TRANSLATION INTERNSHIP MODULE: SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO BETTER MEET THE COURSE OUTCOME STANDARDS AT THE FACULTY OF ENGLISH, HANOI OPEN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: *The study aimed to assess the current implementation of the Translation Internship Module at the faculty of English, Hanoi Open University, so as to propose methods to evaluate the Translation Internship module in accordance with the orientation of developing the capacity to meet the course learning outcome. The study involved 235 last year English major students who have just completed the Translation Internship module, and data collection was conducted via a questionnaire survey and interviews to analyze students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and desires and synthesize teachers' opinions concerning module quality improvements. The findings reveal that most students chose topics based on popularity, appropriate language styles and structures, specialized vocabulary, diverse content, and reference sources. The study also shows that students employed adaptation and equivalent translation methods while source text features, namely vocabulary, content, style, language structures, and culture, were generally analyzed to illustrate students' knowledge and translation skills. The following outcome shows that a lack of both background knowledge and translation skills were students' major obstacles. Besides other issues regarding internship time, instructor-student interaction, and other supportive tools, assessment methods in accordance with the learner capacity assessment orientation were also discussed in the study.*

Keywords*: source text, translation method, style, assessment, internship, target language, and report.*

I. Introduction

Translation Internship is an essential module for students majoring in English at Hanoi Open University. Internship subjects are final-year students majoring in English, including full-time, second-degree, and distance students. Regarding internship contents, students are required to complete a translation internship period and write an Internship Diary and Report under the guidance of instructors. The Translation Internship module helps

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students apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired during their studies to translation in particular, and it is a premise for students to research more deeply about their chosen field and serve future career orientation as well.

The translation internship module operates smoothly and successfully with clear written instructions on the subject, content, and implementation process. However, as a course instructor, we would discuss some of the issues such as orientation to exploit source texts, mastering and application of necessary skills essential to the internship process to meet the course requirements, improving the quality of internship reports in particular, and the effectiveness of the Translation Internship module in general. The study aimed to assess the current implementation of the Translation Internship module at the Faculty of English (FOE), Hanoi Open University (HOU), so as to propose methods to evaluate the Translation Internship module in accordance with the orientation of developing the capacity to meet the course learning outcome. The subsequent section addresses theoretical aspects and the background of the study.

II. Theoretical background

2.1 Translation internship module and the course outcome

In the course curriculum, the Translation Internship module is introduced in Term 8 for undergraduates. It is designed for students registering for the translation & interpretation sub-major at FOE, HOU. On completion of the module, students are expected to apply knowledge and master skills in translation and interpretation in their jobs. It is expected that students can efficiently translate required materials from English into Vietnamese and vice versa; they are also expected to be able to handle English-

related administrative and managerial tasks and be capable of writing reports for assigned tasks.

As module requirements, students need to apply for internship positions that enable them to implement tasks related to the responsibilities mentioned above daily. They are also required to translate two texts of about 1500 words each from the source into the target language, write a report on their internship, and present crucial points of the internship report orally. Students will need to make use of their knowledge and skills in translation and interpretation to meet the module requirements. That is also the reason for referring to key concepts in translation, as mentioned in the subsequent part.

2.2 Translation methods

Larson (1998) states that translation is studying the source text's vocabulary, structure, communication, and cultural context, analyzing the text to determine the meaning, and then using the words, appropriate vocabulary, and structures in the target language to reproduce the same meaning. However, Newmark (1988:119) defines translation as "replacing a written or spoken text with a written or spoken text with the same content in another language." Although the above definitions are slightly different, they have one thing in common: equivalence in translation, which means finding the closest equivalence that retains meaning and style.

