Comparing Individual and Collaborative Translation in Google Docs: An Investigation of Thai EFL Undergraduates Translation Skills

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Abstract
Existing research has indicated the benefits of synchronous collaboration through Google Docs in enhancing language skills and productivity among learners. However, there remains a lack of knowledge concerning synchronous collaborative translation within the context of English as in Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, particularly concerning its impact on the quality of students’ translations. This study aims to investigate the English translation skills of 20 English majors, aged between 18 and 23 years old, enrolled in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at a private university in Thailand. The investigation compares individual translation with synchronous collaborative translation in small-groups, conducted under time constraints, utilizing three distinct tests. Additionally, the study examines the prevalent language errors made by individuals and small-groups during the translation process. The findings of the study reveal significant disparities between individual translation and collaborative translation in small-groups across all three test variations employed. Notably, the results suggest that engaging in collaborative work within small-groups leads to higher translation accuracy when compared to individual efforts. Regarding the identified errors, this study highlights word choice, mechanics, articles, prepositions, and ellipses as the most frequently occurring mistakes in both individual and small-group translations. This research briefly discussed the implications of the identified errors of collaborative translation in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: collaborative translation, EFL learners, small-group translation, synchronous collaboration, translation skills

1. Introduction
The progress of computer-mediated communication technology, together with the growth and evolution of the Internet, has facilitated collaboration as a mode of teaching and learning. In language education, Google Docs is a significant tool used for collaborative work, just one of many “web-based word processing tools” (Kessler et al., 2012). Collaborative tools like Google Docs have been beneficial for teaching writing, as they allow learners to work together simultaneously and share their work with peers for feedback and revision, all at their own pace. The increasing popularity of these technological tools (such as Wikis, Google Docs) and social networking sites has resulted in continued research interest in web-based collaborative writing tools (WBCW) (see Cho, 2017; Li & Storch, 2017).

Collaborative learning has been an important aspect of writing classrooms in both English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting for the past two decades (see Begum, 2016; Elola, 2010; Kitjaroonchai & Suppasetsereee, 2021; Limbu & Markauskaite, 2015; Storch, 2011; Talib & Cheung, 2017; Zhang, 2019). However, these studies have primarily focused on investigating students’ English writing skills development through participation in collaborative writing activities and the effectiveness of instructors’ pedagogical approaches. Writing tasks such as translation and academic literacy development have received minimal attention. The researchers found only three related articles. In the two articles from China: Yang et al. (2015) examined interactive networks and behavioral patterns in online English-to-Chinese cooperative translation activity, while Yang et al. (2016) examined how cooperative translation affected Chinese EFL student levels of interest and self-efficacy in specialized English translation.

In Thailand, there is limited research on collaborative writing in the field of translation (see Yamamoto’s review of translation research in Thailand, 2018). Translation is a crucial communication process (Baker, 1992),
especially in Thailand, where English remains a lingua franca and the country is an important destination for
ASEAN businesses (Loo, 2018), tourists (Jocuns, 2018), education, and employment within this sector
(Tanhueco-Nepomuceno, 2019). This study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on collaborative writing,
particularly translation, by examining the use of collaborative learning to enhance the translation skills of Thai
undergraduate students who learned English as a Foreign Language. Specifically, this study will (a) investigate
the translation skills of Thai EFL students by comparing their translations with small-group collaborative
translations in Google Docs; and (b) examine the common English language errors made by individual learners
and small-groups in translation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Collaborative Translation

Translation is a practice that involves a complex interplay of cognitive, linguistic, and social factors (Keyes et al.,
2014), with elements of the ideology embedded within both the source and target languages (Munday, 2009;
Pavlovic, 2013). Translators must have a strong understanding of connotative meanings, register, technical terms,
and dialect when translating a text from one language to another (Baker, 1992; Pojprasat, 2007). Due to the
complexities involved, inexperienced translators often rely on a literal word-for-word approach, using syntactic
structures from the source language, which can lead to distortions in meaning or result in zero meaning in the
target language (Bunchutrakun, 2014; Kitjaroenchak et al., 2018; Lee, 2012; Wongranu, 2017).

