Investigating Teachers' and Graduates' Remarks on the Translation of English Modals into Vietnamese Provided by Google Translate

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ABSTRACT

Due to demands of using English for work, study and entertainment, more Vietnamese people have tended to use Google Translate to help translate English into Vietnamese and vice versa. This tool has become popular in these situations. However, can this tool translate English modal verbs expressing social functions into Vietnamese? To obtain the data for the study, the authors used the English source extracted from the grammar course book by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) which was fed into Google Translate for their Vietnamese versions. The source was related to making requests, giving advice, expressing potential realization, expressing desire, giving invitation and making preference. The study also recruited 11 experienced Vietnamese-speaking teachers of English and 21 Vietnamese-speaking graduates of English to give their remark on these translation texts which were sent to them via email and the social media platform Zalo. The findings showed that Google Translate was able to keep the intended meanings of many social functions through using the English modal verbs when transferring these functional texts into Vietnamese. The results also uncovered that most of the teachers and graduates agreed with these translated texts provided by Google Translate. Besides, both groups had a quite common point of view that Google Translate were unable to translate the past forms of the English modal verbs for more indirect or polite intention when they were transferred into Vietnamese. Some recommendations to help improve English-Vietnamese translation provided by Google Translate were also included.

Keywords: Google Translate; English modal verbs; social functions; remark; Vietnamese

INTRODUCTION

Since the twentieth-century, nine teaching methods were invented to serve the learning and teaching of foreign languages (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Among the nine approaches, Grammar-Translation was used as the first. This approach gave priority to translation exercises from one language into another language. For example, it primarily aimed to translate a foreign language into the language learner's mother tongue and vice versa, and instruction was given in the native language of the learners. Nonetheless, this approach did not last for long due to its drawback. It deemphasized the use of the target language (the learned language) and therefore many other approaches appeared to replace it. However, recently the translation strategies such as formal equivalence strategy and dynamic equivalence strategy have been widely used in foreign language classrooms to support the learning and teaching of a foreign or second language due to their effectiveness evidenced in many studies such as the study carried out by

Khau and Vo (2020), who investigated which translation strategy (formal equivalence strategy or dynamic equivalence strategy) the Vietnamese learners used to help translate 15 English proverbs of varied topics into Vietnamese. For example, the majority of the Malay students of German in the study conducted by Ying et al. (2018) posited that it was necessary to use translation strategies in learning a foreign language. The learners found that the application of translation strategies was helpful for improving translation. Moreover, in the time of the fourth industrial revolution, more people have owed support from machine translation aiming at different purposes and hence many researchers have started to explore its usefulness. For instance, as what Tsai (2019) found, Google Translate helped condense a writing text by producing more advanced vocabulary, better spellings and grammar. Noticeably, translation is in heavy need when the world is increasingly integrating. First, many language learners may think that at least they need to learn a foreign language considered as an international language to have a better stand to discover the world as a plethora of valuable knowledge and interesting stories can be presented in that language. Nevertheless, let us think that many international languages can be regarded as the world languages such as English, Russian, French, Spanish, and Chinese, and even in recent years Japanese and Korean are required in many organizations in Asia. Then, it is difficult for language learners to choose for themselves one international language to learn and it is impossible to learn several of them simultaneously. Secondly, many people in non-English speaking countries are still restricted to world knowledge in various fields in life. For instance, still so much work in many fields of study written in English has not been translated into Vietnamese. Therefore, they need to learn English to broaden their knowledge. As clearly known, many people in disadvantaged countries are facing lack of food to eat, roof to cover, so more or less these hindrances impede their learning foreign languages. In contrast to this group, better-off people have more opportunities to study foreign languages like English to widen their horizon, so they may take advantage of this foreign language to discover new things about the world.

Above all, learning a foreign language is not easy to many people, so many of them may seek support from translation machines to help them learn the language better. However, we should put it in mind that machine translations like Google Translate may not store sufficient languages for translation purpose. In terms of comprehension sufficiency, Google Translate seems to translate European languages better than their Asian counterparts (Aiken & Balan, 2011). Google Translate cannot do all things for us. Therefore, we should side with one another to help ameliorate quality translation produced by the machine translation system. This study aims at looking into how Google Translate picks up Vietnamese texts for their English versions. Specifically, it explores the ability of Google Translate in interpreting English modal verbs expressing different social functions into Vietnamese and investigates how the two groups of the educated participants - experienced Vietnamese teachers of English and Vietnamese graduates of English - judged its translation texts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

First and foremost, the researchers would like to briefly introduce English modal verbs expressing diverse social functions. Regarding English modal verbs, the study employs a set of modal verbs expressing varied social functions from Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999). This book helps bring EFL teachers many useful grammatical points, explanations, and teaching suggestions on each point. Specifically, to have the data for analysis, the researchers had Google Translate render these social functions into Vietnamese. The meaning of these social functions is presented by using the modal verbs "will", "would", "can", "could", "may", "might", "must", "shall", "should", "ought to", "had better", "had best", "have to", "need to", "be supposed to", "would like", "would you like, "would rather and would prefer".