According to Newmark, any text can be translated into another language with the same content with many translation methods. (i) Word-for-word translation translates the source word directly into the target language in word units, preserving the word order of the source language, translating words using meanings in the dictionary, and separating the context. (ii) Literal translation is close to the original in

terms of form, grammatical structure, and vocabulary, separated from the context. (iii) Faithful translation is relatively close to the original in form, grammatical structure, and form of the original text, limiting the reproduction of meaning and expression of the target language. (iv) Semantic translation is close to the target language, flexible, creative, meaningful, and aesthetic. (v) Communicative translation attaches importance to the target language user, so the translation has the easiest-to-understand content and form for the reader. Translation is an area that cannot be ignored in many language-related activities. There are many different views on translation. From the perspective of translators and researchers, translation is an artistic activity that emphasizes creativity and aesthetics, while linguists believe that translation is a linguistic activity, establishing the elements of translation. Equivalence is based on comparison and linguistic analysis and is an interlingual and intercultural communication activity. (vi) Idiomatic translation recreates the message of the source language with a lot of creativity and idiomatic expression in the target language. The translation is oral, lively, natural, close to the target language, and friendly to the reader. (vii) Free translation is not limited by the form and characteristics of the source language, so the expression of content is more important than the form. (viii) Adaptation maintains the theme while the script, characters, and culture are recreated.

Newmark advocates that the main purpose of translation among the eight translation methods is accuracy and economy, and he also supports the focus on meaning and communication. He also emphasizes the value of faithfulness in translation. In addition, he advocates that translation methods must be chosen depending on the target audience, the purpose of translation, and the purpose of the text genre. The above concepts and perspectives are the basis for the authors to design data collection tools for the next steps of the research process.

III. Research methodology

The research was carried out to address the key research questions: (1) What difficulties do students at FOE, HOU, face on completion of the Translation Internship module? (2) What are solutions to the difficulties? and (3) In accordance with the learner capacity assessment orientation, how should the Translation Internship module be assessed?

The main research methods, including the document-based method, observations, and a questionnaire survey, are used. The document-based research methods are effective in the description and analysis of different types of translation. While the qualitative method was employed to compare and contrast the responses of a survey on students' perceptions, opinions, difficulties, and expectations about some aspects of the Translation Internship module, the qualitative method helped the analysis and synthesis of both teachers' and students' responses.

To assess students' knowledge and synthesize their opinions about the *Translation Internship module* and, at the same time, find out students' difficulties and aspirations to improve the effectiveness of the module, the authors surveyed a group of K26 students who have taken the Translation Internship module at the FOE and English majors attending EN4861, EN4862 and EN4863 courses, a distance-learning program at Elearning Center, HOU. A questionnaire survey was used to collect data for the study. A total of 235/360 students responded, reaching over 65%.

The researchers also interviewed 20 full-time and visiting lecturers at FOE, HOU, lecturers responsible for *the Translation Internship module* or those with extensive experience in teaching practical translation and translation theory modules.

The data collected were also compared with the responses of a small survey on students' perceptions, opinions, difficulties, and expectations about some aspects of the Translation Internship module conducted in March 2022, right after 39/43 full-time students, FOE, HOU, completed the Translation Internship module. The following section describes the survey results, evaluates the current situation, and proposes solutions to improve the situation.

IV. Findings and discussion

4.1 Select source text

4.1.1 description of survey results

Full-time students were required to choose one English source text of 1500 words and one Vietnamese source text of 1500 words. Distance-learning students were required to choose two English source texts and two Vietnamese source texts with a total of about 2000 words. Translation topics include *education, culture & sports, economics, politics, environment, travel, medical & healthcare, society, science & technology*.

The survey results show that students mainly chose the topics 'medical & healthcare' (31.5%), 'travel, environment, economics, education' with rates fluctuating from 22% to 26%. About 24% of the students chose the topic 'economics'. Compared to the previous year's survey, the topics selected by students were consistent.

Regarding the source text, most students chose texts for their diversity, exciting content, and familiarity, with respective rates of 52.3%, 48.1%, and 43%. In addition, students chose source texts for other reasons, for example, easy analysis, adequate length, self-motivation, reference source, current issues, information spreading, working place appropriateness, personal reasons, specialized vocabulary, updated news, importance for national economy, rich content and useful information for readers.

