

An Analysis of Myanmar-English Translation Techniques Found in the Short Story “When the Pledge of Love Remains Firm”

by **Zaw Tun**

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Abstract

Translation is the process when the translator changes the meaning of the source language text by means of an equivalent target-language text. Also, it is of great importance in exchanging the information between languages. The translator should be careful to use an appropriate strategy to produce a good translation. This study aims to find out the kinds of translation techniques found in Myanmar- English translation short story entitled “တိုင်တည်သစ္စာမြဲလေသော အခါ” by Thin Aung Than into “When the Pledge of Love Remains Firm” by Zaw Tun. In this study, the data were analyzed using translation techniques proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). The result showed that out of seven translation techniques, three techniques such as calque, borrowing and literal translation were not found. Only four techniques were found. The percentage of four techniques found was transposition (21.3%), modulation (32%); equivalence (6.4%), adaptation (40.3%). The occurrence of adaptation is the highest and the least one is equivalence. The occurrence of calque, borrowing and literal translation was not found. The reason is that there are striking differences in the nature of the source language and the target language. Therefore, this study enhances the understanding of the literature of source language text through the target language text for the learners who would like to approach Myanmar literature. Besides, it is of great help to students who are interested in Myanmar to English translation.

Keywords: translation, techniques, source language, target language.

Introduction

There are many countries and also many languages all over the world. For this reason, people in the world create language for interacting and communicating with others. In this way, language becomes a communication tool. Therefore, people need translation to communicate between people with different languages. Translation, therefore, plays a vital role in human life. The act of translation is defined in various ways by the scholars but the common thing among the scholars is that it is an activity when someone transfers a language in a text form or source language (SL) to another language or target language (TL) accurately. Catford (1965), as cited in Jiraphatralikhit et al.² (2005) views translation as the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by the equivalent text material in another language (TL).

Newmark³ (1988) states that “translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text.” In translating, a translator should carefully keep attention for every word that is translated because it will influence the equivalence meaning between SL and TL on its translation.

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² Jiraphatralikhit, J., Klinpoon, S., & Kaewjan, S. (2005). An analysis of strategies in translation of the movie subtitle: Behind the painting. *Research Gate*

³ Newmark, P. (1988). A textbook of translation. London: Prentice Hall.

Nowadays, many literatures are being translated for a good variety of reasons. A lot of English books, short stories, dramas are translated into other language versions and vice versa. These translated literatures are very useful materials for foreign students as well as for people who learn English. This enables them not only to enrich their vocabularies but also to get cultural knowledge. To translate a text from source language into target language the translator should consider the process of translating. Further, a good translator should be able to translate a lot of text types through the correct methods. Nevertheless, most of the translators translate the works of other authors who are not the same nationality from their mother tongue language into another language and vice versa. But for this short story “တိုင်တည်သစ္စာမြဲလေသောအခါ”, both the original author and the translator are Myanmar nationality. So, this inspired the researcher to investigate the translation techniques used by the author who is not a native speaker. In this paper, the researcher analyzed the short story “တိုင်တည်သစ္စာမြဲလေသောအခါ” by using translation techniques proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet¹ (1995). This story is written by Thin Aung Than who is a former veterinarian and translated by Zaw Tun who has just been awarded Doctor Tin Shwe literary prize for his book entitled *The Sweet Honey Drop on the Sharp Scalpel Blade*.

This paper is intended for those who are interested in translating Myanmar literary text into English. So it is hoped that this paper will encourage them to make the best use of translation techniques so as to achieve improvement in their translation skills.

Literature Review

Translation is not an easy work but it is a challenging job as well. Today many people think that anyone who knows more than one language can become a translator or interpreter. But it is only a half-truth because a good translator must have good background knowledge of both languages. Moreover, the work of translation needs the theoretical knowledge and understanding of source text.

Hatim and Mason² (1990) suggest that translation is a process involving the negotiation of meaning between producers and receivers of the text. It is defined that general translation is a method of transferring oral and written messages from writing to speech or from one language to another. (<https://translationjournal.net/journal/63theory.htm>)

Larson³ (1984) states that in general translation communicates, as much as possible the same meaning that was understood by the speakers of the source language, using the normal language form of the receptor language, while maintaining the dynamics of the original source language text. So, translation can be explained as a decision-making process and a problem-solving task.

