A Comparative Study of the Thai Translation Between Two Translation of "Murder on the Orient Express" Written by Agatha Christie

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ABSTRACT

The translation of novels is one of the most challenging translations. There are many translated novel from many languages in Thailand but sometime reading the translated one seems not as tasty as reading directly from the source language version and something it feels like something is missing in the translated text.

This thesis aims to compare the translating quality of two Thai translators who translated the same renowned English novel but in the different time. Parallel to Nida and Bell's translation procedures, syntactic, semantics and pragmatics structure of the source texts were analyzed before comparing to Thai translated texts to find equivalence between the source text and the target language. The 4 important defects or errors which are mistranslation, over translation, under translation, inappropriate word choice, and the 2 defects from inadequate register translating which are unnatural Thai and improper language use are the major errors leading to unsuccessful communication from the author to the readers of the work. So those 6 errors were used as index for comparing between the two Thai translators' quality. The concept for translation criticism employed in the thesis is the criticism topics of Peter Newmark (1988). Also, the thesis used J.L.Malone and Eirlys E.Davies' translation strategies for the text evaluation.

The research is documentary research by conducting primary and secondary resources study, translation theories study from Thai and foreign scholars, prior researches and theses, translation articles, another documents and internet resources. When the two translated texts are compared to the original text of Agatha Christie, inappropriate sentences from translated texts will be collected and extracted the defects or errors. After completion of analysis and comparison of the source and translated text, the defects and errors result of the translators were compared and quantitatively summarized by percentage and frequency. Statistical method is applied in order to prove hypothesis. Then, quality and suitability of translated text will be considered by employing Eugene Nida's theory.

Keywords: Translation Quality Assessment, Thai translation, translation strategies, equivalence in translation, (up to 4 keywords).

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, written and spoken translations have played crucial parts in each society in the world, especially for international communication. There are many fields of translation and the translation of novel is one of the most popular field for translator. Basically novel is written in the author's language but when it became more popular, they were translated into other languages. In theory, it is vital to transfer meaning in

the original texts to the translated texts as much as it can. Apart from the meaning covey, languish, stylish and aesthetic must also be conveyed into the translated one. However, sometimes the translated text showed obscured meaning and feeling which resulted to the understanding and pleasure to the translated novel. Sometimes when there is more than a version of translated text of the same language by different translators, questions will be raised in term of each translated work quality. As the result, the translation quality assessment's role has become more important.

The novel "Murder on the Orient Express" of a famous English author, Agatha Christie has been selected for this research and Thai translated version of this novel translated by two Thai translators has been used for comparative study between each other and to the original English version. The first one was titled "แผนสังหารบนรถด่วน (Pan Sanghan bon rod duan)" translated by Laksanarong in 1988 and the other one was titled "ฆาตกรรมบนรถด่วน (Kattakam bon rod duan)" translated by Sopana Chaowiwatkul in 2015.

TRANSLATION PROCESS
Nida's translation procedures consist of three main phases: 1) analysis of the source and receptor languages; 2) careful study of the source-language text 3) determination of the appropriate equivalents.

According to Nida, the first procedure of analysis of the source and receptor languages means that translator should have a good grasp of the linguistic structures of the two languages. Though translators understand well the meaning of individual words or phrases but they are often insufficient in the meaning of constructions. So, it is essential that translators must be fully acquainted with the syntactic structures. Not only the syntactic structures but also the meaning of lexical elements translators must be specialized for the lexical resources relevant to the text but not necessary to have a complete grasp of the whole semantic equivalences.
Next procedure is to analyze the source-language text. After the text form has been determined, the semantic level must be studied. The study of meaning can gained from various levels of analysis. Nida described for 5 stages which are lexico-grammatical features of the immediate unit, discourse context, communicative context, cultural context of the source language, and cultural context of the receptor language.
The last main procedure of Nida is to determine equivalence between source and target languages which is as well divided in to two simple procedures; decomposition of the text into simplest semantic structure and recomposition of the text into the target language with equivalence conform and provide the most appropriate text for the intended receptors.