The study results show that 70%-95% of lecturers agreed with topics being limited to students. 15% wanted to add more translation topics. The percentage of teachers who agreed with the 5 reasons was 65%-90%. The most common reasons were 'familiarity' (90%), 'diversity' and 'work-orientation' (both 80%) and 'interest' (75%). The reason stating 'the topic is topical and has reference sources' was also counted. 10% agreed, 35% disagreed, and 50% chose a combination of elective and mandatory content.

4.1.2. Assessing the situation

A large proportion of students chose the topic for the reasons of 'source text diversity,' 'interest,' and 'familiarity' high, while smaller proportions of students chose the source text for 'suitable linguistic characteristics' and 'work orientation.' The majority of the lecturers agreed with topics being limited to students, and a small percentage wished to add translation topics. It means that a large proportion of students focused on certain topics, and the reasons were subjective and emotional, leading to difficulties in the process of exploiting source texts in the later stages.

4.1.3. Solutions

There should be a combination of compulsory, required elective, and elective topics. To prevent the majority of students from choosing a few topics, compulsory topics are necessary for certain reasons.

The time to select source texts should also be lengthened so that students can find suitable texts. All students should be required to translate many short texts on many topics. In fact, choosing a 1,500-word text with diverse linguistic features is not difficult, but only one text on one topic will limit the diversity of vocabulary and stylistic structures. Therefore, students would find it easy to choose suitable texts for translation as well as for the evaluation of the translation process.

4.2. Translation techniques and source text exploitation

4.2.1. description of survey results

Findings on students' translation methods and the exploitation of source texts to report on translation experiences were consistent with all student groups. The popular translation methods included 'adaptation,' 'equivalence, ''conversion', and 'word-for-word' in descending order between 85% and 60%. Regarding source text exploitation, the contents were arranged in descending order of popularity (95%-50%), including vocabulary, style, linguistic patterns & culture.

4.2.2. The current situation assessment

The responses of both groups of students and lecturers to the survey on how students use translation were quite consistent, with adaptation and equivalent translation being the most popular. There was a difference in the proportion of students exploiting source texts according to vocabulary content, style, and linguistic patterns & culture. In the report on translation experience, structure, style, and culture are not the focus. Meanwhile, comparing the structure, style, and influence of a new culture helped students become more aware of the differences between the two languages, aiming for a translated text that ensures the accuracy of information and natural expression.

4.2.3. Proposing solutions

With consistent findings, the two popular translation methods and source text exploitation content should be used as a basis for developing study guides and evaluation criteria for translations to guide students in their completion part of the course's objectives.

4.3. Time, workload, and interaction with lecturers

4.3.1. description of survey results

About 33% of students agreed that the internship time was not enough to research texts, refine translations, and write an experience report. In particular, the internship time overlaps with the time to study other subjects, making it difficult for students to balance time between subjects, and for distance students, it was difficult to balance time to work and practice even with the 16-week internship period. There were students who had not kept up with the progress. To support the group of students, the Professional Division and instructors should provide additional reference materials.

4.3.2. Assessing the situation

According to the majority of students, the internship time was adequate. However, some students wanted to increase the time spent studying the Translation Internship module to have more time to research and complete the subject better. The group of distance-learning students who had to balance study and work time (16 weeks) felt that they did not have enough time and probably could not manage their time effectively.

4.3.3. Solution

Instructors need to interact more frequently to ensure progress. According to the opinion of the distance-learning students, Vclass provided an introduction to the Translation Internship

module, instructions on completing the Translation Product, instructions for the internship report organization, and other requirements of the Translation Internship Report. Therefore, forcing students to participate in the Vclass is necessary to achieve the highest efficiency and save the lecturer's time. If not, the teacher had to answer many questions about one content. During the internship, the Faculty of English should organize a discussion session so that students can talk about difficulties during the internship process and get timely support. The content of the complete report can be more concise, focusing on translation skills.

