

DECODING ENGLISH NAMES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN VIET NAM: UNDERSTANDING THE TRANSLATION PROCEDURES

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Abstract: In today's era of the internationalization of higher education, the name of a higher education institution (HEI) plays a crucial role. This study investigates the Vietnamese and English names of 276 HEIs in Viet Nam that are authorized to offer university-level education or higher, and the translation procedures used to create their English names. The research applies both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyze data, statistically categorizing the translation procedures based on the category of HEI, academic subject area, and descriptors of personal and place names. By providing an overview of the English names of HEIs in Viet Nam, the study acknowledges efforts to translate them in accordance with international practices, but also exposes inconsistencies and inaccuracies in several name translation cases. It is recommended that education officials set more stringent criteria for approving institutional names, and that HEIs choose names that reflect both their identity and reputation while adhering to international norms.

Keywords: higher education institution, translation procedure, proper name, Vietnamese, English

1. Introduction

As they integrate into global education, higher education institutions (HEIs) in Viet Nam strive for improved global recognition and reputation through branding efforts. One of the ways they have pursued this is by translating their names into English or establishing their English names filled with numerous meanings, intents, expectations, visions, and the like.

HEI names can be analyzed as brand names when viewed as businesses in the process of marketing the education sector. The selection of a brand name is an important consideration that can influence customers' perceptions of the same brand

(Klink, 2001). Similarly, university names can be viewed as a significant factor that influences how students perceive them. As a result, choosing the appropriate institutional and brand name is a critical decision for universities.

In Viet Nam, the significance of the names of educational institutions is acknowledged by law. Article 2 of Decree No. 99/2019/NĐ-CP (on detailing and guiding the implementation of a number of articles of the Law on Amending and Supplementing a Number of Articles of the Law on Higher Education) details regulations on "Naming and renaming higher education institutions" as follows:

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The international business name of a higher education institution shall be translated from Vietnamese to a foreign language using terminologies appropriate to international practice. For universities affiliated with a parent university, their international business names shall be stipulated by such parent universities.)¹

Several Vietnamese institutions have English names that are not appropriate for international practice, which can cause problems in educational management and administration, as well as affect their reputation due to misunderstanding or inaccurate translation. Inconsistent translations of these names can cause confusion for international colleagues and harm the institutions' reputation by demonstrating a disregard for their brand.

Inspired by the work of Dang Hong Thu (2018) and astounded by how the names of Vietnamese HEIs have been translated into English, we are motivated to identify and analyze translation procedures employed for translating the Vietnamese names of the currently registered HEIs into English based on the typology of Translation Procedures suggested by Newmark (1988). By doing so, we would also like to draw out a thorough description of the status quo of the English names of the current HEIs in Viet Nam.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Names of HEIs as Proper Names

Within the field of onomastics, as Nguyen Viet Khoa (2021, p. 61) maintains, it is a must to distinguish proper names from proper nouns. A proper noun is a noun identifying a single entity and is used to refer

to that entity as opposed to a common noun, which refers to “a class of entities” (Anderson, 2007, pp. 3-5). That is to say, proper nouns are nouns denoting unique entities. Proper nouns are, in principle, capitalized in written English, Vietnamese and many other languages. In terms of grammar, a proper noun is a noun subclass, whilst a proper name is “the institutionalized name of some specific person, place, organization, etc., institutionalized by some formal act of naming and/or registration” (Huddleston 1988, p. 96). Thus, *Ha Noi* or *London* is deemed a proper noun while *University of Languages and International Studies* or *Imperial College of London* is considered a proper name. Proper names are a cultural feature that should be studied from a variety of angles, including historical, geographical, cultural, linguistic, cross-linguistic, and social aspects.

In international onomastics, commercial or brand names are sometimes called *ergonyms*. However, this term encompasses more than just commercial names. It also includes names of non-commercial entities like educational institutions, cultural institutions, churches, and various administrative organizations.

Names of HEIs are certainly proper names, and more precisely institutional names or ergonyms since they possess all the traits that proper names own. For instance, *Hanoi University of Science and Technology* singularly refers to a university in Viet Nam with capitalized names when written whose meaning is reflected in the components of the name. Other elements included in the names of HEIs are geographical names and people's names, which are also associated with the concept of proper names.

¹ The English versions of the articles of Decree No. 99/2019/NĐ-CP and Law No. 34/2018/QH14, which are mentioned in this paper, are translated by the author as an official version of these documents is not yet available to date.

2.2. HEIs in Viet Nam

2.2.1. Term Definition

According to the amendments to Article 4 of Law No. 34/2018/QH14 dated November 19, 2018 on amendments to the Law on Higher Education, a number of terms relating to HEIs in Viet Nam are construed as follows:

1. “Higher education institution” (Cơ sở giáo dục đại học) means an educational institution of the national education system and is permitted to provide higher education training, be engaged in science and technology activities, and serve the community.
2. “University” (Trường đại học, Học viện) means a higher education institution that provides training in multiple academic disciplines and has an organizational structure conformable to this Law.
3. “Parent university” (Đại học) also refers to a higher education institution that provides training in multiple fields, has an organizational structure conformable with this Law and multiple units that pursue the same missions and objectives.
4. “Subsidiary” (Đơn vị thành viên) means a university or research institution that is a legal entity, established or permitted to be established by the Prime Minister, has the autonomy over its organization and operation as prescribed by law and its own internal rules and regulations.
5. “Affiliate” (Đơn vị trực thuộc) means a legal entity affiliated to a higher education institution, established under a decision of the school council of the university or parent university (hereinafter referred to as “school council”); organized and run in accordance with

the law, internal rules and regulations of the higher education institution.

