

EXPLORING EXPLICITATION IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH NOMINALIZATION INTO VIETNAMESE

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Abstract: This paper reports on one part of a larger research. The aim was to investigate and characterize different explicating shifts that emerge from the translation of English nominals with the suffixes *-tion* and *-er* into Vietnamese. Gumul's (2017) taxonomy of surface manifestations of explicitation was adapted to serve as the framework for qualitative corpus analysis. Quantitative processing of corpus data in the form of frequency counts was also performed to achieve the research goals. Within the limited scope of this paper, the results reveal seven types of explicating shifts and their typical features, thereby providing further evidence for the existence of explicitation in translating nominalization. The paper concludes by proposing practical implications for translation teaching and practice.

Keywords: Explicitation, nominalization, translation

1. Introduction

Nominalization has been widely regarded as a type of lexical and grammatical resource that plays an important role in language activities and garners significant attention in academic circles (Lei & Yi, 2019). Having said that, there is a distinct lack of consensus among linguists and language philosophers regarding the precise meaning, structure, and functions of nominalization due to its trans-categorical operation (Roy & Soare, 2011). With its complicated nature, nominalization might pose challenges to translators from linguistic backgrounds where this phenomenon does not exist or is less prevalent. This reality entails a growing number of studies (e.g., Hou, 2011; Le, 2014) into different translation shifts that occur in the rendering of nominalizations. Among various aspects that have been visited, explicitation, which emerges as the result of this translation process, serves as a point of departure for this paper. This phenomenon is of interest due to the differences between its functioning and the nature of nominal structures. Explicitation is the inclination towards clarity when translating informative texts, in contrast to the implicitness present in nominalizations' compressed structure (Marshall, 2019). Although explicitation is deemed eminently important in the discussion of translation correspondences to nominalizations (Marshall, 2019), this shift in translation has been largely underexplored and thus should be investigated in different language pairs and across a wide range of discourses. For a comprehensive understanding of the tendency for explicitation while translating nominalizations, it is of great importance to examine this phenomenon via the lens of corpus-based contrastive linguistics.

This study chooses to investigate how English nominalizations formed with the suffixes *-tion* and *-er* are explicitly represented in Vietnamese in non-fiction discourse since English nominalizations appear more frequently as a standard feature of some special functional registers

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of language use (Radovanovic, 2001), such as non-fiction works. Furthermore, of the existing investigations into nominalization in Vietnam, most of their objectives are specified to explore the scientific, legal, political, business, and economic discourses. These aforementioned reasons have prompted this research to fill in the gap in the literature on nominalization and explicitation in Vietnam and around the world by exploring explicitation in translating nominals with the most prolific suffixes (*-tion* and *-er*) found in the non-fiction book “Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind” into Vietnamese. In order to achieve such objectives, the study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What types of explicating shifts occur as a result of translating *-tion* and *-er* nominals into Vietnamese?
2. What are the characteristics of these explicating shifts?

2. Literature review

2.1. Nominalization in English

First proposed by the traditional linguist Jespersen in 1924, the concept of nominalization has aroused the interest of linguists and language philosophers.

Under the tenets of Prague School philosophy, Mathesius introduced the notion of complex condensation as a recurrent phenomenon in the English language. By this term, he meant the inclusion of a nominal element or phrase in a sentence as a replacement for the finite verb of a subordinate clause, thus allowing the said sentence to dispense with the clausal structure (Vachek, 1955). Regarding the means of condensation, Mathesius identified the gerund, the infinitive, and the participle as the most widely employed in English contexts.

Within the realm of transformational-generative grammar, inspired and influenced by Noam Chomsky’s influential book “Syntactic Structure” (1957), Lees treated nominalization as a transformation process where noun phrases are syntactically derived from the underlying structures which allegedly govern the semantic meaning of the said noun phrases (Hou, 2011).

Furthermore, Biber et al. (2002) regarded nominalization as a product of derivational morphology. Throughout this transformational process, certain types of derivational suffix are attached to the base words (verbs and adjectives) to produce nominalized expressions, which are mostly abstract nouns. Among a wide range of suffixes found in English, while certain suffixes serve the sole purpose of indicating nouns, some are more ambiguous in that they can signal more than one part of speech (Biber et al., 2002).