Secondly, to help readers gain some knowledge of Vietnamese modal verbs, the researchers borrowed works from some Vietnamese authors. First, Dao (2004) provided us with some Vietnamese social- functional verbs which have the meanings of "Khiến" (meaning to have someone do something) and "Cầu" (meaning to wish someone to do something) as shown in Table 1 below. These meanings are presented from level 1 (less authority) to level 6 (stronger authority). Depending on the context, the speaker may choose an appropriate verb to make the listener do things.

TABLE 1. Level of authority of the verbs "Khiến" and "Cầu" from Level 1 to 6

Khiến (from stronger authority)
1 a: ra lệnh =order, cấm=forbid (using Khiến with strongest force, without Cầu)
1 b: cho phép= allow (using Khiến with strongest force, without Cầu)
2 a: yêu cầu=request (using Khiến with less force than 1a&b and Cầu with lowest force to show more polite)
2 b: đề nghị=suggest (using Khiến with less force than 1a&b and Cầu with lowest force to show more polite)
3: khuyên=advise (using Khiến with less force than 2a&b)
4: mời= invite (using Khiến with lowest force and Cầu with more force than 2 a and 2 b)
5: chúc=wish (Using only with Cầu stronger than 4, without Khiến)
6: xin=ask for (Using only Cầu with very strong force)
Cầu (to lower authority)

In Vietnamese, verb conjugation is not applied, so there are no tenses. No past Vietnamese modal verbs are found in Vietnamese, so Vietnamese speakers rely on certain words like "làm ơn" and "vui lòng" meaning "please" to soften the request. However, one will see that in English, a modal verb "will" has its past form "would", "can" having its past form "could", "may" having its form "might" and many more. While the present forms of these modal verbs show neutral degree of formality, their past forms are used to express a higher degree of politeness. Additionally, Diep (1996) considered modal verbs as dependent verbs as they also need to be accompanied with another verb or another word. Vietnamese modal verbs are found to have similar equivalents to those in English such as "có thể" (can), "nên" (should), "cần" (need), "phải" (must). However, in speech acts, these modal verbs in Vietnamese do not have similar social functions like in English. According to Hoang (1980), a Vietnamese speaker tends to use an imperative to have the listener respond to this with an action, doing something. Thus, she stated that the meaning of an imperative can express a certain social function in Vietnamese society, such as offering an invitation, making a request, giving a command, prohibiting someone to do something or congratulating someone. It is clearly seen that to express these social functions, Vietnamese speakers do not use a question. For instance, the verb "yêu cầu" (to request) is used to make a request instead of using "có thể" (can), "sẽ" (will) or "sẽ" (would) as in English. Furthermore, Dao (2004) also explained that if a Vietnamese speaker uses a question, it means the interlocutor expects the hearer to answer literally. Therefore, it can be inferred that most of the social functions mentioned earlier are not presented in interrogative forms like in English.

Before moving to related studies, this investigation would like to go through some definitions of translation and machine translation. According to Nida (1964), translation is to transmit the meaning of a text written in one language to that in another language without changing the original meaning in the source language. Moreover, as Newmark (2009) put it, the act of translation is to "render the meaning of a text in one language into another language in the way that the author intended the text" (p. 5). Ren (2013) viewed translation as the method of rewriting under certain constraints and for a purpose, so to achieve that purpose, rewriting is needed during the process of translation. Sinhal and Gupta (2014) considered machine

translation as a sub-field of computational linguistics. It looks into the transference from one language to another assisted with certain software. These definitions have guided the researchers to take on all necessary philosophies to seek a qualified translated text. Why has machine translation been increasingly preferred, especially in the age of the fourth Industrial Revolution? According to Wang et. al. (2021), it still takes the machine translation system much time to improve its translation quality and it requires a combination of methods like symbolic rules, knowledge, and neural networks for translation enhancement.

The following are the related studies the researchers used to advocate their study, which focuses on translated texts provided by Google Translate. The review is on both pros and cons of Google Translate.

It is undeniable that Google Translate has its upsides. Kreger et al. (2019) found that a group of medical staff took advantage of Google Translate in dealing with emergency department patients. Due to their limited English proficiency, they used Google Translate to help with translation between their first language and English. They used Google Translate to translate 20 commonly used English emergency department discharge instruction phrases which then were evaluated by 14 native speakers of seven commonly spoken languages including Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Korean, Armenian, and Farsi in this context. They measure fluency, adequacy, meaning, and severity and whether the statement conveyed the overall meaning. The overall accuracy of the translated statements was 78.5% but varied greatly between languages. This suggests that Google Translate is useful in this case.

