TRANSLATION AS A LEARNING TOOL IN LEGAL READING LESSONS: FIRST-YEAR LAW STUDENTS' VOICES

Minh Nguyen Binh La

Hanoi Law University, Vietnam

ORCID iD: Minh Nguyen Binh La   https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4461-865X

Abstract. *This paper delves into the use of translation as a learning tool in legal reading lessons by law students at Hanoi Law University, Vietnam and their perceptions of the efficacy of this device. The study employed a quantitative method of data collection via a survey questionnaire with the participation of a total of 192 first-year law students. The quantitative data were analysed descriptively using SPSS v.26.0 software. The results show that law students utilize translation as a learning tool in their legal reading lessons quite frequently, mainly for converting legal words and phrases, and sometimes sentences into L1. Their choice of translation device is influenced by such factors as domain knowledge, language competence and purpose of reading. Translation is also positively perceived by the participants in aiding their reading comprehension, linguistic development and memory strengthening, though minor concerns relating to time-consumption and reading speed slowdown are uncovered. Based on the findings, several pedagogical recommendations are proposed accordingly to strategically integrate translation activities into legal reading lessons to further enhance student learning outcomes.*

Key words: *legal English, learning strategy, legal reading, translation*

1. INTRODUCTION

Legal English, a subset of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), provides learners with the language used by lawyers and other legal practitioners in various contexts such as court proceedings, contracts and other legal documents, legal communication, etc. In the globalized world, cross-border legal transactions have become more commonplace than ever before, raising a need for future legal professionals and those working in the field of law to be able to read legal documents competently. Legal English courses designed for law undergraduates play a significant role in enhancing their reading capabilities and preparing them for the rigors of legal practice. However, reading legal texts has never been an easy task for legal English learners because of its distinct complicated lexical and syntactic features and insufficient domain knowledge of law (Huong, 2022). Some researchers also attribute ESP reading difficulties to the lack of reading strategy (e.g., Roodbari et al., 2022; Saidrasulova, 2023; Tamrin, 2023). This necessitates research into and application of different learning strategies to enhance learners' reading comprehension of legal texts.

The use of translation as a cognitive learning strategy in English language teaching (ELT) or English as a second language (ESL) has been a topic of extensive research. However, the application of this method remains controversial among researchers and educators (Tan, 2015). Opponents of the use of first language (L1) and translation argue that the using mother tongue is useless and counterproductive, and that translation is detrimental rather than beneficial (cited in Carreres, 2006). Mogahed (2011) also claims that translation is not appropriate for students who have not reached a significant level of proficiency. Contrarily, many others advocate for the utilization of translation for learning English, emphasizing the benefits of this technique for learners' language acquisition (e.g., Fernadez-Guerra, 2014; Asgarian & Vefali, 2015). Despite the lack of researchers' consensus on whether translation supports or hinders EFL or ESP acquisition, it is a widely used strategy by learners at various proficiency levels (Putrawan et al., 2019). As a consequence, researchers have revived interest in examining students' perceptions of translation in language learning, particularly in reading comprehension of ESP texts (e.g., McDonough, 2002; Leonardi, 2009; Chirobocea, 2018; Novita, 2019).

In Vietnamese contexts, only a couple of recent studies have been conducted to investigate the use of translation and its effects on students' ESP reading. Minh et al. (2023) examine the effects of this strategy on students' ESP medical reading, while Phuong and Nguyen (2023) explore the correlation between translation and ESP reading performance. However, this learning device remains relatively unexplored when it comes to teaching reading of legal texts, particularly in the context of Hanoi Law University where the current research is conducted. At the said institution, compulsory legal English courses are instructed to law students from the beginning of their legal education. From the researcher's own observation, law freshmen often struggle to comprehend legal texts due to their lack of inter-disciplinary knowledge and legal terms. Translation is a straightforward approach to facilitate their comprehension of terms and contents. Therefore, figuring how law students use and perceive translation as a learning tool in legal reading classes is beneficial for legal English teachers who have been considering the inclusion of translation as a pedagogical device. This is the impetus for this present study to take shape, aiming to bring light to how students actually use and perceive translation as a learning strategy to handle reading comprehension of legal texts.

