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Analysis of errors of google translate for translating social work terminology from Vietnamese to English

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Abstract: This research investigates the errors produced by Google Translate in rendering Vietnamese social work terminology into English. A combination of statistical, classification, analytical, and descriptive methods was applied to ensure a comprehensive evaluation. The data set consists of 2,344 Vietnamese terms compiled from a specialized social work dictionary, along with their English equivalents generated by Google Translate. These translation outputs were examined and systematically categorized according to levels of equivalence and types of errors. The findings indicate that the most common and significant issues include conceptual mistranslation, breaches of the principle of brevity, and syntactic inaccuracies. Such recurring problems highlight the limitations of machine translation in specialized domains where terminological accuracy is essential. The outcomes of this study provide a valuable reference for linguists, translators, and researchers, offering practical insights for addressing challenges related to new and evolving terminology in the field of social work. Ultimately, the research underscores the necessity of human expertise in ensuring precise and contextually appropriate translation.

Keywords: *Concepts, Errors, Google Translate, Nonequivalents in English, Social work terms in Vietnamese.*

1. Introduction

Translating technical terminology is an ongoing challenge, as the connection between terminology and translation is intricately intertwined. Cabré suggested that the primary challenges faced by translators related to technical terminology include units, grammatical use, and denominative units that precisely correlate to concepts [1].

One of the numerous tools that enable users to translate words and texts from one language to another is Google Translate. Although it was not the first translation tool developed, Google Translate has gained popularity and success and a large number of people use it to translate words or texts from other languages to English [2]. However, the efficacy and accuracy of Google Translate for translating specialized terminology is questionable.

This study evaluates the translation of Vietnamese social work terminology into English through Google Translate. The complete equivalence ratio in semantics and form between the Vietnamese social work terms and their translation output in English, the target language, was ascertained through methods of statistics, classification, description, and contrastive analyses. Errors in the English nonequivalent translations of Vietnamese social work terms are examined and clarified. The study's findings have both theoretical and practical significance by giving researchers and multiple language users a better understanding of how Google Translate can be used to translate specialized terminology. The results serve as a foundation for editing translated documents to ensure that they adhere to the standards of accuracy, scientificity, and terminological structure.

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2. Literature Review

2.1. Definitions and Standards of Terms

Scholars and researchers have offered numerous definitions of the word "terms". According to Leichik, a term is a word or phrase that has a special, strictly defined meaning in a particular field of science or technology [3]. Sager defined terms as lexical items with specific references in a restricted subject field [4]. Dubuc noted that terms designate concepts specific to subject fields [5]. Likewise, linguists Shufan and Shelov described a term as a special word or phrase with a rigorously developed definition across different areas of scientific disciplines [6]. In addition to being accurate and adequate, a term should reflect an essential characteristic of a concept and avoid ambiguity [5]. Additionally, a term should be precise, grammatically correct, widely applicable, short, and stylistically neutral [7].

According to the general theory of terminology, the concept is the primary subject of study in the traditional definition of a term. This cognitive perspective allows terminology to differentiate itself from a linguistic approach by highlighting the extralinguistic aspect. This bi-univocity principle emphasizes two criteria: monoreferentiality and univocity. Univocity means that for a given term, one concept corresponds to one and only one designation. The principle of monoreferentiality means that for a given term, one designation corresponds to only one concept [8]. According to these criteria, a term can only have a single meaning and no synonyms. Since bi-univocity does not acknowledge any type of variation, this view of the term is only applicable in the context of highly standardized terminologies [9, 10].

2.2. Concepts

According to Cabré, a concept is an element of thought or a mental construct that represents a class of objects [11]. Concepts consist of a series of characteristics shared by a class of individual objects. Written or spoken linguistic signs encompass a term, groups of terms, or symbols to convey concepts [11]. What speakers express, however, is not the real world but rather how an individual or community has internalized it. Language does not precisely reflect the real world but rather interprets it. Concepts are mentally independent of terms and exist before them.

2.3. Translation and Equivalence in Translation

Equivalence was the prevalent concept in translation theory in the 1950s. Translation has been defined in terms of equivalence relations [12, 13]. The primary relationship that allows a target text to be considered a translation of a source text is known as equivalence, according to the proponents of equivalence-based theories of translation. Theorists who assert that equivalence is a prerequisite for translation have sought typologies of equivalence, either emphasizing the rank of the level (word, sentence, text) or the type of meaning (denotative, connotative, pragmatic, etc.) that equivalence achieves [14].

Newmark defined eight distinct methods of translation, namely word-for-word, literal, faithful, semantic, adaptative, free, idiomatic, and communicative [15]. Koller presented five types of equivalence: denotative equivalence, which involves equivalence of the extralinguistic content of a text; connotative equivalence relating to lexical choices; text-normative equivalence relating to text types; pragmatic equivalence, which is receiver-oriented; and formal equivalence relating to the form and aesthetics of the text [16].

2.4. Terminology Translation

Terminology is a special part of the vocabulary of each language with the function of expressing common scientific concepts. Internationality is an important feature of terminology, and when translating terminology or compiling a dictionary, it should only be necessary to provide the corresponding terms in each language without explanation. Nguyen asserted that corresponding terms in languages are the realization of common concepts [17]. According to Ha, there are two possibilities for translating terms: translation with equivalence and translation without equivalence [18]. Equivalence means finding a term that completely matches the source language and the target

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language. If the target language does not have a term that is equivalent to the concept in the source language, it must be translated in a style that explains the semantic content.