Collaborative translation (CT) is an increasingly popular practice due to the rise of the Internet and
computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools, making it easier for translators to collaborate and work
together online (Kung, 2021). As translation is a complex process that involves multiple factors, such as
cognitive, linguistic, and social elements, it requires a high level of expertise and understanding to produce
accurate and meaningful translations (Munday, 2009; Pavlovic, 2013). Inexperienced translators may rely on a
literal word-for-word approach, leading to distortions in meaning or resulting in zero meaning in the target
language. Therefore, CT can be beneficial in ensuring that multiple perspectives and expertise are involved in
producing high-quality translations (Barros, 2011; O’Brien, 2011). CT can be described as the joint effort of two
or more translators to produce a single translation (Mitchell-Schuitevoerder, 2020; O’Brien, 2011; Yuliasri,
2014). CT can take various forms depending on factors such as geographic location, time zone differences, or
nationality.

Traditionally, translators on large projects worked independently and then combined their translations later,
resulting in time-consuming post-editing. However, technological advancements like shared platforms such as
Google Docs or Wiki have allowed CT, reducing post-editing time, increasing efficiency, and ensuring
consistency in the final output.

2.2 Translation Errors

Translation errors lack fixed categorization models and arise from various causes such as comprehension gaps,
inadequate knowledge in both the source and target language, and word misuse (Putri, 2019; Wetsakoson, 2015;
Wongranu, 2017). Previous research has identified multiple classifications of errors (Hatim, 2014; Jahanshahi &
Kafipour, 2015; Sari, 2019). Pym (1992, 2004) distinguishes between binary errors, which are incorrect
translations, and non-binary errors, which are translations that may not be entirely wrong but require
improvement. Non-binary errors occur when a less appropriate choice is made among several correct options.
These error categories can assess students’ language and translation competencies, with binary errors indicating
a need for improved language proficiency and non-binary errors reflecting translation competence as the ability
to select the most suitable target text for a given purpose and readership.

Suksaeresup and Thep-Ackrapong (2009) categorized translation errors in English-to-Thai translation into two
types: errors from reading and interpreting. Errors from reading occur when the source text is misread, either due
to pure miscues or interference from background knowledge. Misinterpreted source text causes errors,
comprising grammar, denotative, and connotative meaning.

Wongranu (2017) investigated the typology of translation errors made by Thai EFL university students. The
findings revealed that the most prevalent errors observed were syntactic, encompassing issues related to
countability, determiners, tense, and prepositions. Semantic errors, characterized by a disparity between source
text’s intended meaning and the target language’s conveyed meaning, constituted the second most frequent type
of error. The students’ inadequate comprehension of the source text, leading to misinterpretations and deviations
from the original meaning, demonstrates the semantic errors attributed to students’ translation. In addition,
miscellaneous errors encompassing misspelling, under-translation, and unnatural translation. Wongranu classified as separate from the syntactic and semantic categories.

In a recent study conducted by Tongpoon-Patanasorn and Griffith (2020), the focus was on good translating and its translation efficacy. The study entailed an examination of linguistic inaccuracies generated by Google Translate while translating a set of 54 research abstracts sourced from diverse academic disciplines within the realms of Humanities and Social Sciences. The research abstracts, published between 2012 and 2016, were sourced from Thai academic journals ranked Q1 in the Thailand Citation Journal Index (TCI). Findings indicated that the most recurrent errors produced by Google Translate included improper capitalization, incorrect punctuation usage, and text fragmentation. The predominance of capitalization and punctuation errors underscores the challenges machine translation systems encounter when attempting to comprehend and appropriately render these linguistic attributes within the Thai language context.