From the standpoint of systemic-functional grammar, Halliday (1994) advanced a more structured and all-embracing theory, which takes into account both grammatical transformation and a wide range of context-specific functions of nominalization. He identified nominalization as one pattern of a wider construct known as grammatical metaphor, which implies “a substitution of one grammatical class, or one grammatical structure, by another” with the regular involvement of lexical variation (Halliday, 2005, p. 97). Via nominalization, processes and properties, which would otherwise be congruently phrased as verbs or adjectives respectively, are metaphorically reworded as nouns.

2.2. Explicitation in translation

The origin of the concept of explicitation can be traced back to the seminal work entitled “*Stilistique Comparée du Français et de L’anglais*” by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958). They defined explicitation as “a procedure that consists in introducing in the target language details that remain implicit in the source language but become clear through the relevant context or situation” (1995, p. 342, translation of Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958).

As the research of explicitation has progressed, more concerns have developed, one of which is the fundamental requirement for explicitation typologies or, at the very least, a clear distinction between its many realizations. One of the earliest attempts to classify explicitation was made by Séguinot (1988) who divided explicitation based on surface manifestations. According to his proposal, there are three ways in which explicitation is manifested: “something is expressed in the translation which was not in the original, something which was implied or understood through presupposition in the source text is overtly expressed in the translation, or an element in the source text is given greater importance in the translation through focus, emphasis, or lexical choice” (1988, p. 108).

Another widely cited typology of explicitation to date belongs to the linguist Klaudy. She divided this phenomenon into four different types, namely “obligatory”, “optional”, “pragmatic”, and “translation-inherent” explicitation (2009, p. 106-107). While obligatory explicitation is governed by “differences in the syntactic and semantic structure of languages”, optional explicitation depends on “differences in text-building strategies and stylistic preferences between languages” (2009, p. 106). In addition, pragmatic explicitation frequently parallels cultural explicitation since it occurs due to the absence of what is regarded as common knowledge within the source language culture in the target-language cultural community. Lastly, translation-inherent explicitation can be explained by one of the most prevalent, language-independent characteristics of all translational activity, which is the requirement to formulate in the target language concepts that were originally devised in the source language (Klaudy, 1993).

Drawing on the previous studies on explicitation in translation (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1986; Séguinot, 1988), Gumul (2017) developed a comprehensive taxonomy of surface manifestations that are considered as indicators of explicitation. This classification encompasses a wide variety of linguistic features, including: (1) adding connectives, (2) intensifying cohesive ties/categorical shifts of cohesive devices, (3) lexicalisations of pro-forms (i.e., shifts from referential cohesion to lexical cohesion), (4) reiteration, (5) filling out elliptical constructions, (6) reconstructing substitution, (7) insertion of optional “that”, (8) adding modifiers and qualifiers, (9) inserting hedges, (10) inserting discourse organising items, (11) adding a proper name to a generic name; substituting a generic name with a proper name; substituting a pseudonym or a nickname with a name and/or surname, (12) full expression for acronym or abbreviation, (13) including additional explanatory remarks or providing descriptive equivalents, (14) adding examples, (15) replacing nominalisations with verb phrases, (16) disambiguating lexical metaphors or replacing metaphors with similes, (17) lexical specification (i.e., substituting a word with general meaning with a word with more specific meaning), (18) meaning specification (i.e., articulating ideas retrievable or inferable from the preceding part of the text or the cognitive context), (19) distributing the meaning of a sourcetext unit over several units in the target text, and (20) addition and

modification of punctuation marks. Due to its direct relevance to the corpus under consideration, Gumul's model (2017) has been selected as the analytical framework of this paper.

2.3. Previous studies on explicitation in the translation of nominalization

Among a wide spectrum of approaches to this notion, nominalization in translation is the issue to which scholars have long devoted. To date, most of the studies under this approach are contrastive analyses between English and other languages set in a variety of discourses. Furthermore, strategies employed in translating nominalized expressions as well as the impetus behind translators' decisions are the focus of numerous research. Having said that, only some of them have strived to shed light on the phenomenon of explicitation in the rendition of nominalizations (e.g., Južnič, 2013; Le, 2014; Marshall, 2019).