6. “Affiliate” (Đơn vị trực thuộc) also refers to a unit of a higher education institution that is not a legal entity, established under a decision of the university council (school council); organized and run in accordance with the law, internal rules and regulations of the higher education institution.
7. “School” (Trường) means a training unit of a higher education institution, established under a decision of the university council (school council) in accordance with regulations of the Government; organized and run in accordance with internal rules and regulations of the higher education institution.

Also, in the amended Article 7, HEIs are defined as legal entities, including universities, parent universities and other categories of HEIs defined by law. HEIs can be public (invested, maintained and represented by the State) or private (invested and maintained by domestic or foreign investors). National universities and regional universities are parent universities responsible for the achievement of strategic national and regional development objectives.

2.2.2. Components in Names of HEIs

Refined from the research result provided by Dang Hong Thu (2018), it has been noted that a Vietnamese HEI's name typically consists of two components: **Category of HEI** at the first place followed by one or more **Descriptors** (descriptive elements). Three primary descriptors are **Academic Subject Area**, **Name of a Place** and **Name of a Person**. The subject area includes common nouns and adjectives (Industrial, Technology, etc.). On the other hand, Name of a Place (geographical name or toponyms) and Name of a Person

(personal name or anthroponyms) are proper names, indicating singular references. The examples of names of HEIs in Viet Nam

Table 1

Components in Names of HEIs

HEI Category	Descriptor			
	Field/Subject area	Place name	Personal name	Other name
Đại học (<i>university</i>)	-	Thái Nguyên	-	-
Trường đại học (<i>university</i>)	Dược (<i>pharmacy</i>)	Hà Nội	-	-
	-	-	Tôn Đức Thắng	-
	-	-	-	FPT
Học viện (<i>institute</i>)	Tài chính (<i>finance</i>)	-	-	-
	Âm nhạc (<i>music</i>)	Huế	-	-
Trường sĩ quan (<i>college/university</i>)	Không quân (<i>air force</i>)	-	-	-

divided in the aforementioned pattern are presented in Table 1.

2.3. Newmark's Translation Procedures

Translation procedures are the proper procedures or methods used by the translator in transferring the source language (SL) into the target language (TL) as closely as possible by reproducing the meaning and style of the source language. This necessitates a close examination of the ideas and concepts conveyed in the original text. Translation is frequently used to demonstrate a person's proficiency in a foreign language.

Different techniques for translating proper names have been suggested by several scholars. These include the approaches proposed by Hermans (1988), Newmark (1988), Pym (2004), Xu (2005), Coillie (2006), Calderón and López (2019), Nyangeri and Wangari (2019), and others. Among those, Newmark's (1988) model has been established as a reliable and comprehensive approach for translating proper names. This model includes 18 procedures, namely *transference*, *naturalization*, *cultural equivalent*, *functional equivalent*, *descriptive equivalent*, *synonymy*, *through-translation*, *shift or transposition*, *modulation*, *recognized translation*, *compensation*, *componential analysis*, *reduction and expansion*, *paraphrase*, *couplets*, and *notes*.

Newmark (1988) also distinguishes between translation procedures and translation methods as such “translation methods relate to whole texts, translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language” (p. 81).

The conditions of the source text (ST) and target text (TT) have the greatest influence on how the translation procedure is used. The use of translation procedures can help to simplify understanding of a text, especially when communicating ideas from a different culture. Through the translator's operation, these procedures can also introduce the foreign culture to the target culture. In this context, the translator serves as a carrier of both language and culture, and the procedures used are the means by which these elements are transported (see also Le Hung Tien, 2022).

2.4. Translation of HEIs Names Based on Newmark's Model

Many people believe that translating proper names from one language to another is a simple task because they consider proper names to be nothing more than labels used to identify people or things. However, this view is incorrect, and in reality, translating proper names is a complex issue that is closely linked to the question of what the

proper name actually means (see also Hanaoka, 2002; Nguyen Viet Khoa, 2021; Nyangeri, 2019; Vermes, 2003).

Newmark (1993, p. 15) sees proper name translation as a challenging aspect of translation, which many other scholars agree with. Proper name translation is considered to be a common issue in the act of translation. The 18 translation procedures proposed by Newmark (1988, pp. 82-91) are addressed below. We manage to provide examples involving ergonyms, but an alternative is offered where impossible.

Literal translation: The SL grammatical structures are converted to their closest TL equivalents, but individual words are translated without regard for context. Because the ST is written in a standardized language, translators are advised to use additional methods and exercise caution when checking the ST's content.

