



DEVELOPING LEARNING MATERIALS FOR SPECIALIZED ENGLISH: THE CASE OF TRANSLATION FOR TOURISM

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(Received: March 23, 2025; Accepted: November 09, 2025)

Abstract: This study was part of a larger project that analyzed the needs from stakeholders to develop a translation textbook for students specializing in English for tourism. The study was intended to collect evidence for a model of materials development, which focused on real-life examples. The study adapted three steps suggested by Borg and Gall (1983), namely, information collecting, planning, and developing preliminary form of product. Five lecturers and 30 third year students of the English Language Studies program, minoring in English for Tourism, at a university in central Vietnam, participated in this study. The data was collected via semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. The findings showed that both lecturers and students wished to have an independent course in translation for tourism and the learning materials that displayed a clear topic, and a wide range of topic-related vocabulary, structures and text types. Specifically, the lecturers were concerned about a consistent classroom procedure, where both knowledge of language and tourism, and translation skills were promoted. Meanwhile, the students were interested in the authentic materials that they would probably encounter while working in the tourism industry. Based on the findings, the study suggested a model of adapting materials for a textbook titled 'Translation for Tourism' intended for EFL students specializing in English for Tourism.

Keywords. authentic materials, endogenous material development, translation pedagogy, ESP, English for Tourism

1. Introduction

The growth of English as a global language has had significant impact on the communication across countries. Although the number of users of English as a second/foreign language has increased, there is still a high demand for specialized translation, which calls for insightful understanding of special fields. Therefore, teaching translation in this new era must

satisfy the needs from various stakeholders. The traditional approach to teaching translation, which mainly follows the reading-vocabulary-translation procedure, is no longer effective (Pietrzak, 2014). Teaching translation, especially in training translators for a special field, must aim to prepare trainees with appropriate cognitive processes, which Bell (1991) described as analysis phase (including syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic analysis) and semantic representation (involving revision and idea organizing). Teaching translation in this regard requires both profound knowledge and high-level skills of both source and target languages.

Training translators in the context where English is treated as a Foreign Language (EFL) is much more challenging. The classroom procedure is complicated because it is on the one hand providing learners with the knowledge in the English language, and on the other hand, facilitating them with skills and tactics for appropriate translation. To this end, it requires consistent well-designed materials as well as recursive tasks that familiarize learners with activities for effective translation in the real world. Research into approaches to teaching translation in EFL contexts has proved the effectiveness of developing materials that simulate real-life situations or texts in teaching and learning (Davies, 2003, 2004; Li, 2000; Vienne, 1994). Nonetheless, these studies often examined the use of simulation-based teaching and learning in general translation classes (e.g., Alenezi, 2020; Hajmalek & Aghamohammadi, 2023) or to develop a particular translation skill or strategy for teaching (Vienne, 1994). Little attention has been paid to research that proposed a way of developing materials useful for translation classes in the EFL context. This study is, therefore, an attempt to survey and design texts and tasks for a course in translation, and thereby constructing a template for endogenous material development.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is the process of surveying and assessing to determine skill levels and training needs. This is the first step that needs to be taken to successfully develop an effective training program (Bleich, 2018). Needs analysis in training is the process of systematically surveying and analyzing the current performance levels and understanding the desires of stakeholders to help training institutions determine the specific content necessary to provide for trainees so that they can achieve the expected competencies upon completion of the training program (Morrison, 2020). Needs analysis, according to Morrison (2020), brings about benefits to training institutions. First, it helps training institutions identify gaps in knowledge and skills, thereby proactively planning training programs to equip trainees with knowledge and skills based on the real and accurate data. In addition, needs analysis also helps to identify priority areas. Although the training program is sustainable, the topics, themes and approaches need to be flexible and prioritized according to the context.

2.2 The importance of developing teaching materials in translation training program

In today's globalized world, it is almost impossible for a country to develop without the exchange of information and technology. Globalization has brought about economic, political and technological changes, while at the same time, increasing interaction between countries. People's language needs have changed and accordingly, translation services have become more important.

