

A Study of Translation Strategies from English to Thai in *Dora the Explorer*

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were to study the types of translation strategies from English to Thai and find out the frequency of translation strategies used in *Dora the Explorer*, a series of children's books. The samples consisted of three short stories translated from English to Thai, which were used for data collection. Frequency and percentage were used for data analysis regarding seven translation strategies suggested by Newmark (1988).

The results show that three types of translation strategies were used in *Dora the Explorer's* three stories: word-for-word translation strategy, literal translation strategy, and free translation strategy. Regarding the frequency of each translation strategy, it is shown that the word-for-word strategy has the highest frequency (80%); literal translation, the second-highest frequency (11.67%); and free translation, the lowest frequency (8.33%).

Keywords: Translation Strategies, English to Thai, *Dora the Explorer*

Introduction

English is widely used today, whether it is for transportation, various industrial technologies, and almost every other field, because English is an important tool for communication in areas such as education, knowledge acquisition, and career development, including communication with the ASEAN community and abroad. However, traditions and cultures around the world are different; therefore, everyone who is aware of communication in the modern world understands that the main language for understanding one another is "English" because it is the most frequently used language in the world (Oupakham, 2014).

Because cross-cultural communication has become more common, the most popular channel for cross-cultural communication is through translation. Translation is the transmission of ideas and culture from one language to another, which helps people learn and understand the

concepts, lifestyles, and imaginative creations of other cultures. Therefore, the translators play an important role in connecting one culture to another (Boonterm, 2008).

In Thailand, there are both translations from English to Thai and translations from Thai to English in a variety of categories, such as legal translations, commercial business translation, medical and pharmaceutical translation, science and technology translation, literary translation, and translation of meeting documents and international seminars. Each type of document must be translated into different formats to adapt to the corresponding content, the purpose of the author and the purpose of translation. According to Laisatrulkai (2011, p. 7), today there are more and more people who read translated books and other texts in order to know stories of foreigners and to learn about the arts and cultures of various nations. Therefore, translation is very widespread, and there are countless translators around the world.

Therefore, translators must understand the texts correctly; there are various important factors that are interrelated in the principles of translation. When translating English and Thai, the two most important factors are clear knowledge and understanding of English and Thai, and knowledge and understanding of the culture of each language. These will help the translators' work to be more accurate, including bilingual book translation. Because of this, different translations are made to suit with the content in order to make the translation work more widespread and understandable.

In this study, the researchers are interested in translation strategies from English to Thai in a series of children's educational books titled *Dora the Explorer*. The characteristic of Dora is that she is a hardworking and generous girl, so she works non-stop to help others, and she has helpers, which are a monkey and things in her bag. The villain is a fox named Swiper, who always tries to steal things from her. While she carries out each mission, the story will have contents to encourage the children to listen to the stories and to participate in decision-making, such as having the children help to choose a path to cross or choose a way to go. The children enjoy helping Dora complete her mission, and they find some pride in themselves, as well. Therefore, children gain many things from these stories: listening skill, having fun, practicing with English new words, having a positive attitude, seeing the tenderness that hides in Dora's personality, feeling absorbed in helping others, concentrating on listening to stories, and having great imagination as they listen to an exciting and adventurous story. Because of these positive features, the researchers decided to study and focus on the frequency of translation strategies in books that are popular with readers, which can reveal the kinds of decisions that translators make.

Purposes of the Study

There are two main purposes in the study:

1. To study the types of translation strategies from English to Thai used in *Dora the Explorer*, a series of children's books;
2. To find out the frequency of translation strategies from English to Thai used in *Dora the Explorer*.

Research Questions

What types of translation strategies are used in *Dora the Explorer*?

How often are the translation strategies from English to Thai used in *Dora the Explorer*?

Literature Review

The researchers studied many definitions of the term “translation” and the importance of translation. The information is discussed in the following sections.

Definitions of Translation

There are many researchers who studied the definitions of translation and defined them in many ways. But it is notable that the three main theorists below similarly define the term.