2.3 Google Docs for Online Collaborative Learning

Google Docs, launched by Google in 2006, is a web-based tool that is available for free. It provides various features such as word processing, forms, spreadsheets, blogs, and presentations, which help develop communication and technology skills that students require in the 21st century (Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2014). One of the most significant advantages of Google Docs is that it is accessible from anywhere if there is internet connectivity. Moreover, multiple users can simultaneously work and edit assigned parts of a document, enabling them to collaborate in real-time. This feature is particularly advantageous as it enables several users to work on the same document without waiting for others to complete their contributions or leave comments, which is impossible with other platforms used for collaborative learning, such as Wikis. For educators, Google Docs has become an essential tool for blended learning, where traditional face-to-face instruction is combined with the creative use of technology to enhance the learning experience (see Steinberger, 2017). It also encourages peer learning, as shown in the study by Kessler et al. (2012), where peer scaffolding highlighted their collaboration. Hence, Google Docs are ideal for supporting CT as they offer flexibility in terms of time and location while maintaining accountability through the revision history feature (Munday, 2012; Thelen, 2016). However, it is essential to note that CT requires collective support from all collaborators to achieve satisfactory results. Regarding research, there is limited literature on collaborative writing in the field of translation, especially in Thailand (Bunchutrakun, 2014; Jindapitak, 2019). Therefore, more studies are needed to investigate CT’s effectiveness in improving language learners’ translation skills in different contexts and cultures. Additionally, examining the common errors made by individual learners and small-groups in translation can help identify areas for improvement and inform pedagogical approaches to teaching translation.

The current study builds upon previous research investigating how computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools and collaborative writing impact translation skills. With the emergence of data visualization tools, it has become possible for researchers to track collaborative behaviors. Based on this context, our study aims to answer the two research questions:

(1) Is there a significant difference between individual and collaborative translation performance?
(2) What are the most frequent errors in translating Thai to English?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized an Equivalent Time Series Experimental Design to assess students’ translation skills individually and in groups (Creswell, 2012). The participants were divided into groups of three or four based on their previous grades in a translation course. The groups were formed intentionally with a mix of students of varying academic achievements to ensure diverse abilities. At the beginning of the study, the researchers spent two hours explaining the procedures and the nature of CT used and answering questions for clarification. Then participants signed the informed consent form. The research steps are illustrated in Figure 1.
3.2 Participants

The participants consisted of 20 senior English majors (3 males and 17 females) aged between 18 and 23 years old, from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at a private university in Thailand during the second semester of the 2020-2021 Academic Year. All participants were enrolled in a 3-credit course (ENGL 4252 Thai-to-English Translation) scheduled to meet for three hours per week, spanning 13 weeks. Before taking ENGL 4252, all participants had completed an English-to-Thai translation course in the previous semester. They had been studying English as a Foreign Language for at least nine years, beginning from their basic education level. The participants’ English proficiency levels ranged from low intermediate to intermediate (B1-B2 based on the CEFR scale) with TOEIC scores ranging from 400-700. All participants were native Thai speakers.

3.3 Instruments

The research instruments for this study included three translation tests and a reflection paper completed by the students. The three translation tests were designed to evaluate the participants’ abilities to translate at the sentence and paragraph levels. They included five statements/sentences translations (120 words), one paragraph of tourism information translation (160 words), and one paragraph of crime news report translation (180 words). The tests were selected to align with the course description, which requires translating various types of texts on a range of topics. The curriculum committee evaluated the content validity of all three translation tests before their implementation.

The researchers used a standard scoring rubric specifically designed for translation courses offered by the faculty. The rubric assessed content (5 points), vocabulary (5 points), language style (5 points), grammar and structure (5 points), and overall comprehension (5 points), with a maximum score of 25 points. In addition to the translation tests, students completed a reflection paper. The 250-300-word reflection paper prompted participants to discuss their experiences with CT comprehensively. It required them to address various aspects, including the challenges and positive experiences in collaborative activities, and their individual roles within the context of CT, and provide insightful suggestions for enhancing future performance in small-group settings. The students submitted their reflection papers after completing the last CT test in week 12.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The study employed three translation tests and a reflection paper to collect data. The researchers administered the tests, with the first test given in the second week of the research phase. Students completed the test individually within 40 minutes on the university’s Moodle system and were permitted to use an electronic dictionary. An intervention period was then introduced, during which CT activities were conducted in Google Docs for three weeks before administering CT Test 1 in small groups. Four groups of three members and two groups of four members participated, and they were given 40 minutes to complete the test online with the aid of an electronic dictionary. The subsequent tests (tourism information and crime news report paragraph translations)
were administered similarly, with a three-week interval between each test and no feedback or grading given until after all three tests had been completed in small-groups.