In the same vein, Abidina et al. (2020) posited that Google Translate was useful. They found that machine translation was able to pick up acceptable meanings of idiomatic expressions in clear contexts at sentence level. They, furthermore, discovered that when the translated works produced by Google Translate were manipulated, the degree of accuracy was enhanced by 5.7%. Thus, users of Google Translate can see this result as a typical tool to support translation which has to later on be judged by users.

Likewise, to see if the online translation systems are capable of facilitating L2 English cognitive processing, Resende and Way (2021) conducted a syntactic priming experiment with 32 Brazilian Portuguese speakers whose English levels were at Intermediate and Advanced. It revealed that exposure to an English syntactic alternative on Google Translate can make them apply the same syntactic alternative spontaneously in later speech even if it is not the speaker's preferred syntactic alternative in English. Through observation, these participants can retain these syntactic alternatives for a long time. Hence, with an appropriate method, Google Translate can help optimize one's work.

To further support Google Translate, Chon et al. (2021) compared compositions of 66 Korean English as EFL university students in three modes: Direct Writing, Self-Translated Writing, and Machine-Translated Writing. The learners' writing products were first graded by independent raters and then submitted for computerized text analyses to assess linguistic complexity and types of errors. They discovered that machine translation helped shorten the English proficiency gap of weaker students and stronger ones in writing. This study also uncovered that with Google Translate students were able to use less infrequent vocabulary and create more complex sentences. This point reflects the concerns of the current study, which attempts to test ability of Google Translate in identifying appropriate meanings in different social contexts.

Likewise, Cancino and Panes (2021) explored if Google Translate assisted Chilean EFL high school learners in L2 writing. Learners using Google Translate and receiving Google Translate training and learners using only Google Translate without receiving Google Translate training outperformed those who did not use Google Translate or receive Google Translate training. Learners who used both Google Translate and were trained to use it obtained more evidence of lexical resource than those who used Google Translate only without any training

on using Google Translate. Furthermore, learners using Google Translate or receiving Google Translate training had more looked-up words than their counterparts who used Google Translate, but did not receive Google Translate training. With regard to syntactic complexity, the learners who did not use Google Translate or receive Google Translate training were rated as the lowest compared with the group receiving Google Translate and Google Translate training and with the group only receiving Google Translate but without Google Translate training. People can make use of their linguistic knowledge to judge translation quality provided by the machine to create uniform cooperation between the machine and humans.

Although many studies have advocated Google Translate in translating among languages, many other studies found that it needs improving. In an attempt to find downsides that Google Translate may have, Sheppard (2011) argued that Google Translate cannot find suitable meaning equivalent contexts when translating one language to another. It is, in addition, inclined to provide a way of translation called "word-for-word". When language structures are more sophisticated, it starts to lose grammatical meaning in a certain social context. What is more, it still struggles with idiomatic expressions.

Furthermore, Komeili, et al. (2011) tested the translation quality of three pieces of software, namely Pars, Padideh, and Google by evaluating 100 English sentences with simple, compound, complex sentences and idioms which were translated into Persian. They found all the devices had many problems. For lexical choice, Google Translate interpreted a Persian sentence as "Paper, pencil and pen are the essential ingredients of chips". In addition, its translation texts sound ambiguous as in "Fruit flies such as peach. For syntactic choice, it translated a Persian sentence as "Does your money isn't on gold". For level of production and transmission, it rendered one Persian sentence as "She warned she refuse the proposal".

In the same vein, to test Google Translate, Groves and Mundt (2015) recruited a group of pre-university students in a UK university based in Malaysia to write their essays freely without consulting any courses in English for academic purposes and they had their essays translated by Google Translate. The findings uncovered that the number of errors in Malay at sentence level were more than those in Chinese at sentence level. Most errors were detected in sentence structures and word choice and Google Translate has not been regarded as a place for professional translation. This result suggested the system needs to improve its language system among these languages.

Similarly, Oke et al. (2016) attempted to identify the quality of online machine translations used to translate clinical passages. The method employed 13 sentences from genuine previous linguistic validation projects which were translated into a selection of languages by online translation machine. Then, these translated projects were back-translated into English by native speakers of the target language whose quality was evaluated by the linguists of these translated languages. It unveiled that 66% of online translation was unacceptable, incomprehensible or not acquiring the intended meaning and 26% of that had grammatical mistakes.

