

NOMINALSATION IN SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE AND THE PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE TRANSLATION OF THE NOMINAL GROUP FROM ENGLISH INTO VIETNAMESE

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1. Introduction

Translating is a very complex process. It is complex because it involves many problem-solving and decision-making tasks which seem to strike the translator's mind simultaneously during the translating process. Furthermore, what seems to be more problematic for the translator is that when translating a text, s/he will have to create in the target language (TL) an equivalent context which is foreign to the TL itself. To put it more specifically, the problem lies in the seemingly contradictory view that in translating a text from English into Vietnamese, we have to create in Vietnamese a context that is foreign to Vietnamese with an aim that the Vietnamese reader will understand the meaning that is similar to the meaning in the writer's original text. With regard to the translation of scientific texts, what seems to be a problem for the translator is that scientific discourse is a kind of language for the expert not for lay people, one which, according to Halliday in Halliday & Martin (1993: 67) makes explicit the textual and logical interconnections but leaves many local ambiguities. Halliday (*ibid.*) points out that the ambiguities arise especially in two places: (1) in strings of nouns (i.e., heavily loaded nominal groups), leaving

explicit the semantic relations (namely the transitivity relations) among them and (2) the relational verbs which are often indeterminate and may face both ways. It is the first of these issues that I am concerned with in this paper. As a way of start, I will look briefly at the nature of nominalization in scientific textual environment. Then I will discuss some length the main problems related to the translation of the nominal group from English into Vietnamese.

2. The Nature of Nominalization in Scientific Textual Environment

As translators, when we translate a scientific text from one language into another, we tend to think that the problems lie in the translation of technical terminology. This tendency is clearly reflected in Newmark's *Approaches to Translation* (1988a) and *A Textbook of Translation* (1988b). For Newmark, terminology is the only criterion that distinguishes technical translation from other forms of translation. From our point of view, we concede that technical terms are an essential part of scientific language which may cause problems to the translator and that it would be impossible to create a discourse of

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organised knowledge without them. However, technical terms are not the whole story in scientific translation even though they are the 'lexical resources which are highly visible' (Halliday & Martin 1993: 7). What is equally, if not more significant both for the discourse analyst and the translator is not so much the terms themselves as the potential that lies behind them. Halliday & Martin (1993) claim that there is another aspect of scientific language that is just as important as technical terminology. He terms it "technical grammar". The scope of this paper does not permit to discuss in detail what technical grammar is. Therefore, what I should do is to focus only on some of the features which I think might be of interest to the translator.

According to Halliday & Martin (1993), technical grammar possesses two potentialities: (1) turning verbs and adjectives into nouns, making them become technical terms and (2) expanding the scope of the nominal group - including the potential of combining the two together. This process of nominalization is referred to as 'grammatical metaphor' which is defined as 'the transformation of one class of word to another with the words (the lexical items) remaining the same' or 'the substitution of one grammatical class, or one grammatical structure, by another' (Halliday & Martin 1993: 79).

Nominalization as a form of grammatical metaphor can be traced back to early scientific writing. It has been suggested that ancient Greek scientists exploited the potential for

transforming verbs and adjectives into nouns. In this way, they generated ordered sets of technical terms, abstract entities which had begun as the name of process or properties or in some cases as the names of relations between processes. Then these scientists developed the modifying potential of the Greek nominal group, the resources of extending the nominal group with embedded clauses and prepositional phrases. In this way, they generated complex specifications of bodies and figures. This process of nominalization was taken over and further extended in English and in other European languages. It has also been found in Chinese and other Asian languages as well (for a more detailed discussion, see Halliday in Halliday & Martin 1993: 124-132).

Below is an extract taken from Halliday in Halliday & Martin (1993) to illustrate how the two potentialities of technical grammar work in English.

If the humours of the eye by old age decay, so as by shrinking to make the cornea and coat of the crystalline humour grow flatter (1) than before, the light will not be refracted (2) enough and for want of a sufficient refraction (2') will not converge to the bottom of the eye but to some place beyond it, and by consequence paint in the bottom of the eye a confused (3) picture, and according to the indistinctness (3') of this picture the object will appear confused. This is the reason for the decay of sight in old men, and shews why their sight is mended by spectacles. For some convex (4) glasses supply the defect of

plumpness (1') in the eye if the glass has a due degree of convexity (4'). And the contrary happens in short-sighted men whose eyes are too plump.

