

Challenges & Solutions in Legal Translation Training: Translator Trainees' Perspectives

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Abstract—Legal documents are prevalent in every aspect of our lives, from terms and conditions to marriage contracts. In the globalized and technologically advanced setting, the role of legal translators has become critical. Consequently, it is essential for legal translation trainers to understand the challenges faced by their students. This will enable trainers to provide appropriate solutions that will help streamline future translation careers. This study sought to investigate the challenges encountered by legal translator trainees when working with legal texts and understand the strategies they employed to overcome these obstacles. The reflective essays of 57 undergraduate students enrolled in an English-Arabic legal translation course were analyzed thematically to uncover the challenges and solutions from the students' perspectives. The results showed that the major challenges faced by students were legal terminology and complex sentence structures. The solutions used by students were practice, exposure to legal content, and the use of a portfolio. Understanding the challenges of legal translation and available solutions from a student's perspective is expected to inform legal translation training and better equip legal translation trainers with tools to assist their trainees in their translation careers.

Index Terms—legal translation, portfolio, social constructivism, translator training

I. INTRODUCTION

Legal documents are prevalent in every aspect of our lives, from terms and conditions to marriage contracts. “Law develops through a complex network of legal branches that encompass virtually every aspect of life, social interaction, and government, from fundamental rights to business and technical regulations” (Prieto Ramos, 2021a, p. 176). Legal systems in different countries are the product of the historical, political, and cultural developments of their people (Way, 2016). Further, legal texts are deeply connected to such developments, demonstrating the complexities of the legal, political, administrative, and social systems they evolved from. These texts often express even simple matters in rather complex language. Way (2023) explains that this results in legal texts being obscure and difficult to comprehend even in local languages.

There has been a growing demand for legal translation driven by cross-border trading, complicated financial transactions, multilingual legislation, increased mobility, and immigration (Al-Tarawneh et al., 2024). With the advent of technology and the emergence of globalization, the role legal translators play has become significant. Thus, legal translation trainers need to be aware of the challenges facing trainees, to better equip them with skills that will make their future careers more productive.

Despite the global increase in demand for legal translation, little research has been conducted on legal translator training. Cao (2014) argues that advances in legal translator training have been hampered by the limited number of legal translator programs and the limited amount of research and writing done on legal translator training and education. Training challenges stem from the nature of legal translation itself, along with the trainees' background and the structure of the program they are enrolled in (Biel, 2010). Another problem with legal translator training is that even though “legal translation now holds a consolidated position in translation studies and has attracted considerable academic inquiry and research, legal translator training has not always embraced innovations” (Way, 2016, p. 1010). Moreover, research shows that the area of legal translation between English and Arabic remains under-researched (El-Farahaty, 2016).

The significance of this study stems from the fact that legal translation training and its research is a relatively new sub-field that has not drawn much attention yet (Cao, 2014). Moreover, research investigating the challenges faced when translating legal texts has studied it from the translation practitioners' perspective or from the trainers' perspectives (Ali, 2016). To the best of our knowledge, no study has investigated the challenges and solutions to legal translation from the students' perspective. Given that legal translation has its “unique challenges and problems, and by extension, unique pedagogical issues” (Cao, 2014, p. 107), looking into these challenges from a student's perspective will undoubtedly inform legal translation pedagogy. Thus, this study aims to fill a gap in the legal translation training field by investigating

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the challenges and solutions to legal translation difficulties and obstacles students enrolled in an English-to-Arabic legal translation course face from their perspectives.

Based on the background presented above, this study attempted to answer the following research questions:

What are the challenges trainee translators face when translating legal texts from English to Arabic and vice versa?

What solutions do trainees use to overcome the challenges they face when translating legal texts from English to Arabic and vice versa?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Social Constructivism*

Social constructivism refers to a theory of learning that emphasizes the role socialization and culture play in the development and construction of learners' cognitive skills. When learners are allowed to be part of a community, they are given the opportunity to “acquire the cognitive tools and knowledge shared by the community” (Echeverri, 2015, p. 300). This paves the way for them to acquire new knowledge based on previously obtained knowledge and experiences. This similarly applies to professional communities of practice such as translators. The socio-constructivist approach to translator education proposed by Kiraly (2000) represents a shift from teacher-centered conceptions of translation teaching to learner-centered ones. Further, Kiraly (2005) states that when communicating and negotiating with peers and more knowledgeable people, “we acquire a feel for correctness, appropriateness, and accuracy,” thus, given that “knowledge is intersubjectively constructed, learning must be socially situated” (p. 1).

