

**Investigating the Use of Google Translate in  
“Terms and Conditions” in an Airline’s Official  
Website: Errors and Implications**

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**Abstract**

In the era of globalization, the Internet is regarded as one of the most popular sources of information given the number of on-line browsers who have access to websites. The tourism industry, be it hotels or airlines, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century relies heavily on the provision of information via its official websites. Thus, it is crucial that the information be accurate so as not to cause misunderstanding, or legal and financial damage. However, when information in several foreign languages involves a complicated process of translation conducted with a translation machine, serious problems can occur. According to Newmark (1998), human translation occurs at two levels: semantic equivalence and communicative equivalence. The reliance on a translation tool such as Google Translate is therefore worth our attention to find out whether such a tool is efficient and practical. In this

study, we investigate a low-cost airline's official website deploying Google Translate to translate its official, legal documents. Our particular focus lies in "Terms and Conditions" because of its crucial impact on the airline and its passengers. Findings suggest that errors occur at three major levels: lexical, syntactical and discursive. The errors inevitably cause unintelligibility, to which we provide explanations and also offer some practical implications for future use.

**Keywords:** Google Translate, translation, errors

## **Introduction**

A new low-cost airline based in Vietnam was established in 2012. It has mainly served domestic destinations with one international destination: Bangkok. As a new business entity, the airline relies heavily on its official website to promote the airline, provide services and disseminate necessary information including "Terms and Conditions". "Terms and Conditions" is a very important part of an airline website as it officially states all necessary details of the usage, values, and legally-related principles of each airline ticket.

For an airline company operating services to international destinations, it is at times obligatory to have the air ticket's terms and conditions translated into the languages of the destinations. As the airline serves both Vietnam and Thailand, the information is provided in three languages: Vietnamese, English and Thai. Misunderstanding or misusing the terms and conditions of the ticket can lead to ticket wastage and a big loss to the passenger and consequently create both direct and indirect negative impacts to the airline company, in terms of safety, reliability and overall image. Accordingly, accurate translation of the air ticket terms and conditions must be taken into consideration.

The issue of translation is however a long and complex one. For the airline in question, the original information was written in Vietnamese which was then translated into English. The provision

of Thai translation yielded further complications. Without Thai staff in the marketing department, the airline relies on a machine translation tool, Google Translate, to translate all the documents from English into Thai. Google Translate, however, like other automatic translation tools, has its limitations. As each language has its own character and linguistic functions, Google Translate may be able to deliver better and more accurate translation results in some languages than others. It is rational to say therefore that Google Translate does not produce a perfect translation to the original texts and this has created a major problem in the intelligibility of the translated texts which has had a negative impact upon its passengers.

While mistranslations may not look so crucial for frequent travelers, they can pose a lot of complications for passengers who rarely travel internationally and create a lot of legal and financial problems. The key objective of this paper is to investigate the use of Google Translate in “Terms and Conditions” in the airline’s official website in order to find errors in translating from English to Thai and attempt feasible implications for users of Google Translate to practically translate formal or legal-related documents.

## **Literature review**

### **Translation theories**

There is a multiplicity of translation theories. One reason for the great variety of translation theories and sub-theories is the fact that the processes of translating can be viewed from many different perspectives: stylistics, author's intent, diversity of languages, differences of corresponding cultures, problems of interpersonal communication, changes in literary fashion, distinct kinds of content (e.g. mathematical theory and lyric poetry), and the circumstances in which translations are to be used, e.g. read in the tranquil setting of one's own living room, acted on the theatre stage, or blared from a loudspeaker to a restless mob (Nida, 1991). Documented translation theories started in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and have been continuously revisited. To illustrate, in 1540, Etienne Dolet established 5 principles of translation

indicating that the translator must fully understand the sense and meaning of the original author although he is at liberty to clarify obscurities, has a perfect knowledge of both SL and TL, avoids word-for-word renderings, uses forms of speech in common use, and chooses and orders words appropriately to produce the correct tone. These principles obviously pinpoint the significance of understanding the text as a major obligation. Later, Tytler (1797) introduces three laws of translation which state that the translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work, that the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of original, and that the translation should have all the ease of original composition. However, despite the fact that many novel theories were proposed by translation scholars, the concept has always emerged out of the two traditional approaches of “word vs. sense” or “literal vs. free” translation (Newmark, 1998). Whereas a word-for-word translation attempts to maintain the meanings of original texts in the new language, its sense-for-sense counterpart permits a translator’s negotiation and interpretation of meanings.

Therefore, with the reigning dominance in the field of translation studies, these two translation theories: 1) word-for-word translation and 2) sense-for-sense translation will be used as a framework of analysis because in order to analyse the errors of a machine translation, such basic translation theories are a requisite. As a machine, Google Translate, can barely compete with experienced human translators, particularly when trying to convey all meaning accurately and naturally. Therefore, based on initial investigations, the common errors found in using Google Translate arise from the differences in practicality between a word-for-word translation and a sense-for-sense translation. Both theories will be used in the analysis of sources of errors.

### **Google Translate’s translation process**

Google Translate detects patterns in documents that have already been translated by human translators. It makes intelligent guesses as to what an appropriate translation should be. This

process of seeking patterns in a large number of text is called "statistical machine translation" or SMT. It is based on training statistical models from large corpora of human translations. It has the advantage of training rapidly, if there are available corpora, compared to rule-based systems, and AMT systems are often relatively good at lexical disambiguation (Stymne, 2011).

Since the translations are generated by machines, not all translations yield perfect results, however. According to Stymne (2011), statistical machine translation systems have a large drawback because they use no or limited grammatical knowledge and relying on a target language model to produce correct target language texts, often resulting in ungrammatical output. Fem (2011) also states that Translation Tool is completely blind when it comes to translating texts that use a special kind of structure or grammar, context, and even ambiguity. These mistakes commonly happen when the Translation Tools are given a task to translate sentences.

