

Verbs or Nouns - Which Sound More Natural in Vietnamese and Implications for English and Translation Teaching to Vietnamese Students¹

Pham Thi Thuy*

VNU International School, 99 Nguy Nhu Kon Tum, Thanh Xuan, Hanoi, Vietnam

Received 23 December 2015

Revised 13 April 2016; Accepted 24 May 2016

Abstract: What are culturally specific linguistic features of Vietnamese texts? A comparison of five Australian short stories and their translation texts in Vietnamese has revealed one of the features, a mismatch in the word classes: several nouns in English are shifted to verbs in Vietnamese. To answer the question whether verbs sound more natural than nouns in Vietnamese, the present study measured recipients' responses to the naturalness of sentences containing verbs in the translation texts, which had been translated from nouns in the original texts. The study, following Bachman's (1990) framework, employed the method of Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Tasks (MDCT). The results of the study, conducted on 370 native speakers of Vietnamese, confirm previous findings on Vietnamese communicative preferences, that are linguistically manifest (Trần Ngọc Thêm, 1998). The implications of this can be useful for teaching English, in general, and teaching translation, in particular, to Vietnamese students.

Keywords: English – Vietnamese fictional prose translation, word class shift, culturally specific linguistic features, L1 naturalness, Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Task.

1. Introduction

While comparing the Vietnamese translations of five Australian short stories [1],

the researcher discovered that several English nouns were shifted to Vietnamese verbs. A question was raised: Is word class shift in the Vietnamese translations the translator's style or is the use of verbs one of Vietnamese culture-conditioned linguistic features? In order to answer this question, the present study aimed to measure the naturalness of the sentences containing verbs in the Vietnamese translation texts, which had been translated from those containing nouns in the original Australian short stories by using the receptor's responses to the translations.

*Tel.: 84-4-35575992

Email: thuypt@isvnu.vn

¹ This study has been completed under the sponsorship of the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS, VNU) in the project No. QG.15.35 "Models for English-Vietnamese translation assessment". The findings of the study were presented at the fourth combined ALAA/ ALANZ/ ALTAANZ 2015 Conference "Learning in a Multilingual World" at University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia, 30 November – 2 December, 2015.

1.1. Definition of culture and why here?

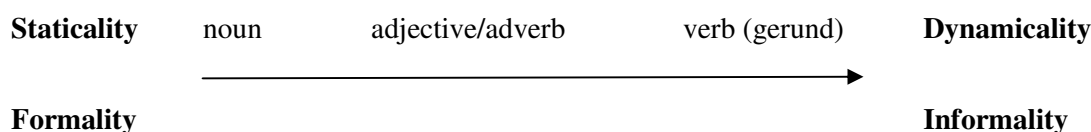
First, to answer the question: what are culture-conditioned or culturally specific linguistic features of Vietnamese text, the concept “culture” will be defined. There exist a variety of definitions of “culture” (see [2]; [3]; [4]; [5]). This study adopts the definition that culture refers to lifestyle, customs, norms, behaviors, products and ideas which are seen as typical for a community, and culture uses a specific language as its tool of expression.

1.2. What are Vietnamese culture-specific communicative norms and preferences that are linguistically manifest?

Linguistic characteristics of Vietnamese communication are pointed out in cross-cultural research on Vietnamese culturally specific communicative norms and preferences (see [2,

6-11]), such as (i) norms in using addressing words: apart from personal pronouns, Vietnamese people also use a large number of kinship nouns, and kinship nouns tend to be more popular than personal pronouns; (ii) preference of active constructions: Vietnamese people prefer active constructions to passive ones; (iii) the preference of verbs to nouns: “Vietnamese people like using verbs: the number of verbs in a sentence corresponds to the number of actions” (see [2: 165]), and so on.

In addition, the use of nouns or verbs also depends on the formality/ informality of the situation, the staticity/ dynamicality of the language style, which are termed “categorical dimensions” (unpublished Nguyễn Quang’s lecture notes on cross-cultural communications) as in the following continuum:



In short, as mentioned earlier, culture refers to customs, norms, ideas, and so on, that are typical for a community, and language is a means of its expression. In addition, one of the linguistic features of Vietnamese communication is the preference of verbs.

2. Data of the study

The data of the study include five Australian original short stories, referred to as source texts (STs), and their Vietnamese translation texts (TTs) taken from the collection *Australian Short Stories* [1]: (i) “Southern Skies” by D. Malouf (1985) – “Trời Nam lòng lộng”, (ii) “Abbreviation” by T. Winton (2005) – “Tên viết tắt”, (iii) “Joe” by P. Carey (1973) – “Thằng Joe”, (iv) “The Hottest Night of the Century” by G. Adams (1979) – “Đêm nóng nhất thế kỉ”, and (v) “Hostages” by F.

Zwicky (1983) – “Con tin”. The total word count of all the five original stories is 19,725. These STs were written by prize-winning Australian writers. In addition, the translator, Trịnh Lữ, was also a well-established one, who earned the Hanoi Writers’ Association Award for a Translated Book in 2004 and the Vietnam Writers’ Association Official Award for a Translated Book in 2005 for his translation of Yann Martel’s award winning novel, *Life of Pi*, (see [12]).

While comparing and analyzing the STs and the TTs, the researcher detected thirty five (35) sentences containing nouns in the STs but rendered into those containing verbs in the TTs. One may wonder whether the noun – verb shift was the translator’s style or it reflected the Vietnamese preference of verbs.