Wallace (2015) notes that the underlying assumption of social constructivism is that learners are active agents of their learning. Consequently, such empowerment is the key that provides learners with the expertise needed to be critical and autonomous and helps them acquire linguistic and professional competence during their development as trainee translators. Wallace (2015) further clarifies that “the encouragement of collaboration is strategic for professional survival in nearly all disciplines” (p. 29). Collaboration leads to further participation by the learner in the learning process, which is expected to be accompanied by an increase in self-monitoring, self-reflection, and peer-to-peer help. Collaboration assists trainers in developing a higher awareness of what learners do and do not understand, since “more heads are better than one, producing richer results” (Wallace, 2015, p. 30).

Given the specific requirements for training students in the field of legal translation, numerous translation scholars have examined available resources to support students' training needs. In addition to exploring the different competencies, other social constructivist approaches have been employed to investigate the need for translation training. Biel (2010), for example, emphasizes that students bring various concepts of translation to the classroom. This aligns with the scaffolding approach, as it acknowledges that students are not a blank slate but have pre-existing ideas to build upon. For instance, Biel (2010) notes that students often focus on linguistic features they are familiar with from language learning, such as syntax and structure. The concept of scaffolding in translation studies has been used extensively by Kiraly (2000) in his seminal work on the social constructivist approach to translator education. Kiraly (2005) explains that knowledge is constructed by students rather than being transmitted to them. Hence, students construct knowledge by building on their previous understanding of a topic or subject. In the case of translation students, they rely on their linguistics knowledge of the target language. However, their linguistic knowledge is not enough in the case of legal translation because it is limited by the highly specialized nature of legal language, which has different terminology and structures.

When teaching specialized translation skills, it is important to rely on students' previous knowledge to allow a form of scaffolding approach. Teaching specialized translation should build on students' existing knowledge while developing their awareness of the unique skills and challenges involved in fields like legal translation. This approach allows for effective scaffolding of new, specialized knowledge on students' existing competencies while also preparing them for the specific demands of specialized translation work. Mellinger (2019) supports this idea, as he observed that in the first translation task, students relied heavily on their existing language skills and general translation strategies. However, their approach evolved as they progressed and gained more specialized knowledge. This demonstrates how new knowledge can be scaffolded on existing skills and understanding.

B. *Features of Legal Translation*

Legal Translation is defined as “a type of specialist or technical translation, a translational activity that involves special language use – that is, language for special purposes in the context of law, or language for legal purposes” (Cao, 2014, p. 107). Legal translation encompasses not only legislative texts and international treaties but also court documents and administrative, commercial, and financial texts (Way, 2016). Cao (2014) identifies several sources of difficulty in legal translation, including cultural, linguistic, and systemic differences in law.

One of the most notable features of legal translation distinguishing it from other specialized translation types is “the system-bound nature of legal terminology” (Biel, 2013, p. 3). This results in legal translation having more culture-specific components than universal ones. Biel (2010) notes that full equivalence in legal translation tends to be rare. This “incongruity of concepts between legal systems lies at the heart of the fundamental problem in legal translation- namely, how to achieve accuracy if full equivalence is not possible” (Biel, 2010, p. 26). Legal translators dealing with the English-Arabic language pair face many challenges that result from the asymmetry between these two languages, be it linguistic,

cultural, or system-based asymmetry (El-Farahaty, 2016; Alwazna, 2019). Further, legal language is “to a large degree created and strengthened by phraseology- fixed recurrent patterns at the textual, grammatical, and collocational level” (Biel, 2014, p. 177).

Another important feature of legal texts is that they have consequences; thus, contracts, for instance, create rights and obligations, while judgments might lead to certain actions being imposed on individuals (Hjort-Pedersen & Faber, 2010). Further, legal texts are linguistically complex and hard to understand for lay readers due to the use of certain constructions such as the passive voice, nominal constructions as well as legal terminology. Such linguistic features entail that for lay readers to arrive at a successful construction of the text, they have to exercise some inferencing, which is a form of mental explication (Hjort-Pedersen & Faber, 2010).

There are challenges and opportunities for legal translation and legal translator training in the 21st century. Unlike other forms of translation, legal translation faces the unique challenge of having to address specialized legal considerations. Translators in this field must navigate not just linguistic and cultural differences but also distinct legal frameworks that have evolved differently due to each society's historical and cultural context. This complexity is further increased because legal systems do not necessarily align with national boundaries (Way, 2016, p. 1012).

