# Google Translate's Performance in Translating Commercial Contracts: A Linguistics Errors Analysis

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**Abstract:** *The study investigates the effectiveness of Google Translate (GT) in translating five commercial contracts from English to Vietnamese, focusing on the identification and analysis of linguistic errors. Translations of five commercial contracts were selected for data analysis due to their variety in terms of purpose, length, and linguistic complexity, all of which offer an extensive basis for assessing translation performance. A systematic approach was employed to assess translation quality, utilizing quantitative methods to classify errors into categories including Sense (SENS), Terminology (TERM), Clarity (CL), and Reference Documents (RD). The findings reveal that TERM errors are the most prevalent, accounting for 30.91% of total errors, followed by CL errors at 19.39%. The study highlights GT's challenges in accurately interpreting technical terms and maintaining clarity, which are crucial for legal documents. It emphasizes the necessity of post-editing by human translators to enhance translation accuracy and reliability.*

**Keywords:** *Google Translate, commercial contracts, translation quality assessment, linguistic errors*

## INTRODUCTION

There are hundreds of different languages spoken throughout the world, each of which represents a distinct culture, history, and means of communication amongst people in different countries. In the increasingly globalized world today, language barriers can make it challenging to access information (Rivera-Trigueros, 2022). As a means of bridging language barriers and providing communication channels among people of different languages and cultures, translation plays an important role in the advancement of global understanding.

With the rapid development of technology, the advent of machine translation (MT) tools and especially the availability of Google Translate (GT), translation practices have seen a significant transformation. Since its introduction in 2006, GT has gained its popularity by providing translation support for 133 languages worldwide. Over the past decades, GT has been widely used in various aspects of language education, especially in translation training and practices.

Google Translate has become increasingly popular in language learning since the tool offers a number of benefits. Language learners have easy access to GT with the use of websites and online apps via smart devices connected to the Internet (Jolley & Maimone, 2022). In addition, the use of GT and other MT tools provides an effective solution to a great number of expensive and time-consuming tasks that require human translators (Azer & Aghayi, 2015).

However, the widespread use of GT has brought about several problems. Language students tend to depend on GT as an instant instrument to complete their assignments, yet they are not sure if the translations from GT are good enough (Brahmana et al., 2020). Many students easily accept translations from GT without questioning its quality. GT translations sometimes produce inaccurate or unusable outputs that would hardly be produced by human translators (Alsalem, 2019). In other words, GT's translations are not as accurate as those generated by a qualified translator, and the quality of GT translation may not be up to the standard produced by a qualified human translator (Amilia & Yuwono, 2020). GT's translation is far from perfect owing to the high level of complexity of languages, which have many different meanings for words, different ways to interpret sentences, and grammatical rules that occur in one language but do not in another (Okpor, 2014). This signifies the importance of conducting the Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) of GT's outputs.

Assessment of the quality of GT translations may benefit trainee translators as they need to be aware of the degree of accuracy and the

types of errors made by GT so as to improve the works (Hönig, 1997, as cited in Zehnalová, 2013). As a result, users can determine how to use GT effectively in their own ways. In other words, assessment of the quality of GT translations helps users to measure and modify the GT's outputs (Görög, 2014).

### Research aims

This study's main goal is to determine the common linguistic errors GT makes when translating commercial contracts from English to Vietnamese. The study aims to classify these problems in a systematic manner by examining the translations' sense, terminology, reference documents, clarity, omission, grammar, spelling, punctuation and addition errors.

Additionally, the study hopes to present an extensive framework for evaluating an MT tool like GT in legal contexts, contributing significant knowledge to the field of translation studies and providing helpful suggestions for using GT effectively in professional contexts.

### Research question

What common linguistic errors does GT make when translating commercial contracts from English into Vietnamese?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Google Translate

Google Translate (GT), introduced by Google in 2006, is a statistical text retrieval system that is predicated on corpuses that gather language data from massive amounts of web data (Kirchhoff et al., 2011, as cited in Alhaisoni, 2017). Since its launch, GT's translation quality has significantly improved as a result of the shift from statistical MT to neural MT over time (Pratiwi et al., 2023). Furthermore, the system's accuracy and dependability have increased through regular updates and improvement of the underlying algorithms, language models, and training data which enhance the system's operation.

GT's rapid development has bridged the language barriers for many people in the world. With so many languages supported, GT is used by a large number of people worldwide. After beginning to provide translation services for a small number of languages, GT has grown over time to support over 100 languages, including several major languages spoken throughout the world including English, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, French, and many more (Pratiwi et al., 2023). With a wide coverage of language services, GT enables users of different geographical and linguistic backgrounds to communicate effectively.

GT and *wordreference.com* are the two most commonly mentioned online dictionaries and tools in all languages (Jin & Deifell, 2013). Google, or Google application programming interface/products, is the most widely utilized MT system among those in use (Rivera-Trigueros, 2022). GT has been widely used for several reasons. Firstly, GT is preferable due to its speed and cost. GT can translate into almost all written languages worldwide. Secondly, GT helps language learners to deal with grammar and vocabulary problems when learning English as a foreign language (Habeeb, 2020). There are fewer grammatical and content problems in the work produced by GT. Research shows that students had a good experience selecting vocabulary items and writing better English when they used GT for writing in English (Tsai, 2019, as cited in Dahmash, 2020).

In addition, GT is quicker and more accurate when translating collocations and phrases as compared to traditional dictionaries such as Oxford School Dictionary (Josefsson, 2011). In brief, GT is advantageous among other MT tools because of its convenience and efficiency.

However, GT has several drawbacks. It might not translate a text accurately or naturally, and it also fails to convey the context or cultural nuances of a text which might affect the entire meaning of the original (Pratiwi et al., 2023). Furthermore, GT frequently overlooks the context-specific meanings of words (Jin & Deifell, 2013). While

there are situations when GT is beneficial, the tool can only translate words according to their literal meaning (Nila & Susanto, 2017). Moreover, the context cannot be recognized when the source text (ST) is a complete sentence or even a whole text. As a consequence, mistranslation may occur and lead to inaccurate translation of the contents.