Trường Đại học Nông Lâm Thái Nguyên
→ *Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry*

Transference: Newmark believes that this is the most common procedure used for translating proper names and it is primarily aimed at the SL. The process of transference involves a translator transferring a word from the SL to the TL text. This procedure includes transliteration and is also known as “adoption,” “transfer,” “loan words,” or “transcription” according to other scholars.

Trường Đại học Hải Phòng → *Haiphong University*

Naturalization (or Transcription): The SL term is adapted to fit the TL's pronunciation and morphology during this translation procedure. The translator looks for a word in the TL that is similar to the original term from the SL.

University of London → *Đại học Luân Đôn*

Cultural equivalent: The translator

is expected to replace cultural terms in the SL with their corresponding equivalents in the TL in this procedure. However, the degree of cultural correspondence between the two languages can have a significant impact on the feasibility of finding a cultural equivalent. As Newmark acknowledged, this is not always a straightforward or accurate process.

Reform on TVET in Vietnam (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) → *Đổi mới Đào tạo nghề Việt Nam*

Functional equivalent: When translators come across cultural words that have no equivalent in the TL, they must choose between using a culture-neutral word or coining a new word to convey the SL word's meaning. Known as neutralization, this approach is widely regarded as the most accurate way of dealing with cultural terms that have no direct equivalent.

10 Downing Street → *Phủ Thủ tướng Anh*

Descriptive equivalent: To describe the meaning of the term and provide additional clarification, the translator may use different words in the TL. This can help ensure that the original term's intended meaning is accurately conveyed in the translation.

John/Jane Doe → *Người được nhắc đến, người chưa biết danh tính, John Doe dùng để ám chỉ một người đàn ông vô danh. Jane Doe dùng để ám chỉ người phụ nữ vô danh.*

Componential analysis: If the ST words have more specific connotations than the corresponding TL words, the translator may need to supplement the TL components with additional words to convey a more precise meaning. This process may entail breaking down a lexical unit into its constituent meaning atoms and translating them separately, with prepositions sometimes used to connect the elements.

Cuộc sống chiến đấu → *life of struggle*

Synonymy: When there is no precise equivalent word in the TL, the translator must choose a near-equivalent word instead. Newmark refers to this near-equivalent word as a “synonym” in situations where a precise equivalent may or may not be available. However, Newmark emphasizes that a synonym should be used only when a literal translation is impossible.

Bim bim → *light snacks*

Through-translation: Through-translation, also known as “calque” or “loan,” is the practice of translating common collocations, organization names, and compound components literally. This procedure should only be used for terms that are already established and recognized, such as those used by international organizations with “universal words” that can be understood in multiple languages.

United Nations → *Nations Unies* (French), *Naciones Unidas* (Spanish)

Shift or transposition: The translation procedure is used by replacing the grammatical structure in the SL with a different type of TL grammar that has the same impact in the TT. Simply put, transposition is the process of translating while changing the order of the parts of speech. Take an example of translating *The United Nations* into French, it will become *Les Nations Unies*. It is in fact a shift of word class.

Modulation: Modulation is a translation procedure that involves adapting the original message of the SL to the norms of the TL while accounting for any differences or contradictions between the two languages. This process typically involves larger translation units and may necessitate a shift in perspective. However, modulation is not commonly used in the translation of institutional names.

The South China Sea → *Biển Đông*

Recognized translation:

Recognized translation is a translation procedure in which the official or widely accepted translation of an institutional term is used by the translator. This approach is employed when the translator normally uses the authentic or established translation of an institutional term.

ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) → *ASEAN (Hiệp hội các quốc gia Đông Nam Á)*

Translation label: When the ST contains SL-specific characteristics, a translation label may be used to find an approximate equivalent or a new term in the TL. This type of procedure is frequently used with proper names, technical terms, and other specialized vocabulary.

Russell Group universities → *Các đại học Anh thuộc “nhóm Russell”*

Compensation: Compensation happens when the loss of meaning, sound effect, metaphor or pragmatic effect in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part, or in a contiguous sentence (Newmark, 1988, p. 90). Nguyen Viet Khoa (2021, p. 65) introduces an example of an idiomatic phrase: *If I ever have to do a Lord Lucan and flee the country, this is where I'll head.* → *Nếu phải biến mất khỏi đất nước mình, đây là nơi tôi sẽ tới.* In the Vietnamese version, the “Lord Lucan” factor has been omitted. The reason for such an affair deals largely with the stylistic possessions of both Vietnamese and English. Instead, the phrase *biến mất khỏi* “compensates” the possible “loss” that the deletion of *Lord Lucan* may cause to the meaning.

Reduction and expansion: While expansion is a more descriptive method of translating a statement and uses more words in TL than SL, reduction entails leaving out a word from an expression that is not necessary for understanding.

Voltage stabilizer → Ổn áp; *Linguistics* → Khoa học ngôn ngữ (Ngôn ngữ học)

Paraphrase: This procedure allows for the addition of detailed information to clarify the significance of a text passage. To achieve greater clarity, different words are used to express the meaning. The explanation here is far more detailed than the descriptive equivalent.