C. Legal Translation Training

In the field of legal translation, legal translators are expected to be “fully aware of the terminology of the source text in question before embarking upon the translation process” (Alwazna, 2019, p. 78). Way (2023) proposes an approach that focuses on the ‘why’ and ‘how’, rather than the ‘what’, which are necessary to establish the foundations to acquire legal translation terminology competence. Furthermore, Strandvik (2016) reminds us that terminology is in fact the only category which is present in all translation quality assessment systems and is, thus, a critical component in the legal translation process and, consequently, in assessing translator trainees.

Way (2016) states that “one of the greatest challenges for legal translation in the 21st century is to train qualified, highly proficient legal translators” (p. 1019). Further, the literature available in English on appropriate approaches to “teach legal translation is relatively scarce” (Biel, 2010, p. 25). “More exchanges of best practices, teaching methods, and content design are needed to serve as points of reference for legal translator trainers” (Biel, 2010, p. 25). Identifying major sources of difficulty and how trainee translators attempt to overcome such difficulties and challenges is one step on the road to training highly qualified legal translators. Thus, this study attempts to investigate the challenges faced by legal translator trainees and the solutions to their difficulties. The main aim of this study is to enrich the studies on legal translation training and provide a glimpse into the challenges and solutions from the trainees’ perspective.

A study carried out by Ali (2016) sought to investigate legal translation challenges encountered by 33 Sudanese translation practitioners and how they responded to such challenges. Drawing on existing frameworks, such as the European Master’s in Translation (EMT) competence model, Cao (2014) adapts essential translation competencies to the specific needs of legal translation. These include linguistics competence, professional and technical competence, intercultural competence, information mining competence, and subject field knowledge.

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper reports on a qualitative, exploratory study which aimed at looking into the challenges and solutions in legal translation from a student’s perspective. Research in the field of legal translation has been mainly qualitative rather than quantitative (Biel & Engberg, 2013). Qualitative research, Dörnyei (2007) explains, involves “smaller-scale, non-numerical, open-ended data”, which investigate “idiosyncrasies and individual/subjective meanings” (p. 24). The advantages of qualitative research are numerous, Dörnyei (2007) states, including being more flexible, emergent, and of an exploratory nature, whereas the weaknesses of this type of research include small sample sizes of an idiosyncratic nature, limited generalizability, and an over-analysis of individual examples.

The language pair this study looks at is English into Arabic, which is a pair that has been under-researched in the legal translation domain (El-Farahaty, 2016). This calls for more studies of an exploratory nature, which will help uncover the nature of legal translation between English and Arabic, thus informing legal translation pedagogy.

A. Participants

Participants in this study were 57 trainee translators enrolled in a specialized legal translation course as part of an undergraduate program on English-Arabic translation. This course was part of a four-year BA program on English Language and Translation and was taught by one of the researchers. The legal translation course was covered in the final year of the student’s study. Thus, the participants most likely had a good working knowledge of the language pair, i.e., English and Arabic, as well as some knowledge of translation processes. Similar to other trainees enrolled in legal translation courses, the participants “enter their legal translation classes, often in the later stages of training, with prior training in research, terminology, and IT skills, bringing the baggage acquired in earlier translation courses” (Way, 2023, p. 594).

The participants were between 21-23 years old. Hence, their knowledge and understanding of the law and legal systems were expected to be limited. Very few students were expected to have taken part in a legal court case, bought property, or even signed a contract. Consequently, their knowledge of legal terminology and phraseology was limited in their mother

tongue, i.e., Arabic. This limitation would result in a lack of confidence when translating legal texts. To overcome this hurdle, the instructor often started the lecture with a presentation that would include basic legal background knowledge to assist students in making sense of the legal texts they would later be asked to translate. The course covered texts in both directions, i.e., from Arabic into English and vice versa. The texts dealt with a variety of legal topics, such as lease contracts and memorandums of association, powers of attorney, royal orders and decrees, labor law, and international law.

B. Data Collection & Analysis

The students were required to keep a portfolio where they would gather all the texts covered in class and write down the translation of each text. They were also required to write down lists of glossaries they would gather from the texts covered in class, which they had to add to their portfolios. Further, students were required to handwrite translations of the texts and the glossaries to ensure that they would review the material and not just copy and paste documents from others. Upon completing the course, the students were asked to write a one-page reflective essay, which is a form of retrospective reflection. In the essay, they answered questions about their experience with the legal translation course, identified challenges they faced when translating legal texts, and described the solutions they used to mitigate these challenges. These reflective essays formed the data for the study in hand. In addition to the portfolio and the reflective essays, students were required to engage in group activities where they would share their translations with their team members during the semester. This assessed activity featured extensively in their reflective essays. The data were analyzed thematically, i.e., the researchers read through the students' reflective essays to identify major themes related to challenges and solutions.