Translation is also a complicated task during which the translator encounters some problems or problematic issues which require observation, identification and finding the suitable solution. The means by which the translator

¹ Vinay, J.P., & Darbelnet, J. (2000). A methodology for translation.

² Hatim, B., & Mason, J. (1997). *The Translator as Communicator*. New York

³ Larson, Mildred.L. 1984. *Meaning-Based Translation*.

deals with these problems are called techniques. Jacobson¹ (2000) described categories of translation into three forms. First is intralingual translation or rewording, an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language. Second, interlingual translation or translation proper, an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language. Third, intersemiotic translation or transmutation, an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal signs systems.

Maisa²(2018) conducted a piece of research named “The Analysis of Translation Technique of Children Story : “Lila, The Clumsy Witch”. In this paper, the writer analyzed the children text entitled Lila, the clumsy witch or Lila, penyihir yang ceroboh. The story is written by Amelia Kurniawati and translated by P. Francis Rhien. It is an English to Indonesian translation story. In order to analyze the story, the techniques used by the researcher are proposed by Newmark(1988). They are word for word translation, literal translation and free translation. In this research, it is found that literal translation is the most preferred method applied by the writer in translating the text. Other translation techniques such as literal translation and free translation since these techniques are easier and simpler to translate text from English to Indonesian. This result indicates that the writer of the book focuses on the source language.

AlBisher³ (2016) did a study entitled “A Comparative Study of Two Translations of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland”. This study focuses on the translation of literary texts from English into Arabic, it discusses the challenges that face translators of children’s literature (CL), regarding cultural references, and offers solutions for such challenges. The research approach adopted in this dissertation includes a descriptive analysis carried out through comparing two translated versions of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. The findings from this research provide evidence that Klingberg⁴ (1986) theory as well as other translation techniques and procedures can be used in translating culturally bound terms and expressions to produce child-friendly translations in Arabic. The main conclusions drawn from this study state that despite the multiplicity of translation theories and techniques, translating literature remains problematic. This becomes more difficult when it comes to CL translation because of the specificity of the target language (TL) recipient (the child). This dissertation concludes by recommending further investigation of the most convenient techniques to achieve child-oriented literature through translation.

From the above discussion, finding the adequate techniques for doing translation is necessary for every translator. In the field translation, many researchers did research on the techniques of translation. However, there is little in the translation study which focuses especially on the translation techniques in the context that both the authors are the same nationality. Therefore, this research was carried out to explore and discuss the techniques used by the translator, Zaw

¹ Jacobson, R. (2000). On linguistics aspects of translation. In L. Venuti (ed.). *The translation*

² Maisa(2018) “The Analysis of Translation Technique of Children Story : “Lila, The Clumsy Witch”. *Journal of English Language and Learning*.

³ Albisher, Maha K. (2016) *A Comparative Study of Two Translation of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. M.A. Thesis .

⁴Klingberg, G. (1986). *Children’s fiction in the hands of writers*.

Tun in translating the short story “တိုင်တည်သစ္စာမြဲလေသာအခါ” by Thin Aung Than. Both the authors are Myanmar nationality. To conduct the research, seven different translation techniques proposed by Vinay and Derbelnet(1995) were used. These techniques are calque, borrowing, literal translation, transposition, modulation, functional equivalence, and adaptation.

1. Borrowing

Borrowing is a translation technique that involves using the same word or expression in original text in the target text. The word or expression borrowed is usually written in italics. In this sense, it is a translation technique that does not actually translate.

E. g. Food (Hamburger, Tofoo, Pizza, etc)

Technical terms (computer, I phone, software, facebook, etc)

Machinery and vehicle (handle, spare wheel, brake, etc)

2. Calque

When a translator uses a calque, he or she is creating or using a neologism in the target language by adopting the structure of the source language.

E.g. Emergency Exit (A-ye-paw-hwet-pauk)

Operation room (Khwae-seit-khan)

3. Literal translation

It is a word for word translation.