Several recent studies on Google Translate do actually consolidate Stymne and Fem's arguments on the shortcomings of translation machines. Agarwal et al. (2011) studied people's sentiments through their tweets and discovered that tweets in foreign languages which had been translated into English by Google Translate were incomprehensible. They labelled those tweets as "junk". Balk et al. (2012) examined the accuracy of Google Translate of 8 foreign languages into English (Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese and Spanish). Their findings showed that while the programme could adequately translate German and Portuguese into English, it could not do well with oriental languages especially Chinese, having the lowest agreement between original texts and translated ones. In another study led by Balk (2013), a comparative study of machine-translated and original language reports was conducted. The researchers argued that Google Translate had potential to reduce language bias but it was certainly a trade-off between completeness and risk of error.

Google Translate does not only pose problems to non-English texts translated into English; it also raises the issue of accuracy in the translation of English into other languages. The work of Nguyen-Lu et al. (2009) is a good illustration. The translation machine was deployed to aid patients who did not speak English in a London hospital. Ten common anaesthetic pre-assessment questions were translated into ten languages (Arabic, Filipino, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Polish, Spanish and Vietnamese). The results revealed that Vietnamese received the least accurate translation.

To our best knowledge, none of the previous researchers included Thai in their studies. Therefore, this research can definitely help shed light on the issue of Google Translate and its English-Thai translation accuracy.

### **Common errors and mistakes**

Named entities (NE), the noun or noun phrases referring to persons, locations and organizations, are among the most information-bearing linguistic structures. Extracting and translating named entities benefits many natural language processing problems such as cross-lingual information retrieval, cross-lingual question answering and machine translation (Huang, 2005). Word segmentation is a major problem for languages that have no word boundary such as Thai, Japanese, Chinese, and etc. (Modhiran et al., 2005).

With regard to English-Thai translation, Chimsuk (2010) categorised problems found in using translation machines including lexical and structural ambiguities, lexical and structural differences, and multiword units such as idioms and collocations.

Example 1:

- a. The check-in counters **close** thirty minutes before the departure time.
- b. Our check-in counters are located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor **close** to gate number 5.

The word “close” in the above sentences has different parts of speech: a verb in sentence (a) and an adjective in sentence (b). A translation machine, such as Google Translate, may not be able to verify the exact meaning of the word “close” for each particular sentence due to its lexical and grammatical versatility.

Example 2:

“William saw Sarah using binoculars.”

This ambiguous sentence structure yields two interpretations:

- a. William used binoculars to see Sarah.
- b. William saw Sarah who was using binoculars.

The structural ambiguity can be challenging for the translation machine because it will not be able to select the intended meaning given its limitation.

Example 3:

“We have a nice house.”

The syntactic difference between English and Thai will pose a problem of accuracy in a machine translation. In this example, the position of the adjective will be translated as such in Thai, making it ungrammatical.

For this study, the deployment of Google Translate in the English-Thai translation of “Terms and Conditions” of the airline’s website is the focal point of analysis. Based on the two aforementioned translation theories, the research aims at identifying errors made by Google Translate.

## **Research methodology**

### **Research question**

This study aims at answering the following question:  
*What are the common errors of Google Translate in translating “Terms*

*and Conditions” section in the airline’s official website from English to Thai?*

### **Data**

The data of the research came from “Terms and Conditions” on the airline’s official website. The data in this section comprise 14 items: Definition, Application, Ticket/Itinerary Confirmation, Carriage Fares, Reservation, Check-in, Refusal and Limitation of Carriage, Baggage, Schedules, Refund, Behave on Aircraft, Liability Limitation, Limitation on Claims and Actions and Modification and Waiver. Each item contains different formats and lengths of the text. For example, in “Definition,” the explanations of terms are between one and three lines long and the types of sentence structures are at the simple, compound and complex level. In “Ticket Price/Carriage Fares,” the sentences are long (between 8-10 lines) but structurally uncomplicated.

Only seven items were used and analysed in depth in this qualitative research including Check-in, Refusal and Limitation of Carriage, Baggage, Schedules, Behave on Aircraft, Liability Limitation, and Limitation on Claims and Actions because they contain different structural complexities that can represent all other items not included in the analysis. In addition, they yield great significance of meaning to the users of the website. Misunderstanding of the items could result in serious legal affairs. A sample of the original data was included in Index 1 after the references.

### **Procedures**

After identifying the objectives of the study, the proposed research was conducted in various procedures. At the outset, the texts, both in English and Thai, were compiled from the official website and copied into Word documents. Then, to prepare for the analysis, the English texts were paired with their Thai equivalence. In order not to make the research discussion too discursive and lengthy, only crucial examples were provided as illustrations of the translation errors.



### Data analysis

With the promptness of the applicable information, the data were then analysed to identify errors. The analysis was done in accordance with the order of the text. That is, we analysed each individual sentence and observed how and where the errors occurred: lexical, syntactic and/or discursive level; each type of error was then categorized. The definitions and criteria for each category are as follows:

Type of error	Definition	Criteria	Example
Lexical	Errors occur at a word level	Errors affect the meaning of a particular word but the phrase or sentence can still be understood.	“your manners on board have the <b>potential</b> to endanger the aircraft” มารยาทของคุณบนเครื่องบินมีศักยภาพที่จะเป็นอันตรายต่ออากาศยาน
Syntactic	A phrase or a sentence contains disorders of sentence structure, rendering it ungrammatical in the destination language	Errors affect the meaning of a particular phrase/chunk but the meaning of the phrase or sentence can still be guessed.	taxes and fees stipulated by the <b>Government and airport authorities</b> ภาษีและค่าธรรมเนียมที่กำหนดโดยรัฐบาลและสนามบินเจ้าหน้าที่
Discursive	A whole phrase or a sentence is incoherent and incomprehensible to Thai readers	Errors stem from the lack of coherence and the sentence cannot be comprehended.	At our discretion we may decide to carry such infants on our flights ขึ้นอยู่กับดุลยพินิจของเรา เราอาจตัดสินใจที่จะดำเนินการเช่นทารกในเที่ยวบินของเรา

To make the analysis academically established, each type of error was further investigated, with reference to the relevant theoretical frameworks. After the analysis, the problems of Google Translate were summarized. Finally, based on the summary, implications were provided on Google Translate's limitations to offer further recommendation on the more appropriate uses of Google Translate.

