

EDN: JDCYQH

УДК 81'322.4+81'25:398.9(=111)(=612.9)

## Students' remarks on Google's translated texts of English proverbs into Vietnamese

Khau Hoang Anh\*, Nguyen Binh Phuong Thao  
and Ngo So Phe

*Tra Vinh University*

*Trà Vinh, Vietnam*

Received 28.02.2024, received in revised form 21.03.2024, accepted 08.04.2024

**Abstract.** Google Translate (GT) has become a focused tool for students to use in their studies. First, to learn more about this machine translation's ability, the paper had GT translate 12 English proverbs adopted from an educational YouTube channel into Vietnamese. Second, to know how English-majored students can remark on this machine translation, the study employed 62 English-majored students at a university to comment on such machine's translated texts. It revealed that 50 % of GT's translation texts were acceptable. Regarding the students' comment ability on these translated texts, many were not confident when asked to comment on the GT's translation texts. Many tend to ignore the contexts of the proverbs when commenting, leading to their misjudgment of these translated texts. Suggestions on how to help improve GT's translation ability between English and Vietnamese proverbs are included, and a translation teaching approach is also proposed to enhance English-majored students' ability to remark Vietnamese translated versions of English proverbs provided by GT.

**Keywords:** GT, machine translation, English proverbs, Vietnamese proverbs, English-majored students.

Research area: social structure, social institutions and processes.

**Authors' contributions.** The first author: Khau Hoang Anh, also the corresponding author initiated the ideas for this study. He also wrote the introduction and the research methodology sections.

The second and third authors: Nguyen Binh Phuong Thao and Ngo So Phe searched for related studies for writing the literature review.

Citation: Khau Hoang Anh, Nguyen Binh Phuong Thao, Ngo So Phe. Students' remarks on Google's translated texts of English proverbs at work into Vietnamese. In: *J. Sib. Fed. Univ. Humanit. soc. sci.*, 2024, 17(5), 892–904. EDN: JDCYQH



## Комментарии студентов к текстам английских пословиц, переведенным Google на вьетнамский язык

Кхау Хоанг Ань, Нгуен Бинь Фуонг Тхао, Нго Со Пхе

Университет Тра Винь  
Вьетнам, Тра Винь

---

**Аннотация.** Google Translate (GT) стал специализированным инструментом для студентов, который они могут использовать в своей учебной деятельности. Во-первых, чтобы узнать больше о возможностях этого машинного перевода, в статье было предложено перевести 12 английских пословиц, заимствованных из образовательного канала YouTube, на вьетнамский язык. Во-вторых, чтобы узнать, как студенты, изучающие английский язык, могут прокомментировать этот машинный перевод, в исследовании приняли участие 62 студента, изучающих английский язык в университете, которые прокомментировали тексты, переведенные таким машинным способом. Выяснилось, что 50 % текстов, переведенных GT, были приемлемыми. Что касается способности студентов комментировать эти переведенные тексты, то многие из них не были уверены в себе, когда их попросили прокомментировать тексты перевода GT. Многие склонны игнорировать контекст пословиц при комментировании, что приводит к их неправильной оценке этих переведенных текстов. В него включены предложения о том, как улучшить способность GT переводить английские и вьетнамские пословицы, а также предлагается подход к обучению переводу, чтобы улучшить навыки студентов, изучающих английский язык.

**Ключевые слова:** GT, машинный перевод, английские пословицы, вьетнамские пословицы, студенты, изучающие английский язык.

Научная специальность: 5.4.4 – социальная структура, социальные институты и процессы.

**Вклад авторов.** Кхау Хоанг Ань, автор-корреспондент, предложил идеи для этого исследования. Он также написал введение и разделы, посвященные методологии исследования. Авторы Нгуен Бинь Фуонг Тхао и Нго Со Пхе провели анализ соответствующих публикаций, использованных для обзора литературы. Все авторы проанализировали данные Google Translate и опроса студентов, написали дискуссионную часть исследования, выводы, заключение и сделали финальное редактирование статьи.

---

Цитирование: Кхау Хоанг Ань, Нгуен Бинь Фуонг Тхао, Нго Со Пхе. Комментарии студентов к текстам английских пословиц, переведенным Google на вьетнамский язык. *Журн. Сиб. федер. ун-та. Гуманитарные науки*, 2024, 17(5), 892–904. EDN: JDCYQH

---

### Introduction

GT has become an increasingly used tool in helping translate one language into another worldwide (Aiken & Balan, 2011; Maryamah et al., 2021). Recently, GT has created an autonomous learning propensity (Godwin-Jones,

2019). According to Al-Husban and Tawalbeh (2023), one of the goals of education is to help students develop appropriate learning autonomy. Moreover, its support in language learning skills has helped foreign language students sharpen their English performance (Muzdalifah

& Handayani, 2020) and English writing performance (Tsai, 2022). “GT is an instant translation tool accessed via a web browser or a software application” (Van Lieshout & Cardoso, 2022, p. 6). GT is a free, instant tool that offers many languages for input and output; it can recognize the voice, translate entire web pages, and upload files with an immediate translation outcome (Medvedev, 2016). However, it is challenging to expect GT to translate languages equally well. GT can better translate European than Asian languages (Aiken & Balan, 2011). GT can make more errors when translating Malay than Chinese (Groves & Mundt, 2015). As most languages do not have many chunks, GT could only discover a few (Medvedev, 2016).