Tran mentioned four principles of translation: fidelity, accuracy, consistency, and brevity [19]. Fidelity requires that the content of the translation be consistent with the original. The main goal that the translator must always pursue is to ensure the equivalence of the content. The principle of accuracy is that the translation must express the meaning clearly, without semantic or grammatical errors, and without polysemy. The principle of consistency is that definitions, concepts, and specialized vocabulary must be consistent and cannot be changed arbitrarily. The principle of brevity requires that terminology be transparent, easy to understand, and not lengthy or complicated.

In this study of the translation of scientific terms of social work, all terms in the target language that are completely equivalent in semantics and form were classified into the group of equivalent terms, and terms that are translated with inaccurate concepts or variant forms were classified into the group of nonequivalent terms.

2.5. Google Translation

In the current era of globalization, information and communication technology has advanced very rapidly. Technological tools such as laptops, computer notebooks, and mobile phones have become indispensable in daily activities. Applications for translators have emerged as a solution for those striving to communicate in multiple languages. These translating applications enable people from different nations to communicate more easily and play a significant role in translating from the source language to the target language. Machine translation is becoming increasingly popular because it can help people overcome obstacles in translating foreign languages [20]. Many types of translating applications are available, including Google Translate, U Dictionary, Microsoft Translator, iTranslate, etc. Among many machine translation service platforms, Google Translate is one of the most widely used applications [21].

Instant translations from and into hundreds of different languages can be obtained with Google Translate, a free online translation tool. Google Translate offers intriguing features such as instant translation, highlighting words and phrases, diction selection, pronunciation preview, and more. Sheppard regarded Google Translate as highly supportive in translating technical documents but noted that it has significant limitations that users should be aware of faulty translations, translating word for word without finding the appropriate equivalent according to context and insensitivity to syntax and idiomatic expressions [22]. There are also confidentiality issues. Sutrisno [23] emphasized the drawbacks of Google Translate, including the lack of a human sense of language, grammatical errors, inability to choose the right words or properly arrange sentences [23].

3. Methodology

This study uses the methods of statistics, classification, description, and comparative analysis. The source corpus is 2344 Vietnamese social work terms extracted from the *Comparative Dictionary of Social Work Terms, English–Vietnamese, Vietnamese–English* [24]. The target corpus is 2344 English social work terms translated from Vietnamese source terms by Google Translate.

The research steps were conducted as follows:

1. Theoretical systems related to terminology, terminology standards, concepts, translation, equivalence in translation, terminology translation, and Google Translate were studied as the scientific basis for the research.
2. Translational equivalence statistics of 2344 social work terms in English were presented in a comparative document.
3. Vietnamese social work terms were meticulously classified according to the number of syllables and the statistics of the number of equivalent and nonequivalent terms in English.
4. Errors in the nonequivalent group of Vietnamese social work terms translated into English using Google Translate were identified and categorized.

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5. The identified errors of the nonequivalent group were described and analyzed.
6. The effectiveness of translating Vietnamese social work terminology into English using Google Translate was evaluated.
7. Recommendations for processing the translation of Vietnamese social work terminology into English in the future were made.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Equivalence in Translating Social Work Terms from Vietnamese to English Using Google Translate

The basic units for forming Vietnamese words are syllables. This study explores whether Google Translate is less accurate in translating longer Vietnamese social work terms into English, following the viewpoint of previous Vietnamese researchers [25-27] according to whom the basic element that constitutes a term is the syllable. For example, the Vietnamese term *an sinh xã hội* (social security) consists of four syllables: *an*, *sinh*, *xã*, and *hội*. Therefore, this study divides Vietnamese social work terminology into groups based on the number of syllables in assessing their translation into English by Google Translate.

The 2344 source social work terms in Vietnamese are composed of between one and ten syllables. The survey results of translating Vietnamese social work terminology when into English by applying Google Translate are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Ratio of Equivalent and Nonequivalent Social Work Terms in English by Google Translate.

Classification of social work terms in Vietnamese	N	%	Equivalent terms		Nonequivalent terms	
			N	%	N	%
One syllable	18	0.8	12	0.5	6	0.3
Two syllables	410	17.5	208	8.9	202	8.6
Three syllables	338	14.4	197	8.4	141	6
Four syllables	817	34.9	529	22.6	288	12.3
Five syllables	250	10.7	159	6.8	91	3.9
Six syllables	328	14	207	8.8	121	5.2
Seven syllables	78	3.3	38	1.6	40	1.7
Eight syllables	76	3.2	40	1.7	36	1.5
Nine syllables	18	0.8	10	0.4	8	0.3
Ten syllables	11	0.5	4	0.2	7	0.3
Total	2344	100	1404	59.9	940	40.1

Table 1 shows that Vietnamese social work terms with four syllables make up the largest percentage with 34.9% (817). Terms with two, three, five, and six syllables account for significant proportions, with 17.5% (410), 14.4% (338), 10.7% (250), and 14% (328), respectively. Terms with seven or eight syllables comprise only 3.3% (78) and 3.2% (76), respectively. The numbers of the remaining groups are negligible.