The research aims to answer two research questions:

1. How do first-year law students use translation as a learning device in their legal reading lessons?

2. How do they perceive translation as a learning device in their legal reading lessons?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Factors affecting learners' ability to comprehend a legal text

Learners' ability to read and comprehend legal texts can be influenced by a variety of factors, among which linguistic and knowledge factors are the most impactful.

First of all, linguistic features appear to be the most obvious obstacle to reading comprehension, especially when it comes to reading legal texts. Legal English is considered a sublanguage that includes "distinctive words, meanings, phrases, and modes of expression" (Mellinkoff, 1963, p.3), and often appears "incomprehensible from the standpoint of the general public" (Mattila, 2006, p.3). Some studies have delved into the peculiar lexical and syntactic features of legal English that may impede learners' reading comprehension and language

acquisition (Thanh Huong, 2022; Christensen, 2007; Steel et al., 2016). Lexically, legal English contains myriad archaism (e.g., herein, hereinafter, hereunder, etc.), doublets (e.g., fit and proper, null and void, peace and quiet, cease and desist, etc.) and triplets (give, devise and bequeath; right, title and interest, etc.), foreign and Latin words (e.g., inter alia, ratio decidendi, stare decisis, de facto, certiorari, amicus curiae, etc.) that challenge students' minds to comprehend. Polysemous words, for example 'fair' in a fair trial, 'consideration' in contract, 'Act' in an Act of Parliament are problematic for readers to interpret the meaning (Steel et al., 2016). Syntactically, complicated and long sentences with insufficient use of punctuation commonly found in legal texts present a big challenge for readers to analyse and comprehend them. Christensen (2007) opines that novice legal readers find it hard to understand the complex grammar and syntax used in legal texts.

The second source of difficulties in reading comprehension of legal texts is from domain knowledge deficiency. Insufficient legal knowledge bars readers from comprehending texts (Dewitz, 1997; Thanh Huong, 2022). According to Thanh Huong (2022), background knowledge of law plays a more dominant role in legal English reading comprehension since law requires high level of precision and accuracy. Sometimes if learners perceive legal texts as too challenging, they may approach them with less effort or avoid them altogether.

Impediments to understanding legal texts underscore the need for a method that can navigate students through the difficulty and complexity of legal texts, for example using translation as a learning device.

2.2. The reciprocal relationships between reading comprehension and translation

Reading comprehension is defined in various ways. Sweet and Snow (2002) view reading as the concurrent process of extracting the meaning and constructing it by way of interacting with written texts. In a similar vein, Allen (2003) opines that the conception of reading has been shifted from a receptive process to an interactive one that embraces two cognitive processes: bottom-up and top-down. Bottom-up processing entails the construction of meaning by looking at the components of the text from the smallest (letters, sounds and words) to the greatest (sentences, paragraphs, structure, etc.). Conversely, top-down processing refers to the reader obtaining the meaning by connecting and relating the text with their prior background knowledge. Both approaches result in the construction of the message and meaning of the text. Reading comprehension of legal texts is the process where readers consume and decipher the meaning of legal documents using an eclectic approach.

In ELT, translation is both a vocational skill and a strategy employed by instructors and/or learners to facilitate language acquisition process. Translation in the present study refers to a learning device used by students in legal reading lessons. Newmark (1985) defines the term as "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way the author intended in the text" (p.5). Bell (1991) suggests that translation is the replacement of a source-language text by means of an equivalent target-language text. Since this research does not look at translation as a career-oriented skill, it adopts its own definition of translation as the cognitive process whereby students resort to L1 to assist their own construction and interpretation of the meaning of legal texts in the reading comprehension process. It can take place either explicitly, meaning it is be done orally or in writing, or implicitly, meaning mentally.

Translation and reading comprehension are interrelated and interdependent. Comprehension is a prerequisite for translation, as without comprehension, little or nothing can be conveyed

into the target language. Translation, in turn, can promote comprehension as it requires learners to read a text carefully from words, and sentences to text levels (Van Els et al., 1984). This is supported by the mutualism theory proposed by Van Der Maas et al. (2006). According to the authors, there is a reciprocal relationship between different cognitive abilities, so enhancing one can positively impact the development of another and vice versa. When students translate, they have to read the texts closely and carefully to avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations, therefore their comprehension of specialized texts are improved (e.g. Leonardi, 2009; Bonyadi, 2003; Pouya, 2012; Rushwan, 2017; Novita, 2019). Furthermore, it facilitates ESP learners' consolidation of their scientific knowledge (Chirobocea, 2018) and acquisition of specific background knowledge (Kic-Drgas, 2014). Last but not least, translation promotes language knowledge and skills. Translation requires in-depth analysis of authentic texts in order to accurately understand the specialized language, structures, collocations that are typical of a particular type of ESP and then transfer the precise meaning in the native language. This can also contribute to deeper understanding of how English functions within a specific field (Chirobocea, 2018; Leonardi, 2009; Xhemaili, 2013; Kic-Drgas, 2014, etc.)