C. Results

The data was analyzed in an attempt to identify challenges faced by trainee translators in the bi-directional translation of English and Arabic and to propose solutions to mitigate these challenges. As a result, two major themes emerged; one relates to the challenges in legal translation and the other theme relates to the solutions students resorted to when dealing with such challenges. Themes, sub-themes, and excerpts from participants' reflective essays are presented and interpreted.

(a). Theme 1: Challenges in Legal Translation

This theme captured the various challenges students faced when translating between English and Arabic. Two sub-themes emerged which are legal terminology and complex sentence structures.

1. Sub-Theme 1: Legal Terminology

Many students faced several challenges when using legal terminology in translation. The first challenge was archaic terms that are often used in legal practice. These difficulties were described in various ways. One group of students described archaic terms as being the most difficult part of the course. A second group of students described archaic terms as very hard and strange as these words often combine several words. A third group of students described archaic words as difficult to remember and use correctly in English and Arabic. Many of these archaic terms in law usually originate from Latin and Medieval traditions. Therefore, the meaning of such words may not be forthright to a student who has limited training in law. Furthermore, the use of these terms usually differs from contemporary use and in different jurisdictions creating more challenges in translation. A fourth group of students described archaic terms in English as fixed and having a specific meaning in law. This posed a challenge in identifying equivalent phrases in Arabic. Differences in language structure, legal systems, and cultural interpretations complicate the translation of English legal phrases to Arabic. For example, legal texts in English often reflect common law principles while Arabic legal texts often reflect civil law principles. In these situations, it is challenging to identify equivalents; in other cases, such equivalents do not exist. Examples of excerpts from participants are shown below.

I experienced difficulties remembering to use the archaic terms correctly in English and Arabic. (P4)

There were fixed terms with a certain meaning in legal texts such as (in witness whereof) it was difficult to remember the equivalent phrase in Arabic. (P9)

The second challenge faced when using legal terminology was semi-technical vocabularies, which have a more technical meaning when used in legal texts. One group of students noted that the everyday use of these vocabularies differs from the legal use. Another group of students described these vocabularies as having more than one meaning, and it was difficult to find the precise meaning in a legal context. Another group of students noted that the general meaning of certain words was different in a legal context. Therefore, it was necessary to understand and distinguish between the meaning in general and legal contexts. These nuances can be difficult to capture when translating between English and Arabic and differences in legal systems and cultural interpretations exacerbate these difficulties.

The vocabulary we use in our daily life that has a different meaning in legal language. (P11)

The terms that have more than one meaning. (P18)

The third challenge students face when using legal terminology is technical terms, especially those of Latin or French origin. One group of students described these terms as difficult to translate due to their unique use in legal texts. A second group of students noted that they struggled with these terms as they were totally new to them. Moreover, memorizing these terms was challenging, as each term has a specific use and meaning in a legal context. A third group of students noted it was difficult to know the meaning of the terms without using a legal dictionary or the help of the teacher. These

technical terms are difficult to understand due to their specialized use and differences in cultures and legal systems. Examples of excerpts from participants are given below.

Legal texts are difficult to translate due to the unique words and phrases that are used in the legal field. (P38)
I do struggle with the new terms, especially the ones that are only used in the legal field and totally new to me. (P43)

2. Sub-Theme 2: Complex Sentence Structures

The complex sentence structure used in legal texts resulted in a high level of ambiguity, a significant challenge for students. This complexity was described in different ways. One group of students reported that the compound sentence structure consists of long sentences, and the use of models such as shall and may be challenging. A second group of students noted that the legal language structure was a major hurdle as it was difficult to understand. A third group of students noted that long and complex sentences made translation difficult. A fourth group of students described the structure as having a lot of run-on sentences which makes understanding paragraphs difficult. A fifth group of students noted that when long and complex sentences were translated into the target language, it was difficult to understand their meaning. This could result in structural errors. An example excerpt is given below.

The most challenging thing about this course was the structure of the sentences, their complexity, and their length. (P12)

(b). Theme 2: Solutions to Challenges in Legal Translation

In their reflective writings, students reported several techniques that helped them overcome the challenges they faced in the course. These techniques are presented as three sub-themes: practice, exposure to legal content, and portfolio.

