

Strategies for Cross-cultural Translation in The Novel Four Reigns and Behind The Painting

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Introduction

Rationale

Language is a tool for communication or a system of communication that enables humans to exchange verbal or symbolic utterances. Whereas languages have been changed all the time depending on people, society and culture. The cultural environment that people grow up in can have surprising effects on how they interpret the world around them. It is more than just a means of communication. It influences their culture and even their thought processes.

In the present time, all languages are still existed because people use to communicate everyday both written and spoken language. Especially, a written text can communicate across time and space for as long as the particular language and writing system is still understood. Speech is usually used for immediate interactions.

Furthermore, a novel is another tool of communication which reflects people in ones' society. It is usually made to be similar to real life that has emotional and feelings. It is also a device for communication from a group of people to the other group. Moreover, the novel has been a part of human culture for over a thousand years. Regardless of how it began, the novel has risen to prominence and remained one of the most popular and treasured examples of human culture and writing. Its form and presentation tends to change with the times, but it remains an essential part of the literary cultures of nearly all societies around the world. Therefore, translation is a very important thing which reflects the story or information from one culture to another. It is due to the

differences between two cultures, and it makes people know and learn about other cultures just by reading the novels.

Four reigns novel or 'Si Phaendin' is a novel by Kukrit Pramoj, shows how individuals in Thai society adjust to change in the face of historic events. Besides, it is reflected how cultural, political and social changes in Thailand from the reigns of King Rama V to King Rama VIII affected a group of people. The traditional values of the times are experienced by the main character and are enhanced by the main character's surroundings, Ploi. Throughout the evolving years the country experiences disturbances of World War I; the Palace Revolution of 1932 and World War II respectively. Four reigns novel focuses primarily on the lives of the minor nobility and the necessary modes of adapting to unpreventable events that come by way of foreign and domestic conflicts.

In addition, "Behind the Painting," the famed novel of Sri Burapha (Kulap Saipradit), was written in 1937 to relate the tragic romance between Nopporn, a Thai student studying in Japan, and Mom Rajawongse Kirati, a beautiful young lady and progeny of a noble family in Thailand.

This paper will be focused on the strategies used in cross-cultural translation from Thai to English context. In addition, the objectives of conducting this paper is to examine how cross-cultural translating techniques used by the translator from Thai to English context, and to analyze the relationship of translating strategies and techniques used by the translator.

Research Question:

What are the strategies or the techniques used in Four Reigns and Behind The Painting from Thai to English translation?

Hypothesis

It is possible that in cross-cultural translation in this novel might use many transliteration and sense-for-sense translation because the source text and the translated text have different cultures. There are no words to translate directly.

Literature Review

In order to complete this paper, different related frameworks and theories were reviewed. The organization of this part would be according to theoretical frameworks which are the definition of translation and translation types and techniques.

Theoretical Framework

1. Definition of translation

1.1 Newmark (1988) states that translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text.

1.2 Larson (1984) states that translation is transferring the meaning of the source language into the receptor language. This is done by going from the form of the first language to the form of a second language by way of semantic structure. It is meaning which is being transferred and must be held constant.

1.3 Nida (1969) also similarly states that translating consists of reproducing the receptor language to the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in the term of meaning and secondly in the term of style.

From those definitions above, it can be inferred that translation is the process of transferring meaning from source language into target language, for example, from English into Thai or from

Thai into English. The translator must be careful in transferring the meaning due to the fact that meaning is very important in translation activity. If the translator cannot get the right meaning from source language, the result of the translation will be misled. Moreover, the translator must consider the context by looking at the cultures and other possible factors.

2. Translation types and techniques

2.1 Literal translation is in which the source language grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest translated language equivalents, but the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context.

2.1.1 Word-for-word translation is in which the source language word order is preserved and the words translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context.

2.2 Sense-for-sense translation is to translate the meaning of each whole sentence before moving on to the next ones. It stands in normative opposition to word-for-word translation. Besides, it is another way to create fluent target texts that preserve the meaning of the original.

2.3 Adaptation translation is the freest form of translation, and is used mainly for plays or comedies and poetry; the themes, characters, plots are usually preserved, the source language culture is converted to the translated culture and the text is rewritten. Besides, cultural substitution refers to the case where the translator uses equivalent words that are ready-made in the translated text, and serve the same goal as those of the source text. In other words, the translator substitutes cultural words of the source text by cultural words of the translated version.

2.4 **Addition** is to add information about a culturally-bound word or expression, or a technical term that is related to a specific domain. They may occupy various places within the text. It is also called grammatical expansion for clarity of meaning.

2.5 **Loan words / Borrowing** refers to a case where a word or an expression is taken from the source language and used in the translated language, but in a naturalized form. It is made to conform to the rules of grammar or pronunciation of the translated text.