Research question: Do verbs or nouns sound more natural in the Vietnamese

translations of five Australian original short stories?

3. Methods

In order to answer the research question, the present study aimed to check the naturalness of sentences containing verbs in the Vietnamese translation texts, which had been translated from nouns in the original Australian short story texts, based on recipients' reactions to the translations.

The study, following Bachman's [13] framework, employed the method of Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Tasks (MDCT). In this section, Bachman's framework and the reasons for using MDCT will be provided.

3.1. Why MDCT in this study?

Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) are types of instruments which are used to assess pragmatic proficiency. In general, there are six types of DCTs: the written discourse completion tasks, multiple-choice discourse completion tasks, oral discourse completion tasks, discourse role-play tasks, discourse self-assessment tasks, and role – play self-assessments [14].

Pragmatic tools like DCT are used not only for investigating pragmatic knowledge or competence of the second (L2) or foreign language (FL) (see [15]; [14]; [16]), but also for the pragmatic studies of the first language (L1) (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, cited in [17]).

Pragmatic competence of a language involves illocutionary competence and socio-linguistic competence, in Bachman's [13] framework.

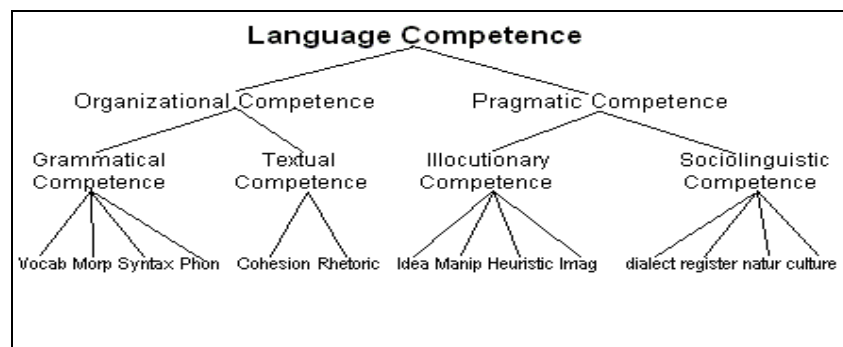


Figure 1. Components of language competence [13: 87].

Socio-linguistic competence is “the sensitivity to, or control of the conventions of language use that are determined by the features of the specific language use context; it enables us to perform language function in ways that are appropriate to that context” [13: 94]. Four abilities under socio-linguistic competence are sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety, to differences in register, to naturalness; and the ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech. Naturalness, or in other words, sensitivity to naturalness, in Bachman's

[13: 97] framework, refers to the ability of a language user to “either formulate or interpret an utterance which is not only linguistically correct, but which is also phrased...in a *nativelike way*”. Alternatively, it is the sensitivity to sentences which would be said or written by speakers of a language who are native to the culture of that language.

In short, DCT is a tool to assess pragmatic knowledge or competence, more specifically, to evaluate sensitivity to naturalness of not only L2 and FL, but also L1.

Among the six types of DCTs, the present study employed only one type, MDCT, to measure receptors' responses to the naturalness of 35 sentences in the Vietnamese translations of five Australian short stories. In this study, informants were not required to read a written description of a situation and select what would be best to say in that situation, but to read two sentences (one sentence with a verb, the other with a noun) each time in Vietnamese, and to choose the one that sounds more natural.

The advantages of using MDCTs are discussed in [18], [19] and other studies. Yamashita [18: 15] points out that MDCTs "can be used to collect data easily in a short period of time and make the analysis...an easier process". Another advantage is that it can be easy to administer and score MDCTs [19]. In addition, MDCTs are easy for test-takers [NB: or informants in this study] to do as they do not need to write anything but just choose one among the options [19]. Furthermore, the reliability of MDCT in this study was guaranteed because the informants, native speakers of Vietnamese, already had pragmatic competence, i.e. knowledge about the naturalness of Vietnamese language. They were not test-takers, but acted as judges of the naturalness of a number of translated sentences in the TTs.

However, it should be noted that "the use of a native speaker norm in inter-language pragmatics has been challenged" (Kasper, 1998, in [19: 410]). Nevertheless, Liu [19: 410] argues that although taking the native speakers' judgments as the standard is controversial in the measurement of pragmatic knowledge, "this is by far the most reasonable norm" that researchers can rely on. North (2000, in [19: 410]) also shares this view, maintaining that "judgments of accuracy, sociolinguistic appropriacy, socio-cultural savvy, discourse conventions, and so on, can only be made by reference to the norms of the native speaker culture(s)".

Every method has its advantages and disadvantages. In this study, the advantages of

MDCTs seemed to outweigh its disadvantages. Therefore, MDCTs were chosen as the means to collect data to measure the receptor's responses to the naturalness of a number of sentences in the TTs.

3.2. MDCT respondents

Three hundred and seventy (370) native Vietnamese speakers responded to the MDCT, among whom were 240 undergraduate senior students (203 English major students specializing in translation and interpreting, and 37 students of literature and linguistics, high quality classes), 21 postgraduate students of English, 45 lecturers of English, and 64 general readers. The age of all the undergraduate students ranged from 21 to 30, while that of postgraduate students was between 21 and 50. The age of lecturers of English was from 21 to above 50, and the general readers' age was from 18 to 40. Regarding gender, 84.1% of respondents were female and 10% were male (NB: there was no information about gender in 20 responses of undergraduate English-major students and in 2 responses of general readers).