Vice-Chancellor → Phó Hiệu trưởng điều hành trong hệ thống đại học Anh quốc, hay còn gọi là Giám đốc điều hành của đại học.

Translation couplets: Combining different translation procedures (borrowing, literal...) in order to convey a more accurate and nuanced meaning in the TL is what this procedure entails. It is used when the TL terms are not universally recognized or for “politically colored terms”.

Hồ Hoàn Kiếm → Hồ Hoàn Kiếm (Hoan Kiem Lake, “Lake of the Returned Sword”)

Notes: Notes are extra bits of information that may be included in a translation, particularly for cultural terms. Although some stylists consider a translation sprinkled with footnotes to be horrible looking, their use can help TT readers make better judgments of the ST contents.²

2.5. Considerations for Functional and Dynamic Equivalence

The relationship between the ST and the TT in translation is referred to as equivalence, which is a central concept in translation studies. The term equivalence refers to how translators can retain the

meaning and effect of the original text in the translation despite differences between the SL and TL. Many scholars have debated how to classify the concept of “equivalence,” with the majority dividing it into two opposing categories such as formal correspondence and textual equivalence, natural and directional equivalence, or formal and dynamic equivalence (Catford, 1965; Gile, 1995, as cited in Le Hung Tien, 2022). These categories correspond with Newmark's methods of semantic and communicative translation.

Formal equivalence is concerned with the message's form and content, whereas dynamic equivalence focuses on having the same effect on target language readers as on source language readers. It is not always possible to find the closest equivalent between linguistic units, which is the goal of formal equivalence. The readability of the text for the source language audience is prioritized by dynamic equivalence. Both Nida and Newmark use linguistic-oriented and target-oriented approaches that prioritize either the linguistic features of the source language or the author's intention to avoid distorting the original meaning.³

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

In this article, by higher education institutions we mean the ones that are legally allowed to provide undergraduate training, master's training and doctoral training. The education institutions that provide lower

² Footnotes, according to Nida (1964), should serve at least two functions: (i) to provide supplementary information, and (ii) to call attention to the original's discrepancies. Notes can appear in the form of 'footnotes' (pp. 237-39).

³ Nida pioneered the concept of “dynamic equivalence” in translation, but later developed “functional equivalence,” which emphasizes maintaining the original text's communicative

function in the target language. This method prioritizes conveying the original text's message or function in the translation, even if it means using different words or sentence structures. The goal is for the translated text to serve the same communicative purpose as the original text while not necessarily replicating its form (Nyangeri & Wangari, 2019).

education training levels (associate/foundation degree) or the research institutes that have doctoral training only are not the subjects of the research.

The names of such degree-awarding recognized institutions are provided by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) on its website (<https://moet.gov.vn/cosogiaoduc>). These names must denote the category of HEIs such as “đại học” (“parent university”), “trường đại học” (“university”), “học viện” (“academy”) or “trường (school/ college/ university).

Based on this criterion set, a list of 276 HEIs are collected as of January 2023. This includes 6 parent universities and their members, 236 universities, 2 institutes, 33 academies and 5 institutions with other names selected to be the subject of this research. The researcher then compiles and compares their English names from the following sources: i) Names they registered with MOET (2023); ii) Names from their official websites; iii) Names from their most up-to-date admission project documents.

The collected names are stored in Appendix A. This is an Excel file with four sheets:

- Sheet 1: A full list of 276 HEIs with fields such as Vietnamese names, websites, management level, locations, and type of ownership;
- Sheet 2: Vietnamese names and English translation names;
- Sheet 3: Category of HEIs and counts;
- Sheet 3: Name structure and counts.

To better understand the English

names of the Vietnamese HEIs, we compile a list of 175 HEIs in the UK (as of January 2023). These are the HEIs that must already hold full authorization for taught degree awarding powers (TDAP) and research degree awarding powers (RDAP) in the UK. All of the institutions on this list are recognized bodies with university status, as evidenced by their use of the university title in their name on the country's Department of Education's recognized bodies list or by a reference to the Office for Students database.⁴ These collected HEI names are detailed in Appendix B.

The two appendix Excel files are also available online at <https://tinyurl.com/ybz4jsps> (Appendix A) and <https://tinyurl.com/4pnukeme> (Appendix B).

3.2. Data Analysis

In this study, we employ purposive sampling, which enables the researcher to deliberately choose data sources that are consistent with the study's objectives. In order to identify the translation procedures for names of HEIs in Viet Nam, the researcher use both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the collected data. The original names are broken into meaningful units and the translation procedures for each of these units are then analyzed. The researcher will then use qualitative techniques to thoroughly evaluate representative cases and create a detailed table of translation procedures for the entire sample. By combining the two methodologies, the researcher can study the data in a systematic manner and learn more about the translation procedures.

⁴ The status of all universities and degree-awarding bodies is recognised and protected by UK law. The Privy Council is responsible for advising the King on universities' proposals to amend their Royal Charter (or Articles/Instrument of Government in the case of post-1992 universities). Since the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, the Office for

Students has expressed powers to vary or revoke degree awarding powers in England, including where authorisation was originally made under Acts or Royal Charters, subject to agreement by Parliament (QAA, 2018).