2.3. Past studies on translation as a learning strategy in ESP reading classrooms

As translation and the reading process are closely related (Bensoussan, 1990), researchers have been interested in exploring how the use of translation as a teaching and/or learning strategy influences learners' comprehension. Due to the scope of this research, studies focusing solely on translation as a learning strategy will be selected for this review, excluding those that investigate translation as a pedagogical technique. While there have been myriad studies on translation use in EFL/ESL contexts, there is a paucity of research on how ESP students utilize translation as a strategy to comprehend ESP/ legal texts in both foreign and domestic context.

Some research indicates that translation is a frequently-employed and effective-learning strategy among ESP students, contributing to their positive academic outcomes. Rushwan (2017) conducted experimental research to explore the effects of using translation on reading comprehension skills in ESP medical classes. The findings demonstrate that translation is "instrumental and beneficial" for learners in experimental groups and "is in line with their learning needs" (pp. 247-248). The participants in these groups also hold positive attitudes towards L1 use in their medical English classes. Another study by Chirobocea (2018) on learners' perceptions of translation in ESP classes reveals similar results. The surveyed students believe that this learning technique is useful and enjoyable and promote their language proficiency, particularly grammar and technical terms. Recent research by Ahandani and Khodareza (2021) compares the effect of translation-based method and strategy-based method on general English and ESP reading comprehension in Iran. They conclude that the former is more effective than the latter in ESP reading comprehension, while their findings show no significant differences in general English.

Some other studies highlight learners' dependence on their mother tongue in ESP classes. Violeta and Galina (2015) carried out a quantitative study to investigate the self-evaluation and attitude of students studying four ESP subfields (psychology, social work, sociocultural education and Internet management and communication) towards translation. Their findings indicate that students are dependent on their L1 in learning ESP. The degree of reliance varies across ESP specializations and classroom activities including in class, in writing, speaking, listening, in vocabulary use and dictionary use. Kavaliauskienė and Kaminskienė's (2007) findings share similar conclusions. They claim that students customarily lean on their L1 in learning ESP and their needs vary across language proficiency and linguistic

contexts. However, this study does not strongly confirm the effectiveness of translation on linguistic development.

In the Vietnamese context, few studies on the use of translation in ESP classes can be enunciated, but none of them explores such use in legal reading classes. Specifically, Minh et al. (2023) examine the use of translation as a pedagogical tool in teaching ESP medical reading. Phuong and Nguyen (2022) investigate the effects of translation activities on ESP students' reading skills. Minh (2022) addresses the teachers' practices and beliefs of L1 use in legal English classes. In the absence of a single study on translation as a learning technique in reading legal texts, the current research is expected to fill the gap in the literature and cast light on how legal English students actually use and perceive the said strategy to help with their reading comprehension of legal texts.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Design

The study utilized a quantitative research method approach, which allows the researcher to gather large amounts of data quickly and minimize bias and subjectivity in research findings. Quantitative data were obtained by means of a questionnaire created by the researcher based on the results of a pilot study conducted to test the acceptability of the questionnaire items.

3.2. Participants and context

A total of 192 first-year law students from four legal English classes participated in the study. This cohort consists of the majority of female students (143), while 49 were male counterparts, accounting for nearly 75% and 25% respectively. The students exhibit a diverse range of English proficiency levels from intermediate to advanced ones. Specifically, the majority of the participants (63.5%) reported that their English proficiency level was at intermediate level, followed by over a quarter (27.6%) at upper-intermediate and a smaller group (8.9%) at advanced level.

When the research was conducted, the participants were attending the 15-week reading-based Basic Legal English 1 (BLE1), which covers four legal topics: law and legal systems, sources of law, legal education, and types of states. This course was not preceded by any law courses; thus, the participants were quite bereft of interdisciplinary knowledge to aid their comprehension of legal texts in general and legal terminology in particular.