According to Bell, R., the translation process is consisted of two main processes which are analysis process and synthesis process. Analysis process is the process to analyze the source text (language-specific text). Synthesis process is the process to synthesize meaning into the target text (a second language-specific text). Each process has 3 sub processes concerning syntactic, semantic and pragmatic.

The first sub process in analysis process is syntactic analysis. This process is to analyze the text structure of the source text in order to now the structure mainly but not the content.

The second sub process is semantic analysis which is aim to analyze what the content of the text.

The third sub process is pragmatic analysis. It is to analyze theme (theme and rhyme) and register (tenor, mode, domain of discourse) of the source text.

Information received from all sub processes called "semantic representation" will be sent to "planner" to consider whether to be translated or not. If yes, it will enter into synthesis process.

The synthesis process also has 3 sub-processes which are pragmatic, semantic and syntactic synthesis. Semantic representation will be considered if it is to be preserved, changed purpose, theme or style before decide the content (semantic synthesis) then considering of the suitability of the content, meaning, clause-type and so on as syntactic synthesis. Finally, it will be sent to writing system to create the translated text.

This thesis employed the translation procedures' concepts of both Nida and Bell. The translation procedures emphasizing on the importance of syntactic and semantic analysis, and if a translating defect or error occurred in concern with syntactic or semantic level, they should be able to be detected by analyzing back and comparing between original syntactic and semantic structures and translated syntactic and semantic structures.

PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATION

Duangta suggested problems in translating for 3 aspects; culture, language structure (syntactic) and semantics. Pratueng suggested the causes of the mismatch translated text to the source text are because of 1) insufficient knowledge regarding to the source language 2) insufficient knowledge regarding to the target language 3) lack of understanding of culture appeared in the source language 4) lack of relevant knowledge to the source context 5) context difficulty or complexity.

Sumon suggested two main problems in translating which are lack of understanding in the source text and inability to translate into good target language. In summary, the problems those three scholars suggested all related to analysis of source text in syntactic, semantic and pragmatic together with culture difference concern.

Duangta and Pratueng referred similar important defects or errors resulted from those potential factors which are mistranslation, over translation, under translation, inappropriate word choice, unnatural target text and improper language use.

The defects or errors can be reduced by increasing more careful and attention from the authors for one way. However, Walaya (2002) proposed the editorial process working between editor and translator as a process in literature translation. According to Walaya, after completion translating from translator, editor will do edition and revision. It depends that the editor might work alone or adjust with the translator for revision (see Table 1). Therefore, quality of translated text will not depend solely on the factors from translator.

Examples of defect/error

(Original):   And   the   General—Lieutenant   Dubosc's   own   particular
General—had suddenly looked ten years younger.

(TTL): ทำให้หน้าตาของนายพลที่เคยดูหมองคล้ำเริ่มสดใส และหนุ่มขึ้นกว่าเก่าถึงสิบปี

(TTS): และท่านนายพล...ท่านนายพลคนเดิมของร้อยโทดูโบสค์นั้นแหละ ก็ดูหนุ่มขึ้นสิบปีทันตาเห็น

From original text above, there is a problem of equivalence between the source text and target text of TTL. ① and ② that found in Original neither would be found in the TTL nor translated in the other form by using appropriated translation strategies. Therefore, those were decided as under translation.

③ is opposite to those two. Its meaning is "...face that used to be gloomy starting to be bright". Since it was not found in the original text but appeared in the TTL and the meaning had changed the tone of the text significantly, it was decided as over translation.

However, there is no such errors found in TTS, there was neither over translation nor under translation in TTS.