In the investigation into how nominalization in an English non-fiction work was translated to Swedish, Marshall (2019) discovered 328 nominals ending in 16 different suffixes. Nearly a third (62,5%) of the translations of these nominal structures deviate from the originals. In such cases, explicitating shifts might occur through the expansion of the structure and the translator must decipher the authors' intent to clarify the implicit information. In another research into the Italian-Slovene language pair, Južnič (2013) laid stress on the function of explicitation in resolving the hybrid nature of Italian nominalized infinitive, which has no parallel structure in Slovene grammar. In other words, when the translator encounters nominalized infinitive, which is an implicit combination of properties associated both with verbs and nouns, two primary types of translation equivalents are typically adopted. While the first approach expresses the nominal nature in a completely explicit manner (i.e., with a noun), the second technique overtly conveys the verbal nature of the nominalized infinitive.

In Vietnam, quite a few contrastive studies have been undertaken to explore different translation shifts that emerge from translating nominalization and have emphasized the tendency for explicitation. To illustrate, in the research into nominalization in official or legal language (Le, 2014), explicitation was pointed out as one of the most prevalent strategies in translating nominals ending in *-ation* and *-ment*. Out of three levels of explicitation (lexical, syntactic, and stylistic), Le observed that lexical explicitation occurs more frequently than the other two and one of its typical manifestations is the restoration of the elliptical units of the original segment in the translation. Following the same analytical framework, studies carried out by Nguyen (2018) and Le and Nguyen (2018) also point to the role of explicitation, especially lexical explicitation, as a translation strategy in translating nominalizations across genres.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

To meet the objectives of the research paper, this study employed qualitative corpus analysis. In addition, quantitative processing of corpus data was also conducted in the form of frequency counts, hence facilitating a variety of analyses to be undertaken for various goals of the present study. The study was carried out on a parallel corpus comprising the non-fiction history book "Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind" by Yuval Noah Harari and its Vietnamese version translated by Nguyen Thuy Chung and edited by Vo Minh Tuan. The source text consists

of 134,722 words, focusing on *Homo sapiens* and the history of humankind, starting from the Stone Age and going up to the twenty-first century. The main function of the text is to objectively report and explain the events that have transpired in an informative rather than persuasive manner. The Vietnamese target text, with a total of 215,587 words, is aimed at readers interested in history and serves the same function as the original text.

3.2. Data processing and analysis

To prepare the corpus texts for qualitative analysis, a variety of procedures must be followed to align the texts, including removing any extraneous content (e.g., tables and figures) and manually editing the texts. In the editing stage, the source and target texts were divided into segments, with each segment corresponding to a sentence. This step is necessary because the aligned texts could not be generated as automatically as anticipated due to the discrepancies in terms of morphology and punctuation rules between English and Vietnamese. Afterward, the aligned sentences were presented side by side and imported to the corpus manager and text analysis software Sketch Engine to finalize the parallel corpus.

In light of Biber et al.'s (2002) corpus-based grammatical description of English, nominalization in this paper is regarded as a product of derivational morphology. Within the limited scope of this paper, only nominals with the suffixes *-tion* and *-er*, which are the most prolific derivational bound morphemes found in the corpus, were examined. At this stage, the software Sketch Engine functioning as a concordancer was employed to obtain empirical data for research. The presentation of corpus excerpts in KWIC format with aligned bi-texts in parallel windows facilitated the navigation of text segments, hence enabling the comparative study of nominalizations in the bi-lingual sources. While the extracting process was performed automatically, a manual examination was required to eliminate noise occurrences such as “question” and “power”.

With regard to qualitative analyses, Gumul's (2017) taxonomy of surface manifestations of explicitation was adapted to serve as the yardstick for identifying explicating shifts in translating nominalizations. While the original taxonomy covers a wide range of surface manifestations of explicitation in translation and interpreting, only features pertinent to the research objectives were retained. They are (1) reiteration, (2) adding modifiers, (3) providing descriptive equivalents or additional explanatory remarks, (4) adding examples, (5) replacing nominalizations with verb phrases or alternative structures, (6) lexical specification, (7) meaning specification, (8) disambiguating lexical metaphors or replacing metaphors with similes, and (9) distributing the meaning of a source-text unit over several units in the target text. It is noteworthy that one more explicating shift, which is (10) adding plurality, was later detected during the examination process and integrated into the final classification.

On the basis of this taxonomy, corpus texts were scrutinized multiple times to detect all instances of explicating shifts. The most crucial aspect of the analytic procedure is that the authors must not only compare the English nominalizations and their Vietnamese counterparts in a phrase-by-phrase manner but also take into consideration the entirety of the sentence or even the surrounding context. Afterward, they were compiled into tables for further analysis. At this

point, a thorough examination was undertaken to shed light on the characteristics of each type of explicating shift.

