

# Evaluation On The In-Faculty Coursebook Of English-Vietnamese Translation Module Currently In Use At Dong Nai University's English Department (Dnu)

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## **Abstract**

Coursebook evaluation is a compulsory and regular activity for any tertiary instructors; however, this process has been seemingly neglected at DNU's English Department. This study is therefore designed with the aim of evaluating the effectiveness of an in-faculty coursebook entitled "English-Vietnamese Translation Module" following its five-year application in this setting. In order to obtain the expected outcome, an evaluation framework of a seven-point criterion/component was designed by the researcher and also the book's author, aiming at exploring translation instructors' and third-year English-majored students' perceptions about its appropriateness for the users. The research instruments consisted of a student questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale and open-ended teacher interview questions with a view to answering the two research questions established at the outset of the study. The study uncovered that almost all teachers and students expressed positive attitudes toward this coursebook in terms of contents, themes, methodologies, teaching styles and learning styles, translation techniques and approaches, translation discussion activities, vocabulary and language structure presentation, cultural aspects, and simulation term papers. However, to make the coursebook more effective for future use, translation instructors suggested some recommendations for material innovation, adaptation, and modification; specifically, the rejection of some out-to-date themes to be replaced with some current and updated authentic teaching materials of translation from the workplace, such as passages concerning labor contracts, formal business letters, emails, minutes, and/or negotiation, news articles from BBC or VOA news, and domestic and world news on educational fields. A final suggestion is to narrow down the volume of units per theme for its limited three-credit program. On the basis of the findings, some recommendations were made for the English department, the coursebook developers, and the administrators of DNU for its better utilization in the future.

**Keywords:** Coursebook/textbook evaluation, English-Vietnamese Translation Module, predictive evaluation, retrospective evaluation, pre-use evaluation, whilst-use evaluation, post-use evaluation.

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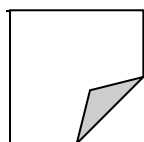
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## **I. Introduction**

Coursebooks play a pivotal role in the teaching processes of tertiary instructors because they function as instructional materials for them to design course syllabi as well as term papers for their learners. Commenting on the importance of the coursebooks, Sheldon (1988, p. 237) posited that "whether we like it or not, these represent for both students and teachers the visible heart of any ELT program." In advocacy of this view, Hutchinson and Torres (1994, p. 315) also emphasized that "no teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has a relevant textbook." As a result, a careful selection of coursebooks, textbooks, and/or any teaching materials should be a top priority for anyone working in the teaching profession.

According to Bao Dat (2008), there are currently three kinds of textbooks in use in Southeast Asian countries. The first one is the global texts, known as foreign or imported texts. These books are distributed extensively abroad, although the material designers do not target any specific markets for them. Whereas the strengths of these books are their reliability and accuracy in English use, they often exceed the low-income customers' financial abilities. The second category is the domestic books, also referred to as in-country or local ones. They are often delivered to the local and national book markets and used as reference books and/or workbooks by both teachers and students for both inside and outside of the classroom. Their advantages include simplified languages, local cultural components, and inexpensive prices. However, they lack communicativeness and authenticity. Finally, the regional coursebooks "are developed in a few countries but are exported to and become accepted in many other countries" (Bao Dat, 2008, p. 4). Like local textbooks, these coursebooks have both advantages and disadvantages as well.



As each coursebook has both strengths and weaknesses and no coursebook or textbook in the world is completely suitable to different teaching contexts (Cunningsworth & Tomlinson, 1984), choosing appropriate coursebooks that closely meet both teachers' and learners' needs and interests has always been considered an important target as it decides the success of any ELT training program.

Presently, there are three types of coursebooks for internal circulation for English-major students at the DNU English department, namely, the global coursebooks, the domestic coursebooks, and the in-faculty coursebooks, similar to the three types as aforementioned by Bao Dat (2008). Of these types, the imported coursebooks account for the highest percentage of the coursebooks in use. This is then closely followed by the in-country coursebooks written by professional writers who are also the instructors at other universities across Vietnam. The final ones are teaching materials and/or coursebooks designed by the very English instructors at DNU. Currently, coursebooks on translation modules, including Theories of Translation, English-Vietnamese Translation, Vietnamese-English Translation, and Business Translation, are designed by a cohort of translation instructors and approved for internal use by the Council of Science of the English Department of Dong Nai University since 2018. In other words, these in-faculty coursebooks of translation have been in use for five years, and until now, there has not yet been any external evaluation by other teachers and students who have been using them.