PROBLEMS OF EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATION

Sechrest, Fay and Zaidi explained the types of equivalence problems found in their research. Vocabulary Equivalence is the most obvious kind of equivalence though it could be solved by good dictionaries. Anyway, the mistake would occur if translator picks the wrong meaning for the word. Idiomatic equivalence is the next more complicated type since idiom of another language which is not native language of translator cannot be conquered by direct translation. Grammatical-Syntactical equivalence will be highly concerned when it comes to long sentences or passages. Experiential equivalence is the equal in experience of both the source language culture and the target language culture. The last one is conceptual equivalence. This type of equivalence refers to the fully aware concept of a culture or society but it is not exactly be understood as the same concept in the other culture or society.

PLAN OF CRITICISM OF NEW MARK
Translation quality assessment becomes important and the systematic concept for evaluation is crucial to extract such defects or errors from the translated text.

Newmark suggested comprehensive criticism of a translation in five topics: 1) Text analysis; 2) The translators' purpose; 3) Comparing the translation with the original; 4) The evaluation of the translation; 5) The translation's future.

The first topic according to Newmark, Text analysis, will be done by include a statement of the authors' purpose, characterization of the readership, indication of its category and type, the quality of the language to determine the translator's degree of license.
The second topic, the translators purpose, is to see the text from the point of view of the translators in order to suggest the reasons of the misinterpreted, the omitting

sections of the text, and to show that good translations can pass a number of errors and the misguided section.

Next topic, comparing the translation with the original, will be done for considering how the translator has solved the problems of the source texts and the critic should discuss translation problems before suggest any correction or a better translation.

The evaluation of the translation is the fourth topic. The critique will evaluate and decide whether the translation is successful in its own terms, then the referential and pragmatic accuracy of the translation will be assessed by translator's standards. The main question is the quality and the scope of the semantic deficit in the translation and consider if it is unavoidable.

The last topic is the translation's future. Critic will assess the work's potential importance within the target language culture, worth of translating of the work and influences having on the target language.

TRANSLATION QUALITY ASSESSMENT

This thesis follows the steps of criticism plan of Newmark by analyzing the author's text, translator's point of view, comparison the translation with the original, the evaluation of the translation and the translation's future of the work. Specific defects/ errors of the translation according to Duangta and Pratueng which are mistranslation, over translation, under translation, inappropriate word choice, unnatural target text and improper language use are used in this thesis.

The errors suggested by Duangta and Pratueng are extracted through the analysis process of Bell's. First, the syntactic structures of the source text are analyzed. Then they are compared to the target text word by word to know whether all are translated. Second step is semantic and pragmatic analysis which is comparing equivalence between the source text and the target text in order to find over translation, under translation. Also theme and register between the source text and translated text are compared whether the translated units transferred as same idea, style and aesthetic of the author as the source text.

After extracting the defects, the defects result of each translator's work will be quantitatively analyzed and compared between each other.

TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

To understand the strategies used by each translator and to ensure they are not mistaken as the defects or errors, this thesis employed translation strategies of Malone and Davies for criticism.

Malone suggested 9 translation strategies which; 1) Equation 2) Substitution 3) Divergence 4) Convergence 5) Amplification 6) Reduction 7) Diffusion 8) Condensation 9) Reordering.

Equation is the strategy that uses when the target text can be automatically equal to the source text, the most obvious is loan words. Ex. pizza-พิซซ่า

Substitution is the strategy that transforms the source words into the target words and bears little or no morphological resemblance or semantic relation to the source text.

Divergence is the strategy of choosing a suitable translation from a range of alternatives.

Convergence is to rendering a range of alternatives with a lexical item.

Amplification is the strategy translator needs to add more information to the translated text for more comprehension.

Reduction is omitting an element in the target text because it is regarded as redundant, or even misleading.

Diffusion occurs when item added or subtracted in order to amplify or bring out meaning.

Condensation is the strategy that translator shrink or condense the source texts into shorter texts but equal in meaning.

Reordering applies when the target text is reordered but can covey the same meaning of the source text.

Davies suggested 7 translation strategies which are; 1) Preservation 2) Addition 3) Omission 4) Globalization 5) Localization 6) Transformation 7) Creation.

Preservation is the strategy used when translator transferred the term directly into the target texts without additional explanation.

