A STUDY OF UNIVERSAL STRATEGIES IN VIETNAMESE TRANSLATION OF -MENT NOMINALISATIONS IN ENGLISH OFFICIAL TEXTS

KHẢO SÁT CÁC CHIẾN LƯỢC PHỔ QUÁT KHI CHUYỂN DỊCH SANG TIẾNG VIỆT CÁC DANH HÓA CÓ HẬU TỐ -MENT TRONG VĂN BẢN HÀNH CHÍNH TIẾNG ANH

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Abstract - In the domain of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), the term "nominalisation" is used to refer to non-congruent metaphorical modes of expression, which is a predominant tendency characteristic of grammatical metaphor (Halliday 1985/1994). As an alternative way of encoding verbal meanings, nominalisations perform important ideological functions. By deleting agency, turning processes into entities, or condensing long strings of shorter sentences into fewer longer sentences (Billig 2008), nominalization helps to make a text become more succinct, more abstract and more sophisticated. With several metaphorical meanings embedded in a nominalised construction (or nominal) as such, for equivalent effect in communication, several strategies as universals have been recognized via the process of going from English into Vietnamese. This article attempts to analyse the universal strategies adopted in rendering nominalisations with the suffix -MENT (or -MENT nominals, for short) into Vietnamese. Based on an English corpus of official documentation and the translation model proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995/2000) and Baker (1995), the article draws out some generalisations on universal strategies adopted in rendering -MENT nominals into Vietnamese with their various metaphorical representations.

Key words - nominalization; metaphorical representations; universal strategies; corpus; official texts

Tóm tắt - Trong Ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống, thuật ngữ "danh hóa" được dùng để chỉ cách diễn đạt ẩn dụ phi tương thích, và là khuynh hướng chủ đạo của hiện tượng ẩn dụ ngữ pháp (Halliday 1985/1994). Là một cách thay thế cho việc mã hóa các ý nghĩa động từ, danh hóa đảm nhận nhiều chức năng tư tưởng quan trọng - loại bỏ tác nhân chuyển quá trình thành sự vật, nén chuỗi câu ngắn thành vài câu dài, làm văn bản trở nên súc tích, trừu tượng và tinh tế hơn. Với nhiều nghĩa ẩn dụ được nén trong cấu trúc danh hóa, nhằm đạt được hiệu quả tương đương trong giao tiếp. nhiều chiến lược dịch đã được áp dụng trong quá trình chuyển ngữ. Bài báo này phân tích các chiến lược dịch danh hóa chứa hậu tố -MENT sang tiếng Việt. Dựa trên khối liệu văn bản hành chính tiếng Anh, sử dụng mô hình dịch của Vinay và Darbelnet (1995/2000) và Baker (1995), bài báo đưa ra những nhìn nhận khái quát về các chiến lược phổ quát khi chuyển ngữ các danh hóa chứa hậu tố -MENT sang tiếng Việt.

Từ khóa - danh hóa; ý nghĩa ẩn dụ; chiến lược phổ quát; khối liệu; văn bản hành chính

1. Introduction

Grammatical Metaphor (GM), as coined by Halliday [5/6], is a feature of language use whereby movement of elements within the domain of lexicogrammar facilitates a change of linguistic functions or reconfigurations of ideational expressions. In fact, while conventional metaphor is often restricted to the transfer from something literal (e.g. the *key* of a door) to something new in a figurative sense (e.g. the *key* to a problem), GM allows more than just this type of rhetorical representation. To put it in another way, if the former relates to 'variation in the meaning of expression', the latter then is more relevant to 'variation in the expression of meaning'.

In the domain of GM, *processes* which are normally expressed by verbs tend to experience a lexico-semantic shift into *things* re-represented by de-verbal nouns (e.g. from *John wrote a letter* to *John's <u>writing a letter</u>*, or *they drove rapidly down the hill* to *their <u>rapid down-hill driving</u>*). These non-congruent metaphorical modes of expression are categorized by Halliday [5/6] as *nominalisation*, which is a predominant tendency characteristic of grammatical metaphor. Nominalisation is often considered as an alternative way of encoding verbal meanings and is a prominent feature of written discourse characterised by text density which is often achieved via nominalization [2].