According to Catford (1965), it is a process and a product, and it is the substitution of a text in one language by an equivalent text in another language.

Larson (1984, p. 3) stated that, in general, translation is a change of form of a source language (SL) such as letters, vowels, words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, etc., and they are spoken or written with a target language (TL).

Moreover, Larson (1998) explained that translation is the transfer of meaning of a text or spoken words in the source language into the receiver's language. Therefore, translation is composed of two linguistic forms: the language to be translated (the source language) and the language to be translated into (the target language).

Eco (2003) defined the objective of a translation as being more than creating any literal equivalence. It is an attempt to produce the same effect in the mind of the target reader, which is based on the interpretation of the translator, that the original text wanted to create. Essentially, a good translation must produce the same effect that is aimed at by the source text.

In conclusion, translation is the human practice of communicating to convey a meaning expressed in the original language, a meaning that is intended by its owner, to the readers of another language.

The Importance of Translation

It can be claimed that translation is an important activity because it becomes the essential component for understanding the contents in a language that we are not able to understand. It is a way of expressing concepts and information from the source language to a different target language. In the translation field, two experts have suggested the importance of translation in these ways, as shown in the following paragraphs.

Anelo (2004) explained that translation is one of the oldest human practices, both written and spoken forms. It is absolutely necessary for making the communication between people of various cultures possible.

Duff (1989, p. 6) wrote that translation helps people to understand the influence of one language on another. It helps to correct errors of habit that move in unnoticed, such as the misuse of special words or structures, and enables people to find the potential of both languages – their strengths and weaknesses.

As mentioned above, translation has an essential role to form the comprehension between humans who apply distinct languages, and it can motivate them to learn and exchange new knowledge between one another. Generally, creating effective translation is closely related to the communication skills of the translator.

Research Framework

There are many researchers who have studied the classification of translation strategies. One of the most famous lists of strategies belongs to Newmark (1988, p. 45-47), who categorized translation strategies into eight types:

1. Word-for-word translation means the preservation of source language (SL) word order and translation of every single word by their most common meanings, out of context.
2. Literal translation means the conversion of SL grammatical constructions to their nearest target language (TL) equivalents and translation of every single word.
3. Faithful translation means the precise contextual meaning and the reproduction of the original within the limitations of the TL grammatical structures.
4. Semantic translation means the conservation of the aesthetic value, e.g., the beautiful and natural sounds of the SL text; it also requires the use of culturally neutral or functional terms, not cultural equivalents, to translate less important cultural words.
5. Adaptation means translation of plays or dramas, so that the themes, characters, and plots are usually preserved; the SL culture is converted to the TL culture and the text is rewritten.
6. Free translation means the reproduction of the matter or the content without the original form.

7. Idiomatic translation means the reproduction of the SL text, and it may include informalities and idioms not existing in the original.

8. Communicative translation means the exact contextual meaning and the expression of the original in a way that both content and language are accepted and understood by the reader of the target text.

Research Methodology

This study was designed in a mixed form, using both descriptive qualitative and quantitative methods to study translation strategies from English to Thai used in the children's books *Dora the Explorer*.

Research Materials

In this study, the data came from a short series of children's books translated from English into Thai titled *Dora the Explorer*. The researchers sampled three short stories: "Dora and the Unicorn King," "Dora's Snowy Forest Adventure," and "Ready to Go."

Data Collection

The researchers analyzed translation strategies in the three books to find what types of strategies are used and how often the strategies are used.

Data Analysis

The researchers searched for translation strategies defined by Newmark (1988, p. 45-47): word-for-word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, semantic translation, adaptation, free translation, idiomatic translation, and communicative translation. Then, the frequency and percentage of the strategies were analyzed.