2.6 **Transliteration** occurs when the translator transcribes the source language characters or sounds in the translated version. It is representing the letters or words in the characters of another alphabet or script

2.7 **Deletion** is to delete words, phrases and sentences out of the context as they are useless in the translated text and can also cause the readers a trouble when reading a text.

2.8 **Cultural Substitution** will be used when there are some lexical items which neither a generic term nor a loan word with modification will be possible as a translation equivalence. Sometimes, the source language lexical items can only be best translated by using the thing, the image, or the event which is not exactly the same but does occur in the receptor language (Larson 1998)

2.9 **Generalization** is the strategy that replaces an culture-bound term referring to something specific by something more general.

Methodology

Interlingual translation or translation proper is seen as the translation procedure of the cross-cultural translation in this paper. It is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language. The source text is Thai and was translated into English.

1. Sources

1.1 Primary source is the sentences or context in the two stories: Si Phaendin (Four Reigns) and Khang Lang Phab (Behind The Painting) showing Thai culture.

1.2 Secondary source is the academic journal and book used to analyze and be the references for this research.

2. Procedures

2.1 Collect words, phrases and sentences which are related to cultures from the source text: Si Phaendin by Krukrit Pramoj and Khang Lang Phab by Sri Burapha.

2.2 Collect the same thing from the translated version (English)

2.3 Analyze the data in which techniques and strategies used in both source text and translated text.

Findings

This research investigates the techniques used in cross-cultural translation in Thai novels which are Si Phaendin (Four Reigns) and Khang Lang Phab (Behind The Painting). This is a quantitative research to analyze some examples of the techniques found in these two chosen novels which were translated from Thai to English.

The data of both Si Phaendin (Four Reigns) and Khang Lang Phab (Behind The Painting) is searched for the tactics that the translators used to show how the novel are translated from one culture to another culture. It is found that literal translation, additional translation, borrowed words, deletion, transliteration, cultural substitution and sense-for-sense translation are the major techniques used.

First, literal translation is a translation that follows closely the form of the source language. For example, in Si Phaendin, “บ้านพลอยอยู่ในคลองบางหลวง เรียกได้ว่าเป็นบ้านใหญ่มีกำแพงอิฐเสริมรั้วเหล็กกันตลอดริมน้ำ ที่ทำน้ำมีศาลาหลังใหญ่ทำด้วยไม้ ขึ้นจากกระไดทำน้ำ เดินผ่านลานกว้าง ก็ถึงตัวตึกเป็นที่อยู่ของเจ้าคุณพ่อ” in Thai version was translated into “Their home on Klong Bang Luang had a brick-and-iron fence running the length of the grounds on the klong side. A pavilion at the landing place, then a spacious courtyard to cross to the big house where resided Ploi’s father, His Excellency the Chao Khun.” In addition, in Khang Lang Phab, “ฉันตายโดยปราศจากคนที่รัก ฉันแต่ฉันก็อึดใจว่า ฉันมีคนที่จะฉันรัก” was translated into ““I die with no one to love me, content that I have someone to love”. It is interesting that in Khang Lang Phab used this technique throughout the story as this technique can maintain well the meaning of the source text and it is easy to the reader to get what the writer wanted to convey.

Second, additional translation is the way that a translator uses when the information may be unclear for the reader. To explain more in detail may be required in cross-culture translation. To illustrate, in Si Pheandin “มารดาชื่อแช่ม เป็นเอกภรรยาของพระยาพิพิธฯ แต่มิใช่ในฐานะคุณหญิง เพราะคุณหญิงท่านชื่อเอี่ยม” was translated into “Her mother’s name, Chaem, coming immediately after this, tended to sound somewhat abrupt. Her mother was His Excellency’s Wife Number One, but not this Khunying which would have been her title had she been his official wedded wife. The underlined sentence is additional information shows the status of Khun Ying in Thai culture that it is high status in society. Another one is “เพราะพวกเอ็งมันลูกเมียน้อย นั่นท่านลูกคุณหญิงก็ต้องเป็นคุณไปหมด เขาไม่เรียกว่าอีพลอยก็ติดมไปแล้ว!”. This sentence was translated into “Because they are Khunying’s children and the rest of you have lesser wives for mothers, that’s why. Be thankful they call you Mae Ploi and Po Perm, and not the lowly Ee Ploi and Ai Perm!” In translated text, the word lowly is added to show that the words Ee and Ai in Thai culture are used with low-class people. Furthermore, เมื่อ พ.ศ. ๒๔๓๕ เมื่อพลอยอายุได้สิบขวบ... was translated into In the year 1892, or 2435 of the Buddhist Era, Ploi at the age of ten.... In translated text, in the year 1892 is added to be easier for western readers. However this technique is not found in Khang Lang Phab.

Third, deletion is the omission of some segments of the information as the information deleted may be unnecessary for the reader. For instance, in Si Pheandin “แล้วแม่จะไปอยู่กับพลอยในนั้นหรือแม่” พลอยถามด้วยเป็นความห่วง แม่จะไปครุ่หนึ่งแล้วถอนหายใจใหญ่ ตอบว่า

“แม่จะอยู่ไปก่อนแต่แล้วแม่ก็ต้องไปทำมาหากิน...” was translated into

“Are you going to stay with me in the palace, mother?”