Finally, Stapleton and Kin (2019) found that Google Translate has too many inaccuracies to let learners along judge their own learning. It means that users might find themselves confused with texts containing ungrammatical sentences produced by Google Translate. Hence, the classroom teacher should always tell their students to use Google Translate smartly and double-check Google Translation's work by giving it to experienced teachers or giving it to other better students for feedback.

In short, the findings above have provided the researchers with valuable information about the machine translation system, which has its pros and cons. Its limitations are many and this study, hence, aims at finding more useful results to provide the system more information about its translation quality, particularly in translating English modal verbs expressing social functions into Vietnamese. This investigation can be seen novel since it totally aims at

discovering the capability of Google Translate in translating English social functions using English modal verbs into Vietnamese dealing with plenty of social contexts. To obtain the data, the study is guided by the following research questions.

1. How does Google Translate interpret English modal verbs expressing social functions into Vietnamese?
2. Do teachers and graduates agree with the translation texts provided by Google Translate?

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS AND INSTRUMENTS

In order to see whether or not the translated texts provided by Google Translate were supported, the study employs 11 experienced Vietnamese-speaking teachers of English, comprising ten females and one male. They have taught English for over five years. All of them are teaching English at Tra Vinh University. They took part in this study voluntarily. They did their Master's degree in English Education, three in Ireland, one in Australia, one in Singapore and the rest in Vietnam. Another group of participants were 21 Vietnamese-speaking graduates of English who had just graduated from Tra Vinh University prior to this study. They were chosen based on their accumulated academic records with at least B+. This selection is believed to support reliable data on their judgment of the translated texts provided by Google Translate. Furthermore, the authors would like to have two groups of the participants to give fair remark on these Google Translate's translation texts, having no intention to compare the ability of the judgment between the two groups.

The study used the source extracted from the Grammar Book-An ESL/EFL Teacher's Course (2nd ed.) by Celce-Murcia and Larsen Freeman (1999) for the use of modal verbs to express many of the social functions such as making requests, giving advice, potential realization, desire, offer/invitation and preference. More specifically, the contexts include two contexts of making less polite requests (will, can), two contexts of making polite requests (would, could), two contexts of making polite specific requests for permission (may, could), two contexts of making less polite specific requests for permission (might, can), five contexts of giving advice in positive statements (must, should, ought to, might, could), six contexts of giving advice in negative statements (had better not, had best not, shouldn't, be not supposed to, don't have, don't need), two contexts of expressing potential realization (can with an animated subject, can with an unanimated subject), one context of expressing desire (would like), two contexts of making an offer/invitation (would like, shall), two contexts of making preference (would rather, would prefer), and two contexts of making formal commands (shall, shall not). The researchers had these English contexts translated by Google Translate into Vietnamese which were used for data analysis.

PROCEDURE AND DATA PROCESSING

After selecting these English modal verbs expressing their social functions, the researchers copied them into the translation machine for English versions. The researchers next duplicated the Vietnamese translated version of each sentence into the draft for further analysis with consultation with the original English source in the Grammar book. Then, the researchers evaluated the meaning of each social context. Next, the translated versions provided by Google alongside their English versions were delivered to the participants for their remarks. Due to the spread of coronavirus, the researchers could not in person gave the translated versions

alongside the English versions to the English teachers and English graduates, so the source was sent via email and the social networking platform Zalo for their responses of agreement or disagreement with each translated text.

All the data gathered from 11 English teachers and 21 English graduates were put into SPSS version 22 for analysis. As labeled in the survey, Letter A is for agreement (when they agree with the translated texts by Google Translate), Letter D is for disagreement (when they disagree with the translated texts by Google Translate). The researchers made the decision to have the data demonstrated in percentages (%) for both agreement and disagreement. The researchers looked for the percentage of agreement and percentage of disagreement of each translated item of each social function. Then the data were exported into word and designed for convenient reference as shown in the following section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

TABLE 2. Translation of English modal verbs in 28 contexts provided by Google Translate