The unguided use of GT can result in sluggish learning for students with low English proficiency levels (Hardini & Dewi, 2021). Students who rely on GT can easily produce translation texts without fully understanding how different components of the sentence are put together. They are unable to decode the meaning of the texts or make new sentences.

In conclusion, GT has its own merits as well as limitations.

## Translation quality assessment

### *Definition of translation quality assessment (TQA)*

TQA is the process of assessing translation quality (Parra, 2005, as cited in Mateo, 2014). As shown in its name itself, the function of TQA is to evaluate the quality of translation. While TQA can be called "a term", which is frequently used to refer to a field that deals with translation quality (Zehnalová, 2013), it is not only a term which is just utilized in relation to a particular subject.

TQA has become a field of study due to the intense interest it continues to arouse among various groups, including practitioners, translation organizations, scholars, and teachers. TQA is driven by both academic and commercial factors including the need to assess students' work and the demand to guarantee high-quality translation products (Alina, 2005, as cited in Zehnalová, 2013).

TQA has always been of interest within the translation community worldwide (Askari & Rahim, 2015; Thelen, 2008) and become one of the most heated topics of discussion in the industry (Alina, 2005, as cited in Zehnalová, 2013).

### *Criteria of translation quality assessment*

With regard to TQA, the literature shows different viewpoints and approaches by which a translation ought to be evaluated. In other words, evaluation criteria in translation assessment are a contentious topic, and differing opinions may result in differing interpretations. According to Williams (2009), when undertaking TQA, it is essential to determine degrees of goodness, regardless of whether the focus is on products, performance, or competence. Hence, validity and reliability can be chosen as the two criteria for assessing the quality of a translation work (Williams, 2009).

Thelen (2008) develops two sets of criteria of TQA for two groups: one for professionals and another for students undertaking translation training. In terms of TQA for professionals, there are four subcategories including accuracy, style, grammar and formatting. With regard to translation training for students, there are seven subcategories such as mistranslation, accuracy, terminology, language, style, country and consistency. Both TQA practices appear to concentrate mainly on the target text (TT) as a product.

Stejskal (2006, as cited in Mateo, 2014) claims that the producer, process, and product, known as the "3Ps" of quality assessment, can be used to analyze the quality of translation. Yet, the methods, metrics, and instruments used in each of these cases to assess quality are unrelated to one another and instead concentrate on distinct dimensions.

### *Models and approach of translation quality assessment*

As mentioned earlier, TQA has been an area of great interest which requires further investigation and research. Thus, in order to produce the most optimal assessment of translation quality, different models have been developed since the 20$^{th}$ century.

Pham (2013) develops two TQA models including non-comparative models and comparative models. The non-comparative models focus

only on the target language (TL) (Maier, 2009). The comparative-models synthesize various TQA models (Newmark, 1988; Steiner, 1998, as cited in Hoang, 2006; House, 2001, as cited in Pham, 2013; Nord, 2016). Each model is elaborated in the following: Newmark's (1988) model of criticism comprises the following steps: analyze the text in the source language (SL), view the text from the translator's perspective, compare the translation with the original, evaluate the translator's standards for referential and pragmatic accuracy in the translation, and determine the work's significance within the TL culture (Pham, 2013).

The most important principle of a theory of translational action is known as the "Skopos rule", which states that every action is dictated by its goal, or or Skopos (Reiß & Vermeer, 1984, as cited in Nord, 2016). In Nord's (2016) model, a translation can be considered as "adequate" if it satisfies the following criteria: translation issues must be resolved in accordance with the Skopos, and the finished TT is lastly compared to the specifications in the translation brief for quality control.

According to Steiner (1998, as cited in Hoang, 2006), when comparing the ST and the TT while assessing a translation, field, tenor, and mode are the three register components that should be considered.

According to House (1997, as cited in Pham, 2013), the assessor should always be compelled to shift from a macro- to a micro-analytical focus, from concerns about ideology, function, genre, and register to the communicative significance of specific language concepts.

Furthermore, House's model has the linguistic situational particularities of the ST and the TT analyzed, the two texts are compared, and an evaluation of their relative match is produced (Askari & Rahim, 2015).

These models share a similarity: The SL text and the TL text must be compared in order to conduct the quality assessment of a translation. To summarize, while non-comparative models concentrate only on the TT, comparative models focus on not only TT but also ST. Different TQA models have been applied and contributed to the development of TQA.

However, due to space constraints, only some prominent models in the literature are reviewed.

### Functional-Componential Approach (FCA)

Functional-Componential Approach (FCA) is a theoretical model developed by Colina (2008) to assess the quality of translations, wherein translations are assessed in light of the text's purpose and the preferences of the target audience. The FCA adopts a functional approach to error and a componential perspective of quality by incorporating the "fit-for-purpose" motto as a guiding concept in TQA, which is consistent with earlier empirical investigations (Waddington, 2000; Colina, 2008, 2009; Jiménez-Crespo, 2009, as cited in Mateo et al., 2017). A unique feature of the FCA is its dual focus, which assesses translations according to their alignment with the text's intended purpose and the target audience's preferences in addition to their linguistic accuracy and adherence to the original language. This dual emphasis guarantees an extensive assessment that extends beyond linguistic accuracy. In conclusion, the FCA represents a paradigm shift in the evaluation of translation quality by adopting a more purpose-driven approach in place of traditional error-focused approaches. By highlighting the interaction of functional relevance and linguistic accuracy, it guarantees that translations are assessed in a way that accurately reflects their worth and practical use.

### Modular Assessment Pack tool (MAP): The practical tool based on FCA

The Multifaceted Assessment Protocol (MAP), a flexible instrument created to handle both the macro textual and micro textual components of translation qualitative quality, operationalizes this functional and componential approach to TQA. Each of the two separate but related modules that make up the MAP has a specific function in the assessment procedure.