Despite their abundance and diversity in terms of coursebooks at the DNU English department at the moment, as said above, these coursebooks have never undergone any external evaluation processes to test their appropriateness for the users. Because of this, it is hard to determine whether the coursebooks in use actually meet the stated objectives of the tertiary curriculum programs as well as the administrators', instructors', and learners' requirements and expectations.

This present study embarked on the evaluation of "*the coursebook of the English-Vietnamese Translation Module*" to check its relevancy and effectiveness to both teachers' and learners' needs and interests. Therefore, it set out to find the answers to the following research questions:

1. To what extent does the coursebook for "*English-Vietnamese Translation Module*" meet the needs and interests of students at the DNU English department?
2. In what aspects of the coursebook do the translation instructors think need to be improved in the future?

## **II. Literature Review**

### **Reasons for coursebook evaluations**

There are some justified reasons to explain why coursebook evaluation is extremely necessary in the activities of teaching and learning foreign languages.

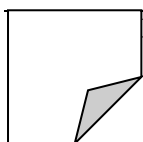
First of all, it can be seen that no material in the world can meet the expectations of all learners in different contexts. As seen, a coursebook is designed for general learners instead of particular ones in the coursebook designers' minds. Therefore, while elements such as language, context, culture, levels of learners, and so on may be suitable for one kind of learner in this context, they turn out to be unfit for others in other contexts. Therefore, through the process of coursebook evaluation, evaluators such as teachers can "identify particular strengths and weaknesses in coursebooks already in use, so that optimum use can be made of their strong points, while the weaker areas can be strengthened through adaptation or by substituting materials from other books" (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 15).

Secondly, as there are many teaching materials, textbooks, and coursebooks available on the market and each of them reflects a unique philosophy from the material designers' intentions, such as methodologies and approaches, learning styles, teaching styles, contents, language structures, vocabulary items, cultural elements, etc., analyzing and evaluating them is therefore of utmost importance as it helps the evaluators decide what they should do with these coursebooks.

Last but not least, coursebook evaluation is particularly urgent for teachers who are using these coursebooks to teach their learners. This is considered their regular work because they are directly responsible for the success of the course and/or the training program. Feedback from the users, such as their colleagues, learners, administrators, and even non-academic readers, can also serve as a useful channel to enable them to continue using, modifying, adapting, or rejecting that coursebook (Rosenbusch, 1991). Through activities such as classroom observation, interviews, questionnaires, and tests, the evaluators who are also the teachers can get a useful insight into a clear and overall picture of the coursebooks.

### **Approaches to coursebook evaluation**

In order for a coursebook to be effectively evaluated, a series of concrete criteria must be built up to assist the evaluators. They are commonly called approaches and checklists for evaluation criteria and vary from evaluators to evaluators and from context to context. The literature review so far has proposed various coursebook evaluation models developed and designed by experts in the field of evaluation. These best-known coursebook



evaluation experts are Ellis (1997), McDonough and Shaw (1998; 2003), McGrath (2002), Tomlinson (2003), and Cunningsworth (1995), to name but a few. Below is a summary of some of their prominent evaluation approaches.

First, Ellis's (1997) approach to textbook evaluation mentioned two main stages of evaluation, namely, predictive evaluation and retrospective evaluation. In detail:

Predictive evaluation is used by teachers who are going to decide whether to use a particular coursebook available on the market or not. The following channels are called upon to help them choose a coursebook: The first one is to look at the available evaluations of the experts specializing in textbook evaluation. The second one is to look at the evaluations of people who are not necessarily academic people. They can be ordinary people who used to read or use that coursebook before. The last one is to make use of various checklists and guidelines available in the literature (Çakir, 2004). One criticism of this kind of evaluation is that it can be rather subjective and inaccurate because, more often than not, the experts and non-academic people, for example, give out their evaluations for general purposes rather than for a specific context and a specific subject. Ellis (1997) said that "there are limits to how scientific such an evaluation can be" (p. 37).

Retrospective evaluations, on the other hand, are considered more dependable and more objective because they are based on user feedback. This evaluation is usually carried out for an in-use coursebook (while-use evaluation) or after it has been used (post-use evaluation). The information the users provide is very useful to determine whether this material is worth using again or not. In line with this, Ellis (1997) asserted that retrospective evaluation was an excellent measurement tool for the validity of a predictive evaluation. Commenting on this evaluation, McGrath (2002) said that the best way to select a material was to try on people whose materials were intended and received feedback from them.