## **Findings**

To answer the research question, the findings are divided into 3 levels of errors: lexical, syntactic, and discursive, which are illustrated and explicated as follows:

### **Lexical translation**

Translation errors occur at a word level and can be separated based on the nature of the occurrence as follows.

#### **I. Non-equivalence between source (English) and target language (Thai)**

- i. **Wrong alternate meaning of a word:** choosing an incorrect meaning of a word with more than one meaning

**Table 1:** Examples of Wrong Alternate Meaning of a Word

Original Text	Translation into Thai by GT	Error Analysis
<p>6.1 Our check-in counters open two (02) hours before the scheduled flight's departure time and <b>close</b> thirty (30) minutes (for domestic flight) and forty-five (45) minutes (for international flight) before the scheduled flight's departure time. The time of check-in, which will be provided to passenger, may be different due to the decision of airport authority and specific flight. You must check-in when our counters are open. We reserve the right not to <b>allow</b> you to check-in if:</p>	<p>ของเรา เคาน์เตอร์ เช็คอิน เปิด สอง (02) ชั่วโมง ก่อน เวลาออกเดินทาง ของ เที่ยวบิน ที่กำหนด และ <b>ใกล้</b> สามสิบ ( 30 ) นาที ( สำหรับ เที่ยวบิน ภายในประเทศ ) และ สี่สิบห้า ( 45 ) นาที ( สำหรับเที่ยวบิน ระหว่าง ประเทศ ) ก่อนเวลาออกเดินทาง ของเที่ยวบิน ที่กำหนด ของ เวลา เช็คอิน ที่จะมีให้กับ ผู้โดยสารอาจจะแตกต่างกัน เนื่องจาก การตัดสินใจของผู้มีอำนาจ ที่สนามบิน และ เที่ยวบิน ที่เฉพาะเจาะจง คุณต้องตรวจสอบ ใน เมื่อ เคาน์เตอร์ ของเรา จะมีการเปิด เราขอสงวน สิทธิที่จะไม่ <b>ช่วย</b> ให้คุณสามารถ เช็คอิน ถ้า :</p>	<p><b>close</b> is translated as "near" instead of "close" as opposed to "open".</p> <p><b>allow</b> is translated as "help" instead of "permit".</p>
<p>9.2 Cancellation, changes of schedule: At any time after your booking has been made, we may change our schedule, cancel flights or be subjected to delays due to <b>safety concerns</b> or commercial</p>	<p>9.2 การยกเลิก การเปลี่ยนแปลงของตารางเวลา: ในช่วงเวลาหลังการจองของคุณได้รับการทำเราอาจมีการเปลี่ยนแปลงตารางเวลาของเรายกเลิกเที่ยวบินหรือถูกยึดเยียดให้เกิดความล่าช้าอันเนื่องมาจาก<b>ความกังวล</b> เกี่ยวกับ<b>ความปลอดภัย</b></p>	<p><b>safety concerns</b> is translated as "anxieties about safety" instead of "safety reasons".</p>

<p>reasons. In such events we shall either:</p>	<p>หรือเหตุผลเชิงพาณิชย์ในกิจกรรมดังกล่าวเราจะต้อง อย่างไรก็ตามโดยหนึ่ง</p>	
<p>11.1 If your <b>manners on board</b> have the <b>potential</b> to endanger the aircraft or any person or <b>property</b> on board (smoking, drunkenness, using mobile phones...), or obstruct or hinder the crew we may take measures, including <b>restraint</b>, or whatever we deem necessary to prevent continuation of such actions. You may be asked to <b>disembark</b> and refused <b>onward carriage</b> and may be prosecuted for offences committed aboard the aircraft.</p>	<p>11.1 หากมารยาทของคุณ <b>ในกระดานมีศักยภาพ</b>ที่จะเป็นอันตรายต่ออากาศยานหรือบุคคลใด ๆ หรือ <b>สถานที่ให้บริการ</b>ในคณะกรรมการ (การสูบบุหรี่หรือ <b>drunkenness</b>, ใช้โทรศัพท์มือถือ ... ) หรือ ขัดขวางหรือเป็นอุปสรรคต่อทีมเราอาจจะใช้มาตรการรวมถึง <b>ความยับยั้งชั่งใจ</b>หรือสิ่งที่เราเห็นว่าจำเป็น เพื่อป้องกันไม่ให้ความต่อเนื่องของการกระทำดังกล่าว คุณอาจจะถามว่าจะ <b>ขึ้นฝั่ง</b>และ <b>ปฏิเสธการขนส่งเป็นต้นไป</b> และอาจถูกดำเนินคดีในความผิดที่กระทำบนอากาศยาน</p>	<p><b>manners</b> is translated as "etiquette" instead of "behavior".</p> <p><b>on board</b> is translated as "in a writing board" instead of "in an aircraft".</p> <p><b>potential</b> is translated as "capability" instead of "chance".</p> <p><b>property</b> is translated as "a serviced place" instead of "assets".</p> <p><b>restraint</b> is translated as "self control" instead of "being arrested".</p> <p><b>disembark</b> is translated as "ashore" instead of "get off the aircraft".</p> <p><b>onward carriage</b> is translated as "transportation from now onwards" instead of "continuation of traveling".</p>