3.3. Data collection instrument and analysis

The primary instrument used to collect data is a self-constructed questionnaire consisting of three major sections. Section one aims to gather the participants' demographic information. Section two focuses on students' practices of translation while section three delves into their beliefs about translation as a learning method through 20 five-point Likert-scale items. To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated using SPSS v.26.0. The resulting alpha coefficient is 0.753 indicating that the instrument is reliable.

To enhance the accessibility, the questionnaire was designed using Google Forms and floated to the participants via class Zalo groups during the 12th week of the course. The whole process of data collection lasted one week, after that the link was closed to ensure the consistency of the data obtained.

IBM SPSS v.26.0 was utilized to analyzed the quantitative data obtained. Descriptive statistics including descriptive frequency for multiple choice items and means and standard deviations for 5-point Likert scale items were run and tabulated for analysis. The mean scores can be interpreted as follows: 1.00 – 1.80: strongly disagree (very low); 1.81 – 2.60: disagree (low); 2.61 – 3.40: neutral (moderate); 3.41 – 4.20: agree (high); and 4.21 – 5.00: strongly agree (very high).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Findings

4.1.1. Research question 1: How do first-year law students use translation as a learning device in their legal reading lessons?

Data from the survey questionnaire are tabulated to scrutinize how law freshmen employ translation to read and comprehend legal texts.

Figure 1 shows how often the participants use translation. As can be seen, about a fifth (20%) of the respondents always use translation, over two-thirds (69%) often and just 11% sometimes. None of them chose 'Never' or 'Rarely' options. What can be inferred from the figures is that translation was actually employed as a learning strategy by law freshmen on a regular basis.
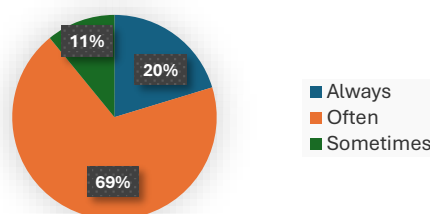

Fig. 1 How often students use translation as a learning strategy

Concerning the reasons why law students employ translation as a learning strategy, Table 2 shows that the top reasons are to improve their comprehension and memorization of legal terms (88%), and aid their comprehension of the legal text (78.1%). Nearly two-thirds (63.5%) admitted that translating between two languages is their habitual practice when learning English. A small number of participants enjoy practicing translating (19.8%) while a minority translate if requested (13%).

Table 1 The reasons for using translation as a learning strategy

	Frequency	Percentage
Only when teacher asks me to.	25	13.0
It's my habit when learning English.	122	63.5
I love translation and want to practice it.	38	19.8
It helps me understand the reading text better.	150	78.1
It enhances my understanding and memorization of legal terms	169	88.0
Others	0	0.0

Pertaining to the level at which law students translate, Figure 2 depicts that while the lowest level of text, i.e., words and phrases, are translated frequently by most participants (86.5%), longer texts including section or paragraph or the whole texts are rarely done by the vast majority of the respondents (68.7% and 71.9% respectively). In the 'Sometimes' category, most of them choose to translate sentences into L1 (62.5%). This means that students prioritize translation of words and phrases and sentences over longer texts for meaning.
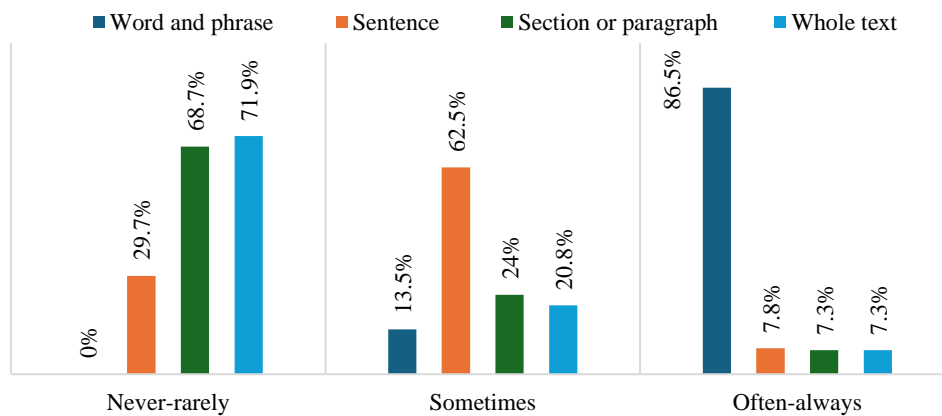