Secondly, the Tomlinson's (2003) approach suggested a three-stage process of evaluation: pre-use evaluation, while-use evaluation, and post-use evaluation. In detail:

As the name suggests, pre-use evaluation involves a decision made prior to using the coursebook. It is highly subjective because the evaluator, at this point, is primarily interested in the physical outlook and content pages of the coursebook to gain a rough idea of its possible applications. According to Tomlinson (2003), the evaluation process will become more objective "if more than two evaluators conduct the evaluation independently and then average their conclusions" (p. 23).

While-use evaluation puts a strong emphasis on the evaluation of the materials in use through forms of feedback from users collected from questionnaires, interviews, observation, and so on. It is more reliable and more objective than pre-use evaluation as "it makes use of measurement rather than prediction" (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 24).

Post-use evaluation seeks evaluation of the impact of the textbooks on the users. Tomlinson (2003, p. 25) said that "this evaluation is the most valuable type of evaluation as it measures the actual effects of the materials on the users." In doing so, it assists the evaluators in deciding whether to continue using the coursebook again in the future or not. This form of evaluation utilizes examination, interviews, and questions for those who used to use the coursebook to decide its strengths and weaknesses before decisions for material adaptation has been carried out. Tomlinson (2003) further highlighted the merits of this evaluation as follows:

It [post-use evaluation] can measure short-term effect as regards motivation, impact, achievability, instant learning, etc., and it can measure long-term effect as regards durable learning and application. It can measure the actual outcomes of the use of the materials and thus provide the data on which reliable decisions about the use, adaptation or replacement of the materials can be made (p. 25).

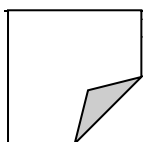
Finally, the Cunningsworth's (1995) approach listed eight specific criteria of coursebook evaluation, including "aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, skills, topic, methodology, teachers' books, and practical considerations" (pp. 3-4). These criteria are evaluated through a series of sub-questions for each criterion used for evaluation in all textbooks and/or coursebooks in general.

In a nutshell, all the aforementioned evaluation models tend to be similar, though they are given different names by different authors. In general, the evaluators deployed two sources of evaluation, namely, superficial evaluation and in-depth evaluation. For first-hand evaluations, the evaluators are going to base their evaluation on the physical outlook of the book, while to test its validity, reliability, suitability, and compatibility of a coursebook, the evaluators must base their evaluation on many different sources of information and different subject participants, such as instructors, learners, administrators, etc., through observation checklists, questionnaires, interviews, and tests, especially after these subjects have used that book for a very long time.

In general, each form of evaluation presents both merits and demerits. Therefore, finding an effective evaluation framework is of urgent need to the evaluators.

### **Design of the evaluation framework to the "English-Vietnamese Translation Coursebook" for this present study**

This present study adopted an after-evaluation framework because the coursebook under evaluation has been in use at the DNU English Department for five years (2018–2023). The researcher built some specific



criteria, mostly from Cunningsworth (1995), to suit his study. In concrete terms, the coursebook evaluation framework of this present study comprised seven criteria or components and is presented as follows:

The first one is the contents of the coursebook. There are four main questions concerning this criteria, including the suitability to the contents of the course syllabus and tertiary curriculum, to students' English proficiency levels, to students' needs and interests and learning motivation, and finally to the needs and desires of the administrators of DNU and job recruiters.

The second one concerns the themes and/or topics of the coursebooks. There are five main questions concerning this criteria: the updatedness and innovativeness of the topics; the variedness and richness of topics ranging from economy, culture, commerce, education, travel, and social lives; the authenticity of the topics extracted from the mainstream teaching materials, both in print and electronic versions, such as in-country published English magazines and global magazines of English-speaking countries; the suitability of the topics to students' English proficiency; and the ability to meet the requirements of the work market.

The third one concerns the methodologies and approaches used in the coursebook. There are three main questions for this criteria: 1. The translation discussion activities included in the coursebooks are varied, ranging from pre-translation, while-translation, and post-translation activities, so that students' personal voices can be well-manifested and represented and students' learning autonomy can be promoted. In other words, questions in the pre-translation, while-translation, and post-translation orient students towards what to follow so that they know what to do and what to be expected in each task. 2. In the same vein, the methodologies have a focal point on each learner's different learning styles, putting an emphasis on the differences between different kinds of learners and teaching styles. 3. Last but not least, translation methods and techniques such as word-for-word translation, literal translation, free translation, addition, omission, colloquial style, idiomatic expressions, conversion, and so on are well explained and emphasized in the coursebook.