- ii. **Wrong part of speech:** translation using incorrect form of part of speech such as translating an adjective as a noun instead

**Table 2:** Examples of Wrong Part of Speech

Original Text	Translation into Thai by GT	Error Analysis
You may <b>be asked</b> to disembark and refused onward carriage and may be prosecuted for offences committed aboard the aircraft.	คุณอาจจะถามว่าจะขึ้นฝั่งและปฏิเสธการขนส่งเป็นต้นไปและอาจถูกดำเนินคดีในความผิดที่กระทำบนอากาศยาน	<b>be asked</b> is translated as "raise a question" (present tense) instead of "be ordered" (passive).
b. Retain the value of your fare in a credit account for your future travel provided that you <b>re-book</b> within 90 days;	รักษามูลค่าของค่าโดยสารของคุณในบัญชีเครดิตสำหรับการเดินทางในอนาคตของคุณให้ <b>คุณอีกครั้ง</b> หนังสือภายใน 90 วัน;	<b>re-book</b> is translated as "give the book to you again" instead of "reserve the seat for you again".

## II. Context digression

- i. **Lexical generalization:** giving general meaning of a word which requires specific meaning.

**Table 3:** Examples of Lexical Generalization

Original Text	Translation into Thai by GT	Error Analysis
b. You don't have proper <b>identification</b> .	คุณไม่ได้มี <b>การระบุที่</b> เหมาะสม	<b>identification</b> is translated as "specifying" instead of "personal identity documents".

11.2 If we decide to <b>divert the aircraft</b> for the purpose of <b>offloading</b> you, you shall be liable for all costs that we incur as a result of such diversion.	11.2 ถ้าเราตัดสินใจที่จะเบี่ยงเบนความสนใจเครื่องบินสำหรับวัตถุประสงค์ของการระบายคุณคุณจะต้องรับผิดชอบค่าใช้จ่ายทั้งหมดที่เราต้องเสียเป็นผลมาจากการเบี่ยงเบนดังกล่าว	<b>divert the aircraft</b> is translated as "distract the attention of the aircraft" instead of "changing the route of the flight".
		<b>offloading</b> is translated as "draining" instead of "getting someone off the aircraft".

- ii. **Definition constraint:** giving specific meaning of a word which requires general meaning

**Table 4:** Examples of Definition Constraint

Original Text	Translation into Thai by GT	Error Analysis
g. We deem you unfit to travel due to drunkenness or any obvious <b>medical condition</b> .	เราเห็นว่าคุณไม่เหมาะที่จะเดินทางไปอื่นเนื่องจากความมึนเมาหรือ <b>เงื่อนไขทางการแพทย์</b> ใดๆที่เห็นได้ชัด	<b>medical condition</b> is laconically translated as "medical regulation" instead of "body condition unfit to travel".
We will endeavor to adhere to <b>published schedules</b> .	เราจะพยายามที่จะปฏิบัติตามตารางเวลาการ <b>ตีพิมพ์</b>	<b>published schedules</b> is laconically translated as "printing schedules" instead of "schedules which have been publicized".

- iii. **Mistranslating idiomatic expressions:** translating through word-by-word pattern without taking the word's idiomatic meaning into account

**Table 5:** Examples of Mistranslating Idiomatic Expressions

Original Text	Translation into Thai by GT	Error Analysis
You must <b>check-in</b> when our counters are open	คุณต้องตรวจสอบในเมื่อเคาน์เตอร์ของเราจะมีการเปิด	<b>Check-in</b> is translated as “examine” instead of “register for boarding the aircraft”.
7.6 Infants: We reserve the right not to carry infants below 14 days <b>old</b> .	ทารก: เราขอสงวนสิทธิ์ที่จะไม่ดำเนินการที่ต่ำกว่าทารก 14 วันเก่า	The word “ <b>old</b> ” in the phrase “ <b>14 days old</b> ” is translated as “outdated” instead of referring to the age of a person.
9.1 Schedules: We will do our best to avoid any delay in <b>carrying you and your baggage</b> .	ตาราง: เราจะทำอย่างดีที่สุดเพื่อหลีกเลี่ยงความล่าช้าในการดำเนินการใดๆที่คุณและกระเป๋าของคุณ	<b>carrying you and your baggage</b> is translated as “processing you and your baggage” instead of taking you and your baggage to the destination”.
We may change our schedule, cancel flights or <b>be subjected to</b> delays due to safety concerns or commercial reasons.	เราอาจมีการเปลี่ยนแปลงตารางเวลาของเรายกเลิกเที่ยวบินหรือถูกยัดเยียดให้เกิดความล่าช้าอันเนื่องมาจากความกังวลเกี่ยวกับความปลอดภัยหรือเหตุผลเชิงพาณิชย์	<b>be subjected to</b> is translated as “be forced to” instead of “preserve the right to”.

11.1 If your manners on board have the potential to endanger the aircraft or any person or property <b>on board</b> ...	11.1 หากมารยาทของคุณในกระดานมีศักยภาพที่จะเป็นอันตรายต่ออากาศยานหรือบุคคลใดๆหรือสถานที่ให้บริการในคณะกรรมการ	<b>on board</b> is translated as “in a committee” instead of “on an aircraft”.
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### III. Omission

- i. **Incomplete content translation:** avoiding translation of some words or phrase

**Table 6:** Examples of Incomplete Content Translation

Original Text	Translation into Thai by GT	Error Analysis
c. You don't have the documentation, permit or visa necessary for travel to a <b>particular</b> place or country.	คุณไม่ได้มีเอกสารใบอนุญาตหรือวีซ่าที่จำเป็นสำหรับการเดินทางไปยังสถานที่ใดหรือประเทศ	The word “ <b>particular</b> ” in the phrase “ <b>particular place or country</b> ” is used as an adjective for “place” and “country” in the source context, but it is only used once for “place”, not for “country” in the Thai translation.
f. The Government or other authorities prohibit you from <b>boarding</b> .	รัฐบาลหรือหน่วยงานอื่นๆ ห้ามคุณจากการขึ้น	<b>boarding</b> is translated as “going up” instead of “getting on the aircraft”.