Afterward, the material is analyzed in detail using a quantitative method to better comprehend how proper nouns are translated. The final statistics that demonstrate how the translation procedures are distributed for the study's goals are produced by a methodical analysis of the source data and the use of numerical synthesis. The quantitative approach provides a broad overview of the frequency and style of HEI name translations.

Finally, the distribution of translations is further explained using a qualitative approach, and the ramifications of the data are critically discussed. The statistical method supplements and broadens the perspective gained from the qualitative analysis.

4. Findings

4.1. Translation Procedures for Categories of HEIs

As mentioned in §2.2.3, the classification of names of institutions includes common nouns to describe the categories of HEIs. On the grounds that the HEI category is characterized by its descriptiveness, literal translation is adopted to render all items in this name unit. The categorization of institution names entails using common nouns to describe different categories of HEIs. A literal translation approach is used for all items within the name to ensure accuracy in describing the category of institution.

The closest equivalents are chosen after translating the SL terms into the TL based on their level of transparency and standardization. The concept of equivalence is demonstrated if the translator is able to accurately convey the meaning and impact of an institutional name in the TL. For instance, “university” can be considered

equivalent to “đại học”, and “academy” can be considered equivalent to “học viện”.

As aforementioned, a challenge in translating different categories of HEIs is finding accurate equivalents for literal translation. This is due to the fact that there are rarely exact equivalents and the concept of institutions varies. The literal translation's choice of terminology for the HEI category is heavily influenced by the translated text's readers. However, the intended audience for the translated HEI name is not specified, which causes confusion when determining appropriate terminology, especially when translating the terms “đại học” and “trường đại học”.

When translating terms from an SL to a TL, the translator should aim to find the closest equivalent in the TL based on the transparency and standardization of the terms. If the translator is successful in presenting an institutional name in the TL that conveys the same meanings and effects to readers of the SL as the original name does, this is considered a demonstration of equivalence.

In Table 2 below, all 6 “đại học” are translated as “university”, enjoying functional equivalence. The translation of the term “trường đại học” as “university” has been applied in all 226 instances, resulting in 100% dynamic equivalence. On the other hand, for the term “học viện” (and “nhạc viện”), 32 out of 39 institutions with this name have been translated as “academy,” accounting for 82.05% of cases. The remaining 7 institutions have chosen other translations: 5 picking “university”, one using “institute,” and another selecting “conservatory” (i.e., *The Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music*). As Table 2 shows, 5 military institutions whose Vietnamese names contain the phrase “trường sỹ quan” are being translated as “college.”

Table 2*Equivalence in Translation of Category of HEIs*

HEIs Vietnamese	Equivalence	
	<i>Functional equivalence</i>	<i>Dynamic equivalence</i>
Đại học	6 (100%)	-
Trường đại học	-	226 (100%)
Học viện	32 (82.05%)	7 (17.95%)
Trường sỹ quan	5 (100%)	-
Total 276	44	232

It is interesting to note that while the phrase “trường đại học” is literally translated to “university” using dynamic equivalence, other translations use functional equivalence. This dynamic equivalence trend is especially prevalent among HEIs in Viet Nam, as they strive to improve their reputation. This is due to the common belief in Viet Nam that the term “university” carries more prestige than “college”. It is worth mentioning that the only 5 institutions that use the term “college” in their names are all military institutions (such as the *Trường Sỹ quan không quân - Air Force Officer College*). The fact that the seven “học viện” (institutes) are translated using dynamic equivalence indicates an inconsistency in the translation of HEI names.

The choice of equivalence has a significant impact on the outcome of a literal translation, especially when translating terms related to HEIs, because readerships in the SL and TL may hold opposing views. This study indicates that this decision should be made on an individual basis, with individual institutions taking into account their objectives and target audience. Currently, dynamic equivalence is the preferred choice for translating “trường đại học” as “university”, while functional equivalence is favored for other categories of HEIs. However, this results in a lack of

uniformity in the literal translation of HEI types.

4.2. Translation Procedures for Descriptors

One key factor determining HEI specialization is their descriptive elements (descriptors), which can be difficult to translate because they aim to express the unique identity of each establishment. In the researcher's experience, Vietnamese HEI names tend to be more descriptive and structural than their English counterparts, often incorporating geographical or personal proper nouns/names in the former and proper nouns in the latter. As a result, different translation procedures are required for each element of this segment. The translation of descriptors can be further divided into two parts: translation procedures for the academic subject area and for the name of a place or person.

4.2.1. Translation Procedures for Academic Subject Areas

Based on the subject area, four primary translation methods are commonly used: literal translation, functional equivalent, reduction of information, and transference. Table 3 presents the statistics of the translation procedures utilized for this subject area.

Table 3*Translation Procedures and Counts for Subject Area*

Translation procedures	Count
Transference	3
Reduction and expansion	11
Functional equivalent	12
Literal translation	169
Total	195/276

4.2.2. Translation Procedures for Names of Places or Persons

Toponyms and anthroponyms are not necessarily equivalent in meaning or

connotation. In other words, toponyms and anthroponyms may have different meanings or connotations, even if they share the same linguistic roots or cultural significance (see Crystal, 2004; Hough, 1994; Newmark, 1981; Nick, 1998).