In this study, the term -MENT nominals are used to refer to the whole nominalised segment comprising of both the de-verbal noun and other linguistic constituents in lexical and grammatical categories. For example, *the settlement of disputes* is labeled as a nominal with -MENT, comprising of a de-verbal noun *settlement*, a lexical item – noun *disputes*, and certain grammatical categories (i.e. determiner *the* and preposition *of*).

Being one of the most common nominalisers the **-**MENT suffix is attached to a verb to form a noun, turning a process, indicated by a verb, into an act or result represented by a noun**.** In its broadest terms, -MENT denotes the *act,* the *result* or *product* of the action of the verb, or the *instrument* used to perform the action of the verb [8, 59]. For example, *development* refers to *the act of developing* while *developments* in *residential developments* might refer to *the result of the process of developing*. Hamawand [7] also notes the transitivity nature of entities that are affected by -MENT nominals: *human* as found with *retirement* or *punishment*; *non-human* as seen in *payment* or *improvement,* and both *human* and *non-human* like *adjustment* or *employment*.

Since languages differ in the way they express common ideational meanings, representations via nominalisation as grammatical metaphor (N-GM) can produce different ways of encoding. This would necessitate some alterations or shifts in translation so that the equivalent effect can be achieved, leading to the adoption of some strategies in the process of going from English into Vietnamese. In order that we can probe to the depth of whether the strategies used are universal in the Vietnamese translation of -MENT nominals, it is necessary to build a corpus of official texts with English being the SL and Vietnamese the TL.

2. Corpus Building and Data Analysis

2.1. Corpus Building

In this study, a corpus is built of texts of *official documentation*, with English texts being official documents released by the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The collected corpus represents a specific genre of language – that is the *official discourse* which is assumed to be lexically dense and highly nominalised [2]. The size of texts taken for the corpus varies from around 4282 words to 17343 words, with three ADB texts (i.e. *'Guidelines on the Use of Consultants'*; *'Procurement Guidelines',* and *'Private Sector Finance'*) [14], and five WB texts (i.e. discussion articles No. 4; 6; 10; 12; 14) [15]. All texts make up a corpus of 79400 running words, with two sub-corpora relatively equal in size (42097 vs. 37303 words), which can be considered as more or less appropriate since it is difficult to obtain an absolute balance for texts coming from two different resources.

Table 1. Total size of the corpus

Type of texts	No. of words in English
ADB Texts	42 097
WB Texts	37 303
TOTAL	79 400

2.2. Data Analysis

Once the corpus was built, segments of nominalised constructions were then extracted. Here only nominalisations with the suffix -MENT (or -MENT nominals) were extracted from the corpus since -MENT is considered as one of the most common nominalisers in English, as observed by Hamawand [7] and Katamba [8]. Based on the cognitive tenets suggested by these theorists, three major semantic categories of metaphorical meaning expressed by nominalised forms can be generalized: (i) the **act** (ii) the **process**; and (iii) the **result** [of the act of doing what is referred to, or described, by the verbal root]. These categories enable the analysis made on the strategies adopted in rendering metaphorical meanings of -MENT nominals into Vietnamese.

3. Universal Strategies in Translation

3.1. Equivalence in Translation

According to Catford, translation is the replacement of textual material in one language by *equivalent* textual material in another language [4]. This simple concept of translation puts forward the importance of maintaining or preserving the equivalent effect in translation. Nida (1964/2000) has introduced the concept of 'dynamic equivalence' which calls for 'complete naturalness of expression'. In Nida's position, the translator needs to make 'formal adjustments' or tailor his way of expression to meet the receptor's linguistic needs [9, 129]. In the quest for 'the closest natural equivalence to the SL message', changes in linguistic behaviour are deemed as necessary in the TL text. This necessitates the strategies adopted or decision made by the translator regarding his verbal behaviour.

3.2. Universal Strategies in Translating -MENT Nominals

It is important to clarify the term 'universal strategies' used in this article article since they are often regarded by many as universals of translation. Concepts like *explicitation*, *simplification*, *normalisation*, or *disambiguation* are described by Baker [1] as features of translation while *explicitation* and *normalisation* were introduced by Vinay and Darbelnet [11] as two of the supplementary translation procedures further to their seven procedures subsumed in two main strategies – direct and oblique translation.