Of the total 2344 terms surveyed, the proportion of terms with translation equivalents accounts for 59.9% (1404) and that of nonequivalent terms comprises 40.1% (940). For the group of equivalent terms, four-syllable terms present the majority with 22.6% (529). Terms with two, three, five, and six words also reach significant numbers, with 8.9% (208), 8.4% (197), 6.8% (159), and 8.8% (207), respectively. In the group of nonequivalent terms, four-syllable terms have the highest number with 12.3% (288). Two-syllable terms also have a considerable number of nonequivalent terms with 8.6% (202). The three-syllable term group is ranked third with a rate of 6% (141), followed by the six-syllable term group with a rate of 5.2% (121). The group of five-syllable terms adds to the group of nonequivalent terms with 91 units, equivalent to 3.9%. The remaining groups of terms account for a very low percentage.

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4.2. Errors in Translating Social Work Terms from Vietnamese into English Using Google Translate

According to Nguyen, the concept of the terminological element was introduced by Lotte and improved by Danilenko [28] and Kandelaki [29]. A terminological element is the smallest structural unit forming a term. Terminological elements can be morphemes that are single words or collocations of combined words or compound phrases. Terms can consist of one or more terminological elements. Each terminological element corresponds to a concept in a certain specialized field [30].

This study analyzes the structure and semantics of the translation equivalents of Vietnamese social work terminology translated into English by Google Translate, based on the viewpoint of Soviet linguists regarding terminological elements [31]. This is based not only on grammatical structure but also on the conceptual aspect, making it appropriate for analyzing the term both structurally and semantically. According to this approach, the term *an sinh xã hội* (social security) has two terminological elements: *an sinh* (security) and *xã hội* (social).

Based on the definition of a term, the elements of terminology structure, and the standards of terms in translation equivalence, the study explores three common errors made by Google Translate when translating Vietnamese social work terminology into English. These are mistranslation of concepts, violation of the principle of brevity, and incorrect structure. These errors are analyzed and clarified in the following sections.

4.3. One-syllable Terms

Table 2.
Nonequivalent One-syllable Terms.

Errors	**N**	**%**	**Examples**		
			Social work terms in Vietnamese	**Google Translate**	**Dictionary**
Conceptual mistranslation	6	0.3	ca	ca	case
			lệnh	command	injunction
			tội	sin	guilt
Violation of brevity	0	0			
Wrong structure	0	0			
Total	6	0			

Among the 2,344 Vietnamese social work terms surveyed, six of the eighteen one-syllable terms did not have equivalent translations from Google Translate when compared with terms as defined in the dictionary. These six terms in English provided by Google Translate do not accurately reflect the concepts of the terms and the concepts represented in the dictionary and by Google Translate are completely different. For example, an "injunction" means "a court process and legal order by which a party is forbidden to take or is made to refrain from taking a particular action…" [32] and a "command" means "an order especially one given to a soldier" [33].

Accuracy is the most important criterion for terms in specific scientific fields. Each term should have one concept and one meaning, and conversely, each concept should have only one representative term. The findings show that no term in the target language of this group violates the brevity and structural rules of the term.

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4.4. Two-syllable Terms

Table 3.
Nonequivalent Two-syllable Terms.

Errors	N	%	Examples		
			Social work terms in Vietnamese	**Google Translate**	**Dictionary**
Conceptual mistranslation	197	8.4	cắm chốt	Pinpoint	Fixation
			chuyển di	Move	Transference
			tăng cường	Strengthen	Reinforcement
			tâm kịch	Drama	Psychodrama
			y sinh	Biomedical	Iatrogenic
			yếu thế	Weak	Marginalization
Violation of brevity	3	0.1	lạm quyền	Abuse of power	Override
			người đói	Hungry people	Hunger
			xuất viện	Discharge from hospital	Hospital discharge
Wrong structure	2	0.1	sống thử	Live together	Cohabitation
			mất mẹ	Lost my mother	Maternal deprivation
Total	202	8.6			

Table 3 shows that there are 202 Vietnamese social work terms with translation equivalents that are different from the terms in the dictionary. Of these, the phenomenon of conceptual mistranslation accounts for the majority with 8.4% (197). For example, *y sinh* (iatrogenic) is translated as "biomedical" by Google Translate. *Y sinh* means relating to biology and medicine. However, the dictionary translates this concept as "iatrogenic" which means "of a disease or problem caused by medical treatment or by a doctor."

The finding shows that three Vietnamese social work terms do not meet the principle of brevity for the terms when they are translated into English by Google Translate. In the composition of the term, it is necessary to contain a minimum number of necessary characteristics that enable homogenizing and differentiating the concept reflected by that term. The term *xuất viện* is translated into English by Google Translate as "discharge from hospital", which consists of three words. However, in the dictionary, this term has been shortened to "hospital discharge" to ensure the brevity of the term.

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4.5. Three-Syllable Terms

Table 4.
Nonequivalent Three-syllable Terms.

Errors	N	%	Examples		
			Social work terms in Vietnamese	**Google Translate**	**Dictionary**
Conceptual mistranslation	132	5.6	bước tiếp nhận	admission	intake
			cai nghiện ma túy	drug addiction	drug detoxification
			mù cảm xúc	emotional blindness	alexithymia
			nhóm tương trợ	support group	mutual aid group
			thuyết lệch pha	phase shift theory	queer theory
Violation of brevity	9	0.4	chứng sợ già	fear of aging	gerontophobia
			dự đoán bệnh	disease forecasting	prognosis
			mất khả năng	loss of ability	incapacity
			người nhận nuôi	adoptive person	adopter
			người phụ thuộc	dependent person	dependent
			nhận con nuôi	adopt children	adopt
			phát triển sớm	develop early	precocity
			ra quyết định	make a decision	decision making
			sợ đám đông	afraid of crowds	ocholophobia
			tháp nhu cầu	pyramid of needs	needs hierarchy
			tiền bảo lãnh	bail money	bail
Wrong structure	0	0			
Total	141	6			

Two of the terms surveyed were found to be structurally incorrect, representing 0.1% of the total 40.1% of nonequivalent terms in the output of Google Translate. For example, *sống thử* is translated as "live together" while the dictionary translates it as "cohabitation," which means "a man and woman residing together in husband-wife roles without formal marriage" [32] fully expressing the meaning of the unique scientific concept and the characteristics of this term in the concept of social work.