Translation plays an important role in conveying information across different speech communities and cultures. Through translation, minority cultures and communities have had the opportunity to express their voices whereas developed countries can easily exchange technology to help disadvantaged countries keep up with change and development, narrowing the gap between countries. Translation has touched every aspect of life from education, health, science and technology to business, economics and politics. In fact, translation has become an important part of global communication and thus helps to lift up language barriers between countries. Translation has also developed into a major form of communication, a powerful channel for transmitting ideas and information. Therefore, the teaching and training of translators is increasingly rigorous and challenging. The need for appropriately designed teaching materials is inevitable and necessary. Developing teaching materials based on current research and practical needs is a new approach that has drawn the attention from many researchers and educators. In teaching EFL, applying the results of research on learners' needs not only to develop materials but also to establish appropriate teaching methods has proven to be effective (Hariyadi & Yanti, 2019). However, the development of specialized teaching materials, especially in translation, has not been attended to. The number of studies into the current situation and practical needs in the field of translation is quite modest and unsystematic. Nonetheless, each aspect of the issue of curriculum development and teaching materials development based on the views and needs of stakeholders has been studied. For example, Al Mubarak (2017) studied the issues between theory and practice of teaching translation in training programs at universities in Saudi Arabia. Peverati (2014) surveyed training programs at universities in Italy from the perspective of trainers on professional standards and learners' ability to demonstrate skills. These studies have demonstrated the necessity of practical research as a basis for developing teaching materials for translation and interpretation training programs.

2.3 Previous studies into developing teaching materials based on needs and reality

Discussing translation teaching in training programs, Bell (1991) pointed out that most of the requirements for teaching translation maintained the focus on bilingual competence, translation strategies and the level of understanding of the translation topic. He believed that translation and interpretation training programs paid little attention to the practicality of teaching materials. Bell (1991) also emphasized that teaching materials played an important and

decisive role in developing translation competencies. Bell (1991) argued that teaching materials, including both source texts and classroom activities, should be authentic because they would act as useful support tools for learners. Teaching materials, on this premise, need to be suggestive and encourage learners' participation. This is because exposing learners to different situations where they have to deal with difficult expressions in class will foster their critical thinking in evaluating their translations during the translation process in the classroom. Most importantly, authentic teaching materials should come from real-life sources. Therefore, in order to develop practical materials, it is necessary to study the current situation and needs of using such materials.

Currently, there have been few studies of practical teaching materials in translation training programs. In particular, studies into an EFL context similar to Vietnam are even rarer. In a recent study in Thailand, Boonkaew (2021) explored learners' feedback on the use of practical teaching materials in translation classes through learning diaries and semi-structured interviews, suggesting that practical teaching materials help learners improve their understanding of the subject, develop translation skills, and promote creativity. In this study, practical teaching materials covered a variety of topics, rather than focusing on a narrow subject. Susendi and Syafei (2017) studied and proposed the use of practical teaching materials in translation programs in Indonesia. This research group believed that practical teaching materials have supported the development of translation competence for students. Similar to the study in Thailand, this study also encompassed a broad theme instead of focusing on a specific professional field. Although both studies in Thailand and in Indonesia show the need to use practical teaching materials, the scholars only propose to incorporate practical teaching materials into the program in a formal manner. In fact, some professions require translators to have in-depth professional practice skills, which are familiarized and developed during the training process. Therefore, research to develop practical learning materials in specialized translation training is very necessary.

Within the past two decades, foreign language teaching at universities in Vietnam has increasingly met social needs. In the field of translation, numerous practical research works related to the needs of learners, employers and other stakeholders have been conducted. The research results have formed solid foundations for many innovations in teaching methods and contents. In addition to studies into teaching methods, classroom organization, translation evaluation, etc., scholars have shifted their attention to research into stakeholders' demands to adjust training programs. Nguyen et al. (2018) analyzed learners' needs for translation teaching materials at the Banking University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and concluded that teaching materials should be practical and apt for the types of documents that companies and organizations use in their practices. Providing practical teaching materials will help learners accumulate knowledge and form translation competence to adapt and meet future job

requirements well. Doan Duc Hoang (2021) surveyed learners' views on the benefits of using practical teaching materials in learning Vietnamese-English and English-Vietnamese translation. The results showed similarities with the findings from Boonkaew (2021), suggesting that practical teaching materials have a positive impact on boosting learning motivation, preparing learners to handle translations related to real work, and thus increasing their employability.