Is human translation better? This question is puzzling. Most papers have researched how students translate their language into English and vice versa. Al Shehab (2016) found that the participating students needed help pick up correct Arabic equivalents for English proverbs due to unfamiliarity. Rahmaniah and Anggriani (2018) found that most students needed to be aware of grammatical aspects when translating English proverbs into Indonesian. Alenezi (2023) contends that students must improve their translation strategies when translating English proverbs into their first language. For example, students used literal translation and rewording translation strategies to translate proverbs, which were not recommended. In the case of a Vietnamese context, Phuong (2023) considers that teaching students translation strategies should optimize proverbial translation, using strategies such as illustrations to encourage students' critical thinking of the meaning contained in proverbs, and she contends that students' English proficiency plays a crucial role in proverbial translation.

From such curious perspectives, this study first aims to investigate GT's translation ability by seeing how it translates English proverbs at work into Vietnamese, thereby hoping to give more specific comments to this translation machine system. Besides, the study aims to see how English-major university students commented on the translation quality that GT generated. The study used a version of the experts' comments on GT's translated texts to de-

cide whether each translation was acceptable. The results of our study can be meaningfully referred to by administrators of the machine translation system and students who wish to seriously consider their translation ability in terms of proverbial translation. Finally, by looking at the students' comment capability in this study, Translation teachers can reshape their Translation curriculum and develop suitable teaching strategies to help their students smartly remark on English proverbial translations carried out by others, especially by this translation machine.

## Literature Review

### *Translations and translation strategies*

The translation is the act of transferring the meaning of one text in one language into another in the way the translator intended the text (Newmark, 2009). The translator can choose his or her strategy to translate a text. For example, he or she can choose a formal equivalence strategy, which looks for the equivalence of surface structures at vocabulary and syntactic levels, or he or she can also choose the dynamic equivalence strategy, which looks at the equivalence of meaning in a deep structure (Jiang, 2020). For example, in Vietnamese, people say, “It is as slow as a tortoise”, while in English “It is as slow as a snail”. The image comparisons of the two languages are different. It can be easily understood that the people in the two societies have experienced objects and their quality of life differently. Hence, if a translator knows this difference, he or she can have a higher chance to produce better translation work.

What is more, when dealing with the issue of non-equivalence between languages, a translator can have difficulty using appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures to retain the original sense in their translation (the target language). However, one can find their same intended meaning by scrutinizing the equivalence between the proverbs used in the two languages. For instance, an English speaker says, “Where there's a will, there's a way”, while a Vietnamese catchphrase is “Có chí thì nên”. In comparison, there is a slight difference between the use of words in the two language proverbs. For instance, there is no “where” in

Vietnamese, but “where” is the adverbial relative pronoun. In addition, while the English proverb has a longer sentence, the Vietnamese has a shorter one; the English counterpart expresses the meaning in an adverbial clause. All these marked differences should be brought into the Translation curriculum and classroom teaching methodology. When the translator proposes to translate the text in the way he or she wants, he or she uses the Skopos theory proposed by Vermeer (Du, 2012).

### **Proverbs**

Native English proverbs are related more to folklore than the written sources and form a national-cultural component in the paremiological fund of Modern English (Ivanov & Petrushevskaya, 2015). Proverbs can be found in anthropology, art, communication, culture, folklore, history, literature, philology, psychology, religion, sociology, and linguistics (Hassanein, 2021). Vietnam is an agricultural country, and many images of animals and life framing, like buffaloes, ploughs, elephants, and wood, have been brought into Vietnamese proverbs (Nguyen, 2020). Symmetrical, asymmetrical, and simile are commonly used in Vietnamese proverbs (Hoang, as cited in Pham, 2016).

Generally, a proverb expresses a fundamental truth presented with homely language, alliteration and rhyme; it is usually short, and its meaning can be presented literally or figuratively; it must be venerable and originated from a distant past (Whiting 1932, cited in Mieder, 2004).

Shormani (2020) considered that to translate proverbs better, a translator needs to understand cultural values in both the source and target language. Concerning cultural aspects, the cultural turn approach is used to explain how the translation process operates, and a translator strives to remove cultural boundaries between the two languages to produce comprehensive translated texts for the target text reader (Nzimande, 2018). As Venuti (1995) put it, when removing cultural boundaries between the languages, it decides whether to keep foreignization (the source texts left untouched when translating either on purpose or because of a lack of equivalents in the target language

or culture) or to remove it to have a sense of domestication (leading to fluent, natural and comprehensible translation, translating familiar to the target reader).