4.4. Knowledge and skills

4.4.1 description of survey results

The results show that many students confirm their lack of knowledge and skills to handle difficult translation situations or to analyze the translation style due to poor understanding of culture and different aspects of language. Regarding the difficulties students encountered in the Translation Internship module, 71% and 64% of the student groups surveyed in 2023 and 2022, respectively, found limitations in language skills to be the greatest difficulty, and about 63% noticed a lack of background knowledge about the topic or understanding of the topic, but the knowledge was not deep enough. A lack of vocabulary and specialized vocabulary /idioms to understand the correct meaning of an entire phrase or paragraph in a specific context was an obstacle. While 50% of lecturers rated students' report writing skills as very limited, the student rate was much lower, 20.5% in 2022 and 33% in 2023.

According to students, criteria evaluation was important when presenting Translation Internship reports. (i) 67.5% chose the criterion of reporting content fluently, clearly, and confidently. (ii)

67.1% valued the ability to respond to questions from lecturers. (iii) Applying technology in presenting the content of Internship reports was chosen by 45%. 85% of teachers chose 'Applying technology applications in presenting report content Translation Internship', and 80% of lecturers thought that (ii) and (iii) were both important.

The survey on the skills students need to serve translation and interpretation activities in real environments shows that communication and language skills are the two most important. 80% and 76% of students chose the above two skills, respectively, while the percentage choosing skills in using technology in translation, interpretation, and presentation skills was about 61%. The percentage of lecturers choosing the above skills was higher; specifically, 100% of lecturers found language skills important, and 80% chose communication skills, 75% for presentation, and 70% for skills in using technology in teaching translation and interpretation.

4.4.2. Assessing the situation

Generally, findings on students' difficulties in the Translation Internship module, and results of the 2022 and 2023 student and lecturer groups were relatively consistent in three issues (i) limited language skills, (ii) poor background knowledge on the topic of translation, and (iii) a lack of skills in arranging and implementing a Translation Internship Report. However, 95% of lecturers rated (ii) 'a lack of background knowledge of the topic' as the biggest limitation of students, while over 2/3 of the students believed (i) 'limited language skills' was their biggest problem. Many students (over 2/3) encountered difficulties during the Translation Internship process because of (i) limited language skills, (ii) a lack of knowledge of the topic, and (iii) a lack of skills in the organization and completion

of their translation internship report. Students need to improve their background knowledge, and they are expected to understand the professional requirements for translators and interpreters.

4.4.3. Solutions

Training content should be developed to enhance students' knowledge and skills and to meet students' needs. Students should be encouraged to translate topics from a variety of sources. Students should be provided with more necessary knowledge. Other translation tasks should be added, such as editing, error correction, and interpretation. Additionally, all students should be able to accumulate practical experiences to practice their translation skills. Practice sessions and role-play activities should be conducted, and an internship portfolio should be introduced for students from year 1. More conditions should be provided for students to interact with various people in their working environment. There should be many addresses and translation opportunities for students to practice. The Faculty of English should introduce or cooperate with agencies and businesses to organize short internship programs, seminars, and events during the study process, creating conditions for students to participate and consolidate their translation experience. Practical or exchange skills to develop skills, especially with translation companies. The university should establish a support center for internships in businesses. The center is, first and foremost, a place that can provide information resources for students who have difficulty accessing internship units. The internship process should be standardized. The faculty needs to offer a reference to internship institutions and internship facilities for students.

4.5. Awareness of social responsibility

4.5.1. description of survey results

Students were asked about factors demonstrating the social, legal, and professional responsibilities of translators/interpreters. Except for a relatively low percentage of students choosing 'fairness-integrity' (41%), high rates of over 63% were reported for each of the other criteria, namely (i) providing translation/translation services of the highest quality, (ii) translating content, style, and communicative purposes accurately, (iii) ensuring confidentiality for customers and other involved parties, (iv) complying with professional ethics (only accepting documents within the scope of knowledge, skills, experience and complying with written contracts), (v) being aware of professional self-development. With regard to instructors' feedback, more than half of the people chose 'fairness and integrity,' and over 70% went for 'being aware of professional self-development.' Significantly, a majority (80-95%) opted for other criteria.