According to Mateo et al. (2017), the module, which serves as a four-dimensional assessment rubric, is the first module. Together, these four dimensions define the qualities of a high-quality translation and represent

the fundamental ideas of the Functional-Componential Approach (FCA). The qualitative module, which is based on the functional idea of adequacy, focuses on how effectively the translation satisfies the expectations of its target audience and accomplishes its intended goal. The rubric's dimensions are further subdivided into specific descriptors, offering a fine-grained evaluation of the text's quality. With the use of the descriptors and their corresponding point values, assessors can grade translations in a methodical manner using precise standards. Consistency, openness, and dependability in qualitative assessments are guaranteed by this methodology.

In order to supplement the qualitative analysis, the second module, which is referred to as the metric module, introduces a calculator interface that quantifies errors based on an error typology. This typology assigns particular point deductions to each kind of errors, which include grammatical faults, omissions, and terminological inconsistencies. The metric module offers a numerical depiction of the translation's quality at the microtextural level by methodically documenting and assessing these inaccuracies. This quantitative approach guarantees that the evaluation catches the subtleties of linguistic and functional performance in addition to highlighting areas that require. When combined, these two modules allow the MAP to provide two different but complementing quality indicators for the translation under review. The MAP ensures that both the functional and linguistic aspects are carefully considered by combining both methods to enable a thorough and multifaceted assessment of translation quality.

## Commercial contracts

Commercial contracts are written agreements containing contents such as business issues or commercial matters mutually agreed upon by the parties (Tridarani & Kuniawan, 2020). Commercial contracts cover more ground than simply the exchange of goods and services between consumers and sellers. Although there is not a precise definition provided by the principles, it is assumed that the term "commercial" contracts

should be interpreted broadly to cover not only trade transactions involving the supply or exchange of goods or services but also other kinds of economic transactions like agreements pertaining to investments and/or concessions, contracts for professional services, etc. (International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT, 1994).

There are 10 major types of commercial contracts listed as follows (Cooper & Kuprovska, 2019):

1. Contracts for the sale of goods.
2. Distribution and franchise agreements.
3. Personal services contracts.
4. Intellectual property licenses.
5. Commercial real estate leases.
6. Commercial real estate sale agreements.
7. Merger and Acquisition agreements.
8. Construction contracts.
9. Loan agreements.
10. Insurance contracts.

## Previous studies

Quality of GT has been the topic of substantial research in the field. Several studies have examined the quality of GT's translations of business correspondences (Riadi et al., 2020), academic abstracts (Tongpoon-Patanasorn & Griffith, 2020), newspapers (Foradi et al., 2022), and legal documents (Alkatheery, 2023). Findings from previous research highlight Google Translate's limitations in accurately comprehending the contextual meaning of texts. The overall comprehensibility and usability of GT were generally found to be at a moderate level. Moreover, the quality of abstracts translated by GT may not fully meet the language standards expected in academic writing. The

most frequent errors produced by GT included fragmented sentences, incorrect punctuation, and improper capitalization.

Previous studies show that GT outperforms the translation of Persian texts into English and that it outperforms the translation of the entire text at the sentence level. Furthermore, the quality of the translations of various newspaper texts including sports, political, cultural, economic, and scientific varied (Foradi et al., 2022). For legal documents, machine translation was not beneficial at translating legal terms and structures, even though it produced an output that was understandable (Alkatheery, 2023).

Obviously, despite the popularity of investigation regarding the translation quality across various text genres, previous research on GT's translations of commercial contracts remains scarce. In other words, despite the importance of commercial contracts used in business transactions, there is still a lack of studies looking into how effective GT is in translating these types of business documents. This motivates the researcher to carry out this study to enhance our understanding of pros and cons of GT in translating business documents with a focus on commercial contracts. In addition, its findings could contribute to our existing knowledge of translation machine tools and its application in translation and language study.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study design

The Framework for Corpus-based Assessment (FCA)=based practical tool, known as the Modular Assessment Pack (MAP), was adopted as a guideline to assess the GT's translation of commercial contracts by identifying the types and quantifying the percentage of errors. The MAP's qualitative analysis modules were adapted to assess how effectively GT performs while translating commercial contracts from English to Vietnamese.

This study does not use the quantitative modules of MAP due to the time-consuming nature of a quantitative assessment, which

necessitates a systemic computation of error rates and percentages across several texts.

## Sample and sampling procedures

The data for this study included five commercial contracts in English, which were Agreement for Extension of Lease, Contract for Sale of Goods, International Distributorship Agreement, Event Photography Contract, Legal Consultancy Agreement. The five contracts were downloaded from Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority [SMEDA], n.d.) (See Appendix 1 for the sources of the five contracts).

The five contracts were selected as research samples because they offer a thorough basis for assessing translation accuracy owing to their diversity in terms of aim, length, and linguistic complexity. First, in order to establish a starting point for comparison with the more complicated contracts in the study, the author has chosen to start with the Agreement for Extension of Lease, which is the most fundamental commercial contract form among those investigated. The shift from a simple contract to more complex ones guarantees a methodical and multifaceted approach to discovering and correcting translation errors. The Contract for Sale of Goods outlines trade-related terms and commercial transactions, providing insight into the accuracy needed in business transactions. The International Distributorship Agreement adds cross-border components that necessitate careful consideration of legal and cultural differences. The Event Photography Contract is an ideal example of a service-oriented contract, highlighting the significance of clarity and accuracy in service-oriented areas. Lastly, the Legal Consultancy Agreement reflects the formal and technical nature of legal terminology by emphasizing professional services.

The contracts were taken from the same database to maintain uniformity in language and structure. This method lessens the possibility of

variations in the usage of language and formatting between various databases, strengthening the accuracy and reliability of the assessment process. In general, this technique guarantees the consistency of the selected contracts' linguistic features, facilitating an accurate assessment of the translation quality of various types of contracts.