Several studies have been conducted to explore the needs for developing translation materials to narrow the gap between materials offered and market demands in countries where translation training programs share similarities with the Vietnamese training situation (Adrien, 2011; Coban, 2015; Sofyan & Tarigan, 2023). These studies showed that the needs for materials are rooted in text types (e.g., vocative texts, expressive texts, informative texts, and legal documents). These characteristics lay the groundwork for the present study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research context

This study reports part of the data from a larger project which explores the needs for translation in the tourism industry from stakeholders' perspective and the quality of current tourism translations on websites and documents. The findings of the project are used as the premise for teaching materials to be developed for translation in tourism, which aims at the authenticity and appropriateness. In addition, it is evidence for a proposal of a course specializing in tourism translation.

3.2 Research aim

For the current study, it aims to gain an understanding of teachers' and students' needs for contents and skills appropriate to the training program specializing in English for Tourism. It seeks answers to these questions:

1. What are students' needs for a course in translation for tourism in terms of contents and skills?
2. What are teachers' perspectives on the contents of a course in translation for tourism?

3.3 Research design and participants

To achieve the aim, the study is designed as exploratory qualitative research. This is a flexible approach to investigate a minor phenomenon with limited prior knowledge, often at the beginning of a larger project, to clarify a practical problem. This study relies on qualitative data from interviews and focus-group discussion with stakeholders. In particular, the research involves five lecturers teaching courses in English for Tourism who took part in interviews and

30 third-year students minoring in English for Tourism at the University of Foreign Languages and International Studies (HUFLIS), Hue University participating in focus-group discussion.

3.4 Data collection and processing

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with lecturers and focus group interviews with students. For 30 students, they were put in five groups of six to participate in focus group discussion. A member of the research team acted as a facilitator and guided the discussion. Each session lasted 67 minutes on average. The questions to guide students' discussion aimed to seek information about (1) the proportion of translation activities in courses of English for Tourism, (2) the perceived importance of translation and (3) the need of an independent translation course in their minor. For the ease and clarity of the discussion, students were allowed to speak Vietnamese.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to seek the lecturers' evaluation of the current materials for teaching English for Tourism, especially those activities related to translation. Each session of interview with the lecturers lasted around 25 minutes and were recorded with the interviewees' permission. There were three main questions that focused on (1) the proportion of translation in their teaching, (2) their points of view about having an independent course in tourism translation and (3) their expectations of what the materials should be like. The interviews were conducted either in English or in Vietnamese depending on the lecturers' preferences.

All sessions were recorded with participants' consents. Audio data obtained was uploaded to the software 'Voice to Text Pro-Transcribe' to transfer to texts, checked for accuracy and translated, if necessary, for data analysis. To anonymize the participants, each was given a code. Lecturers were coded as L1-L5 and students as S1-S30.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1 Students' needs and expectations of learning materials for translation

In terms of translation as part of a course in tourism, most of the students said that they had very few translation tasks and activities in courses they did. Nevertheless, they dealt with a lot of translation in their own studies while searching information for their exercises and assignments because most of the tourism information was in Vietnamese.

There are courses such as Tourism and Cultural Heritage, Vietnamese Geonyms with their History and Culture, and Tour Guiding that need much translation [S17].

Some students admitted that they were not sure if it conveyed the tourism nuance in their classroom presentation. Thus, they found it necessary to have some translation practice in the form of exercises or classroom activities.

In Vietnamese Geonyms, we remain the Vietnamese words places and legends, but I know some of them can be translated into English. A tourist text is to provide information for visitors. If we use too many borrowing words, we cannot communicate well with them [S6].

I think lecturers can give us homework that asks us to translate pieces of information related to the courses, then they give us feedback. If so, we can have the necessary knowledge of the course and improve translation skills [S17].

In terms of the necessity of a translation course included in the English for Tourism minor, they all agreed upon. Some students said they were struggling finding appropriate wordings when they provided information about local tourism in English in task performances in Tour Guiding class or in presentations in Tourism and Cultural Heritage class. This is one of the problems of EFL students in doing translation. Even students minoring in Translation Studies still have difficulty rendering the target texts properly. In a study exploring the supervisor's perspective on translator trainees' competence, Vo (2020a) found that trainees were heavily influenced by the foreign language and had unnatural expressions in Vietnamese, which is not professionally acceptable. Not only classroom assignments but also workplace practice require translation. One student stated:

I am currently having a part-time unpaid internship at a tourism company. One of the tasks I was asked to fulfil involves translating texts, including announcements, advertisements or news on their website. I must admit that this is the scariest thing. I do not study translation formally and I am not familiar with these texts at university, so I am not very confident [S25].