1. Sub-Theme 1: Practice

Practice emerged as one of the techniques students used to overcome difficulties faced when translating legal texts. One group of students stated that practicing and reading more legal texts was an essential solution. Another group of students reported that reviewing what had been learned and correcting mistakes made during translation were critical in improving translation skills. From the participant's responses, it was clear that practicing was not limited to the individual level. Social constructivism was evident in the reflective essays, as students considered practicing while working in small groups a useful strategy for overcoming challenges faced in translating legal texts. This strategy emerged in various ways. One group of students reported they had acquired significant skills when working in teams. For these students, discussions among team members were essential in boosting self-confidence. A second group of students reported that translating in class was the best approach to learning how to translate. For these students, translating in class was a great way to remain focused and compare alternative translations. A third group of students noted learning to work and deal with the group members helped in gaining social, communication, and team-work skills. Another group of students noted that working in a team helped them acquire skills to choose correct context-specific terms and improve their social skills. Examples of excerpts from participants are given below.

What helped overcome obstacles was practicing. (P54)
Translating in class is the best way to learn how to translate well. It is a great way to stay focused during class and is even greater to discuss and compare different translations. (P42)

2. Sub-Theme 2: Exposure to Legal Content

Exposure to legal content emerged as another technique students used to overcome challenges. These techniques involved reading, looking up legal terminology, and watching legal documentaries. These techniques were described in different ways. One group of students noted they looked up and read source and target language texts to understand differences. These students used official government websites and dictionaries to expand their knowledge of legal terminology. A second group of students reported they used the internet, specialized websites, phones, and dictionaries to search for legal terms. The skills acquired from practicing using these tools and reading English/Arabic texts were critical in overcoming challenges. However, these students did not specify the tools they used. A third group of students reported they got exposure to legal content by widely reading contracts and legal texts. A fourth group of students noted they used tools such as the Oxford Dictionary, Almaany, and Reverso dictionary to find accurate translation equivalents. Exposure to instructor reviews was also important in exposing students to legal content. An example excerpt is given below.

I learned the correct and rapid way to search for important terms on the internet and in dictionaries as well. (P31)

3. Sub-Theme 3: Portfolio

From student responses, portfolios emerged as another technique students used to overcome challenges. These portfolios were part of coursework and consisted of legal texts, their translations, and glossaries. Students described the benefits of this portfolio. One group of students noted that writing words in glossaries made it easy to remember legal terms. Another group of students reported that the portfolio was very useful in avoiding mistakes. Writing many legal texts by hand was a productive strategy for these students. Another group noted that the portfolio was a useful asset for remembering legal terminology and its structure. An example excerpt is given below.

Writing words in glossaries made it easy for me to remember most of the words. (P27)

IV. DISCUSSION

A comparison of the two themes revealed that the first theme, which is challenges in legal translation, emerged from almost all the respondents. However, the second theme, which is solutions to challenges in legal translation, was mentioned by fewer respondents. A plausible explanation is that the students wrote their reflections toward the end of the course and may have gotten used to the complexity of legal texts. This could be a possible explanation for fewer mentions of the second theme. Such a finding suggests that challenges from legal terms are a major source of difficulty among legal translation trainees, particularly at undergraduate level. This has been similarly observed by Biel (2010) who emphasizes the need to train novices in legal terminology as supported by evidence. Biel (2010) further notes that surveys have shown that insufficiencies in field knowledge and specialized terminology are major limitations when students start their first translation job. Furthermore, Biel and Kockaert (2023) argue that this is prevalent in the legal field, where “law is expressed, enforced and practiced through language” (p. 1), with legal terminology being a crucial component of legal language.

Finding suitable equivalents of legal terms is generally acknowledged to be a major challenge for legal translators in the workplace. Such problems stem from the fact that legal translation often includes fewer universal components and more culture-specific ones. This can be attributed to the system-bound nature of legal terms, given that legal concepts are often the outcome of national legal systems (Biel, 2008). As previously mentioned, difficulties in the translation of legal terms arise from “conceptual incongruency between legal terms of different legal languages,” particularly in languages based on different legal systems and cultures (Alwazna, 2019, p. 76). The languages covered in this course, which are English and Arabic, are morphologically unrelated and are based on completely different legal systems. Alwazna (2019) explains that this asymmetry “springs from the fact that law has no universal reference and that the legal language is what controls the degree of difference in conceptual correspondence between legal terms” (p. 76). Way (2023) makes clear that “terminology and conceptual incongruency between legal systems and cultures has, without a shadow of a doubt, vexed legal translators since time immemorial” (p. 595).