The Vietnamese translation of nominals with -MENT does not diverge from the generally recognised translation universals as discussed above. Some common universals can be found to represent the general rules or patterns in translating -MENT nominals into Vietnamese.

3.3. Universal Strategies in the Vietnamese Translation of -MENT Nominals

3.3.1. Literal Translation Approach

One of the most common regularities found through translation is the literal rendering of meaning from the SL text into the TL text. The literal translation approach is used to capture the way that the TL segment closely adheres to the surface structure of the ST segment in terms of both semantics and syntax although some alterations are allowed together with the literal equivalents. Here, the *literal translation approach* is examined from two directions - literal translation and literal transposition.

a. Literal Translation

Literal Translation is identified as a direct rendering of nominals with -MENT using their closest literal equivalents, or lexical correspondents. This strategy is often found with some *Result* nominals translated into Vietnamese lexical nouns like *agreement* being translated into *hiệp định*. This literal rendition of metaphorical meaning is also frequent with nominals denoting *Area of Activity* found in the institutional or organisational names. These nominals are translated literally to the meaning of the verbal stem; however, a process of conversion is considered to have taken place, turning the verbal equivalent into a noun post-modifying the head noun to indicate the *Area of Activity* undertaken by these organisations.

(1) Asian ***Development*** Bank [ADB_CON]
     *Ngân hàng **Phát triển** Châu Á*
(2) Industrial Zone ***Management*** Board [WB_DP14]
     *Ban **Quản lý** Khu Công nghiệp*

The translation of -MENT nominals as an attributive noun also undertakes *a criss-cross transposition* with the nominalisation being rendered via conversion, transforming the verb equivalent into a converted noun, turning the whole combination into a completely abstract conceptual unit.

(3) ***Management*** system [ADB_PSF]
     *Hệ thống **quản lý***

b. Literal Transposition

Besides the literal rendering as presented above, the ***Literal Transposition*** strategy can be considered as 'modified' literal translation since the process of translation allows some modifications or transposition, the shifting of word classes without changing the original meaning. In this context, the *literal transposition* involves a shift in word category often from a de-verbal noun in the

SL text into a verb in the TL text.

This approach is common with -MENT nominals of the *Process* type, especially those denoting *Activity*. In the translation, the original nominal is transposed into its verbal equivalent, and by doing so, it recaptures the role of the participants as object of the verb in the verbal complex.

(4) The ***establishment*** of linkages [WB_DP6]
    Thiết lập *các mối quan hệ*
(5) ***Settlement*** of disputes [ADB_CON]
    Giải quyết *tranh chấp*

3.3.2. Explicitation

Explicitation, as an unavoidable by-product in the process of translation [3], found to be prevalent in the translation of -MENT nominals. Here, *explicitation* is observed from different perspectives - lexical, syntactic, and stylistic.

a. Lexical Explicitation

Lexical explicitating shifts, as found in the corpus, are identified with *the implicit references being specified*, *the elliptical units being filled out*, and *vague information made more precise*.

The translation of the nominal *the assignment* in one of the ADB texts illustrates this approach.

(6) The consultants will carry out *the **assignment*** [ADB_CON]
    *Chuyên gia tư vấn sẽ thực hiện **nhiệm vụ** được giao*
(7) Issues related to *the **assignment*** [ADB_CON]
    *Các vấn đề liên quan tới   **công việc** này*

Clearly, the metaphorical meaning of *the assignment* is explicated by virtue of lexical means, *'being assigned'* ('được giao') in (6), or a demonstrative *this* ('này') to translate *the* in (7). Without doubt, the insertion of demonstratives or post-qualifying phrases shows a rise in the level of cohesive explicitness of the TT segment [3].

Lexical Explicitation is also labelled for cases whereby signs of re-capturing the elliptical units of the original segment are marked in the translation. This type of explicitation can be seen as necessary because it makes the translation closer to the TL norms while increasing the explicitness of the translated text. Thus, we have the expansion of the implicit meaning conveyed in *the assignment* into *the assignment of the consultants* as can be seen in (8).