### Research instruments

The five English commercial contracts were translated into Vietnamese using GT. The GT translations were analyzed using the quantitative module adapted from FCA and MAP. The first step was selecting the contracts to be served as the research sample, translating the contracts using GT and analyzing them. In the second step, which was also the main step of the TQA process, the author identified the error types using the quantitative module adapted from FCA and MAP. The last step entailed aggregating the results, in which the author compiled a summary of every error discovered and its proportionate distribution to determine the most common errors GT makes. Ultimately, the drawbacks of GT in translating commercial contracts were demonstrated.

The contracts were put into MW files and then entered into GT for translation. The GT translations were archived in different MW files for comparison. Both the original and the translated versions of the contracts are counted using MW's word count algorithm. The length of the original contracts varies between 600 and 2,500 words, whereas the GT translation versions range from 700 to 3,300 words. The corpus consists of five original contracts in English and its corresponding translations in Vietnamese, totaling 19,825 words, which function as the data for analysis. Furthermore, statistical calculation and enumeration were executed on ME files (See Appendix 2) for the purpose of tracking and generating comments on various metrics from the analysis of the translations produced by GT.

## Assessment guideline

### *Step 1: Data preparation: selection of ST*

Five commercial contracts have been chosen to serve as the study's ST.

a. Translating

In the study, the chosen ST are translated into Vietnamese using GT (GT).

b. Using tools to analyze

Excel files: The author utilized Microsoft Excel as a tool to record, classify errors, and calculate error statistics.

c. Reference documents

To ensure translation accuracy, a variety of dictionaries and translation reference manuals are employed.

### *Step 2: Quantitative analysis: Identifying linguistic errors*

The following linguistic errors are found and noted in the TT using the quantitative module adapted from FCA and MAP.

**Table 1: Error Types**

| Error Type | Description |
|---|---|
| **SENS (Sense):** | Errors that cause the ST to be misinterpreted or misrepresented. |
| **TERM (Terminology):** | Misuse of technical terms in contracts. |
| **RD (Reference Documents):** | Errors referring to the failure to follow established reference documents. |
| **CL (Clarity):** | Errors that make the TT unclear or obscure. |
| **OM (Omission):** | Error that arises when there is content appearing in the ST but does not present in the TT. |
| **GR (Grammar):** | Errors in grammatical structure. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **SP (Spelling):** | Spelling errors. |
| **PT (Punctuation):** | Errors in punctuation. |
| **AD (Addition):** | Error that arises when there is content appearing in the TT that does not appear in the ST. |

After identifying the specific errors in the ST, the following steps are implemented to assess the ST.

***Documenting the errors***

a. Record the error type.

b. Determine the total number of errors.

c. Calculate the proportion of each type of error to the total by using the formula.

*Percentage of Error Type = (Number of Specific Error Type/Total Number of Errors) x 100*

***Collecting and presenting examples***

a. For each type of error, extract phrases that demonstrate distinctive errors.

b. Give each example an annotation.

c. Present translation from GT and the suggested translation, which is based on the references.

d. Provide explanation of the error and its consequences.

***Step 3: Aggregating assessment results***

a. Provide an overview of all errors found and their proportionate distribution.

b. Determine the most common errors that GT makes.

c. Talk about the drawbacks of translating commercial contracts with GT.

## Validity and reliability

The systematic approach is employed to guarantee that the methods accurately measure what they are intended to measure.

To begin with, the researcher studied and reviewed previous research to identify suitable TQA models and frameworks to apply to this study which uses commercial contracts as the research materials. After the reviewing process, the researcher integrated well-known models and frameworks from prominent scholars in the field of TQA, including FCA and MAP with adjustments to build a TQA framework that fits the scope of this study. Subsequently, five commercial contracts obtained from the Legal Services Department of SMEDA were selected based on their standard and conformity to legal requirements. Also, the researcher carried out extra verifications to make sure the contracts were credible enough to serve as study samples. This entailed confirming the contracts' validity and evaluating how relevant they were to the aims of the study. These attempts were made to guarantee suitability and precision in the framework's design for the TQA process.

The same findings can be consistently achieved by employing the same methodology since the author implemented consistent techniques for gathering and analyzing data, ensuring consistency throughout the process of TQA.

In order to enable accurate comparisons, the author utilized the TQA process which involved meticulously analyzing features of the contracts to identify mistranslated ones and produce more suitable translations for those mistranslations. All of these efforts were carefully documented in an extensive file containing features investigated in the research.

In summary, the reliability of the findings was enhanced through meticulous documentation of data collection procedures and analytical processes, coupled with the consistent application of translation assessment and error calculation techniques.

## RESULTS

The analysis of error types highlights critical aspects of Google Translate's performance across the five commercial contracts. The most common errors are terminology (TERM), which suggests that it is difficult to handle technical words consistently across all contracts. Moreover, the fact that there are only two cases of punctuation (PT) errors, and five cases of addition (AD) errors, shows how well GT maintains the structure of the ST. Remarkably, there are no spelling (SP) errors recorded, which demonstrates GT's ability to process vocabulary in the ST correctly.

**Table 2: Proportion of Error Types**

| Error Types | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | Total | Proportion (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SENS (Sense) | 3 | 2 | 10 | 7 | 9 | 31 | 18.79 |
| TERM (Terminology) | 3 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 12 | 51 | 30.91 |
| RD (Reference Documents) | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 7 | 31 | 18.79 |
| CL (Clarity) | 0 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 12 | 32 | 19.39 |
| OM (Omission) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 4.24 |
| GR (Grammar) | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 3.64 |
| SP (Spelling) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| PT (Punctuation) | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1.21 |
| AD (Addition) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3.03 |
| Total | | | | | | 165 | 100 |

The GT's translation of the five commercial contracts is examined by looking into the error types. With 51 errors (30.91%) recorded, Terminology (TERM) errors are the most common, indicating a considerable challenge in processing technical terms equally across all contracts. With 32 occurrences (19.3%), Clarity (CL) come in second, showing GT's problems generating translations that are simple to comprehend. Sense (SENS) with 31 errors (18.79%) are also common, underscoring problems in maintaining the ST's intended meaning.