The study analyzed the three tests for common language errors, and the results were compared between individual and small-group translations using a standard scoring rubric. To determine any significant differences between individual and CT, Paired-Samples t-Test was conducted. The researchers in this study followed the approach of Pojprasat (2007) and Wongranu (2017) by analyzing the frequency and percentage of language errors in the translation tests. In addition, students’ reflection papers were used for data triangulation and enriching the discussion to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of CT in Google Docs.

4. Results and Findings

The findings of this study were presented according to the research questions. The research questions are discussed in a separate section.

4.1 Comparison between Individual and CT by Students

Table 1 shows that there were significant differences between individual translation and CT in small-groups for all three tests administered in the study. Specifically, there was a significant difference in the scores for Test 1, with a mean (M) of 15.90 and a standard deviation (SD) of 1.81 for individual translation compared to a mean of 19.34 and an SD of 1.18 for CT in small-groups; t (19) = -8.34, p = .000. For Test 2, a significant difference was found between individual translation (M=15.46, SD=2.55) and CT in small-groups (M=20.39, SD=1.14) conditions; t (19) =-8.03, p = .000. Similarly, a significant difference was also found in Test 3 between individual translation score (M=18.08, SD=1.55) and CT score (M=20.87, SD=1.22) conditions; t (19) = -8.84, p = .000. Students’ average scores increased by 3.44, 4.93, and 2.79 for Test 1, Test 2, and Test 3, respectively. Notably, the average scores of CT from Test 1 to Test 3 gradually increased, albeit slightly. These results indicate that CT in small-groups had a positive impact on students’ translation skills.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Paired Samples t-Test of Individual Translation and Collaborative Translation in Small-groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Test 1</th>
<th>Test 2</th>
<th>Test 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing students’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scores in translation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual translation</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>15.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative translation</td>
<td>19.34</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>20.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>-8.34</td>
<td>-8.03</td>
<td>-8.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<0.001

Figure 2 depicts the test scores of individual translations (represented by the blue line) and CT in small-groups (represented by the orange dotted line). The test evaluates students’ capacity to translate thought-provoking statements of an average length of 25 words per statement/sentence. As indicated in Table 1, the average score of CT increased by 3.44 out of a total score of 25 points. The orange dotted line being higher than the blue line indicates the substantial improvement in scores achieved when students worked together in small-groups.
Figure 2. Line Chart Comparing Scores between Individual Translation and Collaborative Translation (Test 1)

Figure 3 illustrates the scores of Test 2, which measures students’ ability to translate a paragraph of tourism information, approximately 160 words in length. The average scores of individual translation (blue line) and small-group translation (orange dotted line) showed a significant increase of 4.93, as shown in Table 1. This indicates that CT activities can enhance students’ translation skills.

Figure 3. Line Chart Comparing Scores between Individual Translation and Collaborative Translation (Test 2)

Figure 4 illustrates the scores of Test 3, which measures students’ ability to translate a crime news report paragraph of approximately 180 words. The blue line represents individual translation, while the orange dotted line represents small-group translation. As shown in the figure, the average score for small-group translation increased by 2.79 compared to individual translation. Although the increase was minimal, the t-test showed it to be significant (see Table 1).
4.2 Common Errors in Individual Translation and Collaborative Translation

To address research question 2, we conducted an analysis of the frequencies and percentages of common errors found in both individual translation and CT. Table 2 displays the combined frequencies and percentages of common language errors observed across all three tests.