(8) … relevant to *the **assignment*** [ADB_CON]
    *Liên quan đến   **nhiệm vụ** của chuyên gia tư vấn*

In (9), however, a real case of expansion occurs with the addition of lexical means to manifest a different nuance of meaning. Here, in the English corpus, we can recognise the use of -MENT nominal in a very abstract sense, yet encoding in a more concrete way in the TL text by lexicalising the quantifier *more* as 'closer':

(9) the overall direction towards *more **engagement*** [WB_DP6]
    *Hướng đi chung là sẽ tiến tới **sự gắn bó** chặt chẽ hơn*

Besides, *lexical explicitation* is recorded in cases where the abstract meaning embodied in the -MENT nominal is rendered with a more concrete connotation. This partial conversion (from abstract to concrete) is identified as *explicitation* since it helps to make clear the referent referred to via nominalisation, thus making the vague information as expressed more precise as in (10) and (11):

(10) **recruitment** capacity [ADB_CON]
     *Năng lực **tuyển dụng** tư vấn*

(11) widening *the **development** gap* across geographic regions [WB_DP10]
     ***Khoảng cách** giàu nghèo tăng theo không gian địa lý*

By making some vague information become more precise in the translation, *explicitation* utilises lexical means to make this happen. *Explicitation* of this type happens with the rendering of the *Process* meaning indicated by the -MENT nominal. For example, the nominal *assignment* in (12) has been rendered, inserting lexical means denoting *process* in Vietnamese - *thời gian*.

(12) … during an ***assignment*** [ADB_CON]
     *Trong **thời gian** thực hiện **nhiệm vụ***

In similar vein, the *Result* meaning of -MENT nominals undergoes some explicitating shifts, and is often marked by plurality, when being translated, the plural morpheme is lexicalised by means of a plural marker in Vietnamese like *các* and an additional lexical item *hình thức* in (13):

(13) Equity **investments** [ADB_PSF]
     *Các hình thức **đầu tư** cổ phiếu*

Other instances involve the addition of lexical items like *công việc* (i.e. 'task'), or *hợp đồng* (i.e. 'contract') as in (14) and (15).

(14) for handling **procurement** [ADB_CON]
     *Để thực hiện **công việc** mua sắm đó*
(15) the value of the **procurements** [ADB_CON]
     *Giá trị **hợp đồng** mua sắm*

The *Activity* sense of -MENT nominal is also made explicit with *hoạt động* as in (16), and in (17), we can see a free lexical unit *khối lượng* being inserted at the expense of the lost plurality in (17).

(16) Each ***procurement*** [ADB_PRO]
     *Từng **hoạt động** mua sắm*
(17) **Payments** are linked to inputs [ADB_CON]
     ***Khối lượng** thanh toán thường được tính theo đầu vào*

b. Syntactic Explicitation

Syntactic Explicitation used in this analysis refers to the translation which involves shifts in syntactic terms using additional structural means to render the metaphorisation of the nominalised construction. Some instances of syntactic explicitation can be illustrated here.

(18) The borrowers may assign its own professional staff to **the *assignment*** [ADB_CON]
     *Bên vay có thể chỉ định các cán bộ nghiệp vụ để thực hiện các **nhiệm vụ** trong hợp đồng*
(19) Sale of ADB's equity ***investment*** [ADB_PSF]
     *Việc bán cổ phiếu **ADB đã đầu tư***

Arguably, the syntactic expansion as shown above is non-obligatory since it can be encoded in a more literal way, without adding *carry out* (18), or paraphrasing the genitive case of what has been nominalised (19). However, it may be a matter of choice when the translator has opted to express the meaning differently for some stylistic effect.

c. Stylistic Explicitation

Stylistic explicitation can be now sub-divided into either *expansion of condensed passages* or *stylistic effect* with the former co-occurring with the technique of *restructuring*. As the use of nominals adds to lexical density of the official texts, translating them often necessitates elements of expansion, thus increasing 'the level of cohesive explicitness of the TL texts" [3, 300]. Clearly the message embedded in the English nominalised constructions has been expanded by lexical or syntactic means: the *Act* meaning in *employment* is rendered into ***the generation of*** *employment* in (20), and the *Result* meaning in *achievement* is encoded by *the results* ***achieved*** in (21).