### **Related studies**

The study has examined how GT translated proverbs among languages. Regarding using GT to assist in proverb translation, El-Madkouri and Aranda (2022) tested how GT translated Arabic proverbs into Spanish, and they found that it generated a low level of accuracy and needed post-editing by a human translator. Chon et al. (2021) found that GT still needs to enhance its quality in contextual translations to ensure the understanding of translated texts with sources. Abidin et al. (2020) also found that GT could render idiomatic expressions better with precise contexts. Jabak (2019) stated that GT struggled with lexical, syntactic and expression aspects in proverbial translation. It tended to translate the texts literally, devaluating their contextual aspects. The author concluded that the literal translation chosen by the machine was because the source and the target language differ in distinctive linguistics and cultures. Hence, the machine could only pick the superficial meaning of the texts, and the author claimed that GT could not replace humans in the field of translation. Al-khresheh and Almaaytah (2018) investigated how GT translated six English proverbs into Arabic. They found that the machine could not pick up the meaning of English proverbs; the target language readers found such translated texts strange because the machine chose the literal translation. Lear et al. (2016) discovered that 66 % of online translations needed to be revised, made more comprehensible or acquired the intended meaning, and 26 % had grammatical mistakes. When talking about GT, Sheppard (2011) also regarded that it could not pick up the correct meaning when transferring the meaning of one language into another. It picks up word by word in a sentence or a clause. GT produced unsatisfactory translation results in the study of Komeili et al. (2011). They reported that GT tended to translate the literal rather than the contextual meaning. In addition, it tended to produce ambiguous translation sentences. Nguyen and

Khau (2021) found that GT could only translate functional language with present-time modal verbs, such as “can” and “will”, but could not render functional language with past forms of modal verbs, such as “could”.

The study also reviewed the literature on students' ability to handle proverbial translation in languages in this study. To test students' ability to translate proverbs, Polvonnazarovich (2024) found that students still met challenges regarding the translation of idioms, proverbs, and aphorisms from English into the students' native language (Uzbek). Alfaleh (2020) used English proverbs about honesty, lies, friendship, love, and unity, applying three primary criteria: comprehension errors, linguistic errors and translation errors and found that the students mainly focused on similar equivalents, translation by paraphrase, and literal translation. Shormani (2020) found that to help students ameliorate their ability to translate proverbs, Translation teachers must teach them cultural aspects engaged in proverbs. Khalil and Bilal (2019) had a group of English-majored students translate 15 English proverbs into Arabic using the criteria “incorrect”, “acceptable”, and “correct”. He discovered that the students needed help translating these English proverbs into Arabic. To explore whether students could translate English proverbs, Al-Khaza'leh (2019) got 25 fourth-year Jordanian translation students to translate 25 English proverbs into Arabic. It revealed that most participants picked up many correct equivalent Arabic proverbs, albeit still having some incorrect Arabic equivalents, caused by the differences in linguistics and cultures between English and Arabic. Dabbagh (2015) investigated the conceptual meaning of proverbs about time in Persian and English and found that both ethnic groups perceived time differently. English people experience more proverbs than their Persian counterparts. Dweik and Thalji (2015) found that the participants had difficulty translating culturally-bound words and equivalence in the target texts when translating idiomatic expressions.

Based on the literature on the pros and cons of GT and students' ability to translate English proverbs, this study uses the following questions to collect the data for the study.

1. How does GT translate English proverbs at work into Vietnamese?

2. How do English-majored students comment on GT's proverbial English translation into Vietnamese?

## **Methodology**

### ***Research design***

The study's objectives are to see how GT translated English proverbs into Vietnamese and how the English-majored students commented on GT's translated texts. The author applied a mixed method by having GT render English proverbs into Vietnamese and collecting the students' comments on GT's translated texts. Finally, the study employed four senior Translation teachers who would comment on the translated texts provided by GT. Their comments were used to judge the quality of the machine's translation.

### ***Participants***

Sixty-two English-majored students at X University in southwest Vietnam were invited. Their ages range from 19 to 20. Most are females. They were in their second year of English studies. At the time of the study, they were taking Translation Course 1. The English program has both Oral and Written Translation courses. Thus, they were deemed to be suitable participants.

### ***Instruments***

The first instrument is GT, which helped translate English proverbs into Vietnamese to prepare the translated texts for judgment. The second is the survey, which was used to obtain the English-majored students' comments on GT's translated texts. The comments were given in the form of “agree” or “disagree” with each translated proverb provided by GT.

### ***Materials***

The study adopted 12 English proverbs from Accurate English.com – a YouTube channel that Mojsin (2020) presented. All twelve English proverbs are about work. The presenter explained the proverbs very well, which helped guide the authors and four volunteer senior teachers in judging GT's translation quality.

### Procedures

After the author selected the English proverbs, he put them in GT for the translated texts. Then, he screenshotted the translated texts and gave them to the four senior Translation teachers for feedback by giving a suggested translated version plus a comment with a “Yes” or “No” to each GT’s translated proverb. They have taught translation to English- majored students for over five years. They and the author frequently support each other in sharing teaching materials and methodology related to Translation and general English classes. Thus, asking them for support is exemplary. Hence, the author used these suggested translated versions to judge GT’s translation quality.

Next, the authors surveyed the participants with the classroom teachers’ support. To ensure the students’ understanding, the author explained the proverbs clearly and asked them

to do the task. The task lasted 15 minutes at recess, and each student received a gift.

Sixty-two surveys were returned, making 100 % of participation. After collecting the data, the author downloaded the survey’s result and computed it using SPSS software (version 22) for nominal data with a frequency count of agreement or disagreement, presented with a percentage.