Results

The results show that, in the three stories, there is a total of 60 examples of using only three types of strategies. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of Each Translation Strategy in *Dora the Explorer*

No.	Type of Translation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
1	Word-for-word translation strategy	48	80
2	Literal translation strategy	7	11.67
3	Free translation strategy	5	8.33
Total		60	100

Table 1 presents three of the translation strategies described by Newmark, who categorized translation strategies into eight types. The researchers found three types of translation strategies: word-for-word translation, literal translation, and free translation.

The second purpose was to find out the frequency of translation strategies. From the data, it can be seen in Table 1 that word-for-word translation has the highest frequency (80%). Next, literal translation is the second most frequent (11.67%). Lastly, free translation is the least frequent strategy (8.33%).

Table 2: Six Examples of Word-for-Word Translation

Source Language	Target Language
Unicornio makes a shield with his horn. We need to stomp our feet to make a really big shield.	ยูนิคอร์นโอสสร้างเกราะป้องกันด้วยเขาของมัน เราต้องช่วยกันกระตืบเท้า เพื่อสร้างเกราะป้องกันขนาดใหญ่

These sentences use word-for-word translation because the translator arranged words in the source language into the target language with the same grammatical form and word arrangement.

Source Language	Target Language
Unicornio is kind, smart, brave, and strong. He is a true king!	ยูนิคอร์นโอบใจดี ฉลาด กล้าหาญและแข็งแกร่ง เขาเป็นหะละคือราชาที่แท้จริง

These sentences are also word-for-word translation because the words in the source language are put into the target language with the same grammatical form and word arrangement.

Source Language	Target Language
A witch waved her magic wand and locked the Snow Princess in a tower.	แม่มดโบกคทาวิเศษไปมาและขังเจ้าหญิงหิมะไว้ในหอคอย

This sentence uses word-for-word translation because the words in the source language have the same grammatical form and word arrangement as the words in the target language.

Source Language	Target Language
“Yum, yum,” says the Nutty Car. Soon the Nutty Car is full of nuts and ready to go.	“จ๋าๆ” รถถั่วพูด ในไม่ช้า รถถั่วก็มีถั่วเต็มถังและพร้อมออกเดินทาง!

These sentences are word-for-word because the translator puts the words in the source language into the target language with the same grammatical form and word arrangement.

Source Language	Target Language
Tico drops us off at Isa's Garden. Isa is going on a trip too. "I am going to ski at Snowy Mountain," says Isa.	ทีโวก๊วเส่งตอรักับบูตส์ที่สวนของอิซ่า อิซ่าก็กำลังเดินทางเหมือนกัน "ฉันกำลังจะไปเล่นสกีที่ภูเขาหิมะ" อิซ่าบอก

These sentences are word-for-word translation because the same grammatical form and word arrangement are used in the source language and the target language.

Source Language	Target Language
"Hey, that log is moving," Boots says. Who is inside that log?	"นี่ ท่อนไม้นั้นขยับได้ด้วยละ" บูตส์พูด ใครอยู่ข้างในท่อนไม้กันนะ

These sentences employ word-for-word translation because the translator used the same grammatical form and word arrangement in the source language and the target language.

Table 3: Three Examples of Literal Translation Strategy

Source Language	Target Language
Who can help the elf? Unicornio! Unicornio is kind, just like a king.	ใครจะช่วยภูตตนนี้ได้ล่ะ ยูนิคอร์นีโออย่างไงล่ะ! ยูนิคอร์นีโอใจดีเหมือนราชา

These sentences are examples of literal translation because the translator added some words to change the structure to make the passage clearer. The word "Unicornio" is "ยูนิคอร์นีโอ" in the Thai language, but when the translator translated it, he added "อย่างไงล่ะ" for this passage.

Source Language	Target Language
With the Snow Princess gone, the Magic Snowy Forest is starting to melt!	เพราะเจ้าหญิงหิมะหายไป ป่าหิมะวิเศษจึงเริ่มละลาย !

This sentence uses the strategy of literal translation because the translator added some words to change the structure and improve understanding. For example, "with" means "ด้วย" in the Thai language, but the translator used "เพราะ" because it is appropriate to the Thai language.

