average level (M=3.11; SD=1.128). It is surprising that students only rated the diversity of Legal English dictionaries as low (M=2.54; SD=1.167). The analysis reveals that the comprehensive and varied English Legal dictionary is the primary source of challenges for students. This data was also confirmed in the interviews:

“Conditions related to studying are also an important factor affecting the translation of legal documents. I find that translation topics are not yet diverse and innovative. Many times, I have to proactively search for more outside

sources of documents for translation. In addition, legal dictionaries are less diverse and lack much vocabulary. Furthermore, I had very little opportunity to use legal dictionaries.” (Interviewee 5)

“When it comes to learning conditions, I have a lot of difficulty finding new translation sources because the documents are not updated regularly. Current legal terms are not diverse, so they cannot provide me with information. However, I received enthusiastic support from the teacher when I encountered difficulties during the translation process.” (Interviewee 8)

7. Conclusion

The findings reveal that the difficulties respondents face in studying translation of legal English topics stem from the linguistic features of legal English, translation structure, and legal knowledge. When it comes to barriers of legal vocabulary and translation structure, most students admitted that it was difficult to convey the exact meaning owing to the use of Latin terms, the lack of equivalent legal terms in Vietnamese, the use of legal abbreviations, and ambiguous pronouns in legal documents. In addition, the differences between Vietnamese and other legal systems, the lack of interdisciplinary knowledge in law, economics, politics, and society as well as unfamiliarity with the common law system also posed difficulties.

Secondly, students’ difficulties in studying legal English translation originated from both individual and contextual factors. In terms of individual factors, they struggled to understand the balance between message transfer accuracy and translation naturalness as well as ensuring the adequacy of content transfer from source language to target language. Concerning learning conditions, the lack of English legal dictionaries, outdated information in learning materials, and the lack of topics related to knowledge of law made it difficult for respondents to study.

8. Recommendations

The difficulties relating to legal translation skills could be dealt with by utilizing translation tools to ensure the precision and reliability of legal translations. Utilizing translation technology enables translators to gain insights from past translations and enhance their skills over time as they can evaluate their work along with the suggestions offered by the software (Hock, 2016). To reduce the complexity of the translation of legal linguistics, it is necessary for learners and translators to study and read translated articles to become familiar with the text and improve their ability to remember legal vocabulary. In addition, to facilitate learning to translate legal English topics, students need to focus on improving their knowledge of the legal system and legal culture of SL and TL as much as possible. Only when they have a deep understanding and knowledge of the law can students learn to translate legal English effectively. Students majoring in legal English who wish to work as translators in the legal field need to have professional legal skills in addition to language requirements.

9. Implications

The implications of this study are significant for both the theory and practice of legal translation. First, these findings provide valuable insights into the difficulties students at HLU encounter in translating topics related to legal English, which in turn can inform the development of more effective follow-up methods to solve difficulties in English translation solutions.

Second, research acts as a bridge between science and students in the teaching-learning process of translating topics related to legal English. From the findings of this research, faculty, and students can gain a deeper understanding of student's difficulties in the process of learning to translate topics related to legal English in order to develop methods or approaches.

Following the most appropriate approach helps them achieve their ultimate goal of continuing to collect legal fees.

* *This article was conducted within the framework of the scientific thesis 'Perceptions of English majored students at Ha Noi Law University of the barriers when studying to translate legal English topics' of Hanoi Law University*

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Appendix 1

Instructions for completing the form: Please rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest rating and 5 is the highest. Please fill in the circle that best represents your opinion.

(1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Legal knowledge					
I understand the differences between the legal system in Vietnam and that of other legal systems in other countries.					
I have adequate fundamental knowledge of legal matters to study the translation of legal topics					
I understand the intersection of legal knowledge with economics, politics, and society					
I understand the common law system					
Cultural knowledge					
I am aware of the differences in customs between Vietnam and Western countries					
I can distinguish the differences in structure and style in legal documents and texts					
I grasp the fundamental differences in the historical and political nature of each country					
I am familiar with culturally specific legal terminology.					
I understand the social norms and values that influence legal outcomes.					
Legal linguistic					
Nuances and terminology specific to legal English texts					
Using terms that have special meanings.					
Semantic distinctions in lexicography ("shall")					
Using Latin and archaic language, the terms seem to be used in the present. ("ab initio", "ad hoc, bona fide")					
Semantic distinctions in lexicography					
There are non-equivalent meanings in Vietnamese and English legal terms ("common law")					
There are pronouns and adverbs ("Herein"; "thereunto")					
Using of highly technical terms due to legal nature ("Jurisdiction").					
Using legal synonyms ("Contract" - "Agreement")					
Using terms and titles that are mutually compatible in legal documents, contracts or regulations ("employer-employee")					
Using legal abbreviations ("1A - First Amendment")					

The existence of many pairs of rules that do not exist in Vietnamese.					
Translation structure					
The sentence structure is long, using many subordinate clauses, and is complex.					
Using multiple phrases that include words that have the same or similar meanings ("Will and testament")					
Using long noun phrases, many conjunctions, and complex inversion structures.					
Using binary expressions and parallel structures. (All or nothing).					
Using of ambiguous pronouns (it, they, relative pronouns) in legal documents.					
Student's ability in legal English translation learning					
I understand how to balance between transferring an accurate message and creating the naturalness translation.					
I understand ways to analyze and approach translation.					
I can effectively apply methods translation.					
I understand the many conditions to specific assessment of legal English translation skills.					
I have translation skills to transfer accurate and adequate content from source language to target language.					
I meet all the requirements of English skills to study the translation of legal topics					
I understand steps to apply technology translation flexibly in various legal texts.					
Learning conditions related to legal English translation learning					
I received support from my teachers in finding materials related to my study of Legal English					
The Legal English reference book supply meets my learning needs.					
The topics covered in the document are rich, the updated information is fresh and engaging.					
There is a complete and bilingual English Legal dictionary.					
Specialized topics are interrelated with knowledge of law courses.					
Valid N (listwise)					

Content of semi-structured interview questions

1. Do you have any obstacles in choosing a suitable translation method in different legal contexts?
2. What are the challenges you face while studying to translate legal English topics?
3. Do you have any recommendations for overcoming the difficulties of studying legal English translation topics?