Addition occurs when translator decides to keep the original item but supplements the text with necessary information in the point of view of translator. The additional information can be added within the text or in a footnote and etc.

Omission is the opposite strategy to addition. This will be used when translator decides that the translated texts should be more understandable and natural than preserved the problematic item in the texts.

Globalization is the process of replacing the culture-specific words with more neural or general ones.

The opposite strategy to globalization is localization. Translator uses this strategy for the word translated to local words which will be more natural to the target audience.

Transformation strategy consists of alteration and distortion of the original. It means that the source text is changed for matching with the target culture reality.

Final strategy is creation. Davies said that this strategy can be totally different from the source text or sometimes do not even appear in the source text.

If a unit in the translated text fell to prove to be one of those strategies, it is decided to be a defect or error.

APPENDIX

Table 1 Work process between editor and translator
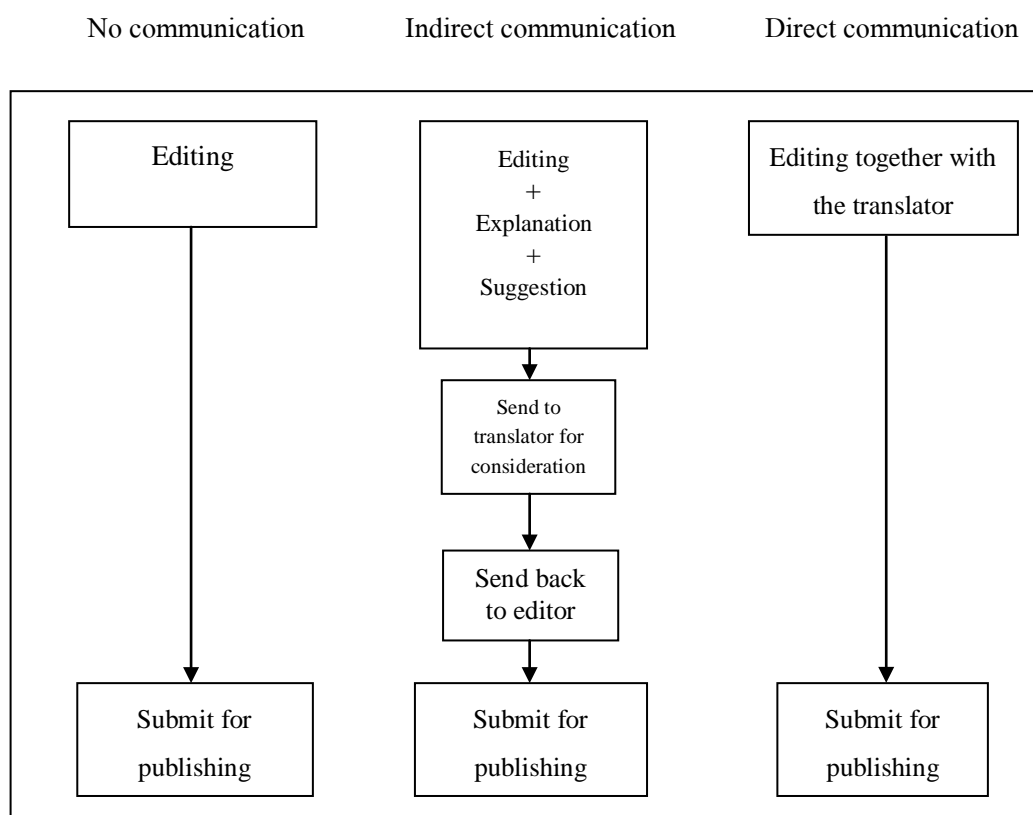
No communication   Indirect communication   Direct communication

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ABBREVIATIONS

1. Source Text (ST)
2. Source Language (SL)
3. Target Text (TT)
4. Target Language (TL)
5. Text from Murder of the Orient Express of Agatha Christie (Original)
6. Translated Text by Luksanarong (TTL)
7. Translated Text by Sopana (TTS)