In the above extract, there are four pairs: (1) : (1'), (2) : (2'), (3) (3'), and (4) (4'). In each of the pairs, a verb or an adjective in the first expression has been reworded in the second as a noun. This process of nominalization can be represented as follows:

| | | |
|------------------|--------|-----------------------|
| <i>flatter</i> |▶ | <i>plumpness</i> |
| <i>refracted</i> |▶ | <i>refraction</i> |
| <i>confused</i> |▶ | <i>indistinctness</i> |
| <i>convex</i> |▶ | <i>convexity</i> |

A close examination of this process reveals that in each case grammatical process has taken place which enables a piece of discourse that was previously presented as New information to be re-used as Given in the course of the succeeding argument. This is an important feature of scientific discourse that the translator should be aware of when translating a scientific text.

According to technical grammar, the process of turning verbs and adjectives into nouns which is the first step in the nominalization process is termed the "process of objectification". This process consists of two interdependent sub-process: (1) creating technical terms and (2) nominalizing the grammar. The interdependency of these two features can be explained as follows:

Creating a technical term is itself a grammatical process; and when the argument is constructed by the grammar in this way, the words that are turned into nouns tend thereby to become

technicalised. (*Halliday in Halliday & Martin 1993: 8*)

The second step is to nominalise not only the process but also any participants and circumstances that go with it: that is, grammatically expanding the nominal group still further to include some or all the elements of the clause; for example:

Over recent years, grammar has been restored from its temporary exile
▶ *The restoration of grammar from its temporary exile over recent years*

In the above example, there is a complex process of nominalization. The process *restored* has become a noun *restoration*; the goal in the process *grammar* has become its Possessor of *grammar* functioning as Qualifier in the nominal group; and the two circumstances *from its exile* and *over recent years* have retained their original forms, but function as its Qualifiers.

When wording are packaged in this way, they turn the clause into a nominal group, enabling it to function in another clause. This helps to construe the phenomenon as if it were a thing because nominalization downgrades the grammatical status of meaning so that "what might be construed as a combination of interdependent clauses in the spoken mode is reconstrued as edifice of words and phrases in writing" (*Halliday & Martin 1993: 39*). And in this way, the meaning comes to function at the lower rank in the grammar - at the rank of group/phrase and word, instead of at the rank of clause. This opens up a vast potential for the

nominalised form to function in the clause: the nominalised form can be placed in the clause as Theme or New; it can be made both as Theme and New; it can be exclusively identified as New or Theme and so on; for example:

Theme: *The restoration of grammar from its temporary exile over recent years has attracted much attention from language teaching methodologists.*

New: *What has attracted much attention from language teaching methodologists is the restoration of grammar from its temporary exile over recent years.*

Theme & New: *It is the restoration of grammar from its temporary exile over recent years that has attracted much attention from language teaching methodologists.*

Theme: *That the restoration of grammar from its temporary exile over recent years has attracted much attention from language teaching methodologists is a matter of fact.*

Furthermore, the nominalised form can be made to function as participant in a vast array of relational clause types which can be developed to describe, to classify, to exemplify, to decompose, to order, to interface, to contrast to prove, to explain and so on. Below are some examples to illustrate this point:

(1) *The restoration of grammar from its temporary exile over recent years represents a new way of looking at second/foreign language teaching.*

(2) *The restoration of grammar from its temporary exile in recent years proves that grammar still has its part in second/foreign language teaching.*

(3) *The restoration of grammar from its temporary exile in recent years leads to the conclusion that grammar should not have been ignored.*

(4) *The restoration of grammar from its temporary exile in recent years has attracted much attention from second/foreign language teaching methodologists.*