4. Findings and discussions

The findings emanating from the analysis reveal that explicitation in translating *-tion* and *-er* nominals manifests itself in a relatively wide pattern, with seven categories employed by the translator to increase the level of explicitness (see Table 1). While six of them were inspired by Gumul’s model, the idea of adding plurality was later incorporated into the classification due to its prevalence in the corpus. In addition, three categories, namely reiteration, adding examples, and distributing the meaning of a source-text unit over several units in the target text, were found utterly lacking in the corpus. In the following table, the total instances and percentage values for all explicating shifts are presented, giving an overview of their distribution patterns in the target text.

Table 1. Frequencies of explicating shifts found in the corpus

No.	Types of explicating shifts	Number	Percentage
1	Meaning specification	23	26.4%
2	Replacing nominalizations with verb phrases or other structures that contain the nominalizations’ root words	20	23%
3	Lexical specification	14	16.1%
4	Adding plurality	11	12.6%
5	Adding modifiers	7	8.1%
6	Providing descriptive equivalents and additional explanatory remarks	7	8.1%
7	Disambiguating lexical metaphors or replacing metaphors with similes	5	5.7%
8	Reiteration	0	0%
9	Adding examples	0	0%
10	Distributing the meaning of a source-text unit over several units in the target text	0	0%
Total		87	100%

In what follows, a more in-depth qualitative analysis of corpus data is provided. For each type of explicating shift, its most typical instances are given, encompassing the source text fragment, its Vietnamese translation, and the English back-translated version. These examples will be examined to elucidate the characteristics of the explicating shifts found in the corpus.

4.1. Meaning specification

In most cases, explicitation of this type is manifested by the insertion of lexical items representing ideas that can be retrieved or deduced from the preceding part of the text, as illustrated in the following example.

(1) Source text (ST): To ensure that the pigs can’t run away, farmers in northern New Guinea slice off a chunk of each pig’s nose.... Since the pigs cannot find food or even find their way around without sniffing, this mutilation makes them completely dependent on their human owners.

Target text (TT): Để bảo đảm rằng những con lợn không thể bỏ chạy trốn, nông dân ở miền bắc New Guinea xẻo bỏ một khúc ở mũi mỗi con lợn... Vì những con lợn không

thể tìm thức ăn, hoặc ngay cả tìm lối đi quanh của chúng mà không đánh hơi, sự cắt xén mũi này làm cho chúng hoàn toàn phụ thuộc vào người chủ của chúng.

Back translation (BT): To ensure that the pigs can't run away, farmers in northern New Guinea slice off a chunk of each pig's nose.... Since the pigs cannot find food or even find their way around without sniffing, this nose mutilation makes them completely dependent on their human owners.

While “mutilation” was straightforwardly rendered into “sự cắt xén” in the target sentence, the new lexical item “mũi” (“nose”) emerged as the modifier of this nominal. This piece of information, which can be inferred from “a chunk of each pig's nose”, serves to explicate what was implied yet left unstated in the nominalization in the source sentence.

Albeit not addressed in Gumul's model (2017), additional lexical items can also articulate notions inferable from ensuing information in order to clarify what is embedded in the previously mentioned nominal expressions. The translation of the nominal “builders” in the following example illustrates this approach.

(2) ST: Imagine two builders, each busy constructing very tall towers.

TT: Hãy tưởng tượng hai người xây tháp, mỗi người bận rộn xây những tòa tháp rất cao.

BT: Imagine two tower builders, each busy constructing very tall towers.

It should be pointed out that new lexical items were also discovered in the form of parenthetical remarks. Although this structure was not touched upon by Gumul (2017), other studies on explicitation in translation have highlighted the importance of parentheticals in elaborating the proposition expressed by their carrier structure (e.g., Baumgarten et al., 2008). In the following example, the lexical addition in parentheses fulfills the same functions as other instances falling under the category of meaning specification. Regarding the source of reference, “những sự vật việc trong đầu óc” (“between things in the mind”) was evidently inferred from the previous information within the text.

(3) ST: In the brain, all data is freely associated...Free association and holistic thought have given way to...

TT: Trong não, tất cả những dữ liệu thông tin đều được tự do kết nối...Tự do liên kết (những sự vật việc trong đầu óc) và suy nghĩ (về chúng) với cái nhìn tổng thể đã nhường chỗ cho...