The English major undergraduate and postgraduate students, Vietnamese literature and linguistics major undergraduate students, as well as lecturers of English were chosen for this study, because of their level of education, in general, and their proficiency level of Vietnamese and English, in particular. In addition, the reason for choosing general Vietnamese readers was that the *Australian Short Stories* collection [1], like any fictional prose, was intended for general readers, who may or may not know English. What is more, the MDCT was carried out in Vietnam's National Library, Hanoi, with the expectation that readers there were educated ones. And the information about education background of the general readers proved it right. Most of the general readers were students from a variety of universities in Hanoi, and some of them were staff working for different enterprises in Hanoi.

In short, in this study, the participation of different groups of educated native respondents in the MDCT was intended for a variety of responses.

3.3. MDCT data

Altogether 35 sentences containing nouns in the five Australian short stories but rendered into those with verbs in their Vietnamese translations have been detected. Second, a Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Task (MDCT) comprising those 35 items was developed. Two versions of MDCT were designed: one with sentences in English quoted from the STs and their translations in Vietnamese in the TTs, and the other without quoted sentences in English.

In the first version of MDCT, each item consists of (i) one sentence in English from the STs; and (ii) two sentences in Vietnamese (options A and B), one option containing the verb was taken from the TTs, and the other one containing the noun - a distractor was created by the researcher. The distractors were designed based on differences between Vietnamese verbs and nouns in their syntactic functions, as well as their collocations (see [20]; [21]). The first version was designed for informants who were students and lecturers of English.

The second version of MDCT includes only sentences in Vietnamese, with those in English being removed. Thus, each item in the MDCT of the second version contains only two options A and B (see Appendix). The second version was designed for informants, who were general Vietnamese readers.

The MDCT required the informants to read each item and to choose one option (A or B) that they thought would sound more natural in Vietnamese. The sum of each option for each MDCT item was then given and presented in percentage. Finally, the researcher compared the percentage of the two options to see the proportion of informants choosing the option with the verb.

4. Results and discussion

Analyses of translation naturalness based on the data from MDCT

On the whole, the informants' responses to the naturalness of sentences containing verbs in the TTs are quite clear in most cases, although each individual group of informants may differ a little in their choice of some sentences.

In what follows, the responses of the five groups of respondents as a whole will be analyzed first, followed by specific cases of each individual group.

Table 1. Verb and noun choice by five groups of respondents as a whole

N	V	N	V	N	V	N	V	N	V	N	V
1		2		3		4		5		6	
13.2%	86.8%	27.6%	72.4%	28.4%	71.6%	22.4%	77.6%	53.5%	46.5%	38.6%	61.4%
7		8		9		10		11		12	
50.3%	49.7%	7.8%	92.2%	10.5%	89.5%	48.9%	51.1%	30.5%	69.5%	39.5%	60.5%
13		14		15		16		17		18	
15.1%	84.9%	14.9%	85.1%	18.6%	81.4%	8.1%	91.9%	18.4%	81.6%	49.7%	50.3%
19		20		21		22		23		24	
27.0%	73.0%	17.3%	82.7%	13.5%	86.5%	25.9%	74.1%	43.2%	56.8%	3.0%	97.0%
25		26		27		28		29		30	
19.2%	80.8%	24.3%	75.7%	35.7%	64.3%	23.5%	76.5%	15.4%	84.6%	18.4%	81.6%
31		32		33		34		35			
8.9%	91.1%	38.1%	61.9%	30.5%	69.5%	16.8%	83.0%	4.3%	95.1%		

Table 1 reports the choice of verbs and nouns by respondents. The numbers (1 – 35) refer to the number of sentences in the MDCT, while N is the short form for noun, and V is the short form for verb.

As can be seen from Table 1, 20 out of 35 sentences with verbs have been chosen as sounding more natural than those with nouns by over 75% of respondents. Especially, the option with the verb in five sentences (No. 24, 35, 8, 16, and 31) were selected by over 90% of respondents (97%, 95.1%, 92.2%, 91.9%, and 91.1% respectively) (see Table 1).

(No. 24): *For protection from the white sun* I wrapped an old cotton bedspread about my shoulders and legs.

- A. Vì việc tránh cái nắng chói chang, tôi cuốn một tấm khăn trải giường bằng vải bông cũ quanh vai và hai chân. [*For protection from the white sun, ...*]
- B. Để tránh cái nắng chói chang, tôi cuốn một tấm khăn trải giường bằng vải bông cũ quanh vai và hai chân. [*In order to protect from the white sun, ...*]

(No. 35.) “I’m not really *in practice*.”

- A. Cháu chưa tập tành gì cả. [I did not *practise* anything.]
- B. Việc tập tành của cháu chưa có gì cả. [My *practice* was not any.]

In ten (10) other sentences, the options with verbs were selected by 60 – 74% of respondents.

Examples:

(No. 22)...he became so consumed *with watching* that I was able to move quietly into the room...

- A. Ông mê mải với việc ngắm biển đến mức tôi có thể lẳng lặng vào phòng mà ông không hay biết. [He became so consumed with sea *watching* that...]
- B. Ông ngắm biển mê mải đến mức tôi có thể lẳng lặng vào phòng mà ông không hay biết. [He *watched* the sea so passionately that...]