3. Problems related to the translation of the Nominal Group from English into Vietnamese

3.1. Introductory Remarks

In this section, an attempt is made to answer the question: "What are the main problems related to the translation of the nominal group from English into Vietnamese?" Before answering, three points should be mentioned in relation to this question. First, as mentioned, translation is a process full of problem-solving tasks (Levy, 1970). Translation problems, therefore, have become a common issue for both translation theorists and translation practitioners. However, they differ in how they look at translation problems. Newmark (1988a, 1988b), for example, states that in scientific and technical translation, the problems arise mainly from the new terminology. Apart from this, he identifies some other related problems such as the varieties of technical style, the constraints of register, the nature and the degree of formality of the text,

and the differences between the TL readership and the original one. Hatim & Mason (1990), on the other hand, after considering the aids that modern technology may provide to facilitate the translator, conclude that aids to translators are improving all the time, but the basic problems faced by translators and their work remain the same. These problems are: (1) comprehension of the source text (ST) (parsing of text, access to specialized knowledge, access to intended meaning), (2) transfer of meaning (relaying lexical meaning, relaying grammatical meaning, relaying rhetorical meaning, including implied and inferable meaning, for potential readers); and (3) assessment of target text (TT) (readability, conforming to generic and discursive TL conventions, judging adequacy of translation for specified purpose). Secondly, from the theoretical and practical points of view, we are fully aware of the fact that it would be totally inadequate to discuss the problems in translating the nominal group without considering such factors as the context of the ST, the context where the TT is placed, the text type, the intention of the writer, and so on. Space does not permit discussion of these factors. Hopefully, some of the inadequacies may be somewhat circumvented by choosing a text whose context is likely to be familiar to most teachers and students of second/foreign languages. I shall discuss the problems related to the translation of the nominal group from English into Vietnamese by taking the text "ELT and EL Teachers: Matters Arising" by H.G. Widdowson which was printed in

the *ELT Journal*, Volume 43/4, 1992. Then, I will select from the text some long, structurally complex and syntactically ambiguous nominal groups for identifying and discussing translation problems.

The approach I take implies that when we discuss the problems related to the translation of the nominal group from English into Vietnamese, we are at the same time considering all the factors mentioned above. And thirdly, it should be pointed out that translation problems differ from one translator to another. In translating a text, for an incompetent translator there may be a lot of problems, while for a competent translator, there may be few or none. For this reason, it would be difficult to talk about translation problems without setting a starting point. Shall we discuss the translation problems experienced by all translators (translators at all levels of competence) or only those experienced by incompetent translators or just the ones that are faced by competent translators? I shall adopt the third position, taking the competent translator as the starting point for identifying and discussing translation problems. A simple reason for this is that a certain degree of competence is an essential condition for being a translator; one cannot be thought of as a translator without this basic equipment (for a more detailed discussion of the translator's competence, see Bell 1991: 35-43). From this starting point, I shall focus on two main translation problems which, I believe, the competent English-Vietnamese translator may experience

when translating the nominal group from English into Vietnamese. These are: (1) structural complexity and syntactic ambiguity and (2) the problems of word choice and ordering of elements in the Vietnamese translated nominal group. (1) is concerned with the problems of comprehension and analysis of the English nominal group and (2) is concerned with the problems of establishing correspondences between the lexical units in the English nominal group and those in the Vietnamese counterpart and the problems in producing naturalness in the Vietnamese translated nominal group.

3.2. Structural Complexity and Syntactic Ambiguity

When competent English-Vietnamese translators come across such nominal groups as (1) *the first part*, (2) *the new language programme*, (3) *these two radical differences* and so on; there may be no problems for them because the lexical items and the structures of these nominal groups may already be in the two stores located in their brains which Bell (1991) calls "Frequent Lexis Store" (FLS) and "Frequent Structure Store" (FSS) (for a detailed discussion of FLS and FSS, see Bell 1991: 45-53, 141-148). When presented with a nominal group like (2), what the translator has to do is to match the Vietnamese lexical items and their orders with those in the English original. This matching process may be elaborated as follows: the Parser in the translator's brain will tell him/her that *programme* which functions as the Head of the English nominal group corresponds to *chương trình* which also

functions as the Head of the Vietnamese counterpart; *language* which functions as the Classifier and precedes the Head (programme) corresponds to *học tiếng* which has the same function but follows the Head (*chương trình*) in the Vietnamese translated nominal group; *new* which functions as the Epithet and precedes *language programme* corresponds to *mới* which has the same function but follows *chương trình học tiếng*; and *the* which functions as Deictic in the English nominal group and precedes *new language programme* is not translated because in Vietnamese there are no lexical items which may correspond to the definite article *the* in English. All these seemingly simultaneous operations are based on the translator's contrastive knowledge of the structures of the English and Vietnamese nominal groups. The translation of this nominal group presents no problems for him/her because the order of the elements in the nominal groups of both languages are unmarked