(20) direct impact in terms of **employment** [WB_DP14]
*Tác động trực tiếp đến **tạo việc làm***

(21) on **achievement** of selected milestones [ADB_CON]
*... trên cơ sở **kết quả đạt được** các mốc*

The translation of -MENT nominals also undergoes explicitation in stylistic terms towards maintaining the naturalness and aesthetic values of the TL. Here, the translators tend to say things differently, using a paraphrase in (22), or reconstructing the information structure in (23).

(22) At the time of ADB's ***commitment*** to invest [ADB_PSF]
*Tại thời điểm ADB **đưa ra cam kết** đầu tư*

(23) ... weak contract **enforcement** [WB_DP10]
*Yếu kém **trong khâu thực thi** hợp đồng*

Cases of *Stylistic Explicitation* may also entail some *Lexical* and *Syntactic Explicitation*, and some level of *Restructuring*, which would suggest a high probability of several strategies overlapping in the translation of -MENT nominals. Table 2 summarises the distribution of explicitation occurrences in the two sub-corpora.

Table 2. Explicitation in translating -MENT nominals

Types of Explicitation	ADB (643 tokens)	WB (325 tokens)	Total
Lexical Explicitation	99	9	108
Syntactic Explicitation	19	7	26
Stylistic Explicitation	27	13	40
TOTAL	145	29	174

3.3.3. Simplification

Simplification as another common universal in translation is also found in the rendering of -MENT nominals. This strategy refers to the tendency that translators may adopt to simplify the expression of meaning at different levels of language.

a. Lexical Simplification

Lexical Simplification first happens with lost plurality. By converting a more concrete result-like meaning into a more abstract act-like one, *Lexical Simplification* helps to facilitate a partial conversion from the count category to the non-count one. For example, rendering *implementation* ***arrangements*** into *cơ chế thực hiện* without marking the plurality is indicative of *Lexical Simplification*.

Lexical Explicitation is also seen in the simplified wording of meaning, or rather, simplification in structure. For example, the superordinate *that ('đó') is* used as a substitute for the absent equivalent of *in question* in Vietnamese as in (24), and the demonstrative *this* is replaced by a nominal marker *('việc')* in (25).

(24) the ***assignment*** *in question* [ADB_CON]
Công việc đó

(25) *This* ***assessment*** will influence the plan [ADB_CON]
*Việc **đánh giá** sẽ ảnh hưởng đến quá trình thực hiện ...*

b. Syntactic Simplification

Many cases are recorded with embedded non-finite nominals being translated using a finite clause, thus making the information structure simpler and more easily comprehensible. The rendering of *post-assignment* in (26) illustrates this syntactic type of simplification.

(26) Through a **post-assignment** questionnaire [ADB_CON]
*Thông qua bản câu hỏi **khi nhiệm vụ kết thúc***

c. Stylistic Simplification

Stylistic Simplification, though not commonly found, can be illustrated for -MENT nominals. Once there is the replacement of elaborate phraseology with shorter collocations, a case of stylistic simplification takes place.

(27) the various ministries concerned *with enterprise development* [WB_DP6] -
*Các bộ **có liên quan***

By wording *các bộ **có liên quan*** (i.e. 'the concerned ministries') in the TL text, the manifestation of the nominalised construction *with enterprise development* becomes unnecessary. *Stylistic Simplification* also occurs when the meaning of the verbal stem glides away, allowing a more generic re-configuration of meaning: *infrastructure* **payments** becoming **phí cơ sở hạ tầng** (i.e. *fee*); *compensation* **payments** simplified into **mức đền bù** (i.e. *level*); and *lease* **payments** into **tiền** *thuê đất* (i.e. *money*).

Table 3. Simplification in Translating -MENT nominals

Simplification by type	ADB (643 tokens)	WB (325 tokens)	Total
Lexical Simplification	86	31	117
Syntactic Simplification	41	43	84
Stylistic Simplification	14	23	37
TOTAL	141	97	238

Regarding the distribution pattern, *Lexical Simplification* has the highest frequency in both the ADB and WB texts, although it is more prevalent in the former. *Syntactic* and *Stylistic Simplification* occur less often in both types of text despite a higher representation in the WB than in ADB texts. The difference may result from the tendency to reduce the plural indication embedded in many *Result* nominals for more abstract encoding in the WB texts (e.g. *payments*, *requirements,* etc.), or the different choices made on the part of the translators, who perform under different conditions, thus adopting different strategies and "ultimately com[ing] up with markedly different products" [10, 199]. Table 3 summarises the distribution patterns of simplification adopted in translating -MENT nominals.