(No. 19) However, Joe excused himself *after his birthday tea* and went to the bathroom...

- A. Nhưng hôm qua, Joe xin lỗi *sau buổi trà* và vào nhà tắm. [But yesterday, Joe excused himself *after tea* and went to the bathroom.]
- B. Nhưng hôm qua, Joe xin lỗi *sau khi uống trà* và vào nhà tắm. [But yesterday, Joe excused himself *after drinking tea* and went to the bathroom.]

However, in the rest five sentences (No. 5, 7, 10, 18, and 23), the options with the verb have a low choice rate of under 60%, (46.5%, 49.7%, 51.1%, 50.3%, and 56.8% respectively) (see Table 1).

(No.5) I hesitated, made no *decision*.

- A. Tôi do dự, không *quyết bẽ* nào. [I hesitated, did not *decide* anything.]
- B. Tôi do dự, không *đưa ra sự quyết định* nào. [I hesitated, did not *make any decisions*]

(No.7) Vic, said his mother *with a note of warning*.

- A. Vic, mẹ nó nói với vẻ *răn đe*. [Vic, his mother said *with a note of warning*.]
- B. Vic, mẹ nó *đe*. [Vic, his mother *warned*.]

In general, regarding the choice of the five groups of informants as a whole, in 20 out of 35 sentences the options with verbs were chosen as sounding more natural by over 75% of respondents. In 10 other sentences, the options with verbs were selected by 60% to 74% respondents, whereas in the last 5 sentences - by less than 60% of respondents. Four among the last five sentences (No. 5, 7, 10, and 18) have the choice rate lower than 52%.

In addition to the four sentences with verbs (No. 5, 7, 10, and 18) that have a low choice rate by the five groups of respondents as a whole, the results from the survey also reveal seven other sentences with the choice rate of around 50% by each individual group of respondents (see Table 2), including No. 3 (by

group 4 – students of literature and linguistics), No. 6 [by group 1 (lecturers of English), group 2 (postgraduate students of English), and group 4 (students of literature and linguistics)], No. 12 (by group 3 – English-major students), No. 22

(by group 5 – general readers), No. 23 (by group 4), No. 27 (by groups 2 and 4), and No. 32 (by group 5). In what follows, a brief description of the seven sentences will be provided.

Table 2. Verb and noun choice of seven sentences among individual groups of respondents

N	V	N	V	N	V	N	V	N	V
No.3		No.6				No.12			
G4		G1		G2		G4		G3	
49%	51%	47%	53%	48%	52%	49%	51%	47%	53%
No.22		No.23		No.27		No.32			
G5		G4		G2		G4		G5	
45%	55%	51%	49%	48%	52%	46%	54%	48%	52%

Among the above seven sentences, the choice of naturalness of the option with a verb in sentence No.23 (by respondents of group 4) is the lowest, 49%, (see Table 2):

No 23. I did not care for *swimming*.

A. Tôi cũng chẳng thiết *bơi*. [I did not want to *swim*.] (“*bơi*” = verb)

B. Tôi cũng chẳng quan tâm đến *việc bơi lội*. [I was also not interested in *swimming*.] (“*việc bơi lội*” = noun)

The options with verbs in sentences No. 3, No. 6, No 12, and No. 32 were selected as sounding natural by just above half of respondents in groups 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (see Table 2):

No.3: “I make *observations*, you know”

A. “Tôi *quan sát*, cậu biết đấy”. [I *observe*, you know”]

B. “Tôi *tiến hành quan sát*, cậu biết đấy”. [“I make *observations*, you know”]

No 6. Nothing of what he had done could make *the slightest difference* to me, ...

A. Không có gì trong những hành động của ông có thể gây ra *sự khác biệt dù chỉ rất nhỏ* trong tôi.

[Nothing of what he had done could make *a difference, though very small*, in me.]

B. Không có gì trong những hành động của ông có thể *đổi khác* được tôi, *dù chỉ là đôi chút*. [Nothing of what he had done could *change* me, *although a little bit*.]

The option with a verb in sentence No. 22 was chosen by 55% of respondents in group 5 (see Table 2), while the choice rate of all the five groups as a whole is 74.1% (see Table 1):

(No. 22)...he became so consumed *with watching* that I was able to move quietly into the room...

A. Ông mê mải với *việc ngắm biển* đến mức tôi có thể *lặng lẽ* vào phòng mà ông không hay biết. [He became so consumed with sea *watching* that...]

B. Ông *ngắm biển* mê mải đến mức tôi có thể *lặng lẽ* vào phòng mà ông không hay biết. [He *watched* the sea so passionately that...]

In short, regarding the choice of the five groups of respondents as a whole, as can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2, 20 out of 35 sentences with verbs in the TTs as translations of those with nouns in the STs were chosen as sounding more natural than the sentences with nouns (designed by the researcher) by over 75% respondents in the five groups. 10 other sentences with verbs in the TTs were selected as natural in Vietnamese language by 60% - 74% respondents, while the rest 5 sentences

with verbs had the choice rate of between 46.5% and 56.8%. Four among the last 5 sentences were considered natural by fewer than 52% of respondents.

Regarding the choice of each individual group of respondents (see Table 2), 7 out of 35 sentences with verbs (No.3, 6, 12, 22, 23, 27, and 32) were shown to have a low choice rate, ranging from 45% to 55%.