(Deictic^Epithet^Classifier^Thing in English and Thing^Classifier^Epithet in Vietnamese). The result of these translation operations is that the meaning which is expressed through the English nominal group *the new language programme* is transformed into Vietnamese as *chương trình học tiếng mới*.

However, as has been pointed out elsewhere (H. V. Van 1994, 2005), scientific texts in English do not always contain simple and unmarked nominal groups like the ones we discussed above. In an English scientific text, one may

come across many long and complex nominal groups with high lexical density, or to use Bell's (1991) term, "high informativity". These nominal groups, according to Halliday in Halliday & Martin (1993), often make it difficult for the translator (reader) to process the meaning, analyze the structure and interpret the logical semantic relations among the elements. Below are two examples taken from H.G. Widdowson's (1992) text: "ELT and EL Teachers: Matters Arising" to illustrate the point:

(1) These contents were originally made at the concluding session of the ELT Journal 45th Anniversary Symposium (October 1991) which was entitled "The changing roles and nature of ELT".

(2) Here, then, are a number of problematic matters arising from the symposium concerning the nature of ELT and the role of EL teachers.

At the central level (at the level of the whole nominal group), the structures of these nominal groups look rather simple. If our analysis is appropriate, the experiential and logical structures of these nominal groups may be represented as follows:

(1) Deictic ^ Classifier ^ Thing ^ Qualifier

γ ^ B ^ α ^ B

(2) Deictic ^ Thing ^ Qualifier

B ^ α ^ B

A close look, however, at the internal structure of these nominal groups will reveal that they are extremely complex.

This is because each of them consists of different layers of modification which will call for careful analysis and interpretation from the translator. When presented with nominal groups as such, if the translator does not interpret the logical relationships among its elements correctly, s/he will give wrong analysis, and wrong analysis will certainly result in wrong translation. In translation practice, we sometimes hear translators complain about the fact that when they read an English sentence they understand every word in it, but they cannot get its meaning across. And once they cannot get the meaning across, they cannot translate the sentence into the target language. This problem is partly due to the translator's inability to analyze the structure of the sentence for its meaning and partly due to its structural complexity which is often the source of syntactic ambiguity. In a long and complex nominal group, syntactic ambiguity can be seen at every layer of modification. Let us consider the nominal group in example (2) to see how structural complexity creates syntactic ambiguity and how these two factors cause problems to the translator.

The analysis of the nominal group in example (2) shows that it consists of four layers of modification. In the first layer, *number* functions as the Head of the whole nominal group, *a* functions as Deictic and *of problematic ... teachers* functions as Qualifier. In the second layer, *matters* functions as Thing, *problematic* functions as Epithet, *arising from the symposium* functions as Qualifier 1 and *concerning ... teachers*

functions as Qualifier 2. In the third layer, Qualifier 1 contains the nominal group *the symposium* which function as Deictic and Thing respectively and Qualifier 2 consists of two Paratactical nominal groups: (1) *the nature of ELT* and (2) *the role of EL teachers*. In (1) *the* functions as Deictic, *nature* as Thing and *of ELT* as Qualifier. In (2) *the* functions as Deictic, *role* as Thing and *of EL teachers* as Qualifier. And in the fourth layer, *ELT* functions as Thing (below nominal group 1) and *EL teachers* as Classifier and Thing respectively. The problem here is that when faced with a structurally complex nominal group like this, even the competent translator may easily get confused in identifying the layers of modification which are inherently syntactically ambiguous. When it comes to the translation of the example we have analyzed, one of the questions the translator may ask is "Which Head does *concerning ... teachers* modify, *matters* or *symposium*?". Further, because *arising* is a non-finite verb in the clause *arising from the symposium*, we do not know exactly whether it is in the continuous tense or the past continuous tense or the present perfect continuous tense. Similarly, if *concerning ... teachers* is interpreted as a non-finite embedded clause, we do not know which tense it is in either. Also lexically *concerning* is ambiguous. Even when *concerning ... teachers* is identified as Post modifier of *matters*, it is still not known whether it is ... *matters which were/have been concerning the nature of ELT and the role of EL teachers* or *matters which were/have been concerned with the nature ...*