Table 2. Frequencies, percentage of common errors, and percentage of declination identified in the study (three tests combined)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of error</th>
<th>Frequency of error</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Percentage of Declination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Determiner</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Article</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>7.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Modality</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tense</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Participle</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Relative clause</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Passive voice</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. If-clause</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ellipsis</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. S+V agreement</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Parallelism</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Preposition</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Redundancy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Mechanics</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 presents the frequencies and percentages of the top five language errors frequently committed by the participants in individual translation. The most common errors were word choice (16.91%), mechanics (8.27%), article (7.65%), preposition (7.28%), and ellipsis (6.42%). These errors and others decreased slightly when students worked in small-groups. The prominent errors committed at the individual level seem to transfer to small-group translation, as the errors appear to be relatively identical in both modes of working. Word choice
remains the most frequent error committed by small-groups (21.04%), followed by article (11.46%), mechanics and preposition (9.17%) respectively. These errors are likely to be committed at both individual and small-group levels, although they were reduced in the latter.

Figure 5 displays a bar chart illustrating the difference between individual and group translations. As shown in Table 2, the number of errors in CT (blue stacked bar) has slightly decreased compared to individual translation (green stacked bar). The highest percentage drop was observed in parallelism (80%), followed by subject and verb agreement (74.42%), if-clause (73.08%), and tense (72.22%). The use of determiners (10.87%), articles (11.29%), and redundancy (13.33%) showed the least drop in percentage. Overall, all 18 types of common errors committed at the individual level were found to have decreased variably when translation was conducted in small-groups.

![Figure 5. Comparing common errors of Thai-to-English translation (three test combined)](image)

**Figure 5. Comparing common errors of Thai-to-English translation (three test combined)**

**Note: Code Interpretations**

DE = Determiner  RE = Relative Clause  PAL = Parallelism  RED= Redundancy
AR = Article  PAS = Passive Voice  PRE = Preposition  MEC= Mechanics
MO = Modality  IFC = If-Clause  SVA = S+V Agreement  WOC= Word Choice
TE = Tense  ELS = Ellipsis  PSP = Part of Speech  I= Individual Translation
PAR = Participle  WOD = Word Order  PRF = Plural Form  G= Group Translation

We conducted a Wilcoxon signed-rank test to determine if there was a significant difference in error decline between individual and small-group translation. This non-parametric test compares paired data sets from the same population and is used when dealing with unexpected results and small sample sizes (Rosner et al., 2006). Table 3 demonstrates the results of Wilcoxon signed-rank test.
### Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Comparing Common Errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Translation</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>26.81</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Translation</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26.67</td>
<td>23.48</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Translation</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Translation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- a. Group Translation < Individual Translation
- b. Group Translation > Individual Translation
- c. Group Translation = Individual Translation

**Test Statistics (a)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group Translation-Individual Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-3.724b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
- b. Based on positive ranks

The results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test in Table 3 shows that the mean number of errors committed in individual translation was 45.00, with a standard deviation of 26.81, while the mean for group translation was 26.67, with a standard deviation of 23.48. This indicates that there was a statistically significant decrease in language errors in small-group translation compared to individual translation, with a Z-value of -3.724 and a p-value of less than .001. This indicates that group translation is more effective in reducing language errors than individual translation. The test also showed that none of the 18 types of common errors committed at an individual level increased or changed when students worked collaboratively in small-groups.

### 5. Discussion

The study aimed to explore the translation skills of Thai EFL students by comparing individual translation with CT in small-groups. Additionally, the study sought to identify the most common errors encountered during Thai-to-English translation. The findings revealed significant disparities between individual translation and CT in small-groups across all three test variations. The results notably suggest that working collaboratively in small-groups leads to higher translation accuracy than individual work. Concerning errors, the study identified word choice, mechanics, articles, prepositions, and ellipses as the top five most frequently occurring mistakes in both individual and small-group translations.