BT: In the brain, all information is freely associated...Free association (between things in the mind) and holistic thought (about them) have given way to...

While the insertion of additional lexical items in the middle of the nominal structures may assist the target-text audience in comprehending the subject matter, these elements can be removed without influencing the rest of the structure or its meaning. Therefore, it can be argued that their existence in the Vietnamese translation is non-obligatory.

4.2. Replacing nominalizations with verb phrases or alternative structures

Instances under this category have intrigued interesting discussions regarding the translator's ideological tendency. To illustrate, the nominal "colonisation" in the following example has been substituted with its verbal base "colonise".

(4) ST: ...that pristine world came to an end when British colonisation began in earnest...

TT: ...thế giới trinh nguyên hoang sơ đó đã đi đến kết thúc khi thực dân Anh sốt sắng thuộc địa nó...

BT: ...that pristine world came to an end when the British colonised it in earnest...

Syntactically, this shift necessitates the transformation of the nominal phrase "British colonisation" into the agentive finite clause "thực dân Anh...thuộc địa nó" ("the British colonised it"). While the newly established structure in the translation conveys the same content as the source text, this alteration helps to reduce the level of abstraction intrinsic to the original nominals and thus makes the sentence structure more accessible for the target readers.

This explicitating shift was also observed in several cases whereby the English nominalizations were converted into their root words and incorporated into different grammatical structures such as non-finite clauses as in (5).

(5) ST: The Americas were a great laboratory of evolutionary experimentation...

TT: Châu Mỹ đã là một phòng thí nghiệm vĩ đại để thực nghiệm thuyết tiến hóa...

BT: The Americas were a great laboratory to experiment with the evolutionary theory...

The prepositional phrase "of evolutionary experimentation" has significantly been transformed into the non-finite clause "để thực nghiệm thuyết tiến hóa" ("to experiment with the evolutionary theory") in the Vietnamese translation. Accordingly, the nominal "experimentation" switched its syntactic role into a full infinitive. Such a radical change in syntactic structure, coupled with the insertion of the lexical item "thuyết" ("theory"), unpacks a considerable deal of information loaded in the former structure, hence resulting in a longer and more informative expression. Without a doubt, the tendency for denominalization via verb phrases helps to narrow down the experiential gap between the text and the depicted reality (Gumul, 2017, p. 91). Having said that, the aforementioned nominalized construction can nonetheless be conveyed in a more literal fashion, without employing verbal phrase and meaning specification. The observed explicitating shift, therefore, is non-obligatory and can only be justified by the translator's personal stylistic preference. This tendency has also been noted in the research conducted by Le (2014), who attributed translators' reconstruction of nominalizations as verb phrases to their inclination to preserve the naturalness and aesthetic values of the target language.

4.3. Lexical specification

For the majority of nominalizations with *-er*, lexical specification fulfills its intended purpose, which is to make the allusion to the designated person or group of individuals implied in the source sentences more explicit, as shown below.

(6) ST: Would Karl Marx have urged workers of all species to unite?

TT: Karl Marx có đã cũng sẽ kêu gọi giới vô sản của tất cả mọi loài người khác biệt hãy cùng đoàn kết lại không?

BT: Would Karl Marx also have urged the proletariat of all different human races to unite?

While the nominal “workers” prototypically refers to a group of people in a firm or industry performing physical work rather than organizing things or managing people, its semantic scope and referential range were further specified as “the proletariat” in the translation. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, the class of wage workers in the theory of Karl Marx was characterized not only by their general participation in industrial production but also by their meager wages in exchange for their labor power. The use of “giới vô sản” (“the proletariat”) in the Vietnamese translation, therefore, helps to reflect the latter connotation which was left unexpressed in the source text.

While lexical specification was mostly adopted to provide the target readers with detailed information, thereby contributing to a better comprehension of the communicative situation, some were found rather redundant or even unsatisfactory, and hence should be eliminated in the process of back translation. A case in point is the use of “loài” in substitute of “population” in the original version, as exemplified below.

(7) ST: A similar fate befell the mammoth population of Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean (200 kilometres north of the Siberian coast).

TT: Một số phận tương tự đã chụp xuống với loài mammoth sống trên đảo Wrangel ở Biển Arctic (200 km về phía bắc của bờ biển Siberia).

BT: A similar fate befell the mammoths living on Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean (200 kilometers north of the Siberian coast).