Fernández and Zabalbeascoa (2012) found that when teamwork was extensively used, the performance of translation trainees was superior. This is in line with the students’ testimonies observed in this study regarding the significant benefit of group work and how working in groups improved translation skills. In fact, one of the most noticeable coping techniques that emerged from reflective writing is the benefit of group work. Biel (2010) notes that awareness activities in the legal translation classroom, such as contrastive exercises and glossaries, enable discovery and learning and shift focus from teacher-centered to student-centered classrooms.

Kiraly (2005) emphasizes the importance of collaborative and cooperative learning in translator education. This aligns well with the idea of using reflective writing and portfolios, as these tools can foster collaboration when students share and discuss their reflections with peers, such as learning new specialized translation skills. The social constructivist approach places emphasis on empowering students and giving them more responsibility in their learning process. Reflective writing and portfolios are excellent tools for this, as they encourage students to take ownership of their learning and development. Evidence in the field of translator training generally acknowledges the need to promote self-reflection among students enrolled in translator training programs. This is expected to lead to higher self-awareness and, in turn, boost trainees’ self-confidence (Norberg, 2014). When adopting a social constructivist approach to translator training, reflective writings form a key component in the trainees’ development. Further, reflective practice helps students and instructors become aware of the most problematic areas in translation training (Pietrzak, 2019). The practice of reflective writing can be considered a social constructivist learning method in which students can express their points of view and ideas about legal translation and thus be in charge of the learning process (Kiraly, 2000). The reflections made by students can attest to that through their ability to identify areas of difficulty and come up with solutions to deal with challenges they faced while translating legal texts.

The results of this study have shown legal terminology is the most challenging aspect for legal translation trainees. Strandvik (2016) has similarly observed that terminology is the only error category present in all systems for translation quality assessment. Thus, legal terminology is undoubtedly a critical component in legal translation training. This emphasizes the need for more time in legal translation classes to be dedicated to legal terminology. Legal translation trainers should aim to help trainees build an extensive repertoire of legal terms through all means available. This can include introducing trainees to legal terminology databases and specialized dictionaries, providing them with more practice on a variety of legal texts, and asking them to build personal legal glossaries.

As noted earlier, participants joined the legal translation course at a later stage in their BA journey. Thus, they had already acquired knowledge in research, terminology, and IT, which entails that they were aware that translating legal terms involves overcoming significant challenges and requires specific methodological skills, such as research and information management (Prieto Ramos, 2021b). Addressing legal translation challenges and equipping trainees with adequate skills to overcome such challenges is expected to provide future translators with a solid foundation to stand on when they embark on their legal translation careers. In fact, research has shown that “students who are encouraged to freely express their concerns or doubts gradually become aware that they are responsible for their own learning process and learn to take this responsibility” (Pietrzak, 2016, p. 58).

V. CONCLUSION

This qualitative study investigated the challenges translator trainees face and solutions to difficulties translator trainees face when dealing with legal texts from the trainees' perspectives. Two themes emerged from student reflections; the first theme showed the challenges faced. The second theme revealed solutions students used to overcome challenges. The major challenges reported by the participants were legal terminology and complex sentence structures. The solutions to overcome these challenges were practice, more exposure to legal content, and the use of a portfolio. Doing the portfolios at the end of the course was a completely new experience for the students, and based on their reflections, it was a highly appreciated activity from which most participants reported to have benefitted greatly. Being aware of the challenges trainees are expected to face helps instructors know what to focus on and enables them to provide their trainees with appropriate solutions to such challenges. Identifying the challenges and providing trainees with guidance on appropriate solutions to these challenges is expected to prepare them for life-long learning, which will hopefully transform them into distinguished professionals in the future.

Although this study has provided insights into legal translation challenges and solutions, it still has a number of limitations that need to be acknowledged. Due to the limited number of participants included in the study, the results are indicative rather than conclusive. Another limitation that must be acknowledged is the short span over which the study was conducted. Further, the challenges and solutions stated by the participants could be a result of the language pair covered in this course, i.e., English and Arabic. Thus, future studies need to investigate the challenges and solutions translation trainees face when working with legal texts over a longer period, using a larger number of participants and different language pairs. Further, future studies need to compare translation trainees and professional translators to understand the challenges and solutions reported by each group when dealing with legal texts.

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