- ii. **Skipping:** keeping original English words in the translated phrase



**Table 7:** Examples of Skipping

Original Text	Translation into Thai by GT	Error Analysis
h. We deem you not medically fit to travel or decide that your medical condition <b>poses</b> or could pose a danger to the health of other passengers.	เราเห็นว่าคุณไม่ได้ในทางการแพทย์ที่เหมาะสมในการเดินทางหรือตัดสินใจว่าเงื่อนไขทางการแพทย์ของคุณ <b>poses</b> หรืออาจก่อให้เกิดอันตรายต่อสุขภาพของผู้โดยสารคนอื่นๆ	<b>poses</b> is not translated.
(smoking, <b>drunkenness</b> , using mobile phones...),	(การสูบบุหรี่ <b>drunkenness</b> , ใช้โทรศัพท์ที่มีแอลกอฮอล์ .. )	<b>drunkenness</b> is not translated.

#### IV. Other lexical-related errors

i. **Number:** adding more number into a singular word

**Table 8:** Examples of Errors in Number

Original Text	Translation into Thai by GT	Error Analysis
... when the <b>parent</b> of the infant signs a limited liability statement and a medical practitioner expressly sanctions carriage in writing.	...เมื่อบิดามารดาของทารกได้ลงนามในคำสั่งจำกัดการรับผิดชอบและแพทย์ชัดลงโทษสายการบินในการเขียน	<b>parent</b> in a singular form is translated as “father and mother” (plural) instead of one single “close relative”.

ii. **Formality:** using informal meaning (spoken language) in a written context

**Table 9:** Examples of Errors in Formality

Original Text	Translation into Thai by GT	Error Analysis
<b>However</b> , times are subject to change at any time and we will not assume any responsibilities relating to damage arising from such changes.	แต่บางครั้งอาจมีการเปลี่ยนแปลงได้ตลอดเวลา และเราจะไม่รับผิดชอบใดๆ ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับความเสี่ยงภัยที่เกิดขึ้นจากการเปลี่ยนแปลงดังกล่าว	<b>however</b> is informally translated as "but at some times" instead of "somehow".
... or <b>whatever</b> we deem necessary to prevent continuation of such actions.	...หรือสิ่งที่เราเห็นว่าจำเป็นเพื่อป้องกันไม่ให้ความต่อเนื่องของการกระทำดังกล่าว	<b>whatever</b> is informally translated as "thing" instead of "any measurement".

### Syntactic translation

A syntactic error takes place when a phrase or a sentence contains lexical errors or disorders of sentence structure, rendering it ungrammatical in the destination language. They can be further categorised as follows:

- i. **Single word-based translation:** a word-for-word translation without any contextual consideration causing syntactical disorder

**Table 10:** Examples of Errors in Single Word-Based Translation

Original Text	Translation into Thai by GT	Error Analysis
h. We deem you not <b>medically fit</b> to travel...	เราเห็นว่าคุณไม่ได้ในทางการแพทย์ที่เหมาะสมในการเดินทาง	<b>medically fit</b> is translated into Thai which can be reversed into English as "in an appropriate medical".

<p>c. Make a reimbursement to passengers including <b>carriage charges</b>,...</p>	<p>ทำให้การชำระเงินคืนแก่ผู้โดยสารรวมทั้งสายการบินค่าใช้จ่าย...</p>	<p><b>carriage charges</b> is translated into Thai which can be reversed into English as "cost airlines". Here, "carriage" is translated as a noun instead of an adjective as in the source context, whereas "charges" is translated as an adjective instead of a noun.</p>
<p>... taxes and fees stipulated by the <b>Government and airport authorities</b>, prices and passenger services at airports, other fees related to a canceled flight (if any).</p>	<p>ภาษีและค่าธรรมเนียมที่กำหนดโดยรัฐบาลและสนามบินเจ้าหน้าที่ราคาและการให้บริการผู้โดยสารที่สนามบิน, ค่าธรรมเนียมอื่นๆที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการบินยกเลิก (ถ้ามี)</p>	<p><b>Government and airport authorities</b> is translated into Thai which can be reversed into English as "Government and authorities airport". Here, "airport" is translated as a noun instead of an adjective as in the source context, whereas "authority" is translated as an adjective instead of a noun.</p>
<p>Smoking is not permitted <b>on any of our flights</b>.</p>	<p>การสูบบุหรี่ไม่ได้รับอนุญาตใดๆของเที่ยวบินของเรา</p>	<p><b>on any of our flight</b> is translated into Thai which can be reversed into English as "our flight of any".</p>

- ii. **Passive - Active:** using passive structure where an active structure is more preferable, particularly in a Thai context

**Table 11:** Examples of Errors in Passive – Active Structure

Original Text	Translation into Thai by GT	Error Analysis
<p><b>Flight information will be advised to passengers</b> in accordance with the Law on Aviation and the management of the State Agency.</p>	<p>ข้อมูลเที่ยวบินจะได้รับ การแนะนำให้ผู้โดยสาร ตามกฎหมายเกี่ยวกับการ บินและการจัดการของ หน่วยงานของรัฐ</p>	<p><b>Flight information will be advised to passengers (9.1)</b> should be converted as active sentence when translated into Thai.</p>
<p>...other fees related to a <b>cancelled flight</b> (if any).</p>	<p>ค่าธรรมเนียมอื่นๆที่ เกี่ยวข้องกับการบินยกเลิก (ถ้ามี)</p>	<p><b>cancelled flight (9.2 c)</b> is translated into Thai which can be reversed into English as "flight is cancelled".</p>

### Discursive translation

A discursive error takes place when a phrase or a sentence contains too many lexical and syntactical errors, rendering it impossible for Thai readers to understand the translation of the whole phrase or sentence.