MODAL VERBS EXPRESSING SOCIAL FUNCTIONS	ENGLISH VERSIONS	VIETNAMESE VERSIONS
Making requests (less polite-general requests)	Will you help me with this math problem? Can you help me with this math problem?	Bạn sẽ giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này? Bạn có thể giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này?
Making requests (more polite-general requests)	A: Would you help me with this math problem? B: Could you help me with this math problem?	A: Bạn có thể giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này? B: Bạn có thể giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này?
Specific requests for permission - more polite	A: May I leave the room now? B: Could I leave the room now?	A: Tôi có thể rời khỏi phòng ngay bây giờ không? B: Tôi có thể rời khỏi phòng bây giờ ?
Specific requests for permission- less polite	A: Might I leave the room now? B: Can I leave the room now?	A: Tôi có thể rời khỏi phòng ngay bây giờ? B: Tôi có thể rời khỏi phòng ngay bây giờ?
Giving advice in positive statements	A: You must see a doctor. B: You should see a doctor. C: You ought to see a doctor. D: You might see a doctor. E: You could see a doctor.	A: Bạn phải gặp bác sĩ. B: Bạn nên gặp bác sĩ. C: Bạn nên gặp bác sĩ. D: Bạn có thể gặp bác sĩ. E: Bạn có thể gặp bác sĩ.
Giving advice in negative statements	A: You had better not say things like that. B: You had best not say things like that. C: You shouldn't say things like that. D: You're not supposed to say things like that. E: You don't have to say things like that. F: You don't need to say things like that.	A: Tốt hơn hết bạn không nên nói những điều như thế. B: Tốt nhất bạn không nên nói những điều như thế. C: Bạn không nên nói những điều như thế. D: Bạn không nên nói những điều như thế. E: Bạn không cần phải nói những điều như thế. F: Bạn không cần phải nói những điều như vậy.

Potential realization	A: I can speak Indonesian. B: The car can go faster with this fuel.	A: Tôi có thể nói tiếng Indonesia. Chiếc xe có thể đi nhanh hơn với nhiên liệu này.
Desire	Sarah would like to travel around the world.	Sarah muốn đi du lịch vòng quanh thế giới.
Offer/ Invitation	A: Would you like something to drink? B: Shall we dance?	A: Bạn có muốn uống gì không? B: Chúng ta sẽ nhảy chứ?
Preference	A: Brad would rather study languages than mathematics. B: Joe would prefer to go to school instead of working.	A: Brad thích học ngôn ngữ hơn toán học. B: Joe muốn đi học thay vì đi làm.
Formal commands	A: You shall report promptly at 05.00 hours. B: You shall not wear sandals in the mess hall.	A: Bạn sẽ báo cáo nhanh chóng vào lúc 05.00 giờ. B: Bạn không được đi dép trong hành lang.

How does Google Translate interpret English modal verbs expressing social functions into Vietnamese? From the findings in Table 1, Google Translate was able to translate many English modal verbs expressing social functions as mentioned in the Grammar book for the EFL teacher's course. The subjects "You" and "I" were automatically translated into "Bạn" and "Tôi". However, with regard to general and specific requests (both less polite and more polite), offering invitation and giving formal commands, Google Translate seems to have a set of default language in transferring these into Vietnamese as seen in these contexts: "Will you help me with this math problem?" was rendered as "Bạn sẽ giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này? 'Will' was rendered as a future time marker, not as a request. "Would you help me with this math problem?", "Can you help me with this math problem?", and "Could you help me with this math problem?" received the same Vietnamese version "Bạn có thể giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này?" No difference was observed in level of formality. Moreover, the translation is not a request, but instead it is a direct question. Similarly, "Tôi có thể rời khỏi phòng bây giờ?" was the translation received from the three English permission requests: "Could I leave the room now?", "Can I leave the room now?" and "Might I leave the room now?" No difference in degree of formality was observed and the translation appears to be a direct question, not a permission intention. When it comes to the invitation function with 'shall' in "Shall we dance?", the Vietnamese translation "Chúng ta sẽ nhảy chứ?" is also a direct question for confirmation if this person can be available to dance rather than an invitation to dance. Furthermore, Google Translate also has a problem in translating 'shall' in a formal command as "You shall report promptly at 05.00 hours". It rendered this command as "Bạn sẽ báo cáo nhanh chóng vào lúc 05.00 giờ." In this case 'shall' is treated as a future time.

This result has led the researchers to discuss this first research question of the current study in three main areas. First, Google Translate seems to merely pick up the literal meaning or concrete meaning of individual words in each statement, especially in contexts of making requests, giving advice, offering an invitation with "shall" and giving a formal command with "shall". That means Google Translate was unable to pick up the intended meaning of the whole request. As a result, the translated texts by Google Translate were confusing, meaning that Google Translate were unable to transfer the English social function to the Vietnamese social function. For example, "Bạn sẽ giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này?" translated from "Will you help me with this math problem?" sounds unlike a request in Vietnamese. "Bạn phải gặp bác sĩ" translated from "You must see a doctor." is not a piece of advice in Vietnamese, but it is an obligation, instead. "Chúng ta sẽ nhảy chứ?" translated from "Shall we dance?" is not an invitation, but it sounds like a yes/no question in Vietnamese. "Bạn sẽ báo cáo nhanh chóng vào lúc 05.00 giờ." translated from "You shall report promptly at 05.00 hours." does not present the meaning of a formal command. Second, Google Translate tends to better interpret

affirmative statements, not functional questions. Requests are clearly understood when they are made in English, but when these requests were transferred to Vietnamese, they are just like affirmative statements. For instance, "Will you help me with this math problem?" was translated as "Bạn sẽ giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này?", "Can you help me with this math problem?" as "Bạn có thể giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này?", "Would you help me with this math problem?" as "Bạn có thể giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này?", "Could you help me with this math problem?" as "Bạn có thể giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này?", "Could I leave the room now?" as "Tôi có thể rời khỏi phòng bây giờ ?". This phenomenon was already discussed by Diep (1996) as discussed earlier. Modal-like verb forms in Vietnamese have clearer intended meaning in positive cases than in question forms. However, Vietnamese speakers tend to use additional words like "làm ơn, vui lòng" for clear, polite requests.