Of the total 141 Vietnamese social work terms translated into English without equivalents by Google Translate, the number of terms with incorrect conceptual translations makes up the largest proportion with 132 units, equivalent to 5.6%. In social work, bước tiếp nhận (intake) means "procedures used by social agencies to make the initial contacts with the clients productive and helpful. Generally, these procedures include informing the client about the services the agency offers…; assigning the client to the social worker or social workers who are best suited to provide the needed services." [32]. However, Google Translate generates in the target language the word "admission" which means "the act of agreeing that something is true/permission to enter a place, etc." [33].

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4.6. Four-Syllable Terms

Table 5.
Nonequivalent Four-syllable Terms.

Errors	N	%	Examples		
			Social work terms in Vietnamese	**Google Translate**	**Dictionary**
Conceptual mistranslation	254	10.8	bảo hộ trẻ em	child protection	child custody
			bạo lực tâm dược	psychotropic	psychopharmacological violence
			đối lập lưỡng phân	dichotomous opposition	binary opposite
			sa sút tinh thần	mental decline	mental impairment
Violation of brevity	20	0.9	can thiệp tại nhà	intervention at home	home-based intervention
			chứng sợ đến trường	fear of going to school	school phobia
			cuộc sống gia đình	family life	domesticity
			hỗ trợ tại nhà	support at home	domiciliary support
			lạm dụng người già	abuse of the elderly	elder abuse
			mức sống tối thiểu	minimum standard of living	minimum living standard
			người đồng tính nam	gay men	gay
			phức cảm tâm lý	psychological complex	psy-complex
			sinh học xã hội	social biology	sociobiology
			thời kỳ chu sinh	perinatal period	perinatal
			thuốc chống loạn thần	antipsychotic drugs	anti-psychotics
Wrong structure	14	0.6	bảo vệ trẻ em	protect children	child protection
			cung cấp tiếp cận	provide access	access provision
			giải quyết vấn đề	solve the problem	problem-solving
			giải quyết khủng hoảng	solve the crisis	crisis resolution
			huy động nguồn lực	mobilize resources	resource mobilization
			trẻ thiếu giáo dục	children lack education	educationally deprived child
Total	288	12.3			

Nine nonequivalent units with long structures also contribute 0.4% to the total of 141 units belonging to the group of three-syllable terms that were translated nonequivalently. In this case, Google Translate mainly applies the translation technique of semantic transfer (*dự đoán bệnh*: disease forecasting, *người phụ thuộc*: dependent person, *phát triển sớm*: develop early, etc.), making their English translation equivalents overly long and failing to express the exact concept of the term. Furthermore, using the preposition "of" in the translation equivalents obscures the meaning of the original terms because the preposition, which has no standalone lexical meaning, does not express a concept or attribute of a concept and is not regarded as a terminological element. For example, *chứng sợ già* is translated as "fear of aging", *tháp nhu cầu* as "pyramid of needs", and *sợ đám đông* as "afraid of crowds".

For the group of Vietnamese social work terms which are made up of four syllables, similar to the groups of terms of one syllable, two syllables, and three syllables, the rate of terms with conceptual mistranslation is the highest with 254 units, accounting for 10.8%. For example, *bảo hộ trẻ em* (child custody) means "a legal determination in divorce cases specifying which parent or other guardian will be in charge of the children. This determination is based on what is considered to be in the interests of the children." [32]. However, Google Translate translates the term *bảo hộ trẻ em* as "child protection" in

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English. The term "child protection" is defined in the dictionary as: "The intent, activities, and processes involved in securing individual children who are specifically identified as either suffering or likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect." [34].

Additionally, 20 Vietnamese terms in this category are translated in an overly wordy style. The terms must not only be semantically accurate but also concise. For example, the term *lạm dụng người già* was translated by Google Translate with the four-word phrase "abuse of the elderly". However, in the dictionary, this Vietnamese term is translated as "elder abuse" succinctly and accurately expressing the concept of the source term.

Fourteen Vietnamese social work terms, accounting for 0.6%, are translated with inappropriate structures. For example, "protect children", "solve the problem", and "children lack education" are not fixed words or phrases and not the exact names of concepts and objects in the field of social work.

4.7. Five-syllable Terms

Table 6.
Nonequivalent Five-syllable Terms.