The 31 Reference Document (RD) error type indicates difficulties in following reference documents, which is a crucial component of contract translations. Only S4 and S5 include omission (OM) errors (7 occurrences, accounting for 4.24%), indicating rare failures to maintain important information from the ST.

With only six occurrences (3.64%), the Grammar (GR) errors are insignificant, demonstrating comparatively good grammatical performance. The small number of Punctuation (PT) (2 occurrences, accounting for 1.21%) and Addition (AD) (5 occurrences, accounting for 3.03%) further demonstrates GT's proficiency in retaining the structure of the ST. Interestingly, all of the ST show accuracy in this area with no Spelling (SP) errors.

Since SENS, TERM, RD, and CL are the most common errors that were found in the examination of GT's translations of commercial contracts from English to Vietnamese, each of them will be demonstrated in the following examples, which also shed light on how they affect the accuracy of the translated contracts.

## SENS (Sense) errors

**Table 3: SENS Errors**

| ST | GT translation | Source (S&T) | Suggested translations |
|---|---|---|---|
| survive | *tồn tại* | 3 | *còn hiệu lực* |
| pursue (remedies) | *thực hiện* | 4 | yêu cầu |

### *Survive*

**S3:** This obligation of the Distributor shall **survive** for [insert number] years after the date of expiration or termination hereof.

**T3:** *Nghĩa vụ này của Nhà phân phối sẽ **tồn tại** trong [điền số] năm sau ngày hết hạn hoặc chấm dứt Hợp đồng này.*

GT translates the term "survive" (in S3) as "tồn tại" (in T3) which is not appropriate in the context of the sentence. In other words, the GT translation does not convey the meaning intended in the contract. Therefore, the suggested translation "còn hiệu lực" is recommended to convey the meaning in this regard.

***Pursue***

**S4:** In the event the Business fails to make any of the payments referenced by the deadline set forth in Clause 3 (2), the Photographer shall have the right, but is not obligated, to **pursue** any or all of the following remedies.

**T4:** *Trong trường hợp Doanh nghiệp không thực hiện bất kỳ khoản thanh toán nào theo thời hạn quy định tại Điều 3 (2), Nhiếp ảnh gia sẽ có quyền, nhưng không bắt buộc,* ***thực hiện*** *bất kỳ hoặc tất cả các biện pháp khắc phục sau.*

As can be seen, the word "pursue" (in S4) means "following someone or something". However, in contracts, it means "to actively request a resolution" to a specific issue or problem inside the contract. Nevertheless, GT fails to convey the intended meaning, resulting in the two translations "thực hiện" and "theo đuổi", which are incorrect.

In short, the results suggest that GT finds it difficult to identify the intended meaning of these words. When translating these words, GT frequently chooses the translation that is most commonly employed. Consequently, errors and mistranslations may happen diminishing the accuracy of the GT translation.

## TERM (Terminology)

**Table 4: TERM Errors**

| ST | GT translation | Source (S&T) | Suggested translations |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nonwaiver | *Không từ chối* | 2 | *Điều khoản không khước từ* |
| Assignment | *Phân công* | 3,4,5 | Chuyển nhượng |

In T2 and T8, GT's translation of the word "Nonwaiver" as "Không từ chối" does not accurately reflect the legal meaning that is intended in Vietnamese contracts. "Nonwaiver" usually refers to a legal clause or provision, usually pertaining to the contractual terms or obligations that express the decision not to waive certain rights under an agreement.

Therefore, "Điều khoản không khước từ" is the recommended translation which can convey the meaning of a Non-waiver clause.

In T3, T4, and T5, the term "Assignment" is mistranslated as "Phân công" by GT. The term "Assignment" in contracts is used to describe the transmission of duties or rights from one party to another. Hence, a better translation would be "Chuyển nhượng", which is accepted in Vietnamese legal documents which means the shift of duties and rights from one party to another.

The reason for mistranslation of these terms is that GT cannot recognize technical terms as distinct features of the contracts, thus it translates each term based on its common meaning. Consequently, the formality and precision of the contract language are diminished by these errors, which might reduce the clarity and legal efficacy of the contracts.

## RD (Reference Documents)

**Table 5: RD Errors**

| ST | GT translation | Source (S&T) | Suggested translations |
|---|---|---|---|
| term or provision | *điều khoản hoặc điều khoản* | 2 | *điều khoản hoặc quy định* |
| right, title, or interest | *quyền, danh hiệu hoặc lợi ích* | 3 | quyền, quyền sở hữu và quyền lợi |

Firstly, GT translates "term" and "provision" (in S2) as "*điều khoản hoặc điều khoản*" (in T2) which causes lexical repetition and sounds unnatural in Vietnamese. It is acceptable to translate "term" and "provision" differently in order to avoid repetition and improve clarity. In this way, the meaning of each term is precisely conveyed while maintaining coherence in the Vietnamese translation.

Secondly, the term "title" in the expression "right, title, or interest" denotes the right of ownership or legal title to an item rather than "danh hiệu" ("title of honor" in English). Therefore, to appropriately express the legal rights or ownership, it is better to translate the word "title" as "quyền sở hữu" instead of as "danh hiệu".

To conclude, GT finds it difficult to choose a suitable meaning of a word which has multiple meanings depending on the context. Therefore, GT makes two mistakes. First, it translates the pairs word for word, for instance, "term or provision" as "điều khoản hoặc điều khoản". Second, GT separately translates each single word without taking the pair or trio's overall meaning into account, which makes the meaning redundant, e.g., "right, title, or interest" as "quyền, danh hiệu hoặc lợi ích".

## CLARITY (CL)

**Table 6: CL Errors**

| Vague word | GT translation | Source (S&T) | Suggested translations |
|---|---|---|---|
| undue | *quá đáng* | 5 | quá mức |

The term "undue" is translated by GT as "quá đáng" to convey something that goes beyond the norm which makes the text sound very colloquial. It would be better to use "quá mức" in order to maintain the formality and accuracy of the contract.