The third point to be discussed is that Google Translate was unable to interpret the past forms of the English modals into Vietnamese, meaning it could not distinguish between the present form and the past form of an English modal verb. The Vietnamese data in Google Translate appear to set the default meaning "có thể" for the English forms "can", "could", "would", "may", and "might". As can be seen in Table 1, the requests with these modal verbs were interpreted as "có thể" in Vietnamese. From this, the Vietnamese versions are unable to explain the formality (less or more polite) of each of the English modal verbs. Hence, English teachers should bring these translation problems by Google Translate into discussion in the classroom for reference. One of the problems was also stated in the works of some authors (Sheppard, 2011; Komeili, et al., 2011; Napitupulu, 2017; Stapleton and Kin, 2019), who found Google's inability to keep originally grammatical meaning when transferring one language to another. As obviously seen, machine translation needs further improvement in translating English social functions into Vietnamese as each language has a different system of syntactical parameters.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

The data will be illustrated in percentages for easy reference. The data of both groups were analyzed using the SPSS software (version 22) for frequency.

TABLE 3. 11 teachers' remark and 21 graduates' remark on English modal verbs in 28 contexts

MODAL VERBS EXPRESSING SOCIAL FUNCTIONS		%	MODAL VERBS EXPRESSING SOCIAL FUNCTIONS		%
Making requests (less polite-general requests)-will	Agree	T: 36.4 G: 28.6	Making requests (less polite-general requests)-can	Agree	T: 72.7 G: 90.5
	Disagree	T: 63.6 G: 71.4		Disagree	T: 27.3 G: 9.5
Making requests (more polite-general requests)-would	Agree	T: 36.4 G: 14.3	Making requests (more polite-general requests)-could	Agree	T: 63.6 G: 76.2
	Disagree	T: 63.6 G: 85.7		Disagree	T: 36.4 G: 23.8
Specific requests for permission -more polite-may	Agree	T: 72.7 G: 57.1	Specific requests for permission -more polite-could	Agree	T: 63.6 G: 52.4
	Disagree	T: 27.3 G: 42.9		Disagree	T: 36.4 G: 47.6
Specific requests for permission - less polite-might	Agree	T: 63.6 G: 61.9	Specific requests for permission - less polite-can	Agree	T: 72.7 G: 71.4
	Disagree	T: 36.4 G: 38.1		Disagree	T: 27.3 G: 28.6
	Agree	T: 63.6 G: 52.4	Giving advice in positive statements-should	Agree	T: 90.9 G: 90.5

Giving advice in positive statements-must	Disagree	T: 36.4 G: 47.6		Disagree	T: 9.1 G: 9.5
Giving advice in positive statements-ought to	Agree	T: 63.6 G: 57.1	Giving advice in positive statements-might	Agree	T: 63.6 G: 33.3
	Disagree	T: 36.4 G: 42.9		Disagree	T: 36.4 G: 66.7
Giving advice in positive statements-could	Agree	T: 63.6 G: 61.9	Giving advice in negative statements-had better	Agree	T: 81.8 G: 85.7
	Disagree	T: 36.4 G: 38.1		Disagree	T: 18.2 G: 14.3
Giving advice in negative statements-had best	Agree	T: 54.5 G: 76.2	Giving advice in negative statements-had better	Agree	T: 81.8 G: 85.7
	Disagree	T: 45.5 G: 23.8		Disagree	T: 18.2 G: 14.3
Giving advice in negative statements-be supposed to	Agree	T: 81.8 G: 52.4	Giving advice in negative statements-have to	Agree	T: 81.8 G: 81.0
	Disagree	T: 18.2 G: 47.6		Disagree	T: 18.2 G: 19.0
Giving advice in negative statements-need to	Agree	T: 72.7 G: 71.4	Potential realization-animate subject with can	Agree	T: 90.9 G: 95.2
	Disagree	T: 27.3 G: 28.6		Disagree	T: 9.1 G: 4.8
Potential realization-inanimate subject with can	Agree	T: 63.6 G: 42.9	Desire-would like	Agree	T: 100 G: 95.2
	Disagree	T: 36.4 G: 57.1		Disagree	T: 0,0 G: 4.8
Offer/invitation-would you like	Agree	T: 90.9 G: 90.5	Offer/invitation-shall	Agree	T: 81.8 G: 76.2
	Disagree	T: 9.1 G: 9.5		Disagree	T: 18.2 G: 23.8
Preference-would rather	Agree	T: 100 G:90.5	Preference-would prefer	Agree	T: 72.7 G: 61.9
	Disagree	T: 0,0 G: 9.5		Disagree	T: 27.3 G: 38.1
Formal commands-shall	Agree	T: 36.4 G: 47.6	Formal commands-shall not	Agree	T: 63.6 G: 52.4
	Disagree	T: 63.6 G: 52.4		Disagree	T: 36.4 G: 47.6
Overall: Agree: 72.8%; Disagree: 27.2% (T) Agree: 71.7%; Disagree: 28.3% (G)					