In addition, students also expected that they would be facilitated with tourism-related vocabulary, especially culture-specific terms so that they could use appropriate expressions in particular situations:

I'd prefer it that the teacher provided us with vocabulary related to the topic first. In this way, we do not have to spend too long looking up a word or expression [S4].

Evidently, there is a need for a formal, independent course in translation for tourism, which facilitates students with various topic-related vocabulary and text types, as well as familiarize them with authentic texts.

In the focus group discussion, students were also encouraged to give their opinions about what qualities they expect the learning materials should have if a course in tourism translation is offered. Their expectations varied but most of them would like the materials to be authentic (repeated 17 times), career-related (mentioned 20 times), up to date (10 times) and interesting (15 times). To make the quality of being "interesting" less obscure, a facilitator clarified it with a student who explained as follows:

The materials can be a textbook – it is good to have a textbook, or a collection of texts prepared by the lecturer, but there must be different tasks. The tasks should create fun too. We learn but we also want to play [S29].

Examples of career-relatedness and authenticity were also provided by student participants. As mentioned by student [S25], types of texts such as vocative texts (e.g., advertisements and announcements) and informative texts (e.g., news and tourist brochures) are both career-related and authentic. Some students also mentioned contracts, business emails, and receipts. In other words, students were concerned about their competence in the real-world work.

If a course in translation for tourism is offered, I will enroll in it even if I have earned my bachelor degree. I am worried that I fail to translate contracts. Imagine how disastrous it will be if it is translated inexactly. I may work for my whole life to compensate for it [S11].

This result is consonant with Vo's (2020b) findings that a majority of students of Translation Studies thought legal and commercial documents were among difficult texts to translate. As for the state of being "up to date" of the materials, students explained that the material developer should reuse or adapt recent documents from tourist companies that reflect tourism trends and forms.

Generally, students were in favor of a practical course specializing in translation for tourism. Some of the students' ideas were aligned with lecturers' opinions, which will be presented subsequently.

4.2 Lecturers' perspectives on the learning materials of translation for tourism

All the interviewed lecturers said that they did not include translation activities, even had not thought of doing so, in their classes of English for Tourism. Nonetheless, they admitted that their students failed to render appropriate tourism terms and realized that a course in translation for tourism was a good idea and the consistent state-of-the-art materials were significantly needed.

Why not a specialized course as such? I think it is necessary and it is more important if we develop our own materials for the course [L2].

One of the concerns from the lecturers coincided with students' worries about the ability to deal with different texts, implying the importance of familiarizing students with typical text types in tourism.

While translating, they must cope with many genres with different styles. The students should be exposed to as many texts of these genres as possible [L5]

Clearly, this lecturer's idea implies a need of providing genre-based materials for a translation course in tourism. The materials should be extended beyond the discipline resources. As tourism is an industry that has connections with many other economic sectors, students should also familiarize themselves with business and legal documents and styles.

Two lecturers also drew the attention to the topic-related vocabulary development and the connectivity with other courses in the minor. One opined that the design of a course in translation should, on the one hand, prepare students with skills in translation, and on the other hand, consolidate and promote language learning.

These students' minor is English for Tourism, but bear in mind that they are majoring in the English Language Studies. That is, in any circumstances, the course must be for the language's sake. They need vocabulary and grammar, I mean, both sentence and text grammar. They also need reading and writing skills. So, let's bring a translation course close to a dynamic language class rather than a traditional translation class where the lecturer gave students a passage and then asked students to read aloud the equivalent, sentence by sentence, and gave feedback [L3].

In a similar vein, another lecturer emphasized the design of materials that should promote students' engagement and encourage active learning.

The materials should contain tasks that stimulate students' critical thinking, enabling them to comprehend and evaluate the text properly before doing translation tasks [L1].

Whereas other lecturers emphasized the market satisfaction and the authenticity of the course materials, lecturer [L4] was concerned about the academic quality and sustainability of the materials. This lecturer stated that the materials should not be a collection of texts from industry. It is ideal to balance between theory and practice so that students can use the materials as a reference source even after they finish their studies.

Although the number of lecturer participants was modest, the ideas they provided have been well worth considering. The ideas are in consonant with research findings previously conducted in Indonesia, a similar setting in terms of EFL teaching and translation training. The findings of the study have implied a shape of a course in Translation for Tourism, which combines aspects of theories and practice in translation, including step-by-step procedure of translation, and translation strategies and techniques in translating tourism texts.