Errors	**N**	**%**	**Examples**		
			Social work terms in Vietnamese	**Google Translate**	**Dictionary**
Conceptual mistranslation	72	3.1	cai nghiện tại cộng đồng	Community addiction	Community-based drug detoxification
			đánh giá theo nhu cầu	Needs assessment	Needs-led assessment
			gia đình gặp vấn đề	Family problems	Problem family
			hành vi phi xã hội	Antisocial behavior	Asocial behavior
			tội phạm vị thành niên	Youth crime	Juvenile offender
Violation of brevity	11	0.5	bình đẳng trong việc làm	Equality in employment	Employment equality
			chăm sóc qua điện thoại	Telephone care	Telecare
			gia đình có con riêng	Family with stepchildren	Reconstituted family
			mất năng lực tâm thần	Loss of mental capacity	Mental incapacity
			nhu cầu được tôn trọng	Need to be respected	Esteem need
			thuyết tâm lý xã hội	Social psychological theory	Psychosocial theory
			vai trò người hòa giải	Role of mediator	Mediator role
Wrong structure	8	0.3	liệu pháp quyết định lại	Decision therapy again	Redecision therapy
			né tránh ám ảnh sợ	Avoid phobias	Phobia avoidance
			nhóm làm việc ngoài giờ	The group works overtime	Out-of-hours duty team
			nhu cầu được đánh giá	Needs are assessed	Assessed need
			thân chủ không tự nguyện	The client is involuntary	Involuntary client
			trẻ em bị bóc lột	Children are exploited	Exploited children
			trí nhớ được phục hồi	Memory is restored	Recovery memory
Total	91	3.9			

Of the total 91 Vietnamese social work terms that have nonequivalents in English, 72 of their target translations were conceptually mistranslated by Google Translate, totaling 3.1%. For example, in the term *gia đình gặp vấn đề* (problem family), *gia đình* (family) is the main element, while Google Translate gives the phrase "family problems" in English, which has "problem" as the main element. Thus, the concept of the source term and the concept of the target language are inconsistent.

In terms of form, it was found that 11 Google Translate results were verbose phrases using, for example, prepositions (in, with, or of) in translated phrases such as "equality in employment", "role of mediator". The term *thuyết tâm lý xã hội* was translated as the English term "psychosocial theory" in the dictionary, consisting of two components "theory" and "psychosocial". Meanwhile, the output of Google Translate is a longer term with three components, "social psychological theory" (social/ psychological/ theory).

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4.8. Six-syllable Terms

Table 7.
Nonequivalent Six-syllable Terms.

Errors	N	%	Examples		
			Social work terms in Vietnamese	**Google Translate**	**Dictionary**
Conceptual mistranslation	101	4.3	bệnh tự kỷ ở trẻ nhỏ	childhood autism	infantile autism
			chứng loạn thần kinh chức năng	functional neurosis	neurosis
			công tác xã hội cá nhân	personal social work	individual social work
			phản ứng căng thẳng cấp tính	acute stress response	acute stress reaction
			phẫu thuật triệt sản tự nguyện	voluntary sterilization surgery	voluntary surgical contraception
			chăm sóc gia đình thay thế	respite care	substitute family care
Violation of brevity	14	0.6	bác sĩ vật lí liệu pháp	physical therapist	physiatrist
			biến đổi cơ cấu xã hội	change in social structure	structural social change
			chương trình trợ cấp y tế	health assistance program	Medicaid program
			công tác xã hội chính trị	social and political work	political social work
			lạm dụng tiếp xúc gián tiếp	abuse of indirect contact	indirect contact abuse
			làn sóng nữ quyền đầu tiên	first wave of feminism	first wave feminism
			mức độ hành vi thích ứng	level of adaptive behavior	adaptive behavior level
			nhu cầu được thể hiện mình	the need to express oneself	expressed need
			nhu cầu tự khẳng định mình	the need for self-affirmation	self-actualization need
			phân tích tâm lý trẻ em	psychological analysis of children	child psychoanalysis
			quan điểm tâm lý xã hội	social psychological perspective	psychosocial perspective
			trẻ trong độ tuổi tiểu học	children of primary school age	primary school-aged child
Wrong structure	6	0.3	phát hiện lạm dụng ma túy	detect drug abuse	drug abuse detection
			thân chủ có nhu cầu đặc biệt	client has special needs	special needs client
			thực hành năng lực văn hóa	practice cultural competence	culturally competent practice
Total	121	5.2			

The survey results also show eight Vietnamese social work terms that were structurally mistranslated by Google Translate into English. For example, "avoid phobias" and "decision therapy again" are not fixed words or phrases. Some translation results have sentence structures ("The group works overtime."/ "Needs are assessed."/ "Children are exploited."/ "Memory is restored."). These are completely inconsistent with the structural rule of the social work terms, which clearly define the term as fixed words or phrases.

From the statistical results, among 121 nonequivalent translations of Vietnamese social work terms into English by Google Translate renders 101 units that have incorrect scientific concepts of these source terms. For example, the term *chăm sóc gia đình thay thế* (substitute family care), as the source language, is translated into the target language as "respite care". However, "respite care" means "temporary care for a sick, disabled, or old person, so that the person who usually cares for them can have some time on their own". This translation does not accurately reflect the concept of the source term, which in fact, means "a form of care for a child who, for various reasons, cannot be raised in his own family. The child is raised by surrogate parents, foster parents or guardians in an environment that

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is closest to a natural family." The precise conceptual term for this term in English is "substitute family care". In this case, the literal meaning of a term must reflect the characteristics of the concept it identifies [1]. Terminological precision requires that each term be univocal which means that each term is used to express only one concept.

In terms of form, there are 14 terms translated by Google Translate that do not meet the brevity criteria, accounting for 0.6%. The elements that make up a term must be as consistent as possible with the concept expressed, without redundant elements because they will create misunderstandings even though the presence of these elements makes the term seem consistent with the structural rules of the language. For example, the term *biến đổi cơ cấu xã hội* (social structural change) has three elements: *biến đổi* (change), *cơ cấu* (structural) and *xã hội* (social). Thus, "social structural change" would be an ideal conceptual term with a match between the formal structure and the characteristics of this concept. The phrase "change in social structure", as output by Google Translate, with the presence of the preposition "in" in the translated target phrase, makes this term verbose and redundant.