The fourth criterion focuses on vocabulary and language structure presentation. This question specifically narrows down on the design of the coursebook. Therefore, (1) it focuses on asking students' opinions on whether there are thorough explanations of the vocabulary and grammar structures in the coursebook that closely correspond to languages in different contexts. In other words, by looking at the "note sections" of the vocabulary and language structures explained in the coursebook, students do not have any difficulties in doing a translation of the short corresponding passages without much effort. (2) Students have the opportunities to use the real-life languages used in academic and professional environments.

The fifth criterion focuses on the time allotment of the coursebook. There is one question concerning these criteria. As can be seen, the coursebook "*English-Vietnamese Translation Module*" has been introduced and delivered to the third-year English-majored students of the semester five in the four-year B.A. training program of the English Language Teacher Education and English Studies majors. It is a 3-credit module, approximating 45 periods. Therefore, the researcher wants to find out whether the six themes embedded in the coursebooks meet the time spent on each activity of the themes in the coursebook or not. To put it another way, the researcher is attempting to ascertain whether there are too many themes in the coursebook, and if so, he should decide to cut down on the volume of passages in the coursebook in the future so that students can have enough time to complete the translation tasks both inside and outside of the classroom.

The sixth criterion focuses on the usefulness and applicability of the coursebook in the future. In terms of this criterion, the researcher wants to find out whether knowledge gained from this coursebook can assist students in the workplace, as well as whether there is a chance for it to be used again in the future or if it is to be updated or replaced with a better version.

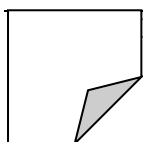
The final one, criteria seven, focuses on simulation term papers designed based on the contents of the course. This criterion refers to how comfortable students are taking tests and exams at the DNU English Department.

### **III. Research Method**

#### **Research site and research participants**

This present study was conducted at the DNU English department on the first semester of the academic year (2023-2024) with the participation of three translation instructors and 191 third-year English-majored students from six classes of two batches: English Language Teacher Education and English Studies.

In terms of instructors, there are two male instructors and one female instructor. They have had over ten years of experience teaching translation and interpretation for English-majored students and have graduated from M.A. programs from foreign universities: Victoria University, Australia, and South Oklahoma University, U.S.A. One of the oldest instructors used to have a lot of scientific articles and textbooks in translation published by the Vietnam National Publishers. He, together with the researcher, took on the main responsibility of designing and writing all the in-faculty coursebooks on translation for DNU English-majored students.



In terms of students, a total of 191 third-year English-majored students of two majors were invited to partake in the study. They have just finished a module of translation theory in the time frame of 30 periods. Therefore, they were well represented to respond to the questionnaires and interviews in the study.

In terms of the coursebook, the module of English-Vietnamese Translation was designed and incorporated into teaching and learning at the English department by the researcher himself, along with the cooperation of another male teacher, and approved by the Scientific Board of the DNU English department before delivering to all English-majored students. This coursebook has been in use for five years, from 2018 to 2023. However, it has not yet been assessed and evaluated by any external users, such as instructors and learners. As such, the evaluation of this coursebook was deemed to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the coursebook.

### **Design of the Coursebook**

As presented above, the coursebook for the English-Vietnamese Translation Module has been designed and brought into use in the English department of Dong Nai University since 2018. The coursebook was designed based on the following reference materials: (1) extracted passages from the already-published textbooks on translation by well-known instructors of translation and interpretation across Vietnamese universities and published by the national and/or local publishers in Vietnam, and currently they are readily available on the book markets in Vietnam. (2) The mainstream magazines (i.e., Times Magazines) and non-mainstream online versions in English are collected and compiled by the researcher of this study. (3) Books on translation written by the authors of English-speaking countries and Vietnamese authors living abroad. In general, the extracted materials to write the coursebook of English-Vietnamese Translation are very varied and rich in contents, topics, cultural aspects, and language focuses. The organizational structure of the coursebook of English-Vietnamese Translation Module consists of two chapters and is organized as follows:

Chapter 1 focuses on the consolidation of grammatical points, translation approaches, and translation techniques in the hope of assisting students during the process of sentence translation. Particularly, it comprises four units with well-explained theories following the translation exercises at the end of each unit.

Chapter 2 focuses on short passages with a minimum of 350 words extracted from texts written by the native people in the English-speaking countries and/or by authors coming from the countries where English is spoken as a foreign or second language. These texts contain a wide array of topics from education, economy, culture, society, tourism, and so on. Particularly, there are six macro-themes: Theme 1: Society and Culture; Theme 2: Education; Theme 3: Economy, Business, and Tourism; Theme 4: Social Lives, Theme 5: Nation and People; Theme 6: Management and Administration.