4.5.2. Assessing the situation

Survey of students and lecturers on factors demonstrating the social, legal, and professional responsibilities of translators/interpreters. Except for relatively low rates of participants choosing 'fairness-integrity' (41% for students and 55% for lecturers), respective approval rates of over 63% and 70% were reported for students and lecturers when the other four criteria were considered. According to lecturers' opinions, students need to be accountable. It means that they must be responsible for the translation/interpretation of content, and they are expected to be ready to admit mistakes and correct errors, if any, during/after completing work.

4.5.3 Proposing solutions

The survey results show that teachers and students are clearly aware

of the responsibilities of translators and interpreters to themselves and the community via their recognition of factors that demonstrate responsibility to society, under the law, and in the profession. Therefore, the Faculty of English can use the survey results as a basis to build component output standards of the Translation Internship module to meet the output standards of the training program.

V. Proposed activities for translation internship module assessment

In order to assess students' learning outcomes, testing and assessment activities should focus on regular and periodic assessments to provide feedback, adjust the teaching process, and evaluate the ability to solve practical problems. The activities should focus especially on evaluating higher-order thinking abilities, and the module assessment should also be conducted during the teaching process. Assessment should be regarded as a teaching method, and the use of technology in testing and assessment should also be considered. With the above approach, the assessment methods to be practiced in the module require the following steps:

Step 1: Determine the training program learning outcomes (PLO) and compatible indicators (PIs) of the Translation Internship module.

Step 2: Determine the CLOs and their relationship with PLO indicators.

Step 3: Determine the relationship between CLOs and program learning output standards

Step 4: Determine the learning objectives.

Step 5: Develop assessment specification for the Translation Internship module.

Step 6: Build an exam matrix for the Translation Internship module.

Step 7: Design sample exam questions.

Step 8: Build a grading scale for the three learning outcomes.

VI. Conclusion

The translation internship is an important module that helps students perfect their language knowledge and skills, especially in obtaining a translated product for future professional challenges. Obviously, there exist many problems both teachers and students are concerned about, and solutions need to be taken to achieve the best learning outcomes. These could be professional issues such as source text selection and exploitation, knowledge and language skill improvement, internship time, interaction between students and instructors, or others. The study also proposes assessment methods for the Translation Internship module in accordance with the learner capacity assessment orientation and for the achievement of the course learning outcomes.

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PHÁT TRIỂN HỌC PHẦN THỰC TẬP DỊCH THUẬT ĐÁP ỨNG CHUẨN ĐẦU RA HỌC PHẦN

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Tóm tắt: *Nghiên cứu nhằm đánh giá thực trạng triển khai học phần Thực tập dịch thuật tại Khoa Tiếng Anh, Trường Đại học Mở Hà Nội từ đó đề xuất phương pháp đánh giá học phần Thực tập dịch thuật phù hợp với định hướng phát triển năng lực đáp ứng chuẩn đầu ra của khóa học. Nghiên cứu khảo sát 235 sinh viên ngành Ngôn ngữ Anh, với dữ liệu được thu thập thông qua bảng hỏi khảo sát và phỏng vấn để phân tích kiến thức, kỹ năng, thái độ, mong muốn của sinh viên và tổng hợp ý kiến của giáo viên về việc cải thiện chất lượng học phần. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy hầu hết sinh viên chọn chủ đề tính phổ biến, phong cách và cấu trúc ngôn ngữ phù hợp, từ vựng chuyên sâu, nội dung đa dạng và có nguồn tham khảo. Nghiên cứu cho thấy sinh viên sử dụng các phương pháp phỏng dịch và dịch thoát ý đồng thời tập trung khai thác từ vựng, nội dung, văn phong, cấu trúc ngôn ngữ và văn hóa trong văn bản nguồn. Hơn nữa, tình trạng thiếu kiến thức nền và kỹ năng dịch thuật là trở ngại lớn của sinh viên. Bên cạnh đó các vấn đề khác như thời gian thực tập, tương tác giữa giảng viên và sinh viên và các công cụ hỗ trợ khác, phương pháp đánh giá theo định hướng đánh giá năng lực của người học cũng được đề cập trong kết quả nghiên cứu.*

Từ khoá: văn bản nguồn, phương pháp dịch, văn phong, đánh giá, thực tập, ngôn ngữ đích, báo cáo.

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