**Table 12:** Examples of Errors in Discursive Interpretation

Original Text	Translation into Thai by GT
The time of check-in, which will be provided to passenger, may be different	ของเวลาเช็คอินที่จะมีให้กับผู้โดยสาร อาจจะแตกต่างกัน
due to the decision of airport authority and specific flight.	เนื่องจากการตัดสินใจของผู้มีอำนาจที่ สนามบินและเที่ยวบินที่เฉพาะเจาะจง
You request to check in after our counters are closed	คุณขอให้ตรวจสอบในหลังเคาน์เตอร์ของเราจะถูกล็อค
At our discretion we may decide to carry such infants on our flights	ขึ้นอยู่กับดุลยพินิจของเราเราอาจตัดสินใจที่จะดำเนินการเช่นทารกในเที่ยวบินของเรา
At any time after your booking has been made, we may change our schedule	ในช่วงเวลาหลังการจองของคุณได้รับการทำเราอาจมีการเปลี่ยนแปลงตารางเวลาของเรา
In such events we shall either:	ในกิจกรรมดังกล่าวเราจะต้องอย่างใดอย่างหนึ่ง
Carry you on another of our scheduled services on which space is available without additional charge;	ดำเนินการคุณในอีกหนึ่งบริการของเราที่กำหนดไว้ในพื้นที่ซึ่งสามารถใช้ได้โดยไม่ต้องเสียค่าใช้จ่ายเพิ่มเติม
If your manners on board have the potential to endanger the aircraft or any person or property on board (smoking, drunkenness, using mobile phones...), or obstruct or hinder the crew we may take measures, including restraint, or whatever we deem necessary to prevent continuation of such actions. You may be asked to disembark and refused onward carriage and may be prosecuted for offences committed aboard the aircraft.	หากมารยาทของคุณในกระดานมีศักยภาพที่จะเป็นอันตรายต่ออากาศยานหรือบุคคลใดๆหรือสถานที่ให้บริการในคณะกรรมการ (การสูบบุหรี่ drunkenness, ใช้โทรศัพท์มือถือ ...) หรือขัดขวางหรือเป็นอุปสรรคต่อทีมเราอาจจะใช้มาตรการรวมถึงความยับยั้งชั่งใจหรือสิ่งที่เราเห็นว่าจำเป็นเพื่อป้องกันไม่ให้ความต่อเนื่องของการกระทำดังกล่าวคุณอาจจะถามว่าจะขึ้นฝั่งและปฏิเสธการขนส่งเป็นต้นไปและอาจถูกดำเนินคดีในความผิดที่กระทำบนอากาศยาน

Original Text	Translation into Thai by GT
unless a higher value is declared in advance and additional charges are paid	จนกว่าค่าที่สูงขึ้นมีการประกาศล่วงหน้า และค่าใช้จ่ายเพิ่มเติมจะได้รับเงิน
If you wish to file a claim or an action regarding delay of checked baggage, you must notify us within twenty one (21) days from the date the baggage has been placed at our disposal. Such notification must be in writing and posted to us.	ถ้าคุณต้องการที่จะเรียกร้องหรือดำเนินการล่าช้าของกระเป๋าเดินทางตรวจสอบคุณ จะต้องแจ้งให้เราทราบภายในยี่สิบเอ็ด (21) วันนับจากวันที่สัมภาระได้ถูกวางไว้ใน การกำจัดของเราแจ้งเตือนดังกล่าวจะต้อง อยู่ในการเขียนและการโพสต์มาให้เรา
Limitation of actions: Any right to damages shall be negated if an action is not brought against us within two (2) years of the date of arrival at the destination, or the date on which the aircraft was scheduled to arrive, or the date on which the carriage stopped. The method of calculating the period of limitation shall be determined by law of the court where the case is processed.	สิทธิที่จะให้เกิดความเสียหายใดๆที่จะต้อง ได้รับเมื่อตะกี้ถ้าการกระทำไม่ได้มากับเรา ภายในสองปี (2) ของวันที่มาถึงที่ปลายทาง หรือวันที่เครื่องบินมีกำหนดจะมาถึงหรือ วันที่ที่รถหยุดวิธีการคำนวณระยะเวลาของ ข้อจำกัดที่จะถูกกำหนดโดยกฎหมายของ ศาลที่กรณีที่มีการประมวลผล

### Limitations of the study

The apparent limitation in analyzing “Terms and Conditions” was the limitation of space and examples involved. The study relied largely on qualitative methodology of data collection and was therefore restrictive in nature. As many parts of the contents of the data are about commercial aviation affairs involving specific words and phrases with technical terms and implications, the study therefore required cautious and in-depth error analysis and interpretation.

In addition, because the original information was written in Vietnamese, then translated into English, before being translated

from English into Thai using Google Translate as the major tool, the information could easily be lost due to these various layers of translation, which would respectively affect the end-results of the target language.

Moreover, since there is a dearth of research on Google Translate, or other relevant translation machines, the fundamental and analytical backgrounds in terms of related theories or frameworks are also limited. There are very few studies which have used supporting theories to assess the errors that can occur when using Google Translate to translate English contents into Thai. To deal with this limitation, other normal and general translation theories were used.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

Various types of errors found in the use of Google Translate in “Terms and Conditions” on the airline’s official website can potentially cause a major problem in the intelligibility of the translated Thai texts which could lead to a negative impact upon the airline’s passengers, particularly in terms of safety and legal issues. This study, therefore, set out with the aim of assessing major common errors from the use of Google Translate in translating specific sources of text from English into Thai, - identifying deficiencies of Google Translate, and providing a brief, effective implication of the use of this translation tool.