The design of this coursebook closely corresponds to the course syllabus and the university curriculum issued by Dong Nai University under the directives of the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). This coursebook is intended for the third-year students of the English major, semester 6, in the duration of 45 periods or three credits of the B.A. training program. Each period lasts 50 minutes. Each passage in the coursebook is designed with many corresponding activities. The starting point of the lesson begins with short discussions and pre-question activities to activate the schematic knowledge of the students and prior prepare to engage them in the subsequent meaningful activities of the lesson. Short instructions in task 1 are as follows:

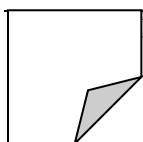
Read through the text below once. Don't try to understand the exact meaning of every word. Read the questions below to help you: 1. What is the topic?; 2. Where is the text probably taken from?; 3. What is the writer's main purpose?; 4. Who is the intended reader?; 5. In what style is it written?

The next activity is the introduction and explanation of some difficult words, phrases, and idiomatic expressions in the selected text. These words and phrases are explained in detail in light of their English and Vietnamese equivalents. It makes use of the Advanced Cambridge Dictionary to explain the terminology. Also, many illustrative examples are provided to clarify the meanings explained. This activity is very necessary to enable students to understand the intended meanings of the new words and phrases in context.

Third, some key grammatical structures in the passage are picked out and explained to students to help them master the nuances of the English language as compared to the Vietnamese-spoken and written styles.

The last activity is devoted to students doing the translation in pairs, in groups, or individually. They are advised to divide the passage into several sentences and then translate them separately before assembling all the translated sentences into the complete passage. This activity is based on the social constructivism of Vygotsky (1896–1934), "doing by learning." Students are encouraged to work together to share and contribute ideas to shape the completeness of the translated texts. After this activity, students exchange their final version with one another in the constructive peer feedback activities before getting the teacher's feedback.

In a word, the design of this coursebook is like a mini lesson plan in which many activities are pooled together to create the effectiveness and efficacy of the coursebook. It is not simply a compiled textbook but a textbook built with the intention of learners and teachers in the author's mind.



### Research instruments

The research instruments are a student questionnaire and an open-ended teacher interview. The questionnaire consists of 21 statements designed based on the seven evaluation criteria mentioned in the literature review. It seeks to get feedback from students regarding the coursebook's appropriateness for DNU English department students, and the interviews with translation instructors delve into their thoughts on additional changes that should be made if the coursebook is to be used again in the future.

All the question items were designed on a Likert scale ranging from 1. Strongly Disagree (SD), 2. Disagree (D), 3. Uncertain (U), 4. Agree (A), and 5. Strongly Agree (SA). After the questionnaires were collected, they were processed quantitatively.

In addition, to validate the answers selected by student informants, a follow-up ended-open interview question was designed to ask three instruction instructors to clarify any points made by the student respondents in the student questionnaire. The responses from teacher respondents were recorded and transcribed. After examining the recording, the researcher summarized the main points and thematic contents provided by the teacher respondents. The data was then processed qualitatively.

## IV. Findings And Discussions

### Students' questionnaires

**Table 1. Student participants' overall perceptions towards "the coursebook of English-Vietnamese Translation Module."**

No	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The contents of the coursebook correspond closely with the stated objectives of the course syllabus and tertiary curriculum framework of "English Language Teacher Education and English Studies" majors of Dong Nai University.	191	<b>4.29</b>	0.781
2	The contents of the coursebook are suitable to the levels of English proficiency of the third-year English majored students.	191	4.20	0.716
3	The contents of the coursebook meet students' needs and interests.	191	4.01	0.836
4	The contents of the coursebook meet students' learning motivation.	191	3.82	0.785
5	Cultural aspects expressed in the contents are in the realm of students' knowledge and understanding.	191	4.04	0.773
6	The themes in the coursebook are always updated and innovative.	191	3.94	0.799
7	There is a variety of interesting themes ranging from economy, culture, commerce, education, travel, social lives, international trade, and etc.	191	<b>4.32</b>	0.739
8	The themes are extracted from authentic texts.	191	<b>4.37</b>	0.749
9	The themes are not beyond students' grasp and understanding.	191	3.71	0.791
10	The themes correspond closely with those that can be found in the workplace.	191	3.95	0.752
11	There is a variety of translation activities in the coursebook, ranging from pre-, while-, and post-translation activities.	191	3.98	0.959
12	The methodologies in the coursebook accommodate different kinds of learning styles.	191	3.82	0.882
13	Translation approaches and translation techniques are well-explained in the coursebook.	191	<b>4.29</b>	0.807
14	There is a comprehensive explanation of vocabulary and grammar structures in the coursebook to better facilitate students in the while-translation activities.	191	<b>4.44</b>	0.715
15	The coursebook meets three credits (45 periods) of the "English-Vietnamese Translation module." In other words, students do not feel overloaded with the contents of the coursebook.	191	4.16	0.807
16	The coursebook can be used again in the future.	191	4.12	0.804
17	There should be a modification in the coursebook if it is to be used again in the future.	191	4.07	0.764
18	There should be a change of the coursebook because this coursebook is not suitable with the current social context any more.	191	2.53	1.01
19	The coursebook can be widely used outside the classroom.	191	3.59	0.767
20	This coursebook can enjoy a high application level in the workplace.	191	3.49	0.753
21	The simulation term papers designed from the coursebook are suitable for students' levels of knowledge of linguistics.	191	3.90	0.798