To replace “population” with “loài” (“species”) in this context was somewhat superfluous, given these are two distinct levels of classification of organisms in ecology. As defined by Biology Online, a species is a collection of similar individuals that interbreed with each other, whereas a population is comprised of individuals of a particular species living in the same geographic dimension at a certain period. For the semantic feature “living in the same geographic dimension” of the word “population” to be fully conveyed in the translation, “quần thể” would be a preferable choice. What is more, “loài” (“species”) could not be preserved without making the back-translated sentence unnatural and redundant.

4.4. Adding plurality

The employment of pluralization was frequently registered in the translation of uncountable nouns. By converting these nouns into the countable category, the translator has concretized the nominalizations that once represented abstract concepts. The rendition of “replication” into “những bản sao” (“replications”) is considered as a typical example of this explicitating shift. The original nominalization signifies the act of copying something exactly, whereas its plural form in the translation refers to the products of this process.

(8) ST: ...cultural evolution is based on the replication of cultural information units...

TT: ...tiến hóa văn hóa dựa trên những bản sao của những đơn vị thông tin văn hóa...

BT: ...cultural evolution is based on replications of cultural information units...

In certain cases, singular nouns were transformed into plural nouns without tangible semantic impacts, as illustrated in the following example.

(9) ST: Parents and community elders were reluctant to let the younger generation...

TT: Những cha mẹ và những người lớn tuổi trong cộng đồng miễn cưỡng để cho những thế hệ trẻ...

BT: Parents and community elders were reluctant to let the younger generations...

While the addition of plurality in this translation does contribute to the overall increase in explicitness, whether it is informative enough to qualify as the product of an explicating shift remains a stumbling block to the authors. What is more, the translator's usage of pluralization does not follow a consistent, recurring pattern and hence cannot reveal much about her decision-making motives.

4.5. Adding modifiers

This strategy was found in cases in which additional adjectives were employed attributively, that is, as modifiers of nouns, to elaborate upon different coherence relations with which the said nouns are associated. In fact, this finding is in line with the results reported by Hopkinson (2008) in his examination of the Czech-English language pair. As observed by Hopkinson, the addition of modifying items could clarify temporal, causal, adversative, and other relations between parts of the text, hence resulting in a more coherent narrative chain. In the current study, the same effect can be discerned in most instances, as exemplified in the following translation, where the translator increased the overall level of explicitness by inserting the adjective “linh thiêng” (“divine”) before the nominal “sự cứu rỗi” (“salvation”).

(10) ST: It is even possible to convert sex into salvation, as fifteenth-century prostitutes did when they slept with men for money, which they in turn used to buy indulgences from the Catholic Church.

TT: Nó ngay cả có thể chuyển đổi dục tình xác thịt thành sự cứu rỗi linh thiêng, như những cô gái mại dâm thế kỷ XV đã làm, khi họ ngủ với đàn ông để lấy tiền, rồi dùng tiền đó để mua những đặc ân xá tội từ Hội Nhà thờ Catô.

BT: It is even possible to convert lust into divine salvation, as fifteenth-century prostitutes did when they slept with men for money, and then used that money to buy indulgences from the Catholic Church.

This explicating shift serves to give prominence to the adversative relation between a practice deemed mundane or even filthy (“sex”) and the gracious, sacred gift of God (“salvation”).

By the same token, the emergence of demonstrative pronouns as pre-modifiers of nouns also helps to explicate different coherence relations in the translated version. The following example illustrates this:

(11) ST: The reaction is quite natural, and does not betray a lack of intelligence or curiosity.

TT: Phản ứng này hoàn toàn là tự nhiên, và không phơi bày một sự thiếu kém về thông minh hay về tính tò mò khám phá nào cả.

BT: This reaction is completely natural, and does not reveal any lack of intelligence or curiosity.

The use of the definite article in the nominal phrase “the reaction” in the source text can somewhat hinder the target readers’ processing effort with respect to what exactly the phrase refers to. From a cognitive perspective, the definite article indicates “unique identifiability” of its referent, that is, the intended referent can be identified on the basis of its already existing mental image in the readers’ mind (Gundel et al., 1993, p. 294). According to Becher (2011), however, the concept of identifiability is highly nebulous. He pointed out that the use of the definite article gives us the impression that we are expected to decipher who or what is being referred to, but we are not given any clues as to how to do so. Therefore, the employment of the demonstrative pronoun “this” in the translation helps to eliminate the referential ambiguity generated by using the definite article. Accordingly, the target readers can readily associate “phản ứng này” (“this reaction”) with its antecedent expression in the discourse rather than with some general reaction that the readers are expected to recall from their world knowledge. The cohesive explicitation observed in this example has reinforced the findings of earlier studies (Becher, 2011; Blum-Kulka, 1986), which corroborated the importance of these pre-modifying items in enhancing the level of cohesive explicitness of the target text.