Source Language	Target Language
Maybe if we all smile into the magic crystal, we can break the spell. Smile with us! One, two, three – smile!	บางทีถ้าพวกเรายิ้มให้คริสตัลวิเศษ เราอาจทำลายคำสาปได้นะ เพื่อนๆ ยิ้มไปพร้อมกับพวกเรานะ! หนึ่ง สอง สาม ยิ้ม!

These sentences involve literal translation because the translator added some words and modified the structure for clearer understanding. The sentence "Smile with us" can be written as

“ยิ้มไปพร้อมกับพวกเรานะ!” in the Thai language, but the translator used “เพื่อนๆ ยิ้มไปพร้อมกับพวกเรานะ!”

Table 4: Three Examples of Free Translation Strategy

Source Language	Target Language
We made it! Now we need to find a way down the snowy hills.	พวกเรามาถึงแล้ว! ตอนนี้พวกเราต้องหาทางลงจากภูเขาหิมะ

These two sentences use free translation because the translator focused on conveying the message in the target text, rather than closely following the source text, by using words that are commonly used and understandable by the target readers. Actually, “we made it” means “พวกเราทำได้แล้ว” in the Thai language, but the translator chose to translate “พวกเรามาถึงแล้ว” into the target language because it is appropriate for this dialogue.

Source Language	Target Language
Just then Diego and Baby Jaguar appear in a canoe. “Swiper took our snacks.” Boots tells them.	ในตอนนั้นเอง ดิเอโก้และลูกเสือจากัวร์นั่งเรือแคนูผ่านมาพอดี “สไวเปอร์เอาขนมของพวกเราไป” บูตส์บอก ดิเอโก้และลูกเสือจากัวร์

These sentences use free translation because the focus of the message is conveyed by the translator in the target text, rather than in the source text, by the use of words that are normally used by the target readers. For example, the word “appeared” can be written as “ปรากฏ” in the Thai language, but the translator used the word “นั่ง” for this passage.

Source Language	Target Language
That night Dora, Diego, Boots, and Baby Jaguar sit around the campfire.	ในคืนนั้นดอรา ดิเอโก้ บูตส์และลูกเสือจากัวร์ นั่งล้อมกองไฟ ช่างเป็นการตั้งแคมป์ที่ยอดเยี่ยมอะไรอย่างนี้

This sentence is done as a free translation, since the translator focuses on converting the message into the target text, rather than strictly following the source text, by using words are common and easily understandable by the target readers. The sentence “ช่างเป็นการตั้งแคมป์ที่ยอดเยี่ยมอะไรอย่างนี้” was not translated from any English sentence in the story, but it was added and used for this new sentence at the end of the story.

Discussion

In this study, according to the results, it was discovered that the most frequently used translation strategy is word-for-word translation, which corresponded with the results from another research study, as discussed below.

Tayzanaraida (2021) performed an analysis of translation principles from English to Thai in "The Little Prince," by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. In the study, the data were based on seven of the strategic categories described by Newmark (1988): word-for-word translation, literal translation without addition of Thai words, literal translation with addition of Thai words, partial translation without addition of Thai words, free translation, transcription or transliteration, and transcription or transliteration without addition of Thai words. The results show that the translation strategy that is used the most is word-for-word translation, which is similar to the results of the present study.

Limitations of the Study

This study may not cover all of the translation strategies because only three stories in the series of children's educational books titled *Dora the Explorer* were analyzed. So it is possible that there might not be enough examples to include all the strategies.

Recommendations

As a result of this study, the researchers would like to recommend that professional translators and translation students take an interest in translation strategies from English to Thai, not only from Thai to English, especially the translation of bilingual books, showing both languages. The study and analysis of children's educational books, such as *Dora the Explorer*, will be very useful to the field of translation, since children's books are good ways to introduce children to a new language and new culture. Persons interested in translation theory should also study various other types of children books, such as fantasy and science, in order to cover all of the translation strategies and possibly discover more.

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