The results of this study indicate that Google Translate’s most frequently occurring errors can be found at the **lexical level**. The most common errors found at this level are the results of non-equivalence between the source (English) and the target language (Thai) leading to choosing the wrong alternate meaning of a word or using the wrong part of speech. With limited lexical knowledge and relying on the source language model to produce target language texts without concerning the background of the language format, the errors found at the lexical level also include context digression in forms of lexical generalization, definition constraint, and various errors in translating idiomatic expressions. Some errors due to limited access to vocabulary sources of the target

language also result in omission in forms of incomplete content translation and skipping some unknown words. It is also interesting to see that the same phrase could be mistranslated twice in two different circumstances. For example, the phrase “on board” (11.1) which is used twice is translated with two different meanings, both incorrectly at the lexical level. It is translated first as “in a writing board’ and then as “in a committee”.

As mentioned in the literature review, prior studies such as that of Stymne (2011) have indicated a large drawback of statistical machine translation, like Google Translate, with limited grammatical knowledge resulting in ungrammatical output. This can be reiterated by this study through the findings of errors at the **syntactic level**. While relying on the source language model to produce target language texts without taking into account the background of the target language characteristics, we have observed that, like various other translation machines, Google Translate tends to deploy a single word-based translation approach (word-for-word) without any contextual consideration yielding a syntactical disorder. For example, in English, an adjective is normally placed in front of a noun to amplify more details about that noun – [article + adjective + noun] such as “a red car”. In contrast, in Thai, an adjective is always placed after a noun. Without knowing the correct order and sequence of each type of words in a sentence; the translation could affect the overall understanding of the recipients.

Another important finding was that due to the above limited translation techniques, Google Translate is not able to distinguish passive and active sentences to process a correct result in the target language (Thai). In Thai, an active structure is more preferable in forming a sentence, whereas in English, a passive form can be used when one would like to stress the action and omit the person doing the action.

With the weakness of Google Translate at the lexical and syntactic level, various phrases and sentences in the source text after being translated into the target language become hardly understandable. This is an error at a **discursive level** where the



recipients are unable to understand the translation of the whole phrase or sentence due to complex lexical errors, syntactical disorder, and contextual incongruity.

These results agree with the findings of other studies (Modhiran et al., 2005), in which word segmentation is a major problem for languages with no word boundary, such as Thai, Japanese, Chinese, and etc. The findings above further support the idea of Fem (2011) which pointed out that the translation tool is completely blind when it concerns the translation of a special kind of structure or grammar, context, or even ambiguity. And moreover, the mistakes regularly occur when the translation tools are given a duty to translate sentences.

This study finds that generally machine translations, including Google Translate, tend to deliver a word-for-word, but not a sense-for-sense translation pattern. However, even with a word-for-word translation, a number of mistakes can still be found especially for words that have multiple meanings and functions. Besides, for a machine translation like Google Translate, a sense-for-sense translation seems almost impossible as its capacities are not designed for profound interpretations of different languages.

It would be unfair, nevertheless, not to mention some advantages of Google Translate. In fixed phrases such as titles, names of organisations and famous people, users can trust the machine for the provision of correct translation. Examples include พันตำรวจเอก (Police colonel), จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย (Chulalongkorn University) and เนลสัน แมนเดลา (Nelson Mandela).

In summation, based on these findings, users of Google Translate must be very careful when the machine is in use.

### **Implications for prospective users**

Google Translate, like other automatic translation tools, has its limitations. It may be able to help the users understand the general content of foreign language texts, but it does not always deliver correct translations. The findings from this study suggest that manual translation by human works better when deeper and more extensive knowledge on the subject of translation is

required, especially when translating texts with specific contents like the terms and conditions of an airline ticket or other official and legal-concerned documents.

The results of this study also reiterate that using Google Translate does not lead to a perfect translation to the original texts which could have created a major problem in passengers' safety and legal concerns. The results indicate that Google Translate may be used only on a single-word based level but still requires cautious and sensible judgments of the users and a heavy revision. As the data presented, for example, in the phrase "safety concern", Google Translate could correctly deliver the right definition for "safety" but not "concern." Users must be aware of potential complications such as words with multiple meanings, words that have specific notions in specific contexts, words that are not recognised by the programme, words that have different levels of formality, and etc. At the syntactic level, word orders in Thai and English need to be intensely studied. With the two levels of error eradicated, discourse problems should be eliminated accordingly.

The findings of this research could lead to the awareness of using translation tools cautiously, particularly in the airline business as having both direct and indirect impact on customers' interest and image of the airline. Passengers' misunderstandings due to errors in translation could lead to safety and financial concerns with legal disputes as consequences. Additionally, the results found in the research could indicate and pinpoint some issues in the effectiveness and efficiency of machine translation tools which implicate the translation industry, professional and semi-professional translators, students, and audiences.

### **Recommendations for future research**

It is highly recommended that more research on this topic be undertaken. Further research should be done to investigate the other sections of the airline's website, whether Google Translate has also been used and how accurate the translation outputs are. The problems caused by such mistranslation should also be

investigated and evaluated to observe multiple impacts on the passengers and to find ways to prevent such causes of errors. A further study on errors from using Google Translate with more focus on non-official contents is also recommended.