#### 5.1 Collaborative Translation in Small-groups Outperforms Individual Translation

The results of the study revealed that small-groups consistently achieved higher scores across all three test types than individual translation. These findings support previous research, which has also demonstrated the efficacy of CT in mitigating language errors pertaining to sentence structure, verb tenses, passive voice, word order, subject-verb agreement, and the appropriate use of articles (see Keyes et al., 2014; Kitjaroonchait et al., 2018; O’Brien, 2011; Thelen, 2016). Moreover, the content of the translated text was of better quality. These findings align with previous investigations conducted by Pavlovic (2013) and Yuliasri (2014), wherein the researchers similarly concluded that group translation yields a higher quality of translated text. As Storch (2011) suggested, collaborative work provides learners with opportunities to better understand their peers’ language usage and find appropriate contextual meaning. It also enables learners to expand their vocabulary and improve their comprehension of the jointly constructed text, as Limbu and Markauskaite (2013) highlighted. One student from group 4 supported this claim in her reflection by stating, “…although collaborative translation gave me more work to do when I had to check on other members’ work before sending it to the teacher, I benefit a lot because I
learn more words that are new to me. Those new words suggested by my friends, we checked the meanings online and we found that they could be used correctly in the transition…” (STG4). Another student from group 2 stated, “With collaborative translation, there are multiple sets of eyes to review and edit the translation. This can help us to identify errors or inaccuracies in the text easier than when we work alone…” (STG2).

Students frequently mentioned in their reflective journals that CT could enhance their vocabulary knowledge and reduce language errors. A student in group 1 stated that “…in my group we are quite active to participate in the work. Everyone tried their best to do their part, and we could identify many mistakes on grammar and sentence structure when we proofread and edited the work together before we submitted to our teacher for grading… I think collaborative translation can improve our language and translation skills” (STG1).

The translation process is complex and requires a careful balance of cognitive processes, linguistic proficiency, and sociocultural knowledge (Baker, 1992; Munday, 2009; Pavlovic, 2013). To ensure accurate translations, working on tasks with utmost caution is crucial, aiming to avoid syntactic, semantic, and cultural errors (Pavlovic, 2013; Pojprasat, 2007; Wongranu, 2017). Translators often encounter challenges stemming from differences in culture, language, and meaning (Bunchutrakun, 2014; O’Brien, 2011). For instance, using conditional sentence type 3 (If + past perfect, conditional II = would + have + past participle) presents difficulties for Thai students due to the absence of a similar structure in the Thai language (Pojprasat, 2007). This study also observed the same issue with conditional sentence type 3 during the translation process, with only one out of twenty students producing a correct translation when working individually. The statement in Thai “ฉันรู้สึกเสียใจอย่างมากเพราะถ้าฉันขยันเรียนมากกว่านี้ในเทอมที่ผ่านมา ฉันคงไม่ได้เกรด D วิชานี้” This statement could be translated as “I deeply regretted for if I had studied harder in the last semester, I might not have received a ‘D’ grade in this course”. Most combined conditional sentence types 1 and 2, resulting in an incorrect sentence structure. An example of such a translation by the students is, “I feel very sad because if I studied harder in the last term, I will not get a D in this class.” Interestingly, when students engaged in collaborative work in small-groups, nearly all groups, except for one, demonstrated significant improvement in accurately constructing the conditional sentence type. This observation highlights the positive impact of collaboration on enhancing language structure. This claim finds support in the reflection of a student from group 2, who stated, “I think to translate well in English we must know a lot of vocabulary and particular terms. Not only that, we must also know the differences between Thai and English language structures. …I can’t remember the form of if-clause type 3 but one of our group members also is good at grammar and writing could make a structure correctly. This is something good about working with someone who knows more than you although sometimes you don’t feel comfortable as you work on your own” (STG2).

According to Begum (2016), collaborative learning enables learners to combine their linguistic abilities and seek assistance from one another when encountering language obstacles, leading to the successful resolution of such issues. Collaborative approaches are more advantageous as they foster creativity and encourage learners to discover terms or phrases that closely align with the original text, particularly when tackling translation challenges. This level of effectiveness is often difficult to achieve when working independently (Lee, 2012).