3.3.4. Normalisation

Normalisation, as a translation strategy or norm is

adopted in translating -MENT nominals as well, showing a *consistent encoding of specific meaning*. Indeed, nominals with -MENT present various metaphorical meanings can be decoded and thus rendered differently. However, we can see a consistent transformation from the SL segment into its TL equivalent. For example, *agreement* occurring in collocates like *financing agreement* is consistently rendered into *hiệp định tài trợ*. Similarly, *requirement* meaning *regulation* is consistently rendered into *quy định* or *nhu cầu* (i.e. *demands*) as in (28):

(28) … determining consultancy **requirements** [ADB_CON]

… xác định **nhu cầu** dịch vụ tư vấn

Numerous cases exist where *the assignment* has been consistently rendered into *nhiệm vụ tư vấn*, or *procurement* into *mua sắm*, as in *procurement plan*.

3.3.5. Disambiguation

Disambiguation as a universal in translation is found in the ways that specific meanings conveyed in nominals with -MENT, are translated by using a specific form of wording. An example of this is the contrast between the interpretation of *employment* in (29) and in (30).

(29) people moving away from direct **employment** in farming into services [WB_DP4]

*Con người chuyển từ trực tiếp **tham gia** vào nông nghiệp sang các dịch vụ*

(30) a falling share of agriculture in **employment** [WB_DP4]

*Việc giảm thị phần nông nghiệp trong **việc tạo việc làm***

3.3.6. Restructuring

Restructuring as a translation strategy differs from *Syntactic* or *Syntactic Simplification* in that it allows the restructuring in information structure of the SL segment. Restructuring is often found to occur with other strategies discussed above - explicitation and simplification.

(31) if **payment** is delayed [ADB_CON]

*nếu có sự chậm trễ trong **quá trình thanh toán** ….*
[EXPLICITATION, RESTRUCTURING]

Some restructuring is here recognized with the subjective role of the nominal *payment* being shifted into a complement to a preposition being an adjunct to modify the preceding noun. *Restructuring* in this case can be considered as "the closest natural equivalent of the SL text" [10, 12]. In (32), we can see then an overlap of *Simplification* via lost plurality, *Explicitation* via specification of metaphorical meaning expressed by *payment* into *acts of paying* as well as *Restructuring* of the information structure by dislocating meaning constituents.

(32) **Payments** may be made at regular intervals [ADB_CON]

*Có thể **thực hiện thanh toán** theo thời hạn định kỳ*
[EXPLICITATION, SIMPLIFICATION, RESTRUCTURING]

4. Conclusion

In short, several universal strategies have been identified in the process of translating nominals with -MENT in the corpus texts. Among these, *Literal Translation* takes the lead with 371 coded occurrences, followed by *Simplification* and *Normalisation* with 238 and 218 occurrences respectively. Table 4 summarises this.

Table 4. *Distribution of universal strategies with -MENT nominals*

Universal strategies	*ADB* (643 tokens)	*WB* (325 tokens)	*TOTAL* by type
Literal Translation	235	136	371
Explicitation	145	29	174
Simplification	141	97	238
Disambiguation	49	19	68
Normalisation	152	66	218
Restructuring	28	16	44
Total by occurrences	**750**	**363**	**1113**

Overall, in translating -MENT nominals, more simplifying shifts occur than explicitating ones, and the normalising tendency also outstrips the explicitating occurrences. These findings would suggest that the possibility of unmarking plurality by lexical means in nominals with -MENT is high, which might be due to a high frequency of certain technical nominals with -MENT. Also, the strategy of *Explicitation* which adds to an increasing level of cohesive explicitness of the TT segment [3] is found inherent in Vietnamese translation in varying degrees and from different perspectives. The analysis of universal strategies adopted via translating nominals with -MENT in the English official documentation, as has been presented, may have provided some insight into the representation of grammatically metaphorical meanings via the heuristic tool of translation.

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