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## Appendix A

### Original Data

#### 6. Check-in ตรวจสอบใน

6.1 Our check-in counters open two (02) hours before the scheduled flight's departure time and close thirty (30) minutes (for domestic flight) and forty-five (45) minutes (for international flight) before the scheduled flight's departure time. The time of check-in, which will be provided to passenger, may be different due to the decision of airport authority and specific flight. You must check-in when our counters are open. We reserve the right not to allow you to check-in if:

6.1 ของเรา เคาน์เตอร์ เช็คอิน เปิด สอง (02) ชั่วโมง ก่อนเวลาออกเดินทาง ของเที่ยวบิน ที่กำหนด และ ใกล้เคียง สามสิบ ( 30 ) นาที ( สำหรับเที่ยวบิน ภายในประเทศ ) และ สี่สิบห้า ( 45 ) นาที ( สำหรับเที่ยวบิน ระหว่างประเทศ ) ก่อนเวลาออกเดินทาง ของเที่ยวบิน ที่กำหนด ของเวลา เช็คอิน ที่จะมีให้กับ ผู้โดยสารอาจจะ แตกต่างกัน เนื่องจาก การตัดสินใจของผู้มีอำนาจ ที่สนามบิน และ เที่ยวบิน ที่เฉพาะเจาะจง คุณต้องตรวจสอบ ใน เมื่อ เคาน์เตอร์ ของเรา จะมีการเปิด เราขอสงวน สิทธิที่จะไม่ ช่วยให้คุณสามารถ เช็คอิน ถ้า :

a. You request to check in after our counters are closed.

คุณ ขอให้ ตรวจสอบ ใน หลัง เคาน์เตอร์ ของเราจะถูก ปิด

b. You don't have proper identification.

คุณไม่ได้มี การระบุ ที่เหมาะสม

c. You don't have the documentation, permit or visa necessary for travel to a particular place or country.

คุณไม่ได้ มีเอกสารใบอนุญาต หรือ วีซ่า ที่จำเป็นสำหรับ การเดินทางไปยัง สถานที่ใด หรือประเทศ

d. You have not settled outstanding fees

ท่านยังไม่ได้ ตัดสิน ค่าธรรมเนียม ที่โดดเด่น

e. You have caused a disturbance at our counter or have abused our staff either physically or verbally.

คุณได้ก่อให้เกิดการรบกวนที่คอนเตอร์ของเราหรือมีการทำร้ายเจ้าหน้าที่ของเราทั้งทางร่างกายหรือวาจา

f. The Government or other authorities prohibit you from boarding.

รัฐบาลหรือ หน่วยงานอื่น ๆ ห้าม คุณจากการ ขึ้น

g. We deem you unfit to travel due to drunkenness or any obvious medical condition.

เราเห็นว่า คุณ ไม่เหมาะที่จะ เดินทางไป อันเนื่องมาจาก ความมึนเมา หรือเงื่อนไข ทาง การแพทย์ใด ๆ ที่เห็นได้ชัด

h. We deem you not medically fit to travel or decide that your medical condition poses or could pose a danger to the health of other passengers.

เราเห็นว่า คุณ ไม่ได้ ในทางการแพทย์ ที่เหมาะสม ในการเดินทาง หรือ ตัดสินใจว่า เงื่อนไขทางการแพทย์ ของคุณ poses หรือ อาจก่อให้เกิด อันตราย ต่อสุขภาพ ของ ผู้โดยสารคนอื่น ๆ

6.2 Self check-in: We offer a self check-in facility. Specified conditions and instructions for the facility are posted on our website and may be changed at any time without prior notice.

เช็คอินด้วยตนเอง: เรามีวันที่เช็คอินด้วยตนเองซึ่งอำนวยความสะดวก เงื่อนไขที่ระบุไว้และ คำแนะนำสำหรับสถานที่ที่มีการโพสต์บนเว็บไซต์ของเราและอาจมีการเปลี่ยนแปลงได้ ตลอดเวลาโดยไม่ต้องแจ้งให้ทราบล่วงหน้า

6.3 If seats are unavailable due to overbooking, we shall either:

ถ้าที่นั่งจะไม่สามารถใช้ได้เนื่องจากการจองเกินเราจะอย่างไรอย่างหนึ่ง:

a) Carry you on another of our scheduled services on which space is available at the earliest opportunity without additional charge (if necessary, such tickets will be retained); or...



ดำเนินการคุณในอีกหนึ่งบริการของเรากำหนดพื้นที่ที่สามารถใช้ได้โอกาสแรกโดยไม่มีค่าใช้จ่ายเพิ่มเติม (ถ้าจำเป็นตัวดังกล่าวจะถูกเก็บรักษาไว้); หรือ ...

b) Should you choose to travel at another time, we will retain the value of your fare in a credit account provided that you re-book within three months (90 days).

หากคุณเลือกที่จะเดินทางในช่วงเวลาอื่นเราจะเก็บค่าของค่าโดยสารของคุณในบัญชีเครดิตให้คุณอีกครั้งหนังสือภายในสามเดือน (90 วัน)

6.4 Boarding: You must be at the boarding gate at least 30 (thirty) minutes before the scheduled flight's departure time.

ขึ้น: คุณจะต้องเป็นที่ประตูขึ้นเครื่องอย่างน้อย 30 (สามสิบ) นาทีก่อนเวลาออกเดินทางของเที่ยวบินที่กำหนดของ

6.5 No-show: If you fail to check in on time or fail to board the aircraft the fare will not be refunded regardless of circumstances.

ไม่แสดง: หากคุณล้มเหลวในการตรวจสอบในเวลาหรือล้มเหลวที่จะขึ้นเครื่องบินโดยสารจะไม่ได้รับคืนโดยไม่คำนึงถึงสถานการณ์

6.6 Compliance: You are solely responsible for complying with all laws, regulations, orders, demands and requirements of countries flown from, into or over and stated by our conditions of carriage. We shall not be liable in any way, if you fail to comply with such laws, regulations, orders, demands, notices, requirements or instructions.

มาตรฐาน: คุณต้องรับผิดชอบในการปฏิบัติตามกฎหมายระเบียบคำสั่งความต้องการและความต้องการของประเทศที่บินจากเป็นหรือมากกว่าตามที่เงื่อนไขของเราของการขนส่ง เราจะไม่รับผิดชอบในทางใดทางหนึ่งถ้าคุณล้มเหลวในการปฏิบัติตามกฎหมายดังกล่าวระเบียบคำสั่งความต้องการประกาศข้อกำหนดหรือคำสั่ง