Table 4

Translation Procedures and Counts for Name of Place/Person

Translation procedures	Count
Transference	175
Reduction and expansion	5
Literal Translation/Transference	2
Literal translation	9
Transference/Reduction and expansion	1
Total	192/276

As shown in Appendix A, three main translation procedures are commonly used for these proper names: literal translation, transference, and reduction. Table 4 presents statistics on the frequency of these translation procedures.

5. Discussion

5.1. HEI Concept and Name Structure

The variation in HEI categories creates challenges in translating the category of institution due to inconsistent naming conventions across individual institutions. In addition, the terms “university” and “college” are understood somewhat differently by Vietnamese and English speakers. The term “đại học” is most closely translated as “university,” while “four-year college” or “college” (like the ones of *The University of London*) shares the same educational principles and awarding powers as “trường đại học.” However, Vietnamese speakers often translate “college” as “trường cao đẳng”, which is associated with a less prestigious degree. This deeply ingrained perception complicates accurately

translating HEI categories between the two languages.

The reputation of a “university” brand (which includes terms such as “academy” and “institute”) in Viet Nam has a direct correlation with the translation preference of the terms “đại học” and “trường đại học”, which accounts for 98% of the preference for translating HEI categories. Only five institutions choose the term “college” while their Vietnamese version is “trường đại học”. These five are all military institutions (e.g., *Trường Sĩ quan không quân* → *Air Force Officer College*). This is a bit different from that in the UK where most HEIs include the word “university” in their name structure, but some institutions singly pick “college” or even “school” instead (e.g., *Imperial College London*; *London School of Economics and Political Science*).

To ensure that HEI names in Viet Nam are recognized and acknowledged internationally, they must be grammatically and semantically precise, as well as familiar and easy to pronounce for native English speakers. Meeting this criterion, however, can be challenging because the translated versions may appear foreign to TL readers due to differences in the constituent elements and descriptors of the name pattern.

As seen in Appendix B, it is obvious that most of the common structures of HEI names in the UK contain the pattern “The University of [Placename]” (e.g., *The University of Sussex*). This structure accounts for more than 50% of the HEIs. Another typical structure is “[Proper name] University” (e.g., *Newcastle University*). Conversely, a small minority of institutions has their names post-modified with common nouns or adjectives denoting subject area, accompanied by city names in a pre-modified position, as in “[Name of a Place/Person] [Category of HEI of] [Subject area]”

(e.g., *Norwich University of the Arts*), or pre-modified by a placename and/or an adjective denoting the subject area (e.g., *Royal Agricultural University*).

The naming conventions of HEIs in Viet Nam differ significantly from those in the UK, owing largely to the descriptors used to ensure that the proper names have an unambiguous reference. As shown in Appendix A, most Vietnamese HEIs have names that consist of denotative nouns and/or adjectives that describe the subject areas they specialize in (e.g., *Hanoi University of Industrial Fine Arts*). Notably, only three Vietnamese institutions follow the structure “The University of [Placename]” (e.g., *The University of Danang*), which accounts for just 1.08% of all HEI names in

Table 5

Inconsistency in Translating “Sư phạm”

No.	HEIs in Vietnamese	HEIs in English
1	Trường Đại học Sư phạm Hà Nội	Hanoi National University of Education
2	Trường Đại học Sư phạm Hà Nội 2	Hanoi Pedagogical University 2
3	Trường Đại học Sư phạm kỹ thuật Vinh	Vinh University of Technology Education
4	Trường Đại học Sư phạm, ĐH Huế	University of Education, Hue University
5	Trường Đại học Sư phạm, ĐH Đà Nẵng	University of Science and Education - The University of Danang
6	Trường Đại học Sư phạm, ĐH Thái Nguyên	University of Education - Thai Nguyen University
7	Trường Đại học Sư phạm kỹ thuật Hưng Yên	Hung Yen University of Technology and Education

Take No. 1 and No. 2 in Table 5 as an example. The major “sư phạm” are being described as both “education” and “pedagogy,” even though these terms have different connotations and meanings. Pedagogy is a discipline that specifically deals with the theory and practice of teaching, while education encompasses a wider range of topics related to teaching and learning, such as curriculum development, educational psychology, and educational

Viet Nam, compared to over 50% in the UK.

5.2. Academic Subject Area

One of the struggles in translation stems from differences in subject-area classification across countries. This can make determining the appropriate formal equivalent for a given subject area difficult, resulting in translation inconsistencies. This issue is particularly difficult in the context of Vietnamese HEIs because there is no standardized classification system for subject areas, further complicating the translation process. An example that highlights the challenges of subject-area classification in translation is the major “sư phạm” (teacher education) in Vietnamese HEIs (see Table 5).

policy. Pedagogy is often considered a subfield of education, but it is not synonymous with education as a whole.

Besides, the inclusion of “number 2” in the university name may hurt its reputation, implying a lower status than the university with the “number 1” designation. This may be particularly problematic if the universities are of comparable caliber, as it may create the impression that the “number

two” university is inferior.⁵ Similar examples of such inconsistency can also be found in the names of several “sư phạm” universities (see Table 5).