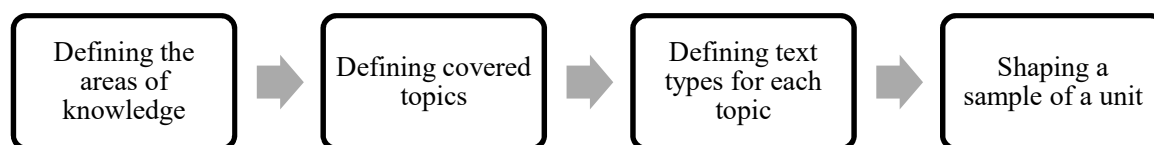
5. Towards a model of learning materials for Translation for Tourism

Based on the findings of the study, a plan for learning materials of translation for tourism is made. Both teachers and students have concerns about specialized vocabulary. Therefore, the materials should have a vocabulary section as a main area of knowledge to equip students with the specialized terminology through activities. In addition, as students pointed out, they used

many borrowings as a result of a lack of knowledge of translation strategies and techniques. In response to this, the teaching materials should include a portion that equips students with translation techniques and strategies. This is crucial as Tran et al. (2024) pointed out that in translating for tourism industry, translators deal with numerous culture-specific terms and thus they must incorporate a variety of translation strategies.

The practical portion of the materials should combine genre-based and topic-based designs to meet the demands for understating the text types and the specific topics in tourism. It is clear that a genre-based design is helpful to expose students to different texts and styles. As tourism is an industry that has interconnections with various economic sectors, it operates a wide range of text types, ranging from short texts with descriptive and appealing language such as advertisements, instructions and announcements, to longer texts such as financial reports and contracts. These texts or parts of them should be incorporated into the course materials to expose students to the authenticity of the career documents. Moreover, the interconnections with other sectors allow for many subtopics within tourism. Topic-based design, therefore, facilitates students with ease for the development of topic-related vocabulary.

Drawing on the findings of the present study, a procedure for material development is identified and proposal of materials of translation for tourism.



In the first stage, two areas of language knowledge were identified, namely, vocabulary and genres. In addition, for the purpose of translation for tourism, knowledge of tourism is also added. In terms of topics and text types, as they are not the main concerns of this study, the decision was made based on the findings of another study within the larger research project. However, a typical unit within the learning materials can be shaped from the ideas and suggestions in the surveys with teachers and students, including the following sections:

Vocabulary Development consists of terminologies in travel and tourism. Classroom tasks and activities including definition matching, gap filling and equivalent renderings. These activities provide students with bilingual competence to be prepared for the translation tasks.

Reading as a pre-translation stage engages students into the contents of the tourism documents. Tasks and activities include critical thinking questions. The purpose of this section is to draw students' attention to the special terms, sentence structures and the genre of the text. Strategies and techniques to handle individual instances should also be addressed in this stage.

Translation as a main stage is where the text is translated into the target language.

Post-translation gives students a chance to polish their text to be culturally appropriate.

6. Conclusion

This study has pointed out the necessity for an inquiry into lecturers and students' points of view on the design of a course in translation for students minoring in English for Tourism and their expectations of the contents and organization of learning materials. The information from surveys with lecturers and students has been conformable, highlighting the importance of a course materials to optimize that the materials contain chapters related to knowledge about characteristics of tourism language the study for students of English for Tourism. They valued endogenous material development and held expectations that the materials should be authentic, career-related and up-to-date. Lecturers also expected the materials to support language development for the sake of English for career teaching and students' lifelong learning.

The study is significant to the extent that it lays the groundwork for materials development for courses in English for career, a state-of-the-art direction of teaching English, especially in Vietnam, where tourism has always been a spearhead industry and a green pasture for young human resources. The underlying drawback of the study, though, is a lack of literature (as stated earlier) in regard of the baselines for materials development in general and in specialized English in particular. However, there is an advantage in its disadvantage, that is, the study enjoys its fresh perspective on the issue with a suggested model of materials development that can be relevant to other similar courses or training programs.

Acknowledgement

The present study reports part of the data obtained in a larger research project (coded as DHH2023-07-95) funded by Hue University. The research team, therefore, would like to acknowledge the grant.

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