Fig. 2 Level at which law students translate when reading legal texts

Further to the finding from Figure 2, Figure 3 delves deeper into law students' selection of what kinds of word or phrase to translate.
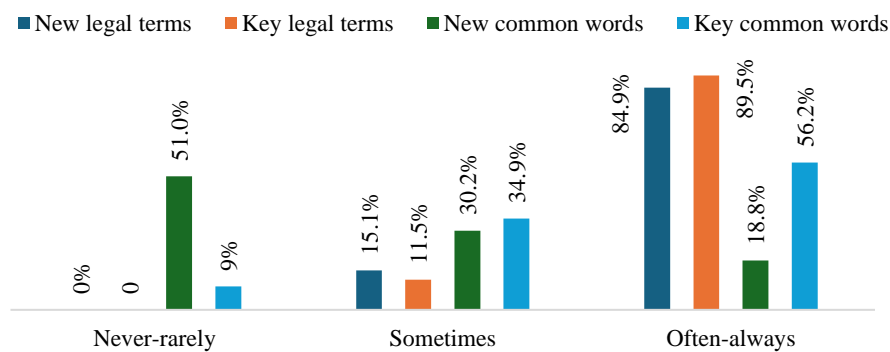

Fig. 3 What law translate when reading legal texts

Evidently, key legal terms are topped in the chart, accounting for 89.5% of participants' choice to translate at the highest frequency level (often-always). They are closely followed by new legal terms (84.9%). Key common words rank the third with 56.2% of the respondents selecting to translate. On the contrary, new common words are frequently translated by a small number of participants (18.8%). The findings highlight the precedence given by law students to translation of specialized terms over unfamiliar common vocabulary when reading legal texts.

Table 3 Factors affecting students' choice of using translation in legal reading lessons

	N	Percentage
Complexity of the reading text	144	75.0
The length of the reading text	93	48.4
The purpose of reading	168	87.5
The time constraints	120	62.5
English proficiency level	159	82.8
Exposure to legal texts	112	58.4
Legal knowledge	175	91.1
Others	24	43.8

Various factors influence students' decision on the utilization of translation to read and comprehend legal texts as illustrated in Table 3. The most influential ones are legal knowledge, the purpose of reading and English proficiency with well over 80% of choices (91.1%, 87.5% and 82.5% respectively). Three quarters go for the complexity of the reading text. Around two-thirds claim time constraints and exposure to legal texts to be impactful (62.5% and 58.4% respectively). Only a small number of the participants (12.5%) opine that other factors affect their selection of said method.

In summary, the answer to the first question "How do first-year law students use translation as a learning device in their legal reading lessons?" can be summarized as follows. Law students often use translation as a strategy to learn legal reading, as they firmly believe that it facilitates their comprehension and retention of legal terms. More important factors influencing their choice of using this strategy include their domain knowledge, purpose of reading, and English proficiency. Smaller components of texts (words, phrases and sentences) are translated more frequently compared to bigger ones (paragraphs or whole texts). Legal terms rank high up among most frequently translated word/ phrase items.

4.2.2. Research question 2: How do law students perceive translation as a learning strategy in their legal reading lessons?

The findings for the second research questions are presented in Tables 4 and 5, which demonstrate the perceived benefits and drawbacks of translation technique.

A quick glance at the results shown in Table 4 indicates that students hold quite supportive views towards the benefits of translation because most items (13/14) were rated as "Very high" and "High". Notably, the participants strongly acknowledge the critical role of translation in handling legal texts, which has the highest rating of all (item 13, M=4.31).