Note: T stands for teachers and G for graduates.

As seen in Table 3, approximately three fourths of the translation with Google received the teachers' positive feedback, 72.8% of agreement and 27.2% of disagreement, respectively. When Google Translate have translation texts that sound common or familiar in the Vietnamese context, they were supported by both the Vietnamese teachers of English and Vietnamese graduates of English. Preference (would rather) and desire (would like) obtained absolute agreement. Standing close to these are giving advice in positive statements with 'should' (90.9% of agreement, potential realization with an animate subject 'can' (90.9% of agreement) and offer/invitation with 'would you like' (90.9% of agreement). In contrast to this, three items received negative remark: Making requests (less polite-general requests) with 'will', making requests (more polite-general requests) with 'would' and formal commands with 'shall' accounted for only 36.4%, 36.4% and 36.4% of agreement orderly. Remarkably, many translation versions of these modals expressing social functions obtained 63.6% of agreement by the teachers.

Table 3 also demonstrates the percentages of agreement and disagreement of translated texts given by 21 English graduates. The percentage of agreement reached 71.7% and disagreement, 28.3%. Five items did not receive great support by the teachers and graduates such as making requests (less polite-general requests) with 'will' (28.6%), making requests (more polite-general requests) with 'would' (14.3%), giving advice in positive statements with 'might' (33.3%), potential realization-inanimate subject with 'can' (42.9%) and formal commands with 'shall' (47.6%). Six items obtained over 90% of agreement: Making requests (less polite-general requests)-can (90.5%), giving advice in positive statements with 'should' (90.5%), potential realization-animate subject with 'can' (95.2%), desire with 'would like' (95.2%), offer/invitation with 'would you like' (90/5%) and preference with 'would rather' (90.5%). Noticeably, the majority of the teachers and graduates' agreement fell in an average range between 52% and 57.1% of agreement.

These results can be brought into discussion as follows. Overall, both groups' remarks are quite similar. The results of both experienced English teachers (Agree: 72.8%; Disagree: 27.2%) and English graduates (Agree: 71.7%; Disagree: 28.3%) are quite aligned. When delving in depth, many similarities can be observed. Both groups posited Google Translate did not give a satisfactory translation dealing with making requests (less polite-general requests) with 'will', with agreement of 36.4% given by teachers and 28.6% of agreement awarded by graduates. Making requests (less polite-general requests) with 'would' made up 36.4% (teachers) and only 14.3% (graduates). When coming to compare the translation of 'will' and 'would' for requests, Google Translate was unable to distinguish the meaning intention of formality. For example, it picked up "sẽ" for 'will' in the sentence "Bạn sẽ giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này?", meaning "You will help me with this math problem?", which has no sense of a request in Vietanmese. Similarly, it interpreted 'would' as 'có thể', meaning 'can' as in "Bạn có thể giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này?". Such translation does not convey any sense of a request in Vietnamese. Likewise, a formal command with 'shall' in "You shall report promptly at 05.00 hours" was rendered as "Bạn sẽ báo cáo nhanh chóng vào lúc 05.00 giờ", which made up 36.4% (teachers agreement) and 47.6% (graduates' agreement). Such translation does not have the intended meaning of giving a formal command. Better results are seen when both groups tended to agree with Google Translate in translating contexts of giving advice in positive statements (should), expressing potential realization-animate subject with (can), desire (would like), making an offer/invitation (would you like), and preference (would rather). In these social functions, both groups reached quite uniform consent ranging from 90.5% to 100%. In such situations, only one difference was observed. While a less polite request "Can you help me with this math problem?" rendered as "Bạn có thể giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này?" received 90% of graduates' agreement, it only attained 72.7% of teachers' agreement. In Vietnamese, for instance, such a request can be made like this: "Bạn có thể giúp tôi với bài toán này không?". A Vietnamese speaker often uses "không" at the end of a sentence to make it sound like a request. This can be more polite when this request uses "vui lòng, sẵn lòng" as in "Bạn có sẵn lòng giúp tôi với bài toán này không?". Besides, such a request can be made by using the word 'nhé' at the end of the sentence to soften it as in "Bạn giúp tôi với bài toán này nhé". However, it sounds like an imperative as mentioned by Hoang (1980) in his work. As known, an imperative in Vietnamese can be softened by using the word 'nhé' at the end of the sentence.