teachers or matters which were/have been about the nature ... teachers or matters which involved/have involved the nature of ELT and the role of EL teachers. Can the whole nominal group be reworded as *a number of problematic matters which were/have been (arising from the symposium) and (concerned with/concerning the nature of ELT and the role of EL teachers)* or as *a number of problematic matters which were/have been (arising from the symposium which were/have been (concerned with/concerning the nature of ELT and the role of EL teachers))*? Of course, it may be difficult to decide.

In the pre-modifying position of the English nominal group, syntactic ambiguity may also cause problems for the translator. Suppose that the translator is translating the nominal group in example (1) *the concluding session of the ELT Journal 45th Anniversary Symposium (October 1991) which was entitled "The changing roles and nature of ELT"* and after translating *the concluding session* into Vietnamese as *phiên bế mạc*, s/he now moves on to translate the Qualifier in which s/he comes across the nominal group *the ELT Journal 45th Anniversary Symposium*. In terms of the number of words, this nominal group looks rather simple. The whole nominal group consists of only six elements with *Symposium* functioning as Head. But if we explore its meaning carefully, we may find that it contains a great deal of what Halliday (1993) calls "local ambiguity". What does *the ELT Journal 45th Anniversary Symposium* mean? Does it mean (1) the symposium which was about the 45th anniversary or

(2) the symposium which was held to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the *ELT Journal* or (3) the symposium which was held on the 45th anniversary of the *ELT Journal*? ... Even with *the ELT Journal* we still do not know whether it is the journal for ELT or the journal which is named after ELT. Or else, it may be also possible to interpret *the ELT Journal* as a specialized journal for teachers of English as a second/foreign language. All these interpretations may be plausible because the nominal group, except the Deictic *the*, is made up of lexical words, leaving inexplicit the semantic relations among the elements. This will certainly give rise to different semantic interpretations and may partly explain why there are different versions of translation of one source text.

3.3. The problems of Word Choice and Ordering of Elements in the Vietnamese Translated Nominal Group

Wilss (1982b) introduces the concept "translator-specific aspects of translation equivalence" to account in part for the fact that different translators produce different TL versions of one and the same SL text. According to Wilss, every translator, like every human being, stands in a specific relation to reality. S/He possesses a specific linguistic and extra-linguistic volume of experience and a range of translational interests. S/He belongs to a specific language community, and within this language community s/he belongs to a specific social group which determines his/her value system, which in turn controls his/her translational production. Against this social and cultural background, this

means that translation is always subject to interference from the subjectivity of the translator. In discussing translation problems we must admit that translators are not abstract entities, but human beings, and as such leave their fingerprints on their finished translation products. Since in practice no two fingerprints are exactly alike, there are "no completely identical TL versions of a SL text which has been translated by various translators, even if the translators possess a comparable degree of translation competence and even if the outward conditions for the translation of the particular text are identical" (Wilss 1982b: 9).

With regard to the translation of the nominal group, the translator's subjectivity can be seen in the choice of words and the ordering of the elements in the TL nominal group. Below we shall first consider some of the nominal groups in the three Vietnamese translations of an English sentence in H.G. Widdowson's text "ELT and EL Teachers: Matters Arising" to see how word choice may cause problems for the translator.

English text:

These comments were originally made at the concluding session of the *ELT Journal* 45th Anniversary Symposium (October 1991) which was entitled "The changing roles and nature of ELT".

Vietnamese version 1:

(1) Những lời bình luận này được đưa ra vào (2) phiên kết thúc của hội nghị thảo luận kỷ niệm 45 năm thành lập Tạp chí Dạy tiếng Anh với nhan đề "Những

vai trò đang chuyển đổi và bản chất của dạy tiếng Anh.