The figures in the table show that translation is perceived to be beneficial across various aspects from vocabulary acquisition to grammar reinforcement, memory strengthening, and reading comprehension. In terms of vocabulary acquisition, the respondents strongly agree that translation is a helpful tool to memorize technical terms (item 1, M=4.23) and deepen their understanding of the contextual meanings of words and phrases in legal texts (item 2, M=4.21). Besides, the new words that students encounter in reading texts and are translated will be transferred to their active vocabulary, meaning that they then can use them easily and naturally (item 3, M=4.01). In grammar aspect, translation is beneficial for understanding and applying complex grammatical structures (item 4, M=3.68), thus reinforcing English grammar knowledge (item 5, M=3.87). Regarding retention capacity, translation has a big impact on students' long-term memory of legal terms as well as information for future use, evidenced by

the quite high ratings for items 5 and 6 which are both over 4.10 (M=4.12 and M=4.10 respectively). Regarding reading comprehension, translation is voiced to serve as a facilitative tool in enhancing students' comprehension (item 8, M=3.97). High-rating responses to items from 9-12 with their means ranging between 3.74 and 3.91 support this view. Through translation, students can distinguish between main ideas and specific details (item 10, M=3.74), identify the organizational pattern of the text (item 11, M=3.91), and draw more accurate conclusions (item 12, M=3.84), contributing to the overall accuracy of their answers to reading comprehension questions (item 9, M=3.81).

While translation is generally viewed as beneficial for language and reading skills, it appears less associated with enjoyment or personal satisfaction because the participants are quite neutral towards this factor (item 14, M=3.26). This finding is consistent with the results illustrated in Table 1 that only a small number of participants enjoy translation and want to practice it.

Table 4 Students' perceptions of benefits of translation technique

Items	Mean	SD	Value
1. Translation helps me memorize legal terms better.	4.23	.67	Very high
2. Translation deepens my understanding of words and phrases in legal contexts.	4.21	.71	Very high
3. Translation helps move new words into my active vocabulary.	4.01	.61	High
4. Translation pushes me through the complexities of grammatical structures.	3.48	.63	High
5. Translation strengthens my knowledge of English grammar.	3.87	.83	High
6. Translation improves my retention of legal vocabulary in the long term.	4.12	.63	High
7. Translation helps retain information for future use.	4.10	.58	High
8. Translation facilitates my comprehension of legal texts.	3.97	.55	High
9. Translation improves the accuracy of my answers to the reading comprehension questions	3.81	.71	High
10. Translation helps me identify the main ideas and specific details of the reading text.	3.74	.47	High
11. Translation helps me recognize paragraph patterns of development.	3.51	.55	High
12. I can make better inferences when I translate texts into L1.	3.84	.70	High
13. I think translation is indispensable to deal with legal texts.	4.31	.57	Very high
14. Translation is enjoyable and gives me a sense of accomplishment.	3.26	.78	Moderate

Table 5 Students' perceptions of the drawbacks of translation technique

Items	Mean	SD	Value
15. Translation is time-consuming.	3.41	.71	High
16. Translation during reading slows down my reading speed.	3.66	1.08	High
17. Translation undermines my ability to think in English.	3.32	.79	Moderate
18. Translation diminishes my English input and output.	3.23	.82	Moderate
19. Translation does not improve my reading performance.	3.36	.73	Moderate
20. Using translation device frequently makes me dependent on my native language for comprehension.	3.37	.86	Moderate

Although translation is a useful tool for students to deal with legal texts, in the participants' view, this method also poses some potential drawbacks. The biggest one is the impact of

translation on reading speed (item 16, M=3.66). However, the respondents' opinions to this statement are the most dispersed of all, evidenced by the great value of the standard deviation (>1.00). The second minus is that translation is time-draining (item 15, M=3.41), though it is at the low-end of the 'High' interval scale. What can be inferred from this result is that whether translation is time-consuming depends on what and when they do translation and how they do it.

The respondents maintain a neutral attitude towards the other four potential demerits of using translation as a learning device, including sabotage of their capacity to think in English (item 17, M=3.32), lessening their English inputs and outputs (item 18, M=3.23), the correlation between translation method and reading performance (item 19, M=3.36) and learners' over-reliance on L1 for comprehension if translation is frequently employed (item 19, M=3.87).

The findings of the second research question can be recapped as follows. Using translation as a strategy in legal reading lessons is believed to bring about multifaceted benefits. In addition to aiding linguistic acquisition, translation helps preserve legal terms and knowledge in students' long-term memory. More importantly, it facilitates the whole process of reading, analyzing the text and constructing meaning from it, resulting in reading comprehension. The findings, however, reveal some participants' concerns about the time-consuming nature of the translation task and the slowdown of their reading pace.