5.2 Common Language Errors in Thai-to-English Translation

Language errors are an inevitable part of the second language acquisition process, as noted by Wongranu (2017) and Putri (2019). Learners often develop their own version of the target language, known as interlanguage, when engaging with written texts. This phenomenon is evident during translation tasks, where inexperienced translators decode content from their native language to the target language. Inexperienced translators commonly make three major types of errors: syntactic errors, semantic errors, and errors related to cultural differences (Pojprasat, 2007). The present study identified two main types of translation errors: syntactic and semantic. Syntactic errors encompass mistakes and incorrect usage of language structures, which were diverse and documented in Table 2 (items 1 to 17). This type of translation error accounted for 83.1% of individual translations and 78.9% of small-group translations. On the other hand, semantic errors involve the use of inappropriate words within a specific context (Pojprasat, 2007; Pym, 2004; Wongranu, 2017). Semantic errors constituted 16.9% of individual translations and 21.1% of small-group translations.

Syntactic errors arise from language structure disparities between the source and target languages. For instance, in Thai, the use of articles is considered insignificant, leading Thai students to overlook their importance when writing in English. In this study, a Thai statement “บนยอดเขายังมีจุดชมวิว” was translated by students as “On mountain top there is viewpoint and there is convenient trail.” A more accurate translation of this statement would be, “There is a viewpoint on top of the mountain with a convenient trekking route.” In this single sentence alone, there are at least three instances where the use of articles is required (two indefinite
articles and one definite article). Another common error involves prepositions, which may result from direct translation from the students’ native language (Thumawongs, 2018). For example, a Thai statement “เพื่อความสุขสัมพันธ์ครอบครัว” was translated as “No secret that leads to success, but success comes on hard working, persevering, and lessons for failure from the past experience.” The revised sentence is “There is no secret code that leads to success, but success can only be achieved through hard work, perseverance, and learning from past failures.”

Furthermore, other common errors observed include ellipses and language mechanics (e.g., capitalization, spelling), which can be attributed to students’ oversight caused by time constraints. As noted by Bennui (2008), Thai EFL students tend to omit prepositions such as ‘to’ and ‘of’. During the translation process, students may intentionally omit certain terms to avoid ambiguity in interpretation. Regarding spelling errors, students often utilize incorrect letters when forming words or use lowercase letters for proper nouns. For instance, in the study, students wrote “solitary road” instead of “solitary road” or “...a french family” instead of “...a French family”.

Semantic errors in this study primarily stem from the use of incorrect words. Pojprasat (2007) and Wongranu (2017) highlighted that Thai EFL learners often face confusion in selecting the appropriate word due to the extensive number of English words that share similar meanings. For instance, in the study, the Thai phrase “การเตรียมการที่เป็นอย่างหนักและเรียนรู้จากความล้มเหลว” was translated as “‘a boat’s technician of S.Prasertporn fishing boat” or “a mechanic of the S. Prasertporn, anchovy fishing cruiser.” A more accurate translation of this phrase would be “the Sor Prasertporn fishing trawler technician.” Another example of a semantic error can be observed in the translation of the Thai statement “มีแต่การเตรียมการอย่างหนัก” ว่าความรู้ที่เราได้จากประสบการณ์ของเรา” where the individual translation, based on a word-for-word approach, resulted in the phrase “When we develop, friends will know us; when we fall and face difficulties, we will know friends.” This translation indicates that the lack of contextual understanding and limited vocabulary knowledge may contribute to such language errors.

While errors displayed diversity and consistency in individual translation tasks, errors decreased when working in small-groups. This aligns with earlier research conducted by Kitjaroonchai et al. (2018), Lee (2012), Pavlovic (2013), Yang et al. (2016), and Yulisari (2014), which demonstrated that CT could enhance students’ written work in terms of syntax and semantics. The students substantiated the findings through the reflection papers they provided. Students in group 2 and group 3 expressed, “…collaborative translation is useful when we translate something difficult because the group members can share knowledge of grammar and sentence structure. We can improve our translation when we work together” (STG2). Another student wrote “…we can find more correct meanings when we work in a small group to finish the test in time.” (STG3).