According to Obeidat and Jaradat (2024), MT is the automatic process of translating text between languages utilizing neural networks and computational algorithms. Also, it is a branch of artificial intelligence (AI) that models the connections between words and phrases in many languages by utilizing neural networks and attention mechanisms (Vaswani et al., 2017, as cited in Obeidat & Jaradat, 2024). However, with regard to human translation, the three stages of human translation training are typically skimming, drafting, and revision. Because drafting and editing are not inherent to machine translation (MT) processes, contextual errors frequently arise, highlighting the necessity for deeper comprehension of domain-specific terminology.

Overall, GT generally fails to understand the context within the sentence that contains the word. As a result, GT produces the translation out of context which makes the whole sentence obscure. Additionally, GT fails to maintain a desired degree of formality of those vague words in contracts. In some cases, though the meaning of the word is correctly conveyed, the sentence sounds too informal to be acceptable as the language of the contracts.

## DISCUSSION

The analysis of the linguistics errors in the translation of five commercial contracts produced by GT shows that the highest proportion of error type is TERM errors with 30.91%. The reason for such errors could be explained that when translating, GT usually uses the definition that is most commonly used, which can cause issues when translating words with complicated or context-specific meanings. The findings somewhat contradict those of the Al-Jarf's (2016) study which showed that GT can accurately translate several technical phrases from English into Arabic. The results of Al-Jarf's (2016) study also show that GT continues to offer Arabic translations for English phrases that have restrictions in terms of meaning, syntax, morphology, and orthography, particularly when it comes to compounds. Furthermore, the research of Abdulaal (2022) reveals that both MT and human translation made mistakes in homonymy, polysemy, syntactic ambiguities, fuzzy hedges, synonyms, metaphors and symbols. However, in the two literary works, human translation has outperformed all MT systems in terms of homonymy and syntactic ambiguity. Ultimately, it can be concluded that despite MT systems' benefits, their shortcomings should not be disregarded and should be addressed through post-editing.

The CL errors constitute 19.39% of all error types found in the GT translation which is the second in the rank. There are several reasons for GT's high clarity errors. First, GT finds it difficult to correctly read the complicated and ambiguous words used in commercial contracts. Furthermore, Vietnamese and English sentence structures differ, which

can result in ambiguity that makes the text harder to read. Additionally, GT does not comprehend context, which is crucial for legal texts since meaning frequently depends on the particular situation. The result is similar to Fitria's (2021) research which found that the translation of an Indonesian article into English by GT was unclear. This indicates that GT is confused when dealing with phrases or word combinations that have multiple layers of meaning.

Furthermore, SENS and RD errors are the third common type of error produced by GT, accounting for 18.79% of all errors. These errors result from GT's inability to understand the writer's intended meaning, particularly in legal documents. Complex terms or structures in commercial contracts are frequently misunderstood by the translation machine. Furthermore, GT might not fully capture the legal meanings of some terms or phrases, which results in inaccuracy of the translation. The accuracy and clarity of the translation are impacted by the large number of sense errors that arise from this. The findings are supported by Rahmannia and Triyono's (2019) study which shows that the most common type of errors made by GT is a deviation of meaning. Obviously, it is crucial to review GT translation for accuracy since GT may not be able to understand words within the context and may fail to produce accurate translation.

In short, translations produced by GT should be reviewed and improved by utilizing post-editing by human translators to fix these errors. Koponen (2016) maintains that translation works produced by MT as draft versions should be post-edited by human translators. Human translators tend to be able to identify and correct errors including overtly and covertly erroneous errors. In doing so, the overall quality of the MT, particularly GT translation of commercial documents, can be close to satisfaction.

## CONCLUSION

The findings show that GT still has problems dealing with specialized terms, clarity, and adherence to reference documents, although it can translate simple words and common phrases with an acceptable level of accuracy. With regards to the examination, mistranslations frequently happen in cases where exact technical terms are needed and the system is unable to adequately convey domain-specific meanings. Furthermore, problems occur when GT does not always adhere to reference documents, which results in incorrect terms usage. These limitations indicate that, even though the tool can be a helpful tool for rapid translations, human intervention is still necessary to guarantee correctness, consistency, and contextual appropriateness, especially in academic and professional contexts.

### Implications for students, teachers, and course designers

Students who are studying translation courses or desire to become professional translators could benefit from the findings of the study. Understanding GT's limitations can help students make better use of GT to deal with translation of business documents while studying translation courses at university. Having an understanding about the level of accuracy in GT translation as well as the error types that GT produces help students become less dependent on GT for outputs but know how to integrate GT and other MT tools into their translation practice effectively to generate quality translation outcomes.

The findings from the study also help teachers understand the benefits and drawbacks of GT and know how to better integrate GT into translation training. To begin with, teachers can guide students in analyzing the quality of GT translation step by step from analyzing the ST (while taking into account its linguistic features) to assessing the quality of the TT produced by GT (with regard to similar types of errors identified in this study). The findings of the study can contribute to the enhancement of professional practices for language teachers in translation teaching.

With guidance from teachers, students are able to identify errors produced by GT. For example, when a translation of technical terms has dubious acceptability errors, which means the translated word is not equivalent to the original and is not culturally accepted in Vietnamese, students can refer to reliable sources such as contracts in Vietnamese for alternative translation. Similarly, translation of conditional sentences may be grammatically incorrect due to GT's failure to rearrange components of the sentence when translating the inversion structure with negative adverbials, students can correct such errors by deciding how the structure is expressed in Vietnamese to edit the GT's translation.

In order to improve students' translation skills and help them deal with challenges when learning translation courses, teachers might include case studies, models, and practical exercises that simulate real-world translation scenarios. For instance, translation practices may include case studies which allow students to identify errors and correct them to improve GT's translation quality.