### Results and Discussion

#### Results

Table 1 illustrates the students’ comments on the twelve proverbs translated by GT. The proverbs in parenthesis all talk about work advice within the context. The translation was carried out on 12 February 2023. The students’ agreement with the translations is presented with a percentage. The teachers’ comments in the last column are either a “Yes” to mean an acceptable translation or a “No” to mean an un-

Table 1. GT’s translations, students’ agreement (Ss’ agreement), and teachers’ comments (T’s comments)

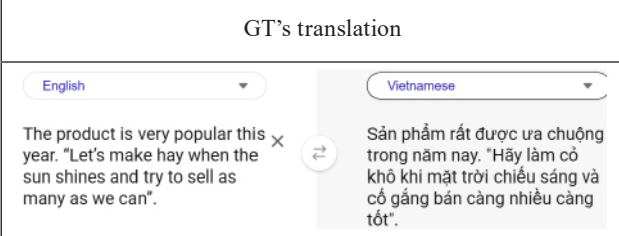
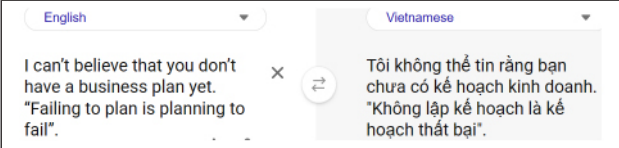
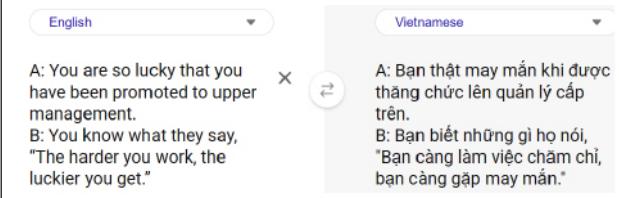
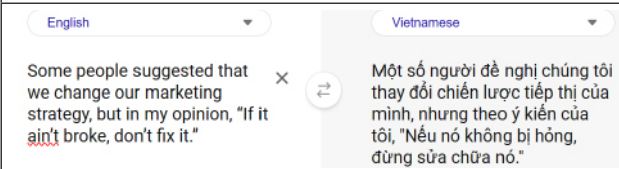
GT’s translation	Ss’s agreement (%)	T’s comments
	91.9	No, “Hãy nắm bắt cơ hội này để bán càng nhiều sản phẩm càng tốt.”
	88.7	Yes, this can be also rendered as “Không có kế hoạch đồng nghĩa với thất bại.”
	90.3	Yes, this can be also rendered as “Làm việc càng chăm chỉ, bạn càng có nhiều cơ hội.”
	72.6	No, “Nếu chiến lược chúng ta không có vấn đề gì, thì không cần thay đổi.” or “Đừng có chữa lợn lành thành lợn què.”

Table 1 Continued

GT's translation	Ss's agreement (%)	T's comments
<p>English</p> <p>A: I don't know how we will afford to live in this expensive neighborhood. B: "Where there's a will, there's a way".</p>	<p>85.5</p>	<p>Yes, this can be also rendered as "Có chí thì nên."</p>
<p>English</p> <p>A: How did you find a way to fix the broken toilet? B: You know what they say, "Necessity is the mother of invention."</p>	<p>82.3</p>	<p>No, "Trong cái khó ló cái khôn."</p>
<p>English</p> <p>If you'd like to buy this house, you'd better make an offer now. In this hot real estate market, "if you snooze, you lose".</p>	<p>74.2</p>	<p>No, "Nếu ông không nhanh tay thì sẽ mất cơ hội."</p>
<p>English</p> <p>A: I'm very nervous about asking my boss for a raise. B: "Nothing ventured, nothing gained".</p>	<p>75.8</p>	<p>Yes, this can be also rendered as "Có thử mới biết." or "Không vào hang cọp, sao bắt được cọp con."</p>
<p>English</p> <p>He's exhausted from working two jobs. It's clear that "he's biting off more than he can chew".</p>	<p>90.3</p>	<p>No, "Anh ta đang làm quá sức mình." or "Bóc ngắn cắn dài."</p>
<p>English</p> <p>I've saved money in case I lose my job due to the economic recession. I'm "hoping for the best but prepare for the worst."</p>	<p>83.9</p>	<p>Yes, this can be also rendered as Tôi "hy vọng có điều tốt nhất nhưng cũng chuẩn bị cho điều tồi tệ nhất." or "Suy trước tính sau."</p>
<p>English</p> <p>A: What will you do if you don't get accepted to the university? B: I don't know. "I'll cross that bridge when I get there".</p>	<p>72.6</p>	<p>No, "Tôi đó hãy tính." or "Tùy cơ ứng biến."</p>
<p>English</p> <p>A: Would you help me in the garden? I'm too tired. B: Come on. Let's go! "Hard work never killed anyone".</p>	<p>75.8</p>	<p>Yes, this can be also rendered as "Lao động là vinh quang."</p>

acceptable translation. The four senior Translation teachers commented on the proverbial translation based on the given contexts. The four teachers also provided the study with a suggested translation for each proverb presented in the last column in Table 1 below.

At first glance, students tend to agree with all the proverbs translated by GT, with the percentage of agreement ranging from 72.6 % to 91.9 %. In contrast, the four senior Translation teachers all said “Yes” to six proverbs and “No” to six proverbs translated by GT as indicated in Table 1.