This subject area major is a typical example of how the lack of a standardized classification system can lead to difficulties in finding the appropriate formal equivalent in translation. Historical reasons may considerably play a part here. After the Geneva Accord, in the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, a number of ‘universities’ specialized in a particular discipline/occupation following either the Soviet or Chinese style were established due to, among various factors, lack of teachers and finance.

Translators may also have difficulty determining the parts of speech of terms in the TL that display their proper syntactic functions. As aforementioned, universities in the UK rarely include a subject area in their name, whereas in Viet Nam, it is common for educational institutions to include descriptors that can be either common nouns or adjectives referring to the subject area. For example, the two following institutions in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City share the same subject major but use different descriptors in their names.

Trường Đại học Kiến trúc Hà Nội
→ *Hanoi Architectural University*

Trường Đại học Kiến trúc TP.HCM
→ *University of Architecture Ho Chi Minh City*

Regardless of whether such usage is considered grammatically correct, this shows a clear inconsistency. Using adjectives that describe a subject area in the English translation of the names of Vietnamese HEIs can also create challenges for readers who are not familiar with the terminology. In the UK, it is not typical for

HEIs to incorporate adjectives into their names. Instead, in some rare cases of using descriptors of subject area, the institutions utilize noun form of terminologies in any name structure.

As regards the subject areas in the HEI names, there are three exceptional cases keeping their Vietnamese version of the subject areas (certainly with some form of transference).

Trường Đại học Thủy lợi → *Thuyloi University (Water resources)*

Trường Đại học Thương mại
→ *Thuongmai University (Commerce)*

Trường Đại học Nông Lâm TP. Hồ Chí Minh → *Nong Lam University - Ho Chi Minh City (Agriculture and Forestry).*

The universities' English names preserve the meaning of the Vietnamese names but use a transliteration of the Vietnamese words. These universities are unique in that they use the Vietnamese version of their subject areas in their English names, which is not a common practice in other universities around the world. It would be explained that they would like to use the Vietnamese as their proper names rather than the sector/discipline/occupation they used to be engaged in, partly as they want to be multidisciplinary. Also as an effort to be multidisciplinary, in more recent years many of these HEIs have managed to change their names, e.g., the case of *Hanoi University* from *Hanoi University of Foreign Languages*.

Inconsistency in the translation of names of HEIs can occur due to a variety of factors, including differences in terminology and parts of speech used in the two different languages. These factors can result in confusion and inconsistency in the translation of HEI names, highlighting the importance of careful consideration and

⁵ It is also possible that the name is simply a tradition or has historical significance, and in that case, it

may not have a significant impact on the university's reputation.

research in the translation process.

5.3. Onomastic Elements

As discussed in §2.1 and §2.4, onomastic elements like proper nouns/names in the name structure of HEIs, including the name of a place and the name of a person, are generally rendered using transference. By this translation procedure, the orthographic pattern of the word is preserved, but all the diacritics and tone marks are removed from the original names.

Cần Thơ → *Can Tho*;

Tôn Đức Thắng → *Ton Duc Thang*

Vietnamese is largely a monosyllabic language with each syllable separated by space in writing and a word may consist of one or more syllables. A name, therefore, can be of one or more words. However, with romanized transference, the spelling of the name may vary. Transference of names of cities (or provinces) is one evident example:

Trường Đại học Đà Nẵng → *The University of Danang*

Trường Đại học Kỹ thuật y - dược Đà Nẵng → *Da Nang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy*

The two translations of the geographical name “Đà Nẵng” both refer specifically to the city of Đà Nẵng. However, when this name is written with different spacing variations, it results in different word forms. While readers of the TL may still understand these variations, yet with their eyebrows raising to some extent, it can complicate information digitization. For example, “Danang” and “Da Nang” are treated as separate entries in databases and other information systems, even though they both refer to the same entity. As a result, while different spacing variations are acceptable for communication purposes, they can complicate information organization and management.

Based on the observations and

analysis of the findings, it can be inferred that there is still room for improvement in the application of translation procedures. One consideration is the need to carefully translate original names and HEI categories to ensure they are easily understood by English speakers. Furthermore, standardization of the translation process is necessary to address differences in academic subject areas and proper name factors.

6. Implications and Conclusion

6.1. Implications

The findings of this article focus on the translation procedures used for the names of HEIs in Viet Nam. The study reveals that the classification of HEI names involves using common nouns to describe different categories of HEIs, and a literal translation approach is used to ensure accuracy in describing the category of institution. The study also highlights the challenge of finding accurate equivalents for literal translation due to the fact that there are rarely exact equivalents and the concept of institutions varies. The translation of descriptors, which aim to express the unique identity of each establishment, is another key factor determining HEI specialization, and different translation procedures are required for each element of this segment. Overall, the names of HEIs in Viet Nam have been translated into English with a relatively high level of accuracy, although some minor inaccuracies and inconsistencies may exist in the translations.