Vietnamese version 2:

(1) Những vấn đề này lần đầu tiên được đưa ra tại (2) kỳ họp bế mạc của hội thảo kỷ niệm 45 năm của Journal ELT (tháng 10 năm 1991) mang chủ đề “Thực chất và vai trò đang thay đổi của việc dạy tiếng Anh.

Vietnamese version 3:

(1) Những nhận xét này nguyên được đưa ra tại (2) phiên bế mạc Hội thảo kỷ niệm lần thứ 45 ngày thành lập Tạp chí ELT (tháng 10 năm 1991) nhan đề “Vai trò đang thay đổi và bản chất của việc dạy tiếng Anh.

It is clear from the three versions of translation that different translator's choose different words that they think may correspond to the ones in the ST. In nominal group (1), *comments* is translated into Vietnamese as những lời bình luận (comments), *những vấn đề* (matters/issues), *những nhận xét* (remarks). In nominal group (2), *the concluding session* is translated as *phiên kết thúc, kỳ họp bế mạc*; Symposium: *hội nghị thảo luận, hội thảo*; *entitled: với nhan đề* (with title), *mang chủ đề* (carry topic/theme), *nhan đề* (entitle); *ELT Journal: Tạp chí dạy tiếng Anh, Journal ELT, Tạp chí ELT* and so forth. What needs comments here is that if we look at the three versions of translation of an English word or word group, we can see that these three words or word groups are synonymous or semantically related; e.g. *comments*: (1) *những lời bình luận*, (2) *những vấn đề*, and (3) *những nhận xét*. Therefore, to choose a word or an

expression which may most correspond to that in the ST seems to be a problem for the translator because “words don't find their equivalences in the new language, nor do cultural expressions and the translator will never approach a text twice in the same way” (Biguenet & Schulte 1989: Introduction). And since there is no one-to-one correspondence between a word in the SL text and that in the TL text and since no two translators can ever produce the same version of translation of a ST, the problems of word choice still remain.

Our last issue in this section concerns the problems of ordering of elements in the translated Vietnamese nominal group. It is generally accepted in translation theory and practice that one of the most important criteria for judging the quality of translation is readability. Readability, according to Hohulin (1982), is dependent on the naturalness of language use. Readability also implies that any translated text which includes too many grammatical structures which are closer to the SL structures or use will not be natural because word order, sentence length, ways of presenting information, and so on, are language-specific (see Wilss 1982b, Neubert 1984, and Hatim & Mason 1990). It is clear from our contrastive knowledge that the order of elements in the English and Vietnamese nominal groups are not similar. Therefore, when translating an English nominal group, especially a long, structurally complex and syntactically ambiguous one into Vietnamese, the ordering of elements so as to assure naturalness in the translated

Vietnamese nominal group may present the translator with some problems. To illustrate this point, let us consider two nominal groups in a sentence taken from the ELT article "Teacher Training for Sri Lanka: PRINCETT" by Charles Parish and Raymond W. Brown which was printed in the ELT Journal, Volume 42/1 January 1988:

Because of (1) its carefully planned integration of components, however, it is seen as (2) an important improvement over the traditional teacher-training programme.

Vietnamese idiomatic version of translation:

Vì (1) sự tích hợp các thành phần được hoạch định một cách chu đáo, cho nên nó được xem như là (2) một bước cải tiến quan trọng so với chương trình đào tạo giáo viên truyền thống.

Nominal group (1)

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <i>sự</i> | <i>tích hợp</i> | <i>các</i> |
| G.Cl. | integration | plural marker |
| <i>thành phần</i> | <i>được</i> | <i>hoạch định</i> |
| component | passive marker | plan |
| <i>một cách</i> | <i>chu đáo</i> | |
| one way | careful | |

Nominal group (2)

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>một bước</i> | <i>cải tiến</i> | <i>quan trọng</i> |
| one step | improvement | important |
| <i>so</i> | <i>với</i> | <i>chương trình đào tạo</i> |
| compare with (to) | programme | train |
| <i>giáo viên</i> | <i>theo</i> | <i>truyền thống</i> |
| teacher | by | tradition |