### Discussion

The purpose of the study is to see if GT can pick the correct Vietnamese meaning for each English proverb within the context and whether the students agreed or disagreed with such translated proverbs provided by GT. The study used the comments made by the four senior Translation teachers to judge these translation works.

According to the three senior Translation teachers, six proverbs (50 % of acceptable translations) retain their original meanings in the target language. The first proverb is “Failing to plan is planning to fail” = “Không lập kế hoạch là kế hoạch thất bại”. In this context, GT can transfer the meaning of “failing to plan” and “planning to fail”. 88.7 % of the students agreed with this translation. The second is “The harder you work, the luckier you get.” = “Bạn càng làm việc chăm chỉ, bạn càng may mắn”. In this context, GT can transfer the meaning of the source language vocabulary and structure compared to the target language source (receiving 90.3 % of students' agreement). The third is “Where there's a will, there's a way” = “Ở đâu có ý chí, ở đó có cách”. In this context, GT can convey the original meaning in the target language, e.g. “where = ở đâu”, “will = ý chí”, “there = ở đó”, and “way = có cách” (obtaining 85 % of students' agreement). The fourth is, “Nothing ventured, nothing gained.” = “Không có gì mạo hiểm, không có gì đạt được”. The meaning is quite clear in the context “không có gì mạo hiểm”. It can reflect the action of a person trying to do something for a goal. However, this translation received 75.8 %

of the students' agreement. The fifth is “hoping for the best but prepare for the worst.” = “hy vọng điều tốt nhất nhưng hãy chuẩn bị cho điều tồi tệ nhất”. In this context, GT can transfer the meaning of the source language vocabulary and structure with the superlative to the target language, like “hoping for the best = hy vọng điều tốt nhất” and “but prepare for the worst = nhưng hãy chuẩn bị cho điều tồi tệ nhất” (making up 83.9 % of students' agreement). The last acceptable translated proverb is “Hard work never killed anyone.” = “Làm việc chăm chỉ không bao giờ giết chết bất cứ ai”. In this case, GT can render the meaning of the source language into the target language, such as “hard work = Làm việc chăm chỉ” and “không bao giờ giết chết bất cứ ai” (constituting 75.8 of students' agreement). This proverb translation received the lowest percentage of students' agreement in the category. Although “hard work” is an example of the adjective “hard” modifying the noun “work”, the phrase was changed to an example of the verb “làm việc” with a modifier of an adverb “chăm chỉ” in Vietnamese. However, the present study does not mean to look for this difference but focuses on acceptable translated meaning only.

The findings have supported GT in rendering proverbs, and they aligned with the findings of Abidin et al. (2020) that GT could translate fixed idiomatic phrases. Nguyen and Khuu (2021) also support GT in using the context to translate, such as translating social functional language expressed with present modal verbs, which convey meaning at word and structure levels. However, in their case, GT cannot differentiate the level of politeness of “may” and “could” or pick the correct meaning of “shall” to mean “must”. This bright side, together with careful human analysis, has continued to encourage GT users to use it as a learning tool, as previously mentioned by Godwin-Jones (2019), Muzdalifah & Handayani (2020), and Tsai (2022).

Regarding the students' comments on these five translated proverbs, not 100 % agree with these five translations (“Failing to plan is planning to fail.” with 88.7 % of agreement, “The harder you work, the luckier you get.” with 90.3 %, “Where there's a will, there's a



way.” with 85 %, “Nothing ventured, nothing gained.” with 75.8 %, “hoping for the best but prepare for the worst.” with 83.9 %, and “Hard work never killed anyone.” with 75.8, respectively). The results show that many students needed to be more critically aware of the contexts before judgment.

In contrast, the senior Translation teachers did not give a “Yes” to the six following translated proverbs. The first is, “Let’s make hay when the sun shines” = “Hãy làm cỏ khô khi mặt trời chiếu sáng”. GT cannot pick up the meaning in the target language based on the context. Instead, it goes for the literal meaning with “hay = cỏ” and “sun shines = mặt trời chiếu sáng”. It should be translated as “Hãy nắm bắt cơ hội này để bán càng nhiều sản phẩm càng tốt”. Surprisingly, 91.9 % of students agreed with this translation. The second is, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” = “Nếu nó không bị hỏng, đừng sửa chữa nó”. The meaning is not clear. What is “nó”? GT cannot engage the true meaning in this context. 72.6 % of students agreed with this translation. It should be rendered as “Nếu chiến lược chúng ta không có vấn đề gì, thì không cần thay đổi”. The third is, “If you snooze, you lose.” = “Nếu bạn báo lại là bạn thua”. Like the first proverb in this category, GT can only literally transfer the meaning, such as “snooze = báo lại” like an alarm signal, and “lose = thua”. GT cannot engage the true meaning in this context. 74.2 % of the students agreed with this translation. The fifth is, “He’s biting off more than he can chew” = “Anh ta đang cắn nhiều hơn những gì anh ta có thể nhai”. Again, GT cannot engage the true meaning in this context. Instead, it picks up the literal meaning, such as “biting off more than = đang cắn nhiều hơn” and “can chew = có thể nhai”. Surprisingly, up to 90.3 % of students agreed with this translation. It should be rendered as “Anh ta đang làm quá sức mình” in this context. The last one is, “will cross that bridge when I get there.” = “sẽ băng qua cây cầu đó khi tôi đến đó”. Likewise, GT can only choose the literal meaning of the proverb and cannot engage the true meaning in the context. This translation received 72.6 % of the students’ agreement. The context translation should go like this: “Tới đó hãy tính.” or “Tùy cơ ứng biến”.