It is implied that ensuring the English names of HEIs in Viet Nam are grammatically and semantically precise, easily recognizable, and effectively convey their intended meaning and level of prestige is of paramount importance. The translation of HEI names and categories presents challenges that highlight the need for careful consideration of cultural and linguistic nuances, as well as the potential impact of

translation choices on the perception of HEIs by English-speaking audiences. While the name of a university carries weight, it is ultimately the quality of education and research that it provides which truly determines its worth and impact. It is true that “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet”.

It can be observed that a number of HEIs may not directly translate their Vietnamese names into English. Rather, they want to establish an English name which may be related to their mission, vision, expectations, directions for development, their historical background, etc. Thus, various intents may be compacted in the English names. Another possible reason is HEIs may aim at multidisciplinary development rather than single discipline/sector/occupation as they were originally established. Unfortunately, uncovering this information requires in-depth interviews and/or consultations with particular HEIs, which were not conducted as part of this study. This is a limitation of the paper that should be addressed in future research. Besides, due to the constraints of this article, the author was not able to delve deeply into certain aspects related to the names of HEIs, such as the spelling (e.g., *Vietnam* or *Viet Nam*, *Hanoi* or *Ha Noi*; presence of diacritics and tone marks), the legal considerations of naming conventions, and the lack of uniformity in the literal translation of HEI types. The study acknowledges the need to address these issues at a more comprehensive level in future research.

6.2. Conclusion

HEIs are multifaceted institutions that are crucial to the cultural, economic, social, and national aspects of a country's identity. The global demand for more prestigious and global HEIs has increased in recent decades, as higher education has become an important part of countries'

economic plans for developing their human resources in the future (Anderson, 2006). In this course, one of the first measures HEIs take is to make their name accessible to the global audience, and HEIs in Viet Nam are not an exception.

The names of HEIs in Viet Nam have been structured so that they include the category of institution and descriptors such as academic subject area, place name, and person's name. The study found that for the 276 HEIs analyzed, the most commonly used translation approaches were literal translation using functional equivalence (15.94%) and dynamic equivalence (84.05%). Among the 195 HEIs with subject areas in their names, four translation procedures were employed for the descriptors: transference, reduction and expansion, functional equivalent, and literal translation, with literal translation being the most common at 86.66%. For onomastic elements, there were five recorded procedures: transference, reduction and expansion, literal translation/transference, literal translation, and transference/reduction and expansion. Transference was the most frequently used procedure, accounting for 91.14% (175 out of 192 HEIs).

While striving to comply with international practice, the English names of HEIs in Viet Nam differ significantly from those in the UK. Unlike many HEIs in the UK, which use the structure “The University of [Placename]”, only three HEIs in Viet Nam follow this structure. Additionally, the use of excessive adjectives in subject areas and different transference variants of proper names is also evident in the English names of the Vietnamese HEIs.

To conclude, this study provides a thorough examination of the English names of higher education institutions in Viet Nam, and identifies inconsistencies and inaccuracies in their naming conventions. By shedding light on these issues, this study

aims to persuade authorities in Viet Nam to establish standardized naming practices that are consistent with international standards for HEIs. Finally, it is hoped that this research will inspire Vietnamese higher education institutions to adopt names that accurately reflect their identity and reputation on a global scale.

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GIẢI MÃ TÊN TIẾNG ANH CỦA CÁC CƠ SỞ GIÁO DỤC ĐẠI HỌC TẠI VIỆT NAM: TÌM HIỂU VỀ CÁC BƯỚC DỊCH THUẬT

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Tóm tắt: Trong thời đại quốc tế hóa giáo dục đại học ngày nay, tên gọi của cơ sở giáo dục đại học (CSGDĐH) đóng một vai trò vô cùng quan trọng. Bài viết này tiếp cận tên tiếng Việt và tiếng Anh của 276 CSGDĐH ở Việt Nam được phép đào tạo trình độ đại học trở lên, và tìm hiểu các bước dịch thuật được sử dụng để dịch tên các CSGDĐH này sang tiếng Anh. Nghiên cứu áp dụng cả phương pháp định tính và định lượng để thu thập và phân tích dữ liệu. Tiếp theo, nghiên cứu phân loại và thông kê các quy trình dịch thuật dựa trên cấp hạng của CSGDĐH, lĩnh vực đào tạo và các yếu tố nhận diện liên quan tới tên người và tên đất. Thông qua mô tả tổng quan về tên tiếng Anh của các CSGDĐH tại Việt Nam, nghiên cứu ghi nhận những nỗ lực dịch thuật theo thông lệ quốc tế, nhưng cũng chỉ ra những điểm chưa nhất quán và chưa chính xác trong một số trường hợp dịch tên cụ thể. Nghiên cứu khuyến nghị các nhà quản lý giáo dục cần xây dựng các tiêu chí nghiêm ngặt hơn để công nhận tên các cơ sở giáo dục và với các CSGDĐH thì cần lựa chọn tên riêng sao cho vừa phản ánh được bản sắc và danh tiếng vừa tuân thủ các tiêu chuẩn quốc tế.

Từ khóa: cơ sở giáo dục đại học, bước dịch thuật, tên riêng, tiếng Việt, tiếng Anh