4.6. Providing descriptive equivalents or additional explanatory remarks

The analysis of the current study shows that a majority of the instances encompassed in this type were nominal expressions explicated in the Vietnamese translation by means of descriptive equivalents. This explicating shift was plainly manifested in the rendering of the nominals “employer” and “protection” in the following examples.

(12) ST: Could an employer favour a candidate because his DNA looks better?

TT: Một người hay một công ty thuê người làm liệu có thể ưa thích chọn một người xin việc nào đó vì DNA của người này xem có vẻ tốt hơn?

BT: Could a person or a company recruiting employees prefer a candidate because his DNA looks better?

(13) ST: Many kingdoms and empires were in truth little more than large protection rackets.

TT: Thực sự, nhiều vương quốc và đế quốc chẳng hơn gì nhiều so với những hệ thống lớn chuyên hoạt động ngoài vòng pháp luật, tổng tiền bằng đe dọa không hại người này hay phá hoại tài sản của người kia.

BT: Indeed, many kingdoms and empires were little more than large unlawful systems of extorting money in exchange for agreeing not to harm one or destroy another's property.

It can be observed that the terms “employer” and “protection racket” in the source texts were replaced with lengthy and detailed descriptions of the concepts they refer to in the target language. Expounding the semantic components of these terms, however, leads to circumlocutions that may not only interfere with the flow of information but also be more challenging to process than the original simple lexical items. Therefore, for the translator to adopt this course of action was rather unanticipated given that the Vietnamese comparable counterparts “nhà tuyển dụng” and “tổ chức bảo kê” would have been more convenient and trouble-free options for the examples (12) and (13) respectively. In the same vein, Mahmud (2020) pointed out that translators should only resort to descriptive equivalents when translating cultural words which are so unique or specific that no direct equivalents of them can be found in the target language. Therefore, the translator's approach in these situations could only be explained by her concern for the risk of misunderstanding on the part of the target readers, since “it is extremely difficult to make assumptions about the knowledge of the audience” (Gumul, 2017, p. 89).

The sub-category of additional explanatory remarks registers a marginal number of instances, all of which accompany nominalizations in the form of parentheticals, as shown below.

(14) ST: ...the best doctors still did not know how to prevent infection and stop the putrefaction of tissues.

TT: ...những y sĩ giỏi nhất vẫn không biết làm thế nào để ngăn ngừa nhiễm trùng và ngăn chặn sự thối rữa của những mô tế bào (putrefaction).

BT: ...the best doctors still don't know how to prevent infection and stop the putrefaction of tissues.

As example (14) indicates, in addition to the Vietnamese literal translation “sự thối rữa” (“putrefaction”), the translator retained the original terminology in English as a piece of useful information to disseminate to the target readers. Such addition, however, is mostly discretionary and must be eliminated from the back-translated version.

4.7. Disambiguating lexical metaphors or replacing metaphors with similes

In a majority of occurrences, the translator strived to disambiguate figurative terms via non-figurative language in order to reduce the processing effort, thereby improving readability among target readers. An example of this strategy is the rendition of the metaphorical compound phrase “tree-huggers” into “người chủ trương bảo vệ môi trường sinh thái cực đoan” in the translated text, as shown below.

(15) ST: Don't believe tree-huggers who claim that our ancestors lived in harmony with nature.

TT: Đừng tin những người chủ trương bảo vệ môi trường sinh thái cực đoan, cho rằng tổ tiên chúng ta sống trong hài hòa với thiên nhiên.

BT: Don't believe radical environmentalists who think that our ancestors lived in harmony with nature.

As “tree-hugger” was coined as a part of a historical event and has no equivalent metaphorical images in the target culture, the translator has opted to decode this term in a non-figurative manner. With the Vietnamese translated version “người chủ trương bảo vệ môi trường sinh thái cực đoan”, target readers can effortlessly decipher what is covertly expressed in the source text without prior familiarity with the source culture or the network of semantic associations the metaphor draws on.