“Ye-es. Then I must find some way to earn a living.”

The underlined sentence was not translated in translated text. However, the translator used the word “Ye-es” to show the feeling of Ploi’s mother that she hesitates in marking her word. However, this technique is hardly found in Khang Lang Phab.

Fourth, sense-for-sense translation is a tactic used in translating. The translator may adapt or adjust the context of the source text in target text as it would be easy to the readers in different culture in understanding the story. To illustrate, คนหนึ่งคือคุณชิต ผู้ซึ่งเวลานั้นกำลังเป็นหนุ่มเต็มตัว อายุ ๑๖ บางทีพลอยเคยเห็นคุณชิตตอนเย็นๆ นุ่งผ้าสีใส่เสื้อกระบอกแพรเลียน หวีผมใส่น้ำมันแปร์ ติดยาแก้ปวดหัวสองขมับ ตามธรรมเนียมหนุ่มๆ สมัยนั้น was translated into Khun Jit, who was 16 and a dandy with slicked down hair, blotchy skin covered with perfumed powder, each temple modishly adorned with a circular bit of medicated plaster designed of that era. It is obvious that the translator changes the contents of the source language as western culture does not have this style of clothes. However, the meaning of the source text still remains in the translated text. Another example is “ไปละก้อไปให้พ้นนะยะ” คุณอุ้นพูดต่อ “อย่าทำกลับไปกลับมา จะเสียรัศมีแม่ผู้ดีแปดสาแหรก” พลอยนิ่งเงียบอีก เพราะถึงจะตอบก็ไม่รู้จะตอบอย่างไรถูก “ไป! ไปให้พ้น” คุณอุ้นไล่ส่ง “นังคนนี่ลูกแม่ ลูกเสือลูกตะเข้ เลี้ยงไม่ได้” was translated into “Just don’t change your mind and come back, understand? We can’t have people coming and going as they please, especially people who set themselves up so high and mighty. To come crawling back wouldn’t be such a high and mighty thing to do, would it?” “Go then! Get out! Tigers and crocodiles can never be nurtured in a house. Go — and good riddance!” The translator tries to explain that tigers and crocodiles are wild animal. People do not pet them in a house. The meaning of source text still remains in translated text.

Fifth, transliteration is the way to transfer the source text’s alphabets to translated text. For example, เวลาที่พลอยรู้สึกว่สนุกที่สุดคือตอนจุดดอกไม้ไฟ was translated into “ And the sanuk ti

sud (greatest fun) part was when the fireworks went off” the translator still uses the same phrase of the source text in translated text as it may be useful for Thai readers or those who know Thai language and culture.

Sixth, Borrowed words is the words borrowed used in both source text and translated text. Those loaned words usually refer to places or specific name of something. For instance, in Si Pheandin ฉะเชิงเทรา คลองบางหลวง แม่น้ำเจ้าพระยา were translated as borrowed words in translated text Chachoengsao, Klong Bang Luang and Chao Phraya. In the same way, in Khang Lang Phab, เมื่อเจ้าคุณอธิการบดี พาหม่อมราชวงศ์_กิริติภรรยาของท่านไปฮันนีมูนที่ประเทศญี่ปุ่น. This sentence was translated into When Chao Khun_Atthikanbodi took his wife, Mom Rachwong Kirati, to Japan for their honeymoon. The underlined phrases are translated as borrowed words since it is understandable by both Thai readers and other cultures readers.

The last technique used we found is cultural substitution. It is the way of using things in another culture to translate in order to make people of that culture understands the context of the story. For instance, in Khang Lang Phab, ข้าพเจ้าปลดผ้าเช็ดหน้าผืนใหญ่ออกจากคอ แล้วจัดแจงไปบนเท้าขาวผ่องของเธอ was translated into I removed the scarf from my neck and covered her pure white feet with it. This is because in western culture, people do not use handkerchief to cover their neck so the word ผ้าเช็ดหน้าผืนใหญ่ was replaced by the scarf which is the thing used to cover the neck instead.

Conclusion

All of the techniques mentioned: literal translation, additional translation, borrowing, deletion, transliteration, cultural substitution and sense-for-sense translation are main tactics in translating from Thai culture to another culture and they are the device that make the people in different culture understand the contents of both novels. However, the most techniques found in cross-cultural translation in *Si Phaendin* (Four reigns) are transliteration and sense-for-sense translation because the source text and the translated text have different cultures. There are no words or the way to describe and translate directly from the source version. On the other hand, the most techniques found were borrowing and generalization in *Behind The Painting*. It is because there were no vocabulary and words which can be translated. The translator so translated in general term and not very specific, just to make readers understand the text easily.

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