With six terms that do not meet the structural standards, the group of nonequivalent terms adds 0.3% to the total 40.1% of terms that are mistranslated by Google Translate. The word-for-word translation (*phát hiện lạm dụng ma túy* is translated as "detect drug abuse", *thực hành năng lực văn hóa* as "practice cultural competence") or a source term that is translated into a sentence in the target language (*thân chủ có nhu cầu đặc biệt* as "client has special needs".) This violates the structural requirements of terminological standards.

4.9. Seven-syllable Terms

Table 8.
Nonequivalent Seven-syllable Terms.

Errors	N	%	Examples		
			Social work in Vietnamese	**Google Translate**	**Dictionary**
Conceptual mistranslation	22	0.9	chăm sóc nuôi dưỡng cả gia đình	Family-based foster care	Whole family foster care
			chỉ số đo lường vị thế giới	World status index	Gender empowerment measure
			hội chứng chấn thương sau cưỡng bức	Post-rape trauma syndrome	Rape trauma syndrome
			liệu pháp tập trung vào nhiệm vụ	Task-focused approach	Task-centered approach
Violation of brevity	12	0.5	bảo mật thông tin có điều kiện	Conditional information security	Conditional confidentiality
			Bằng quản trị dịch vụ xã hội	Degree in social service administration	Social service administration degree
			cha mẹ bị tâm thần phân liệt	Parents with schizophrenia	Schizophrenogenic parent
			chăm sóc sức khỏe từ xa	Telehealth care	Telehealth
			chu cấp cho trẻ dưới 5 tuổi	Providing for children under 5 years old	Under-fives provision
			phong trào xã hội ở nông thôn	Social movement in rural areas	Rural social movement
			rối loạn ảo tưởng kiểu ghen tuông	Delusion disorder of the jealous type	Jealous type delusion disorder
			thuyết phát triển tâm thần sinh dục	Theory of psychosexual development	Psychosexual development theory
			vai trò nhà hoạt động xã hội	Role of social activist	Activist role
Wrong	6	0.3	sự kiện cuộc sống gây căng thẳng	Life events cause	Stressful life event

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structure				stress	
			mối quan hệ quen với xung đột	Relationships are accustomed to conflict	Conflict habituated relationship
			phấn khích tình dục bị ức chế	Sexual excitement is inhibited	Inhibited sexual excitement
			trẻ đảm nhận vai trò cha mẹ	Children take on the role of parents	Parental child
Total	40	1.7			

With the group of seven-syllable terms, out of 40.1% of nonequivalent terms in English, only 40 Vietnamese social work terms are nonequivalent when translated into English by Google Translate, accounting for 1.7%. The results reveal that 22 terms in the seven-syllable group are translated with inaccurate concepts, accounting for 0.9%. For example, in the term *chỉ số đo lường vị thế giới* (gender empowerment measure), the main element is *chỉ số đo lường* (measure), the second element is *vị thế* (empowerment), and the third element is *giới* (gender). However, Google Translate translates this Vietnamese term into English as "world status index". The three elements "index", "status" and "world" do not overlap with the primary concept (measure) and the identifying characteristics (empowerment, gender). Notably, Google Translate misunderstands the element *giới* (gender) in Vietnamese as *thế giới* (world), leading to serious errors in meaning.

Regarding the standard of brevity, the research findings find out that 12 terms (0.5%) violate this criterion. For example, the presence of prepositions (in, with, for, of) makes the terms verbose (providing for children under five years old, delusion disorder of the jealous type, theory of psychosexual development, etc.). Brevity helps to ensure the accuracy and scientificity of the terms.

In terms of form, Google Translate makes mistakes when translating six Vietnamese social work terms with seven syllables into seven sentences, for example, *mối quan hệ quen với xung đột* is translated as "relationships are accustomed to conflict" and *trẻ đảm nhận vai trò cha mẹ* as "children take on the role of parents". Meanwhile, a term is a fixed word or phrase used to accurately represent concepts and objects in a specialized field.

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4.10. Eight-Syllable Terms

Table 9.
Nonequivalent Eight-syllable Terms.

Errors	N	%	Examples		
			Social work in Vietnamese	**Google Translate**	**Dictionary**
Conceptual mistranslation	17	0.7	chương trình hỗ trợ dinh dưỡng bổ sung	Supplementary nutrition support program	Supplementary nutrition assistance program
			công tác xã hội phụ nữ trọng tâm	Women's social work focus	Women-centered social work
			người theo chủ nghĩa độc tôn dị tính	Heterosexual supremacist	Heterosexist
			rối loạn dạng cơ thể không biệt định	Unspecified somatoform disorder	Undifferentiated somatoform disorder
			rối loạn tâm lý đau nhức toàn thân	Psychological disorder body aches	Psychogenic pain disorder
Violation of brevity	15	0.6	chương trình dinh dưỡng cho người cao tuổi	Nutrition program for seniors	Elderly nutrition program
			công tác xã hội vì sự tiến bộ	Social work for progress	Progressive social work
			công tác xã hội với người tâm thần	Social work with the mentally ill	Psychiatric social work
			đầu tư kết hợp trách nhiệm xã hội	Investing with social responsibility	Socially responsible investing
			giai đoạn nền tảng những năm đầu đời	Foundational stage in the early years of life	Early years foundation stage
			mô hình thực hành công tác xã hội	Model of social work practice	Social work practice model
			nguyên tắc công bằng giữa các thế hệ	Principle of intergenerational equity	Intergenerational equity principle
			nhóm nạn nhân bị tấn công tình dục	Group of victims of sexual assault	Sexual assault survivor group
			phân biệt đối xử với người khuyết tật	Discrimination against people with disabilities	Disability discrimination
Wrong structure	4	0.2	nhận con nuôi có quan hệ họ hàng	Adopt a child who is related to each other	Kinship adoption
			nhận nuôi trẻ có nhu cầu đặc biệt	Adopt children with special needs	Special needs adoption
			tín dụng hỗ trợ xóa đói giảm nghèo	Credit supports hunger eradication and poverty reduction	Poverty reduction support credit
			phòng tránh tai nạn thương tích trẻ em	Prevent child accidents and injuries	Child injury prevention
Total	36	1.5			