Another approach by which metaphors can be explicated in the translation is to reformulate them as similes, which in turn brings to the surface the analogy between the two components of the metaphor, as in the following example.

(16) ST: ...with Argentinian armoured divisions sweeping to the gates of Rio, and Brazilian carpet-bombers pulverising the neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires.

TT: ...với những sư đoàn thiết giáp Argentina kéo đến tận cổng của thành Rio, và những máy bay ném bom như trải thảm của Brazil biến những vùng lân cận của Buenos Aires thành cám vụn.

BT: ...with Argentinian armored divisions drawing to the gates of Rio, and Brazilian carpet-bombers turning the neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires into crumbs.

This explanatory translation in Vietnamese, however, was omitted in the back translation to English as any attempt to retain the simile “những máy bay ném bom như trải thảm” (“planes dropping bombs like laying a carpet”) would make the text redundant and lengthy.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

The data uncovers 87 occurrences of explicating shifts in the Vietnamese translation of *-tion* and *-er* nominals. It is noteworthy that meaning specification and the addition of modifiers, which involve the insertion of new lexical items, make a significant contribution to the increase in the overall explicitness of the translation. The emergence of such linguistic elements to accompany the original nominalizations helps to explicate underlying notions which can be inferred from the intra-textual context, thereby strengthening the cohesive ties within the discourse. In addition, the reconstruction of nominalizations as verb phrases or other structures, which was discovered to be relatively common in the corpus, facilitates either the clarification of the information contained in nominal constructions or the production of a more natural translation for the domestic readers' comprehension. Furthermore, lexical specification, which entails selecting a more specific surface form, is essentially context-driven in that it is activated by the translator's understanding of the actual discourse and her own definition of efficacy. Notably, the newly discovered technique of introducing plurality has the potential to make abstract ideas or concepts denoted by nominal expressions more tangible. In addition, descriptive equivalents and further explanatory remarks were only used when the translator felt the need to clarify the nominalizations in a lengthy, thorough, and sometimes redundant manner. Last but not least, given that the majority of metaphorical expressions in the English version have no direct equivalents in the target language, the translator has chosen to convey these metaphors in descriptive language or change them into similes using comparison markers such as “like”.

5.2. Recommendations

The findings drawn from the current research have profound implications for teaching and practice of translation. As previously mentioned, due to its complicated nature, nominalization can pose numerous challenges to translators coming from linguistic backgrounds where this phenomenon does not exist or is uncommon. By providing an insight into the aspect of explicitation in translating nominal expressions, this study shows them an adequate translation strategy and thus directs them towards producing higher-quality translations. To be more specific, the analytical discussion in this paper sheds light on various circumstances that call for the deployment of explicitation as well as the best course of action in each circumstance. In addition, insightful assessment of the cases of overexplicitation also serves as a caution about potential errors that should be avoided during the process of translating

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KHẢO SÁT HIỆN TƯỢNG HIỆN NGÔN TRONG VIỆC DỊCH DANH HÓA TIẾNG ANH SANG TIẾNG VIỆT

Tóm tắt: Bài báo này báo cáo một phần kết quả của một nghiên cứu lớn hơn. Mục đích của bài báo là để khảo sát và tìm hiểu đặc điểm của các chuyển đổi hiện ngôn khác nhau xuất hiện do việc dịch các danh hóa tiếng Anh với các hậu tố *-tion* và *-er* sang tiếng Việt. Phương pháp phân loại của Gumul về các biểu hiện bề mặt của hiện tượng hiện ngôn (2017) đã được điều chỉnh để làm khung phân tích ngữ liệu định tính. Xử lý dữ liệu định lượng dưới dạng đếm tần suất cũng được thực hiện nhằm đạt được các mục tiêu nghiên cứu. Trong phạm vi giới hạn của bài báo này, các kết quả nghiên cứu chỉ ra bảy loại chuyển đổi hiện ngôn và các đặc điểm điển hình của chúng, nhờ đó cung cấp thêm bằng chứng về sự tồn tại của hiện tượng hiện ngôn trong dịch danh hóa. Bài báo cũng đề xuất các khuyến nghị thực tế đối với việc giảng dạy và thực hành dịch thuật.

Từ khóa: Hiện ngôn, danh hóa, dịch thuật