Moreover, a big gap can be seen when both groups tended to give different ideas about translation of giving advice in positive statements with 'might' (Bạn có thể gặp bác sĩ). Although the teachers showed 63.6% of agreement, such translation only obtained 33.3% from the graduates. It can be best explained that "might" is rarely taught in school and seen as an infrequent modal verb. In this context, Google Translate was unable to pick up the right meaning, so this translation context received low agreement. Likewise, other translation texts

experienced unsatisfactory results as can be seen in Table 3 above. Many translation versions of these social contexts obtained low agreement of the two groups, falling in the range from 52.4% to 63.6% of agreement.

As shown, when a modal verb is intended to express a literal meaning, Google Translate can easily pick up its meaning. For example, the modal verb "will" was translated literally by Google Translate "Bạn sẽ giúp tôi với vấn đề toán học này?" instead of making a request as "Bạn sẽ giúp tôi giải bài toán này chứ?". "will" means "sẽ" in Vietnamese. This phenomenon was also explained by Aiken & Balan (2011). They stated that the capability of Google Translate depends on kinds of languages to be translated. For instance, European language is better translated by Google. Groves and Mundt (2015) found Google had more errors in translating Malay than Chinese. Kreger, et al. (2019) also found that Google Translate does not fully bring the original meaning to the target language. In their findings, they found that Google Translate was able to produce 78.5% of translation accuracy. This percentage was not much higher than the translation accuracy that Google Translate produced in this current study (Teachers' agreement of it (72.8%) and graduates' agreement of it (71.7%). The minor difference of the agreement between the two groups might be explained by their current knowledge of English modal verbs as described by Dao (2004) and Diep (1996) and how they approached each specific translation text. They might not have spent sufficient time on analyzing each translation context.

CONCLUSION

The study aims to investigate how Google Translate interpret modal verbs expressing social functions into Vietnamese and explores whether or not Vietnamese teachers of English and Vietnamese graduates of English agree with these translated social functions. Three important points are brought into consideration. Google Translate tends to interpret individual words in a context. Google Translate appears to interpret English social functions as literal questions or common statements in Vietnamese. Hence, the Vietnamese translation texts from these contexts are understood as literal questions or common statements, not clearly mentioning any social purposes. Next, Google Translate is unable to identify formality of subtle English modal verbs used in different social contexts. The same Vietnamese translation text was picked by Google Translate for "can", "could", "would", "may" and "might" in both formal and informal requests. Google Translate cannot interpret "shall" as an invitation purpose and as a formal command.

The second aim of the study is to see if Vietnamese teachers and graduates of English agree with these social-function translation texts provided by Google Translate. The result uncovered that the majority of both groups (over 70%) appeared to agree with Google Translate's translated works. Furthermore, most of their agreement aligns with Google Translate's capability. Both groups tended to give low agreement to inaccurate translation texts, and higher agreement to acceptable translated texts. Vietnamese users of Google Translate should make use of their knowledge in both languages to use Google Translate service smartly to optimize their results.

Although Google Translate produced some unacceptable Vietnamese translation contexts, it did produce acceptable translation of many modal verbs in different contexts. For instance, giving advice in positive statements, desire (would like) and preference (would rather/would prefer) received high agreement above 90.5%. These positive results match with other findings from (Resende & Way, 2021; Chon, et al., 2021; Cancino and Panes, 2021), whose participants did benefit from the use of Google Translate and training of using Google Translate to level off their English proficiency and English essay writing. Therefore, Google

Translate continues to be a useful translation tool in translating literal meaning contexts, but it needs people's judgment when it is used to render social functions.

Some concerns of the study can be considered for further investigation. This study should be conducted in a long-term period to see if (1) Google Translate will produce a different translation result from what it already did. (2) This rule can be applied for the teachers and graduates as well. In this study, they were only asked to give comments on the translated texts only one time. If they had been asked to give feedback on the same translated texts in multiple times, the result might have been different. (3) Based on these findings, Vietnamese learners of English should pay attention to the intended meaning of each English modal verb in a defined context when it is transferred to Vietnamese by Google Translate. As seen, this machine system seems to pick up the direct/literal meaning of each individual word in a statement instead of the overall intended meaning as a whole.

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