The results of the study can be a useful source of reference for translation course designers. Training modules could be designed based on the study's findings regarding the errors generated from using GT to translate business documents, e.g., translation quality assessment techniques and post-editing GT translation guides.

## Limitations and recommendations for further research

The study has some limitations. Firstly, since the study used only a small sample of five commercial contracts was selected for analysis, a larger sample might offer more insights into the accuracy and common errors GT makes. Secondly, because the materials were analyzed manually to identify mistranslations, some errors might go unnoticed and were not examined in the study. In addition, Furthermore, as the translation was performed using the specific version of Google Translate (GT) available at the time of the study, the findings may have limited generalizability, given that GT's output is subject to variation over time and continual system updates.

Future research should extend the scope of the study through the use of larger samples of English commercial contracts or/and business documents. Furthermore, it is suggested that researchers utilize advanced tools and algorithms to improve the detection and categorization of mistranslations produced by GT in commercial contracts and business documents. Moreover, further studies would explore more linguistic features to better understand the quality of translation provided by GT and other MT tools. Finally, as artificial intelligence (AI) tools are continually improving, popular chatbots including ChatGPT and Gemini can function as effective translation tools. Therefore, more comparative studies of the translation by different AI tools should be done to examine their pros and cons when translating commercial documents.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: SOURCES OF FIVE STS

**S1:** Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA). (n.d.). *Agreement for Extension of Lease*. SMEDA Legal Services. Retrieved March 6, 2024, from https://smeda.org/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&id=71:real-estate&Itemid=363.

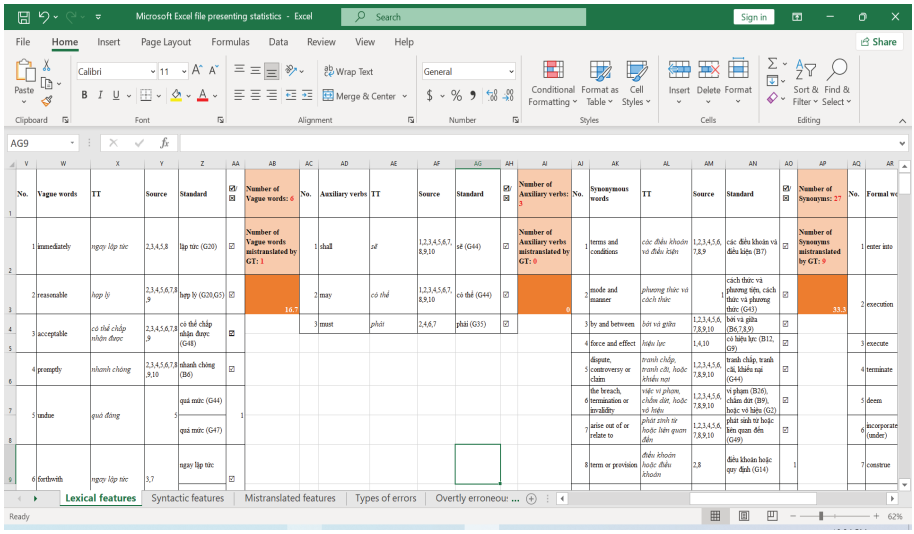
**S2:** Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA). (n.d.). *Contract for Sale of Goods.* SMEDA Legal Services. Retrieved March 6, 2024, from https://smeda.org/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&id=72:sales-and-marketing&Itemid=363.

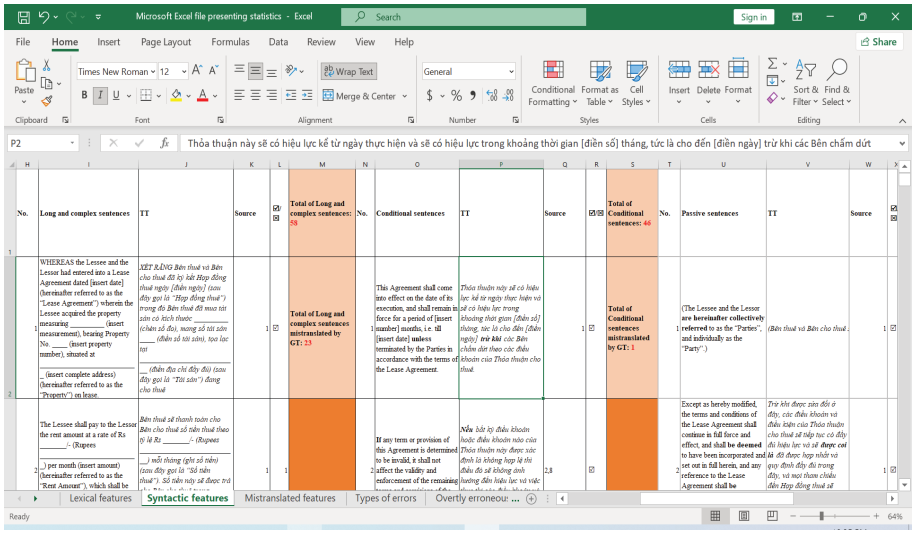
**S3:** Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA). (n.d.). *International Distributorship Agreement*. SMEDA Legal Services. Retrieved March 6, 2024, from https://smeda.org/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&id=65:import-export&Itemid=363.