4.2 Discussion

Generally, all of the participants utilize translation for reading comprehension of legal texts, most frequently for converting legal terms into L1. This practice highlights the participants' need for specialized vocabulary acquisition and accurate comprehension of specialized language. This result affirms previous findings that translation is a valuable tool for mastering specialized vocabulary (Chirobocea, 2018) and checking comprehension (Xhemali, 2013). These findings help explain why the participants rely on translation for comprehension and retention of legal terms. In addition, various factors influence students' choice of translation as a learning tool in their legal reading lessons, such as legal knowledge, English proficiency, and reading purpose. It seems that the more background knowledge the students have, the less dependent they are on translation. Legal knowledge supported by linguistic competence empowers their cognitive process to obtain the meaning without having to recourse to translation for it. This is congruent with Kavaliauskienë and Kaminskienë (2007) who highlight the correlation between the amount of translation and learners' English proficiency. However, it contradicts others who argue that learners perceive the effectiveness of translation in retaining information and clarifying numerous language issues regardless of their command of English (Kavaliauskiene, 2009; Dagiliene, 2012). The purpose of reading has not been addressed by previous studies as they mainly focus on translation activities purposefully used by ESP instructors rather than students' individual reading strategies and needs.

Turning to their perceptions of using translation as a learning strategy, some important findings are worth being discussed. To begin with, translation is perceived to be a useful tool in reading legal texts. It facilitates students' comprehension of legal texts by helping them identify main ideas, make references, recognize patterns of texts and therefore enable them to answer the comprehension questions more correctly. In fact, in order to translate a word, a phrase, a sentence or a larger part of the text, students have to process the text, read it carefully and analyze it by looking at the co-texts, cohesive devices, references,

considering the context and identifying key elements in order to formulate interpretation. All of these cognitive efforts result in better comprehension of text. This finding aligns with past research by Pouya (2012), Rushwan (2017) and Novita (2019). Additionally, translation is a valuable tool for linguistic development, particularly vocabulary acquisition, retention and reinforcement, and grammar mastery. Translation exposes students directly to the lexis used in context, making it easier for students to remember and use them accurately. In addition, to translate a sentence or a group of sentences into L1, students need to analyze the sentential syntax and break down complex sentences into smaller, manageable parts for comprehension. This, in turn, enhances their understanding of grammatical rules. The findings correspond to previous studies (e.g. Leonardi, 2009; Xhemaili, 2013; Kic-Drgas, 2014; Chirobocea, 2018; Leonardi, 2009). Finally, translation helps enhance their memorization capability in the long run. Active engagement with the source language which involves both linguistic and cognitive processes strengthens their long-term memory through multiple pathways. This respect, however, has not been addressed much in other studies on the same field.

Although this study shares many similar findings with previous ones as discussed in the preceding section, some divergences are noteworthy. In the first place, uncertainty about correlation between translation and LEs' reading performance is revealed in this study. Contrarily, Pouya (2012) confirms the effects of translation tasks on ESP students' reading performance. Another uncertainty is unearthed regarding whether translation makes students become more dependent on L1. This partially challenges Kavaliauskienė and Kaminskienė (2007) and Violeta and Galina (2015) who affirm such dependence. Last but not least, law students choose translation for its cognitive rather than affective influence. This clashes with Chirobocea (2018) who claims that this learning technique is enjoyable for ESP students.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study delves into law majors' practices and perceptions of using translation as a learning strategy in reading comprehension of legal texts at Hanoi Law University. The research uncovers some important novel findings in the said context that imply pedagogical considerations for teachers and coursebook designers considering integrating translation activities in legal reading lessons. One important finding is that law students utilize translation on a regular basis to support their acquisition of terms and overall comprehension of legal texts. The second finding is students' positive perceptions of the benefits of this learning technique. Some worries concerning the time-consumption and impediment to reading speed are also revealed. The research findings have implications for both researchers and educators. On one hand, translation should be strategically exploited in legal reading classes by both teachers and students because of its affirmed merits. Furthermore, teachers of legal English are encouraged to seriously consider the inclusion of translation activities in legal reading lessons so as to support students with the comprehension of this highly specialized English language while concurrently bolstering their reading performance and bring more joy to classroom activities. Caution regarding time constraints, difficulty of the text, lesson stage at which translation activities are introduced should also be carefully taken into account to maximize its effectiveness and minimize its potential drawbacks. On the other hand, the aforesaid contradictions between this research's findings and some others' necessitate further research into what translation strategies and activities actually motivate and positively result in better reading proficiency for different types of learners./.

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