E.g. He knows (Thu thithe)

He goes (Thu thwarthee)

4. Transposition

Transposition involves moving from one grammatical category to another without altering the meaning of the text. This translation technique introduces a change in grammatical structure.

E.g. a beautiful flower- Pan (hla-hla-ta-pwint)

Blue sky (Kaung-kin-pyar)

5. Modulation

Modulation is about changing the form of the text by introducing a semantic change or perspective. It sounds better and more natural in the target language.

E.g Good morning (Mingalar par)

You are welcome (Yapartae)

6. Equivalence

This is a translation technique which uses a completely different expression to transmit the same reality. Through this technique, idioms, slogans, names of institutions, interjections or proverb can be translated.

E.g Make hay while the sun shines. (La thar don bai ngin; moe ywa don ye khan)

A good beginning makes a good ending. (A sa kaung ma a naung thay char)

7. Adaptation

It is a kind of translation that cannot be translated and the meaning that is lost is expressed somewhere else in the translation.

E.g I used to live in Mandalay. (Ngar Mandalay mar nay phoo tae)

Did you buy some bread yesterday? (Min ma nae ka par mount wae khae lar)

Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows.

- (1) To investigate the translation techniques used in translating the short story
- (2) To provide useful information of translation techniques to students and translators in order to raise their awareness in translating literature works like short stories.

Materials and Methods

The method used in this study is analytical method because it analyses the translation techniques found in the selected story. The short story “ When the Pledge of Love Remains Firm” by Zaw Tun was used as the research material.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the translation techniques used in the short story “ When the Pledge of Love Remains Firm” by Zaw Tun. It is translated from Myanmar version “တိုင်တည်သစ္စာမြဲလေသောအခါ” by Thin Aung Than. To carry out this objective, the story both in Myanmar version and English version is studied thoroughly, paying special attention to techniques used in each sentence. To complete this research in an organized way, the chosen short story is studied by investigating line by line in both versions. In doing research, the translation techniques, namely calque, borrowing , literal translation , transposition, modulation, functional equivalence, and adaptation proposed Vinay and Derbelnet(1995) are used to decide which techniques are used to translate the selected story. After that, data are categorized into groups depending on the techniques. At last, types of techniques are counted in order to know which translation techniques are used most and least.

Research Questions

- (1) What are translation strategies used most and least frequently in English translation of “တိုင်တည်သစ္စာမြဲလေသောအခါ” by Zaw Tun?
- (2) Why are particular translation techniques used in translating this short story ?

Findings and Discussion

After analyzing all data, the following results are found.

Table (1) Techniques of Translation Found in the Story

Sr. No.	Techniques of translation	No. of each technique found in the story	percentage
1	Borrowing	0	-
2	Claque	0	-
3	Literal Translation	0	-
4	Transposition	10	21.3%
5	Modulation	15	32%
6	Equivalence	3	6.4%
7	Adaptation	19	40.3%
	Total	47	100%

Table (2) shows the number and the percentage of each translation technique found in the English version story. It is found that out of seven techniques, four techniques are found in the translation of the story. It is assessed that techniques such as calque, borrowing and literal translation are not found. The occurrence of adaptation (40.3%) is highest. The second most frequent technique is modulation (32%) , the third most frequent one, Transposition (21.3%) and the fourth one, equivalence (6.4%).