Responding to these results, GT needs to enhance its translation. GT has focused much on literal meaning and cannot reflect the original meaning in the target texts. The results continue to advocate the claims made by various researchers (e.g. Al-khresheh & Almaaytah, 2018; Chon et al., 2021; El-Madkouri & Aranda, 2022; Jabak, 2019; Komeili et al., 2011; Lear et al., 2016; Sheppard, 2011), who found that GT produced low accuracy when translating proverbs.

Surprisingly, many students agreed with these six translated proverbs (“Let’s make hay when the sun shines” with 91.9 % of agreement, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” with 72.6 %, “if you snooze, you lose.” with 74.2 %, “Necessity is the mother of invention.” with 82.3 %, “he’s biting off more than he can chew.” with 90.3 %, and “I’ll cross that bridge when I get there.” with 72.6 %). For example, up to 91.9 % agreed with this translation “Hãy làm cỏ khô khi mặt trời chiếu sáng” for “Let’s make hay when the sun shines”.

The students might think the business is to sell hay, so that could be the reason many of them agreed with the translation. Another alarming consideration is when 90.3 % agreed with the translation “Anh ta đang cắn nhiều hơn những gì anh ta có thể nhai” for “He’s biting off more than he can chew”. Students’ comment results have revealed that many still need to improve their proverbs, as alarmingly mentioned by previous researchers (e.g. Al-faleh, 2020); Al-Khaza’leh, 2019; Khalil, 2019).

Through these results, future Translation teachers should teach students to use the context to translate proverbs or critically think about the cultural aspects involved in proverbs (Dweik & Thalji, 2015); Shormani, 2020; Venuti, 1995). For example, in class, a Translation teacher may give students time to practice translating the literal meaning of vocabulary first (Polvonnazarovich, 2024). Then, the teacher can start to put such vocabulary in the proverb, ask them to think about such literal meaning in the proverbial case and question them if the vocabulary changes its meaning. For instance, “Let’s make hay when the sun shines” can be rendered as “Let’s = chúng ta hãy”, “make = làm”, “hay = cỏ/rom”, “when= khi”, “the sun= mặt trời”,

“shines= chiếu sáng”. Then, in the context of the proverb, a Translation teacher continues to ask them if these words together, in this case, have a meaning. Next, a Translation teacher asks them to think about a Vietnamese equivalent in the context of work and give them some clues like illustrations (Phuong, 2023), so they are prompted to think of a proverb they have ever heard or seen somewhere in life. One more remark is that a translator must be trained to think critically when he or she is commenting on or translating a proverb. For instance, GT translated an English proverb, “If you snooze, you lose.” into a Vietnamese context as “Nếu bạn báo lại là bạn thua”. How can a translator accept such a translation based on the context? It has no meaning at all because we do not know what it means to be “Nếu bạn báo lại là bạn thua”. A Translation teacher must always remind students if their translation makes any sense and tell them to avoid using literal and rewording approaches (Alenezi, 2023). This translation process helps students differentiate the meaning of vocabulary used separately and in a fixed context. The translation can be like this: “If you are lazy, you will not earn anything” or “If you do not take a chance immediately, it is likely that you will lose it”. Once they have gone through this process, they gradually become more aware of their translation and form a critical-thinking mind.

Furthermore, a Translation teacher must train their students to frequently read proverbs in English and their Vietnamese counterparts, as Dabbagh (2015) suggested. The more they read proverbs back and forth between the two languages, the more knowledge they can gain and the more chance they have to compare interesting linguistic and meaning elements between the two languages. This strategy has been proposed by Roxila (2024), who found translating proverbs among languages forth and back is useful for students to memorize and raise their awareness of differences in linguistic uses and meaning, consequently familiarizing themselves with those proverbs in both languages (Al Shehab, 2016).

Moreover, to help students translate proverbs well, a Translation teacher has to teach them to think of social language functions

since it can help translate proverbs (Nguyen & Khau, 2021). Proverbs usually contain meaning beyond each word's meaning, so thinking of the meaning of a whole or a chunk can be helpful (Medvedev, 2016).

First, the GT system needs to collect more proverbs in English and Vietnamese and make them into chunks (Medvedev, 2016), so each time an English proverb is typed in GT, its Vietnamese equivalent pops in. On the other hand, when a Vietnamese proverb is typed in GT, its English equivalent appears. GT must also improve the translation of language sources worldwide (Aiken & Balan, 2011; Groves & Mundt, 2015).