There are at least two points that need comment here. First, one may notice that in nominal group (1), *of* which is the preposition in the

prepositional phrase *of components* and functions as part of the Qualifier in the nominal group is not translated into Vietnamese. This feature of translation immediately affects the function of the element that corresponds to *components* in the Vietnamese translated nominal group. We can see in the Vietnamese version that *các thành phần* which corresponds to *components* is now functioning as Classifier. Although syntactically there is nothing wrong if *integration of components* is translated into Vietnamese as *sự tích hợp (của) các thành phần*, native speakers of Vietnamese may reject it for normative and naturalness reasons. There will be "translation noise" (Wilss 1982b) in the Vietnamese version if the English nominal group *its carefully planned integration of components* is translated into Vietnamese as *sự tích hợp (của) các thành phần được hoạch định một cách chu đáo (của nó)*. In this instance, the occurrence of two *của* in the Vietnamese nominal group will make it read as a translation rather than a natural text. Secondly, one may also notice that *carefully* which is an adverb functioning as Sub-modifier for the Sub-head *planned* corresponds to a prepositional phrase *một cách chu đáo* (one way careful) in the Vietnamese translated nominal group and *planned* – an adjective derived from the verb *plan* – which functions as Epithet in the English nominal group now corresponds to the Vietnamese clause *được hoạch định*. Similarly, in nominal group (2), *improvement* – a single word – which functions as Thing in the English nominal group has its word group correspondence *bước cải tiến*, the

elements of which function as Generic Classifier and Thing respectively in the Vietnamese counterpart; *over* which is the preposition in the prepositional phrase *over the traditional teacher-training programme* is translated into Vietnamese as a phrasal verb *so với* (compare with) so that the whole English prepositional phrase *over the traditional teacher-training programme* has its clause correspondence *so với chương trình đào tạo giáo viên theo truyền thống*. Also in the English nominal group *the traditional teacher-training programme*, *traditional* which functions as Epithet has its Vietnamese correspondence *theo truyền thống* (by tradition) which functions as Qualifier.

The point that should be made here is that in order to achieve equivalence in translation and naturalness in the TL text, some elements may not be translated and others may be subjected to what Catford (1965: 73-82) calls "translation shifts". When an element in the SL text is not translated into the TT, the functions of the elements in the TT which correspond to those in the source text may be changed. Similarly, when an element in the SL is subjected to translation shift, the function of its corresponding element in the TT may also be changed. Together with the differences in the structure of the SL and the TL, these translation facts may add some ordering problems to the translator. At this point, it might be said in summary that the problems of ordering of elements in the Vietnamese translated nominal group may be caused by not only the differences between the structure of the English and Vietnamese

nominal groups but also by the translation facts which we have discussed above.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed briefly the two potentialities of technical grammar and the role and the nature of nominalization in the environment of a scientific text. It appears justified to claim that nominalization plays a central role in creating scientific discourse, whereby scientific discourse becomes the language for the experts not for the lay people. When the translator comes to work on a text the subject matter of which s/he is not familiarised with, translation problems may arise. Another aspect that may cause more problems for the translator is that scientific language is highly metaphorical, in the sense of grammatical metaphor. When a process is represented in the form of a clause, the semantic relations among the components are made explicit by the grammar. However, when there is complex nominalization involving not only the process but also the participants and the circumstances, real problems in translation may occur. This is because the result of this complex process creates lexical density within the nominal group which leaves inexplicit the semantic relations among the components, making it very hard for the translator to process the meaning. Moving from theory to practice, I have devoted a reasonable length to discussing some of the main problems related to the translation of the nominal group from English into Vietnamese. In my discussion, I have identified two

main sources that may cause problems for the translator: (1) structural complexity and syntactic ambiguity of the English nominal group and (2) the problems of word choice and ordering of elements in the Vietnamese translated nominal group. At this point, it is strongly recommended that the translator study the features of the

scientific discourse and explore how technical grammar works. It is believed that to have a good understanding of scientific discourse and a good command of technical grammar will certainly help translators to solve many problems that may occur when s/he is translating a scientific text from one language into another.

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