Based on the responses of five groups of informants as a whole and of each individual group, altogether 11 sentences with verbs in the TTs were chosen as sounding more natural than those with nouns by from 46.5% to 55% of respondents (see Table 1 and Table 2). Three among these 11 sentences (No. 3, 5, and 6) comprise the nouns ["observations", "decision", and "difference"] in combination with the verb "make", and two sentences (No. 18 and 27) contain the nouns "birthday tea" and "school" following the preposition of time "after".

In the three Vietnamese sentences (No. 3, 5 and 6), the option with the verb was chosen by about half of respondents of Group 1 (students of Literature and Linguistics) (sentence No. 3), by just above half of respondents of Group 3 (English major students) (sentence No. 5), and by about half of respondents of Group 1, Group 2 (postgraduate students of English), and Group 4 (lecturers of English) (sentence No.6) (see Table 1 and Table 2). The option with the noun in these sentences was translated from the English structure (make + observation = tiến hành quan sát; make + decision = đưa ra sự quyết định; make + difference = gây ra sự khác biệt, respectively). It can be seen that this is the case only among respondents who was given version 1 of MDCT, i.e the version with both English and Vietnamese sentences, while the choice of the option with the verb in these sentences, is much higher among respondents of Group 5 (general readers), who was given version 2 of MDCT, i.e. the version with only Vietnamese sentences. A possible explanation which may be suggested here is that the respondents of Groups 1, 2, 3, and 4 may probably be affected by the structure of "make"

+ noun in the English sentences while they read the options.

5. Conclusion & implications

5.1. Summary of the study

This study focuses on measuring the receptor's responses to the naturalness of a number of Vietnamese sentences containing verbs being translated from those containing nouns in English. The data were taken from the five original Australian short stories and their translations in Vietnamese. Thirty five sentences with the noun-verb shift were detected in the TTs. For the purpose of checking whether this word class shift was the translator's style or it was a culture-conditioned linguistic feature of Vietnamese texts, an MDCT questionnaire, following Bachman's [13] framework, was conducted on 370 native Vietnamese readers of five groups. The questionnaire was to check the naturalness of those thirty five sentences based on responses from native respondents. Two versions of MDCT questionnaire were developed: the first version contained thirty five English sentences quoted from the original texts and their translations in Vietnamese, while the second version – only the Vietnamese translations of those English sentences. There were two options of Vietnamese translations of English sentences: one option with the verb - taken from the TTs, and the other with noun - designed by the researcher.

On the whole, regarding the responses of the five groups of informants as a whole, in 20 out of 35 sentences the options with verbs were selected as sounding more natural than those with nouns by over 75% of respondents, and in 10 other sentences - by 60% to 74% respondents. In other words, 30 out of 35 sentences with verbs in the TTs, i.e. 85.7%, have been opted as sounding more natural than the sentences with nouns by over 60%, precisely by 60.5% - 97%, of respondents. In the last 5 sentences, the options with verbs were

chosen by less than 60% of respondents. Four among the last five sentences have the choice rate of lower than 52%.

The above research findings show that the word class shift from nouns in the original Australian short stories to verbs in their Vietnamese translations is not the translator's style, but it reflects a culturally specific linguistic feature of Vietnamese texts: verbs are preferred to nouns in Vietnamese language, i.e. verbs sound more natural than nouns in most cases. These findings also confirm previous comments on the Vietnamese preference of verbs by Trần Ngọc Thêm (see [2: 165]). In these five translations, the translator has adapted the language norm of English source texts, i.e. the use of nouns, to the norm of the Vietnamese target language community, i.e. the use of verbs.

5.2. Implications for English and translation teaching to Vietnamese students

This study suggests that in order to make a translation text sound natural in Vietnamese language, a translator should pay attention to culturally specific features that are linguistically manifest, one of which is the preference of verbs to nouns. Thus, the trainee or professional translators should take into account this feature when they translate texts into Vietnamese if they want to produce target-text focused translations. In other words, they don't have to keep the verb structure of English sentences the same in their Vietnamese translation texts, i.e. nouns can be shifted to verbs.

The findings of this study can help Vietnamese students learning English to understand more about the Vietnamese communicative preferences and cultural norms. The findings can also be used to design activities to develop students' communicative competence of both English and Vietnamese languages. The activities may involve a linguistic – cultural comparison between the original texts and the translation texts, or a

distinction between source-text focused and target-text focused translations.

5.3. Other implications

The findings of the present study help to confirm previous research on Vietnamese communicative preference of verbs to nouns. In other words, for native speakers of Vietnamese, the verb sounds more natural than the noun. In addition, further research into the formality/informality of the situation expressed by nouns or verbs is needed.

Regarding the research methods, this study shows that DCTs, more specifically MDCTs, can be used not only for pragmatics studies but also for translation evaluation. The naturalness of a translation text can be judged based on the receptor's responses to the translation.

5.4. Limitation of the study

This study focuses on the naturalness of English-Vietnamese short story translations, thus, the research results cannot be generalized to translations of other genres, such as commercial texts, sci-tech texts, or the other sub-genres of literature as poetry or drama, and so on.