To be fair enough, it is challenging to have GT translate proverbs well enough between languages since thousands of languages exist in this world. As put it, when comparing human translation and Google's translation, the author said, “Human translation is better than Machine Translation because the first uses communicative translation while the other uses semantic translation.” (Tahseen, 2024, p. 68). When words are treated as simple symbols that GT relies on. In this case, GT can function as an online dictionary only, even worse than an online dictionary because a dictionary can give readers multiple meanings of a word and examples, not to mention proving meaning and visual aids. GT can only produce literal meaning. However, an online learning dictionary cannot produce translation when it deals with phrases, clauses, and texts. In this case, GT can take the job and do at least well at picking up the texts' most basic or literal meanings. Through this result, the authors suggest that GT has to gather experienced translators between the two languages (e.g. English and Vietnamese) to sit together and find all possible translated versions. Then, GT needs to upgrade its technical aspect to help store possible translated versions of proverbs between English and Vietnamese or between Vietnamese and English. GT needs technology to detect chunks of language and fixed expressions and then help link them to pick the possible equivalents.

Related stakeholders should test and retest the translation system to see how it translates proverbs between languages. A test of back-

and-forth translation of proverbs between languages should be performed frequently. Moreover, GT also needs constant feedback from its users, who can be seen as valuable sources to help it enhance the system. Therefore, GT should have a hotline system for receiving feedback daily to improve its credibility.

### Limitations

The authors should have had GT translate back from Vietnamese proverbs into English. This method can refer to the terms and linguistic structures that have previously been retranslated, and then they are translated back to the original language so that translation is incorporated into the concept of retranslation (Xu & Chuanmao, 2017). It can be an excellent test to see if the result is different when the entry starts with a Vietnamese proverb at work compare with the entry that begins with an English proverb. Besides, the study only received remarks from 62 students, as a larger sample and a variety of classes should have made the study more persuasive.

### Conclusion

The current paper attempts to see how GT translates English proverbs at work and how English-majored students commented on GT's

translated texts. GT can generate six acceptable proverbial translations (50 %). The translation system needs to establish a better system to contain more proverbs in English and their Vietnamese equivalents and find ways to recognize the meaning of proverbs when either a Vietnamese or English proverb and use strategies, such as using language chunks and fixed expressions for helping locate appropriately translated meanings. Regarding the students, their comment results could be more consistent. While many agreed with the acceptable translations, many also agreed with the proverbial translations that are not acceptable. Students need to read more English proverbs and their Vietnamese equivalents and think more about the contexts when translating. According to Tahseen (2024), humans are expected to use communicative approach to translate, which means they should use appropriate language when translating to fit the context while the translation machine translates language based on semantic aspects. In translating proverbs as mentioned, people may remove some words in the target language if they learn proverbs of the two languages well. For example, “where’s there’s a will, there’s way” was rendered as “có chí thì nên” in Vietnamese, which is shorter in the target source.

### References

- Abidin E. Z. Z., Mustapha N. F., Rahim N. A. & Abdullah S. N. S. Penterjemahan idiom Arab-melayu melalui Google Translate: Apakah yang Perlu dilakukan? *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*, 2020, 20(3), 156–180. <http://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2020-2003-10>
- Aiken M. & Balan S. An analysis of Google Translate accuracy. *Translation Journal*, 2011, 16(2), 1–2.
- Al-Husban N & Tawalbeh M. EFL teachers' practices and perspectives on learner autonomy in virtual language learning environments in Jordan. *International Journal of Language Education*, 2023, 7(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v1i1.36156>
- Al-Khaza'leh B. A Jordanian translation students' difficulties in translating English proverbs into Arabic. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 2019, 6(5), 63–78.
- Al-khresheh M. H. & Almaaytah S. A. English proverbs into Arabic through machine translation. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 2018, 7(5), 158–166. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.7n.5p.158>
- Alfaleh B. A. Translation quality assessment of proverbs from English into Arabic: The case study of one thousand and one English proverbs translated into Arabic. *Arab World English Journal*, 2020, 1–56. <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/th.250>
- Alenezi S. A. How the Saudi EFL Students at undergraduate level translate English proverbs into Arabic: Problems, strategies and solutions. *AWEJ for Translation & Literary Studies*, 2023, 7(4), 61–76. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4605453>