6. Conclusion
In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the translation skills of Thai EFL students and the effectiveness of CT in small-groups. The findings demonstrate that CT outperforms individual translation regarding accuracy across different test variations. Collaborative work allows students to benefit from their peers’ language knowledge, expand their vocabulary, and enhance their understanding of language structures. The positive impact of collaboration is particularly evident in the improved accuracy of complex sentence structures, such as conditional sentence type 3. Furthermore, the study identifies common language errors in Thai-to-English translation, including syntactic and semantic errors, and errors related to language mechanics and ellipsis. CT reduces the occurrence of these errors, highlighting the importance of collaborative learning in enhancing language structure and reducing language errors. These findings contribute to the field of translation pedagogy and underscore the advantages of collaborative approaches in developing translation skills. Future research can further explore specific strategies and techniques to optimize CT, considering different language pairs and cultural contexts. Ultimately, the findings emphasize the significance of collaborative learning in fostering language proficiency and improving translation accuracy among Thai EFL students.

7. Implications
This present study’s findings have unveiled implications poised to shape the future landscape of the translation field.

(1) Pedagogical implications: The findings suggest incorporating CT activities in EFL classrooms can be a practical pedagogical approach to enhance students’ translation skills. Educators can design collaborative tasks that encourage students to work in small-groups, providing opportunities for peer learning, vocabulary expansion, and improved language structure.

(2) Error analysis and correction: Identifying common language errors in Thai-to-English translation, such as syntactic, semantic, and mechanical errors, can inform educators in developing targeted instruction and
correction strategies. Language teachers can focus on addressing specific error types to improve students’ accuracy and fluency in translation tasks.

(3) Contextual understanding: The study highlights the importance of developing students’ contextual understanding in translation. Language learners need to consider linguistic aspects, cultural nuances, and contextual appropriateness when translating. This finding emphasizes the need for integrating cultural and situational factors into translation instruction to ensure accurate and meaningful translations.

(4) Collaborative learning benefits: The study underscores the benefits of collaborative learning in the translation process. CT activities foster creativity, encourage students to explore various translations, and enable them to draw on their peers’ collective knowledge and skills. Incorporating collaborative learning strategies in translation courses can enhance students’ language proficiency, critical thinking abilities, and overall translation competence.

(5) Transferable skills: The skills developed through CT, such as effective communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, have broader applications beyond translation tasks. These skills can be transferable to other academic and professional contexts, where collaborative work and effective language use are essential.

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References


Appendix A (Reflection)
Write a reflective paper of approximately 250-300 words to contemplate upon your experiences of engaging in collaborative translation. Please address aspects such as the challenges and positive experiences encountered during group work and explain your roles and responsibilities within the collaborative translation process.

Appendix B (Translation Rubric)
Translation rubric to rate the student's translation for each of the benchmark indicators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Content**
Demonstrates a profound knowledge and clear understanding of the translating topic. Translates adeptly into the target language with impeccable linguistic finesse. Synthesizes, integrates, and presents the topic accurately, capturing all the essential points intended by the original text.

**Vocabulary**
Exhibits a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of a wide range of vocabulary. Utilizes a complex array of words and idioms, displaying accuracy in word/idiom selection. Displays mastery of word forms and expressions, showcasing an appropriate level of usage.

**Language Style**
Exhibits a thorough understanding of appropriate language usage, language effectiveness, style, imagery, and tone that align with the original text's intended message. No errors or distractions are present in the translated text.

**Grammar and Language Structure**
Employs correct English grammar and maintains proper language structure throughout the translation. No mistakes are observed in the meticulous translation.

**Overall comprehension**
The translation reflects a clear comprehension of the passage or story, capturing the intended structure and meaning of the original text accurately.

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