As mentioned earlier in the paper, research question 1 aims at exploring students' opinions towards seven criteria of the English-Vietnamese coursebook, covering 21 statement items based on a Likert scale, to realize its appropriacy for both current and future use. The results of the questionnaire deployed descriptive statistics SPSS Version 20 to analyze the mean scores of all 21 statement items. The evaluation of students' responses was set as follows:

Very low evaluation: 1.0- 1.80

Low evaluation: 1.81-2.60

Medium evaluation: 2.61-3.4

High evaluation: 3.41-4.20

Very high evaluation: 4.21-5.00

The first evaluation concerned the content criteria comprising the first five items. It can be seen that student respondents expressed high satisfaction with the five items asked. Concretely, most of them strongly agreed that this coursebook met the stated objectives of the training program ( $M = 4.29$ , Item 1). This in turn entailed their high evaluations towards the following items: 2, 3, 4, and 5, where they clearly stated that the coursebooks in use were actually appropriate to their current levels of English proficiency, met needs and interests, and increased their love and motivation for learning, as well as matched cultural elements they had known to those embedded in each topic of the lessons. The corresponding mean scores for these items (2–5) could be seen at 4.20, 4.01, 3.82, and 4.04, respectively. Furthermore, the differences in their responses were not much, chiefly falling around scales 4 and 5, where the standard deviation values (SD) fluctuated between 0.716 and 0.836.

The second category—themes or topics—included the following items: 6–10. Generally, they claimed that the themes selected for the coursebook were current and updated (Item 6,  $M = 3.94$ ). Especially items 7–8 received very high agreements, with mean scores ranging from 4.32 to 4.37. In doing so, they strongly agreed that there was an abundance of topics extracted from the authentic texts. Also, other topic-related issues, such as the appropriateness of the topics to students' knowledge and understanding, as well as the workplace, were warmly welcomed. Their medium evaluations of these aspects were around the mean scores of 3.71 and 3.95, respectively.

Thirdly, a significant number of student respondents expressed high evaluations of the organizational structure of the coursebook. First of all, they agreed that the pre-, during-, and post-translation activities actually engaged them in the subsequent translation activities ( $M = 3.98$ , item 11). Also, a wide range of methodologies in the coursebook met different kinds of learners ( $M = 3.82$ , item 12). Most importantly, they expressed very high satisfactions with the translation approaches and techniques of the coursebook ( $M = 4.29$ , item 13).

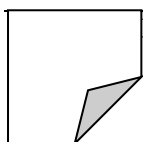
Fourthly, the criteria regarding vocabulary and grammar structure presentation received the highest responses from the student informants ( $M = 4.44$ , item 14). A high concentration of students chose scales 4 and 5 from agreement to strong agreement. They maintained that a comprehensive explanation of vocabulary and grammar structure economized their time in looking up the meanings of the new words and fixed expressions in the dictionary. Similarly, grammar and sentence structures explained in the light of context enabled them to translate the source texts into target texts more accurately. Indeed, this was also the most positive highlight of the coursebook because, in the coursebook designer's minds, the explanation of new words and grammar structure must be seen as a top priority so that novice students have encountered no difficulties in rendering the syntax, semantics, and pragmatics of the source texts into the target texts.

Fifthly, student respondents also expressed that they did not feel overwhelmed with the knowledge of the coursebook ( $M = 4.16$ , Item 15). This could be explained in the light of the fact that most of the translation instructors cleverly organized translation activities for the learners. That is, they organized translation projects for students in terms of group work instead of individual work. Therefore, in order to complete the translation project, students had to work collaboratively among themselves both inside and outside of the classroom. Therefore, almost all translated passages in the coursebook could be finalized by the students in due date. Furthermore, apart from 45 periods in the mainstreamed class, students were asked to devote to an additional 90 hours self-studying outside the class as required by the MOET of Vietnam; therefore, the knowledge manifested in the coursebook was not too overloaded for most of the students. However, this issue would be further explored by the translation instructors' responses in the interviews.