References

- [1] L. Trinh, Trans. R. Moxham Ed., *Truyện ngắn Úc - Australian Short Stories*, Hội nhà Văn [Association of Vietnamese Writers], Hà Nội, Việt Nam [Hanoi, Vietnam], 2005.
- [2] Trần Ngọc Thêm, *Cơ sở văn hóa Việt Nam [Bases of Vietnamese Culture]* (2 ed.), NXB Giáo dục [Education Publishing House], Hà Nội, 1998.
- [3] Newmark, P., *A Textbook of Translation*, Prentice Hall International, Singapore, 1988.
- [4] Samovar, L., Porter, R., & McDaniel, E., *Communication between cultures* (6 ed.), Thomson Wadsworth, Boston, USA, 2007.
- [5] Jones, F. R., *Literary Translation*, In M. Baker & G. Saldanha (Eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (2 ed., pp. 152-156), Routledge, London & New York, 2009.

- [6] Nguyễn Văn Chiến, Từ xưng hô trong tiếng Việt [Addressing words in Vietnamese], Những vấn đề ngôn ngữ và văn hóa, Hội Ngôn ngữ học Việt Nam – Trường đại học Ngoại ngữ Hà Nội, [Issues on language and culture, Association of Vietnamese Linguists - University of Foreign Languages, Hanoi], 60-66, Việt Nam, 1993.
- [7] Phạm Thành, Một vài nhận xét về văn hóa xưng hô của người Việt Nam [Some comments on Vietnamese culture of addressing], Tạp chí Khoa học, Đại học Tổng hợp Hà Nội [Journal of Science, Hanoi University], số 3 -1994 [No 3 – 1994], 72-75, 1994.
- [8] Nguyễn Quang, Xưng hô trong tiếng Việt với ngữ dụng học [Addressing in Vietnamese and pragmatics], Nội san Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội [Journal of Foreign Languages University, VNUHN], 6 – 1996, 7-13, 1996.
- [9] Cao Xuân Hạo, Mấy vấn đề về văn hóa trong cách xưng hô của người Việt [Some issues on culture of Vietnamese addressing ways], Tiếng Việt Văn Việt Người Việt [Vietnamese Language - Vietnamese Literature - Vietnamese People], NXB Trẻ [Youth Publishing House], Vietnam, 2001.
- [10] Nguyễn Thiện Giáp, Dụng học Việt ngữ [Vietnamese Pragmatics], NXB Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội [VNUHN Publishing House], Hà Nội, 2004.
- [11] Hữu Đạt, Đặc trưng ngôn ngữ và văn hóa giao tiếp tiếng Việt [Characteristics of Vietnamese language and communicative culture], NXB Giáo dục [Education Publishing House], Hà Nội, 2009.
- [12] Lê Hồng Lâm, Trịnh Lữ, kẻ tài hoa [Trinh Lu, a talent], 05/11/2005, Retrieved 5/11/2013, from <http://tuoitre.vn/Van-hoa-Giai-tri/106794/trinh-lu-ke-tai-hoa.html#ad-image-0>.
- [13] Bachman, L. F., Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990.
- [14] Brown, J. D, Pragmatic tests, In K. S. Rose & G. Kasper (Eds.), Pragmatics in Language Teaching (pp. 301-325), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.
- [15] Enochs, K., & Yoshitake-Strain, S., Evaluating Six Measures of EFL Learners’ Pragmatic Competence, JALT Journal, 21(1), 29-50, 1999.
- [16] Hà Cẩm Tâm, Độ tin cậy của DCT trong nghiên cứu dụng học [Reliability of DCT in pragmatics research], Ngôn ngữ [Language Review], 2, 18-29, 2007.
- [17] Parvaresh, V., & Tavakoli, M., Discourse Completion Tasks as Elicitation Tools: How Convergent Are They? The Social Sciences, 4(4), 366-373, 2009.
- [18] Yamashita, S. O., Six Measures of JSL Pragmatics, Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Centre of University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, 1996.
- [19] Liu, J., Developing a pragmatics test for Chinese EFL learners, Language Testing, 24(3), 391-415, 2007.
- [20] Nguyễn Kim Thân, Động từ trong tiếng Việt [Verbs in Vietnamese language], NXB Khoa học xã hội [Social Sciences Publishing House], Hà Nội, 1977.
- [21] Diệp Quang Ban & Hoàng Văn Thung, Ngữ pháp tiếng Việt [Grammar of Vietnamese], (Vol. 1), NXB Giáo dục [Education Publishing House], Hà Nội, 1991.

Danh từ hay động từ nghe tự nhiên hơn trong tiếng Việt và đề xuất cho giảng dạy tiếng Anh và dịch thuật cho sinh viên Việt Nam

Phạm Thị Thủy

Khoa Quốc tế, ĐHQGHN, 99 Ngụy Như Kon Tum, Thanh Xuân, Hà Nội, Việt Nam

Tóm tắt: Đặc trưng ngôn ngữ văn hóa của văn bản tiếng Việt là gì? Nghiên cứu so sánh năm truyện ngắn Úc và bản dịch tiếng Việt của chúng đã chỉ ra một trong những đặc trưng ngôn ngữ văn hóa – sự không tương ứng về từ loại: nhiều danh từ tiếng Anh đã được chuyển loại thành động từ tiếng