For the group of eight-syllable social work terms in Vietnamese, the statistical results show that 36 terms are found to have errors when translated into English by Google Translate, accounting for 1.5%. Similar to the above groups of terms, the number of terms with inaccurate concepts is the highest with 17 units, equivalent to 0.7%. To ensure accuracy, there should be only one term for a concept. The term should reflect the basic characteristics and essential content of the concept. Below is a comparison of the differences between the elements of the term *công tác xã hội phụ nữ trọng tâm* (women-centered social work) to clarify the inaccuracies in meaning and concept when applying Google Translate.

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Table 10.
A comparison of the differences between the elements of the term.

	First element (Primary element)	Second element	Third element	Fourth element	Term
Vietnamese social work term	công tác	xã hội	phụ nữ	trọng tâm	công tác xã hội phụ nữ trọng tâm
Equivalent in dictionary	Work	Social	Women	Centered	Women-centered social work
Nonequivalent by Google Translate	Focus	Work	Social	Women's	Women's social work focus

By identifying the element *trọng tâm* as the main element (the primary term), Google Translate has created a term that completely misrepresents the concept of this scientific term in the social work terminology. The equivalent given by Google Translate, consisting of four elements with primary term and nominal characteristic (women's social work focus), does not overlap with the Vietnamese source term (women-centered social work).

There are also 15 terms (0.6%), that are translated verbosely, often due to using prepositions (for, with, in, of, against) or an article (the). There are only four terms with an incorrect structure (0.2%). For example, "adopt a child who is related to each other", "prevent child accidents and injuries" or "credit supports hunger eradication and poverty reduction" are not fixed words or phrases.

4.11. Nine-Syllable Terms

Table 11.
Nonequivalent Nine-syllable Terms.

Errors	N	%	Examples		
			Social work in Vietnamese	Google translation	Dictionary
Conceptual mistranslation	0	0			
Violation of brevity	3	0.1	rối loạn giấc ngủ liên quan đến hô hấp	Sleep disorders related to breathing	Breathing-related sleep disorder
			rỷ lệ dân số hoạt động kinh tế	Proportion of economically active population	Economically active population rate
Wrong structure	5	0.2	lập kế hoạch hành động phục hồi sức khỏe	Create an action plan to restore your health	Wellness recovery action planning
			tiếp cận tập trung vào toàn thể con người	Approach that focuses on the whole person	Whole person approach
			trung tâm điều trị khủng hoảng sau cưỡng bức	Post-rape crisis treatment center	Rape crisis center
			tự sát với sự hỗ trợ của y tế	Commit suicide with medical assistance	Medically assisted suicide
Total	8	0.3			

Notably, in the group of Vietnamese social work terms with nine syllables, Google Translate makes no errors when translating these terms into English. The survey results reveal that there are three terms with errors of verbosity and five terms with structural errors. For example, instead of translating the four-component Vietnamese term *rối loạn giấc ngủ liên quan đến hô hấp (rối loạn /giấc ngủ/ liên quan đến/ hô hấp)* with the four-component term "breathing-related sleep disorder" (breathing/ related/ sleep/ disorder), Google Translate produces the verbose term "sleep disorders related to breathing". In addition, with the Vietnamese social work term with four elements *lập kế hoạch hành động phục hồi sức*

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khỏe (lập kế hoạch/ hành động/ phục hồi/ sức khỏe) (wellness recovery action planning), Google Translate creates a target phrase translated word-for-word "create an action plan to restore your health". This term is defined concisely in the dictionary as a grammatically correct phrase (wellness recovery action planning) with four elements (wellness/ recovery/ action/ planning). It accurately and fully expresses the meaning of the term.

4.12. Ten-Syllable Terms

Table 12.
Nonequivalent Ten-syllable Terms.

Errors	N	%	Examples		
			Social work in Vietnamese	**Google translation**	**Dictionary**
Conceptual mistranslation	0	0			
Violation of brevity	7	0.3	Chủ nghĩa phân biệt đối xử với người tàn tật	Discrimination against disabled people	Handicaptism
			Chương trình hỗ trợ việc làm cho người cao tuổi	Employment support program for the elderly	Senior community service employment program
			Công tác xã hội dựa vào sự kiện cuộc đời	Life event-based social work	Life space social work
			Luật đồng nhất về thẩm quyền giám hộ con cái	Uniform law on child custody authority	Uniform child custody jurisdiction act
			Nghiên cứu dựa trên sự tham gia của cộng đồng	Research based on community participation	Community-based participatory research
Wrong structure	0	0			
Total	7	0.3			

For the ten-syllable term group, only seven errors were found related to the brevity standard. For example, the source term *chủ nghĩa phân biệt đối xử với người tàn tật* (handicaptism) is translated by Google Translate into the target language as "discrimination against disabled people". Meanwhile, this Vietnamese term is translated concisely with a one-word term "handicaptism", which accurately reflects the concept of the source term. "Handicaptism" means "prejudicial behavior that promotes unequal or unjust treatment of people because of apparent or assumed physical or mental disability," which fully represents the concept of the source term in Vietnamese [32].