- Al Shehab M. The ability of Translation Students in translating English proverbs into Arabic and vice versa at Jadara University in Jordan. *Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics*, 2016, 29, 10–19.
- Chon T. V., Shin D. & Kim G. E. Comparing L2 learners' writing against parallel machine translated texts: Raters' assessment, linguistic complexity and errors. *System*, 2021, 96, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102408>
- Dabbagh A. An interpretation of the significance of 'time': The case of English and Persian proverbs. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2015, 5(12), 2581–2590. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0512.20>
- Du X. A brief introduction of Skopos theory. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2012, 2(10), 2189–2193. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4304/tpls.2.10.2189-2193>
- Dweik B. S. & Thalji M. B. Obstacles faced by the Jordanian novice translators in translating Arabic proverbs. *International Journal of English Language and Translation Studies*, 2015, (3)4. 50–59.
- El-Madkouri M. & Soto Aranda B. (2022, September). Readability and Communication in Machine Translation of Arabic Phraseologisms into Spanish. In *Computational and Corpus-Based Phraseology: 4th International Conference, EuroPhras 2022, Malaga, Spain, 28–30 September, 2022, Proceedings* (pp. 78–89). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Godwin-Jones R. Telecollaboration as an approach to developing intercultural communication competence. *Language Learning & Technology*, 2019, 23(3), 8–28. <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/44691>
- Groves M. & Mundt K. Friend or foe? Google Translate in language for academic purposes. *English for Specific Purposes*. 2015, 37, 112–121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2014.09.001>
- Hassanein H. Oppositions in Arabic Proverbs: A Lexicosyntactic Perspective. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 2021, 21(4), 1–20. <http://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2021-2104-01>
- Ivanov E. E. & Petrushevskaja J. A. Etymology of English proverbs. *Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences*, 2015, 5(8), 864–872.
- Jabak O. O. Assessment of Arabic-English translation produced by Google Translate. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 2019, 2(4), 238–247. <http://dx.doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2019.2.4.24>
- Jiang H. Functional equivalence in news translation. *International Journal of New Developments in Education*, 2020, 2(3), 37–39.
- Khalil I. D. A. *Investigating linguistic difficulties arising from translating proverbs from English into Arabic*, 2019 [Doctorate dissertation]. Sudan University of Science & Technology.
- Komeili Z., Hendavalan J. A. F. & Rahimi A. An investigation of the translation problems incurred by English to Persian machine translations: “Padideh, Pars, and Google Softwares. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2011, 28, 1079–1082. <https://doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.11.195>
- Lear A., L. Oke C. Forsythe and A. Richards. Why can't I just use Google Translate? A study on the effectiveness of online translation tools in translation of Coas. *Value in Health*, 2016, 19 (7), A387.
- Maryamah M., Arifin A. Z., Sarno R. & Hasan A. M. (2021, January). Adapting Google Translate using Dictionary and Word Embedding for Arabic-Indonesian Cross-lingual Information Retrieval. In *2020 IEEE International Conference on Internet of Things and Intelligence System (IoT&IS)* (pp. 205–209). IEEE.
- Medvedev G. Google translate in teaching English. *Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, 4(1), 2016, 181–193.
- Mieder Wolfgang. *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Greenwood Publishing Group. 2004.
- Mojsin L. Useful English proverbs about work. *Accurate English*. 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z97SoFQ1LHc>
- Muzdalifah I. & Handayani S. (2020, April). Improving English speaking competence by using Google Translate in campus environment. In *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* (Vol. 469, No. 1, p. 012039). IOP Publishing.
- Newmark P. *A Textbook of Translation*. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press. 2009.
- Nguyen H. T. & Khau H. A. Investigating teachers' and graduates' remarks on the translation of English modals into Vietnamese provided by Google Translate. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 2021, 21(4), 172–185. <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2021-2104-09>

- Nguyen Thi Thu Thuy. Cultural features reflected in Polish and Vietnamese proverbs. *Future Human Image*, 2020, (13), 76–87. <https://doi.org/10.29202/fhi/13/8>
- Nzimande E. Domestication versus foreignisation in the English translation of Mthembu's UMamazane. *Language Matters*, 2018, 49(1), 149–163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10228195.2018.1444080>
- Oke L., Forsythe C. & Richards A. “Why can't I just use Google Translate?” A study on the effectiveness of online translation tools in translation of Coas. *Value in Health*, 2016, 19, A347 – A766.
- Pham H. D. Thành ngữ biểu hiện ý nghĩa cực cấp trong tiếng việt. *Tạp chí khoa học NHSP TP.HCM*, 2006, 132–140.
- Phuong V. T. Factors affecting the learning of English proverbs and idioms of English-majored students at university of Khanh Hoa, Vietnam. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 2023, 9(1), 35–47. <http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.901004>
- Polvonnazarovich N. K. Reflections on the development of the skills of translating texts in students. *International Journal of Advance Scientific Research*, 2024, 4(02), 41–46. <https://doi.org/10.37547/ijasr-04-02-07>
- Rahmaniah R. & Anggriani R. Analysis of students' problems in translating English into Indonesian proverbs: at xi th grade at sma muhammadiyah mataram in academic year 2014–2015. *Paedagogia: Jurnal Kajian, Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kependidikan*, 2018, 7(2), 26–32. <https://doi.org/10.31764/paedagogia.v7i2.27>
- Roxila B. The meaning of proverbs in English, Russian, Uzbek languages. *Modern Science and Research*, 2024, 3(2), 402–408. Sheppard F. (2011). Medical writing in English: The problem with Google Translate. *Presse Med*, 40, 565–566. <https://doi:10.1016/j.lpm.2011.02.024>
- Shormani M. Q. Does culture translate? Evidence from translating proverbs. *Babel*, 2020, 66(6), 902–927.
- Tahseen W. M. Investigating Machine Translation Errors in Rendering English Literary Texts into Arabic. *Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities*, 2024, 4(1), 68–81. <https://doi.org/10.55544/ijrah.4.1.11>
- Tsai S. C. Chinese students' perceptions of using Google Translate as a translanguaging CALL tool in EFL writing. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 2022, 35(5–6), 1250–1272.
- Van Lieshout C. & Cardoso W. Google Translate as a tool for self-directed language learning. *Language Learning & Technology*, 2022, 26(1), 1–19. <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/73460>
- Venuti L. *The Translator's Invisibility*. London: Routledge. 1995. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203360064>
- Xu M. & Tian C. Exploring the traces of translation: A Chinese perspective. *Babel*, 2017, 63(1), 3–20.