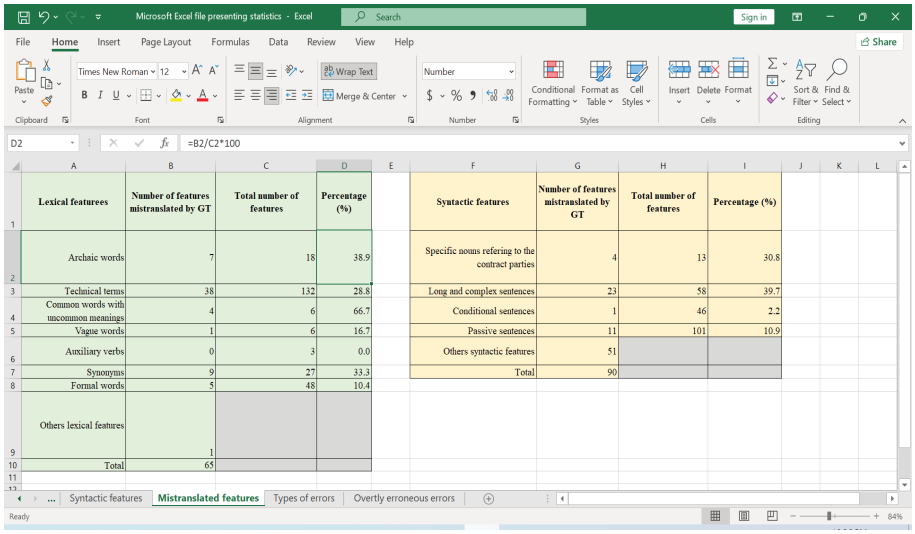
**S4:** Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA). (n.d.). *Event Photography Contract.* SMEDA Legal Services. Retrieved March 6, 2024, from https://smeda.org/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&id=10:services&Itemid=363.

**S5**: Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA). (n.d.). *Legal Consultancy Agreement*. SMEDA Legal Services. Retrieved March 6, 2024, from https://smeda.org/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&id=10:services&Itemid=363.

# APPENDIX 2: THE ME FILE PRESENTING STATISTICS





Microsoft Excel file presenting statistics - Excel

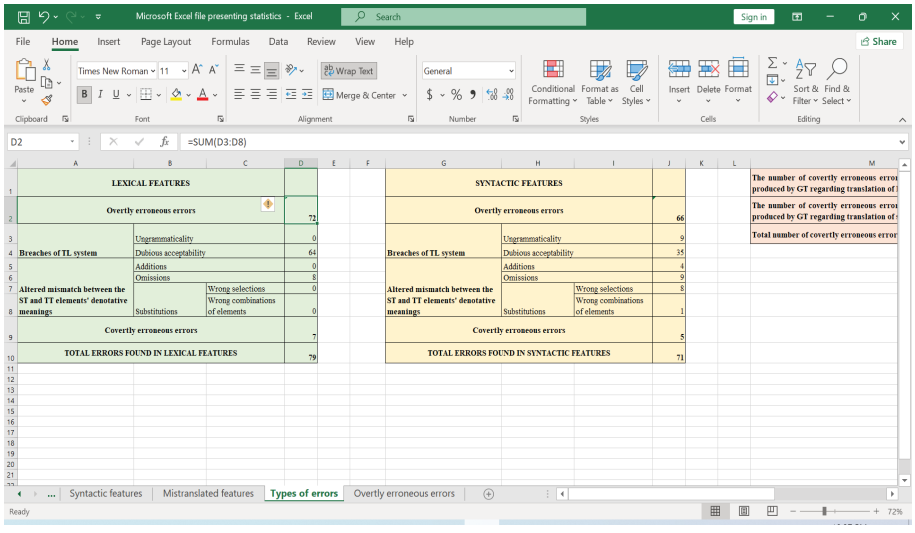
D2 =B2/C2*100

| | Lexical featurees | Number of features mistranslated by GT | Total number of features | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Archaic words | 7 | 18 | 38.9 |
| 3 | Technical terms | 38 | 132 | 28.8 |
| 4 | Common words with uncommon meanings | 4 | 6 | 66.7 |
| 5 | Vague words | 1 | 6 | 16.7 |
| 6 | Auxiliary verbs | 0 | 3 | 0.0 |
| 7 | Synonyms | 9 | 27 | 33.3 |
| 8 | Formal words | 5 | 48 | 10.4 |
| 9 | Others lexical features | 1 | | |
| 10 | Total | 65 | | |

| | Syntactic features | Number of features mistranslated by GT | Total number of features | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Specific nouns refering to the contract parties | 4 | 13 | 30.8 |
| 3 | Long and complex sentences | 23 | 58 | 39.7 |
| 4 | Conditional sentences | 1 | 46 | 2.2 |
| 5 | Passive sentences | 11 | 101 | 10.9 |
| 6 | Others syntactic features | 51 | | |
| 7 | Total | 90 | | |

Syntactic features | Mistranslated features | Types of errors | Overtly erroneous errors

Ready 84%



Microsoft Excel file presenting statistics - Excel

D2 =SUM(D3:D8)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | LEXICAL FEATURES | | | |
| 2 | Overtly erroneous errors | | | 72 |
| 3 | Breaches of TL system | Ungrammaticality | | 0 |
| 4 | | Dubious acceptability | | 64 |
| 5 | | Additions | | 0 |
| 6 | | Omissions | | 8 |
| 7 | Altered mismatch between the ST and TT elements' denotative meanings | Substitutions | Wrong selections | 0 |
| 8 | | | Wrong combinations of elements | 0 |
| 9 | Covertly erroneous errors | | | 7 |
| 10 | TOTAL ERRORS FOUND IN LEXICAL FEATURES | | | 79 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | SYNTACTIC FEATURES | | | |
| 2 | Overtly erroneous errors | | | 66 |
| 3 | Breaches of TL system | Ungrammaticality | | 9 |
| 4 | | Dubious acceptability | | 35 |
| 5 | | Additions | | 4 |
| 6 | | Omissions | | 9 |
| 7 | Altered mismatch between the ST and TT elements' denotative meanings | Substitutions | Wrong selections | 8 |
| 8 | | | Wrong combinations of elements | 1 |
| 9 | Covertly erroneous errors | | | 5 |
| 10 | TOTAL ERRORS FOUND IN SYNTACTIC FEATURES | | | 71 |

The number of covertly erroneous errors produced by GT regarding translation of l

The number of covertly erroneous errors produced by GT regarding translation of s

Total number of covertly erroneous errors

Syntactic features | Mistranslated features | Types of errors | Overtly erroneous errors

Ready 72%