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Table 13.
Errors of Nonequivalent Social Work Terms in English by Google Translate.

Classification of social work terms in Vietnamese	N	%	Equivalent terms		Nonequivalent terms		Conceptual mistranslation		Violation of brevity		Wrong structure	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
One-syllable term	18	0.8	12	0.5	6	0.3	6	0.3	0	0	0	0
Two-syllable term	410	17.5	208	8.9	202	8.6	197	8.4	3	0.1	2	0.1
Three-syllable term	338	14.4	197	8.4	141	6	132	5.6	9	0.4	0	0
Four-syllable term	817	34.9	529	22.6	288	12.3	254	10.8	20	0.9	14	0.6
Five-syllable terms	250	10.7	159	6.8	91	3.9	72	3.1	11	0.5	8	0.3
Six-syllable term	328	14	207	8.8	121	5.2	101	4.3	14	0.6	6	0.3
Seven-syllable term	78	3.3	38	1.6	40	1.7	22	0.9	12	0.5	6	0.3
Eight-syllable term	76	3.2	40	1.7	36	1.5	17	0.7	15	0.6	4	0.2
Nine-syllable term	18	0.8	10	0.4	8	0.3	0	0	3	0.1	5	0.2
Ten-syllable term	11	0.5	4	0.2	7	0.3	0	0	7	0.3	0	0
Total	2344	100	1404	59.9	940	40.1	801	34.1	94	4	45	2

The 1404 terms translated equivalently account for 59.9%, and the Google Translate application has made significant contributions to translating Vietnamese social work terms into English. However, 40.1% of the Vietnamese social work terms translated by Google Translate are not equivalent in English, indicating that users should be cautious regarding the accuracy and reliability of this application, especially when translating specialized and highly scientific content. Table 13 shows that the group of Vietnamese social work terms with four syllables has the highest number of nonequivalent units at 288 (12.3%). Ranked second is the group of terms with two syllables with 202 nonequivalent units in English (8.6%). The groups of terms with three syllables and six syllables contribute a significant proportion, with 141 units (6%) and 121 units (5.2%), respectively. Overall, the number of terms translated as equivalents (1404) is approximately 1.5 times higher than the number of terms translated as nonequivalents (940).

In terms of error type, conceptual mistranslation is found to be the most prominent with 801 terms out of 940 terms being translated nonequivalently, accounting for the highest rate of 34.1%. Specifically, the group of terms consisting of four syllables is translated incorrectly into scientific concepts with the highest rate of 254 units (10.8%). Groups of terms consisting of between seven and ten syllables are translated into concepts quite accurately. The rate of incompatibility in this group is very low. Accuracy is the most important criterion for determining a term in a certain scientific field. The accuracy of a term requires that each term must be univocal, which means that each term is only used to express one concept.

These findings show that Google Translate gives unreliable output in translating Vietnamese social work terminology into English. The group of terms that violate the principle of brevity has 94 units (4%). Finally, Vietnamese social work terms translated by Google Translate with an incorrect structure account for 45 units, contributing 2% of the total 40.1% of terms translated with nonequivalent terms. The study makes clear that Google Translate is a powerful tool for terminologists, lecturers, and students in researching and learning this terminology. However, understanding the exact content, mastering the grammatical structure and the required standards of terminology will help them better label the concepts in this field of science.

5. Conclusion

From this analysis of the translations of 2344 Vietnamese social work terms into English using Google Translate using a combination of statistical, classifying, analytical, and descriptive methods, important conclusions of the study are drawn as follows.

First, although the strengths of the Google Translate application cannot be denied, the proportion of Vietnamese social work terms that are not translated into English equivalently (40.1%) should make

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Google Translate users aware of the unreliability of this application when translating scientific terms related to social work.

Second, the number of Vietnamese social work terms with between two and six syllables, accounting for the largest number and most frequently used in this terminology, has the highest percentage of nonequivalent translations.

Third, in terms of errors when applying Google Translate to translate social work terms from Vietnamese into English, conceptual mistranslation is the most prominent error (34.1%). Errors in verbosity and terminological structure, although low in number, are important findings for Google Translate users regarding the accuracy and reliability of this application in translating highly academic texts, especially in translation and communication in specialized fields. Verbose and structural errors can also indirectly lead to errors in the conceptual expression of scientific objects in the field of social work.

Finally, looking at the connotative meaning of concepts, English grammatical rules, term structure, and the required standards of the terminology will enable users to achieve high efficiency in translation and communication in the field of social work. In other words, to translate specialized terms accurately and scientifically, it is necessary to have an understanding of specialized knowledge as well as language knowledge. The process of translating from source language to target language, especially translating specialized terminology, is a complex process, including terminological semantics and structure. Referring to specialized dictionaries and multilingual dictionaries will help translators to handle the new terms emerging in the field of social work in the future.

Transparency:

The author confirms that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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