The sixth criterion concerns the potential application of the coursebook for future use. There were four statements related to this criterion. First of all, a high proportion of student respondents expressed that this coursebook could be used again for future use ( $M = 4.12$ , item 16). In doing so, they voiced their opinion that the researcher should not replace it with a new one ( $M = 2.53$ , item 18). Instead of this, he could add some new knowledge if it is to be used again in the future ( $M = 4.07$ , item 17). However, items 19 and 20 for this criteria did receive medium evaluations ( $M = 3.59$ ;  $M = 3.49$ ). Actually, there were high reservations among student respondents towards these items ( $SD = 0.767$ ;  $SD = 0.753$ ). It could be that student respondents had not had any experience involving English-Vietnamese documents currently in use in the workplace. This in turn needed further investigation from the responses provided by the translation instructor respondents.

Finally, there was also agreement among student respondents that simulated term papers in the coursebook were nearly similar to the actual exam papers that students had to do in their regular, midterm, and final exam papers ( $M = 3.9$ , item 21). In other words, it could be tentatively concluded that students met just a few difficulties when doing their actual papers on translation because all paper exams must be designed based on the course syllabus and "the tertiary curriculum of English Language Teacher Training and English Studies training program."

All in all, it can be inferred that the English-Vietnamese coursebook currently in use at DNU met the stated objectives of the training program and increased the interests and motivation of English-majored students. Likewise, the contents, themes, topics, methodologies, translation approaches, translation activities, and simulated term papers in general met students' expectations. Where some criteria, such as time allotment and the



possible application of the coursebook, received inconsistent responses from student respondents, they would be explained further in the section “Instructors’ interviews.”

### **Instructors’ interviews**

Research question 2 aims at highlighting translation instructors’ opinions towards aspects of the coursebook that should be modified for future use. To do so, a series of open-ended questions concerning contents, themes, translation discussion activities, presentation of vocabulary and language structures, and the possible application of the coursebook in the future were also delivered to the translation instructors.

First of all, in terms of the contents of the coursebook, three translation instructors strongly agreed that this coursebook met the given objectives of the course syllabus, and the tertiary curriculum framework of English Language Teacher Education and English Studies at Dong Nai University. In similar manner, they concurred with the fact that the coursebook met the needs and expectations of almost all students of two English majors, increasing their love and motivation for learning both inside and outside of the classroom. However, they also suggested some ideas for the material innovation. For example, one male instructor expressed:

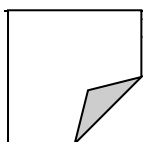
In my opinion, you should include more contents concerning such issues as economy, international trade, tourism, and educational-related contents from international magazines. They set out the reasons that students of the English Studies major, for instance, would like to know more about current, updated texts concerning the workplace or the on-going issues in the business world to familiarize them with the areas of translation and interpretation upon their graduation. As for students of English Pedagogy, contents on education and the culture of Vietnam and worldwide will be a sure shot to arouse their interests in the field of translation.

In response to the question of whether the coursebook lived up to the job employers’ expectations, another older male translation instructor stated that the designer of the coursebook should specify what the recruiters are expecting. To put it another way, before designing the course outline and the coursebook, he should spend more time learning about the recruiters’ needs before creating the course plan and the coursebook that more closely matches their expectations.

To clarify the responses of this male instructor, a young female instructor has introduced texts commonly used in the workplace, including business negotiations, labor contracts, emails, and minutes. She went on to say that the DNU translation instructor cohort should pay a visit to overseas businesses with headquarters in Vietnam to find out more about the authentic texts or documents applied here and, if feasible, acquire permission to use them in whole or in part.

Concerning themes and/or topics embedded in the coursebook, they expressed that themes selected for translation were of good quality, extracted from authentic texts that closely corresponded to texts found in the workplace. Likewise, they expressed their positive attitudes with the abundance and diversity of the themes, ranging from economy, culture, commerce, education, social lives, and so on. More importantly, the topics selected for translation were not beyond the knowledge and understanding of students of English majors. Almost all of them did not find any difficulty in rendering these texts into the corresponding Vietnamese versions. However, three instructors expressed their reservations about the innovation and updatedness of the themes. In their opinion, the designer of the coursebook should eliminate out-of-date themes, replacing them with the most current and updated news to catch up with the developmental trend of the age. For example, one male instructor suggested that more pieces of news, such as reports on business, culture, education, and travel, extracted from international news sources such as BBC news and VOA news, should be included to increase the authenticity of the texts in use. Another one shared his idea that, in actual fact, the theme basically met the requirements of the recruiters, but not all the texts did. Therefore, a replacement of these passages in the coursebook for later publication should be taken into consideration.