Việt. Để trả lời câu hỏi: liệu trong tiếng Việt động từ có nghe tự nhiên hơn danh từ, nghiên cứu này đã đánh giá mức độ tự nhiên của các câu chứa động từ trong bản dịch được dịch từ các câu chứa danh từ trong bản gốc thông qua phản hồi của độc giả Việt Nam. Dựa trên khung lý thuyết của Bachman (1990), nghiên cứu sử dụng Phiếu điều tra trắc nghiệm dụng học (MDCT). Nghiên cứu được tiến hành với 370 độc giả người Việt và đã khẳng định kết quả của các nghiên cứu trước đây về các đặc trưng giao tiếp thể hiện qua ngôn từ của người Việt (Trần Ngọc Thêm, 1998). Nghiên cứu đưa ra một số đề xuất hữu ích cho việc giảng dạy tiếng Anh nói chung và giảng dạy dịch thuật nói riêng cho sinh viên Việt Nam

Từ khóa: Dịch văn xuôi Anh – Việt, chuyển loại từ, đặc trưng ngôn ngữ văn hóa, mức độ tự nhiên của tiếng mẹ đẻ, điều tra trắc nghiệm dụng học.

APPENDIX: MDCT – VERSION 2² “FINDING THE MORE NATURAL EQUIVALENT”

Đây là phiếu câu hỏi cho một nghiên cứu về ngôn ngữ. Những thông tin trong phiếu câu hỏi này sẽ được giữ kín và chỉ sử dụng cho nghiên cứu duy nhất này.

Xin bạn vui lòng cho biết một số thông tin cá nhân bằng cách đánh dấu hoặc điền thêm thông tin vào ô trống:

Giới tính	Tuổi	Nơi học tập/ công tác
Nam <input type="checkbox"/>	18-20 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Nữ <input type="checkbox"/>	21-30 <input type="checkbox"/>	
	31-40 <input type="checkbox"/>	
	41-50 <input type="checkbox"/>	
	51-60 <input type="checkbox"/>	

Bạn hãy đọc kỹ và trả lời câu hỏi dưới đây. Xin cảm ơn sự giúp đỡ của bạn.



Câu hỏi: Theo bạn, câu nào (A hay B) trong hai câu sau thì nghe tiếng Việt **tự nhiên hơn**? Bạn hãy khoanh tròn vào **MỘT** chữ cái, A hoặc B. **Cụm từ in nghiêng** là phần trọng tâm của nghiên cứu.

Story No. 1

- A. Tôi đã sợ ông sẽ hỏi lý do, nhưng dĩ nhiên là ông không làm thế.
 B. *Nỗi sợ của tôi* là ông sẽ hỏi lý do, nhưng dĩ nhiên là ông không làm thế.
- A. Và tôi có thể gặp ông giáo sư trong cuộc đi dạo sau bữa tối.
 B. Và tôi có thể bắt gặp ông giáo sư đang đi dạo sau bữa tối.
- A. “Tôi quan sát, cậu biết đấy”.
 B. “Tôi tiến hành quan sát, cậu biết đấy”.
- A. Khi bà gọi chúng tôi vào làm tách trà, tôi bước lại chỗ vòi nước ngoài vườn.
 B. Khi bà gọi chúng tôi vào uống trà, tôi bước lại chỗ vòi nước ngoài vườn.
- A. Tôi do dự, không quyết bề nào.
 B. Tôi do dự, không đưa ra sự quyết định nào.
- A. Không có gì trong những hành động của ông có thể gây ra sự khác biệt dù chỉ rất nhỏ trong tôi.
 B. Không có gì trong những hành động của ông có thể *đôi khác* được tôi, dù chỉ là đôi chút.

Story No. 2

² Due to the paper length limit, we are providing here only version 2 of the MDCT used in the study.

7. A. Vic, mẹ nó nói với vẻ răn đe.
B. Vic, mẹ nó đe.
8. A. Trở lại bờ, bọn con gái đầu đỏ như cà-rốt nheo nhéo đòi *một chuyến đi xuống*.
B. Trở lại bờ, bọn con gái đầu đỏ như cà-rốt nheo nhéo đòi *được đi xuống*.
9. A. Vic không biết tại sao mọi người cứ phải đi chơi đánh lầy nhau như thế nhưng nó *không có sự nghi ngờ gì* đây là ý đồ của Nana.
B. Vic không biết tại sao mọi người cứ phải đi chơi đánh lầy nhau như thế nhưng nó *biết chắc* đây là ý đồ của Nanna.
10. A. Người lớn chẳng ai nói gì nhưng nó biết rằng Ernie có *vị trí cao* trong lòng Nana.
B. Người lớn chẳng ai nói gì nhưng nó biết rằng Ernie *được Nanna bênh che nhất mực*.
11. A. Sóng nhỏ thôi nhưng nó *lướt ván chưa giỏi* nên không hề gì.
B. Sóng nhỏ thôi nhưng nó *chưa phải là người lướt ván giỏi* nên không hề gì.
12. A. Làm sao có thể *nhìn những da thịt thế kia* mà không thành một thằng rình mò chính chị mình kia chứ?
B. Làm sao có thể *chịu được cái nhìn những da thịt thế kia* mà không thành một thằng rình mò chính chị mình kia chứ?
13. A. Đưa con gái *lướt ván* cũng chẳng hơn gì Vic.
B. Tính ở *vai người lướt ván*, đưa con gái cũng chẳng hơn gì Vic.
14. A. Thỉnh thoảng, *lúc nước lặng* đi câu, Vic lại xoa nhẹ lên tai ở chỗ thùy châu.
B. Thỉnh thoảng, *khi chờ cá cắn câu*, Vic lại xoa nhẹ lên tai ở chỗ thùy châu.
15. A. *Một cuộc đi dạo* thì hơn.
B. *Đi dạo* thì hơn.
16. A. Ô kê, *đi dạo*.
B. Ô kê, *một cuộc đi dạo*.