Thirdly, three translation instructors highly valued criteria regarding vocabulary and language structure presentation in the coursebook, translation discussion activities, and translation approaches and techniques. They asserted that the objectives of the lessons, which included pre-, during-, and post-translation activities, were all clearly stated at the outset of the lessons. These facilitated the process by which instructors could create lessons that involved students’ cognitive engagement. Pre-translation discussion questions, for example, helped students activate their schematic knowledge while also preparing them for what came next in the subsequent activities. In particular, all three translation instructors wholeheartedly concurred that these questions made students more highly aware of the text types, target readers, and purpose of the text. Meanwhile, instructors and students greatly benefited from the clear presentation and comprehensive explanation of translation techniques, vocabulary, and fixed expressions appearing in the passages. This helped them understand the intended meanings of the text in more detail and saved time by eliminating the need to look up the definitions of these fixed idioms in the dictionaries. Actually, all three translation instructors highly ranked the meanings given in both English and Vietnamese equivalents. They claimed that the explanations were concise and straight-forward in both Vietnamese and English language. Specifically, by utilizing the Advanced Cambridge Dictionary to explain these technical terms, the author of the book enhanced the reliability and accuracy of the words used. Finally, these instructors





also conveyed their contentment with the groupwork and pairwork activities given in the coursebook. In other words, students were given the chance to engage in the process of negotiating meaning to produce a final translated text as a group, which in turn supported the idea of the socialist theory of mutual learning.

Finally, concerning the feasibility of the coursebook for future use, three translation instructors agreed that this coursebook can be reused with some modifications. First of all, they suggested getting rid of some out-of-date topics and replacing them with more modern and up-to-date translation-related ones. As said above, in order to better prepare students of English Studies major for their future workplace, instructors recommended including additional topics on international trade, labor contracts, formal business letters, emails, letters, and news articles on BBC and VOA reports. As for English Pedagogy students, texts about contemporary educational practices in Vietnam and worldwide would be most appropriate for them because they involve students' teaching practice in secondary school when they graduate. The second recommendation concerned narrowing down on the coursebook's themes. The argument put forward was that the themes selected for the current coursebook were excessively intensive when compared to the duration of a three-credit course in the English major curriculum. More precisely, they suggested that the coursebook should only include 12 units that will cover every topic related to culture, education, news of business, and social lives, rather than the six themes present in the current coursebook. Every unit, if at all possible, could conclude with further translation exercises for students to practice outside the classroom.

## V. Conclusion And Recommendation

In general, this present study achieved consistent opinions from both instructors and students about the usefulness of the English-Vietnamese coursebook currently in use at the DNU English department.

First of all, most of them agreed that this coursebook met almost all criteria of a good coursebook in terms of contents, topics, methodologies, translation approaches and techniques, translation activities, and language use. In doing so, they concurred that this coursebook can be used again in the future.

Secondly, there need to be some adjustments to the coursebook in the next publication. These concerned the innovativeness and updatedness of the coursebook. From the instructors' viewpoints, some contents and topics in the coursebook bear little relevance to the current educational and professional contexts. Therefore, the researcher should replace them with the most current and updated topics to suit the swiftly changing trend of the era. This is particularly true in the field of translation and interpretation, where innovation and updating are required. Without any changes in terms of contents and topics, the coursebook would forever be lagged behind, and therefore, students can hardly catch up with the new information to cater for their occupational needs in the future. The final one is related to cutting down on the volume of the topics in the coursebook. All instructors agreed that there was too much information in the coursebook. This, in turn, made it difficult for both instructors and students to conduct teaching and learning activities successfully and effectively.

On the basis of the conclusions, some recommendations were given to make the best use of the coursebook. First of all, material developers should update current contents and topics concerning education, economy, social issues, environment and travel, literature, and so on. These collected materials can be taken from current domestically and internationally published mainstream and non-mainstream magazines. Secondly, material developers can cut down on the volume of information in the coursebook by incorporating chapter 1 into chapter 2 so that students can apply the theory of translation directly to their translation lessons instead of learning two chapters separately as before. It is hoped that students will learn translation better if they can see a close connection between translation theory and translation practice in one lesson.

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