Story No. 3

17. A. Nếu ai đó trong nhà chúng tôi ra làm nghề cảnh sát, nhất định chúng tôi vẫn giữ nguyên *sự coi trọng* đối với người đó.
B. Nếu có ai đó trong nhà chúng tôi ra làm nghề cảnh sát, nhất định người đó vẫn *được* cả nhà *coi trọng* như thường.
18. A. Hôm qua là sinh nhật thứ 16 của nó, và nó đi xem phim một mình *sau khi uống trà sớm hơn mọi ngày*.
B. Hôm qua là sinh nhật thứ 16 của nó, và nó đi xem phim một mình *sau buổi trà sớm hơn mọi ngày*.
19. A. Nhưng hôm qua, Joe xin lỗi *sau buổi trà* và vào nhà tắm.
B. Nhưng hôm qua, Joe xin lỗi *sau khi uống trà* và vào nhà tắm.

Story No. 4

20. A. *Với sự kinh ngạc*, ông thấy mình đã ở ngoài khơi và đang ngày càng bỏ xa đất liền để tiến về phía chân trời.
B. *Ngạc nhiên hết sức*, ông thấy mình đã ở ngoài khơi và đang ngày càng bỏ xa đất liền để tiến về phía chân trời.
21. A. Ông được đưa vào bệnh viện *theo dõi*.
B. Ông được đặt dưới *sự theo dõi* của bệnh viện.
22. A. Ông mê mải với *việc ngắm biển* đến mức tôi có thể lảng lạng vào phòng mà ông không hay biết.
B. Ông *ngắm biển* mê mải đến mức tôi có thể lảng lạng vào phòng mà ông không hay biết.
23. A. Tôi cũng chẳng thiết *bơi*.
B. Tôi cũng chẳng quan tâm đến *việc bơi lội*.

24. **A.** Vì việc tránh cái nắng chói chang, tôi cuộn một tấm khăn trải giường bằng vải bông cũ quanh vai và hai chân.
B. Để tránh cái nắng chói chang, tôi cuộn một tấm khăn trải giường bằng vải bông cũ quanh vai và hai chân.
25. **A.** Bây giờ mới vừa *ăn sáng xong*...
B. Bây giờ mới vừa *sau bữa sáng*...
26. **A.** Thế rồi có *một tiếng hét to*.
B. Thế rồi có *ai đó hét lên*.
27. **A.** Trong giờ học tôi nhận được một mẫu giấy của mấy thằng con trai nói chúng muốn gặp tôi ở sau đài thiên văn *sau giờ học*.
B. Trong giờ học tôi nhận được một mẫu giấy của mấy thằng con trai nói chúng muốn gặp tôi ở sau đài thiên văn *khi tan học*.
28. **A.** Cha tôi nói tôi nên đi lên núi một tháng để *thay đổi*.
B. Cha tôi nói tôi nên đi lên núi một tháng để *tạo sự thay đổi*.
29. **A.** Rồi bà giám sát chúng tôi lau người, nói rằng bà không muốn chúng tôi bị mẩn ngứa và lở loét vì bỏ sót những chỗ ướt trên người trong thời gian mà bà *trông nom* chúng tôi.
B. Rồi bà giám sát chúng tôi lau người, nói rằng bà không muốn chúng tôi bị mẩn ngứa và lở loét vì bỏ sót những chỗ ướt trên người trong thời gian mà chúng tôi nhận *sự trông nom của bà*.
30. **A.** Tuy nhiên, ngày thứ Bảy sau đó ông đi tàu hoả đến và đón tôi về, mặc dù *trái với ý muốn của ông*, ông bảo vậy.
B. Tuy nhiên, ngày thứ Bảy sau đó ông đi tàu hoả đến và đón tôi về, mặc dù *ông không muốn thế*, ông bảo vậy.
31. **A.** Tôi đặt cho mình nhiệm vụ đêm nào cũng kiểm tra giày và gấu quần của cha tôi, mà *không có sự hay biết của ông*.
B. Tôi đặt cho mình nhiệm vụ đêm nào cũng kiểm tra giày và gấu quần của cha tôi mà *không cho ông biết*.
- Story No. 5**
32. **A.** Bởi vì cô ấy cần *được giúp đỡ*.
B. Bởi vì cô ấy cần *sự giúp đỡ*.
33. **A.** Mẹ đã bảo với ông Grover, ông ấy ở quá xa, mẹ không thể đưa con hai lần một tuần đến *giờ học nhạc* của ông ấy được.
B. Mẹ đã bảo với ông Grover, ông ấy ở quá xa, mẹ không thể đưa con hai lần một tuần đến *giờ học nhạc* ông ấy được.
34. **A.** Ngôi nhà kín mít xung quanh như một hòn đảo *bị bao vây*.
B. Ngôi nhà kín mít xung quanh như một hòn đảo *trong vòng vây*.
35. **A.** Cháu chưa *tập tành* gì cả.
B. Việc *tập tành* của cháu chưa có gì cả.

Xin chân thành cảm ơn bạn đã hợp tác