Figure (1) Translation Techniques Found in the Selected Story

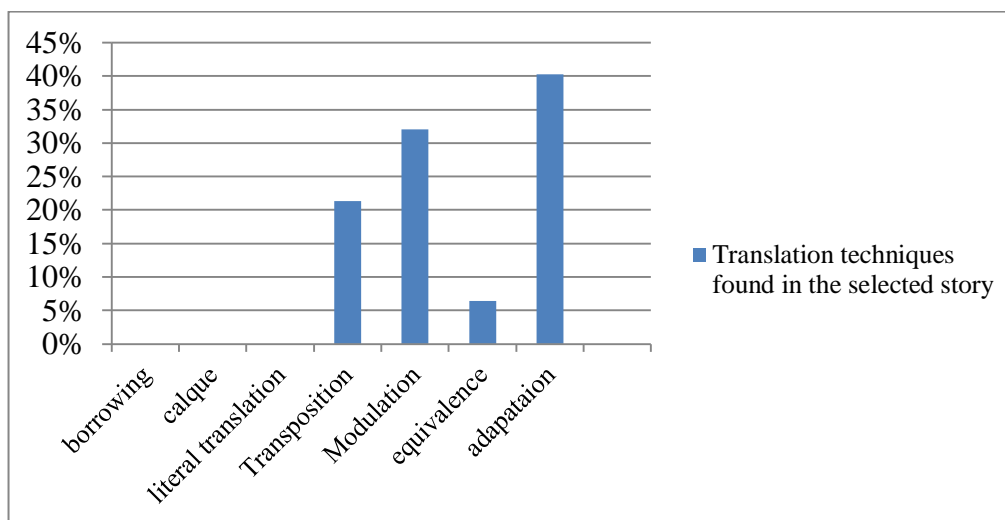


Table (1) and Figure (1) shows translation techniques found in the selected story “When the Pledge of Love Remains Firm”. By considering the results, the first research question “What are translation strategies used most and least frequently in English translation of “တိုင်တည်သစ္စာမြဲလေသောအခါ” by Zaw Tun?” can be answered as follows. The techniques like Calque, Borrowing, Literal Translation are not found in this story. The most frequently found technique is adaptation and the least one is equivalence. It is believed that the source language text was mostly translated by employing the adaptation technique in English language and the translators attempted to translate as natural as English language without missing Myanmar language culture.

Furthermore, the following are the answers for the second research question “Why are particular translation techniques used in translating this short story ?” The translation technique like borrowing is not found in this story because one fact is that it is a kind of translation which involves using the same word in original text in the target text. Another fact is that in translating this story, the original text is Myanmar and there are few borrowing Myanmar words in English. Again calque is not found, either. The reason is that structure of the source language (Myanmar) is rarely adopted in that of English language. Literal translation is not found in the translating work. The main reason is that Myanmar and English grammar patterns are quite different. In fact, literal translation needs following the same pattern and order of the source language and translated it word for word. There mustn’t be any addition or reduction in translating .If not so, the translation result may become awkward in target language. So, it is not surprising that literal translation is not found in the translated story.

Equivalence is the technique where languages describe the same situation by different stylistic or structural methods. It expresses the same situation in different terms or in other words or different ways of rendering some phrases. As mentioned above, as the nature of Myanmar and English languages are quite different, the occurrence of this technique, Equivalence is less used in the translation work.

The technique modulation is shifting from one grammatical category to another without altering the meaning of the original text. And it can also be justified so that translation results will be grammatically correct. As Myanmar grammatical structure and that of English are not the same. So there is no doubt that the translator uses this technique more frequently in translating the text.

The most frequent technique found in collecting data is adaptation. Adaptation is a situational equivalence or the type of situation being referred when the source language message is unknown in the target language culture. In this case, the translator has to do Myanmar to English translation. Myanmar is a little-known language whereas English is an international one. So it can be said that the translator keeps his translation faithfully by following the rule that the translator has to create a new situation that can be considered as equivalent in the target language.

In conclusion, the focus in this research is Myanmar-English translation work. So, the techniques like adaptation, modulation and equivalence are found but the rest are not, due to the different nature in grammatical patterns in both languages as well as different levels of popularity in languages.

Conclusion

Translation has a wide area to be discussed. In this study, it is only focused on techniques which were reflected in translating short story entitled “When the Pledge of Love Remains Firm” by Zaw Tun. After analyzing and interpreting the data, of seven translation techniques proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), there are three techniques which were not found in the story but four techniques were found. The percentage of every translation technique that was found in the story was transposition (21.3%), modulation (32%); equivalence (6.4%) and adaptation (40.3%). It can be stated that the translator tends to use adaptation technique the most. Although the translator does not use three techniques, the rest four techniques the translator uses are quite enough for the readers to understand the source text. This is because the translator may try to adapt the meaning of the original text for the target text readers. In this way, it could be of some help to students who are interested in translating Myanmar into English as well as to English readers who are eager to know Myanmar culture.

This study was done by considering the translation techniques which were proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). From the result of the study, it could be suggested that

1. This kind of study could also be done on other techniques or strategies suggested by other scholars.
2. The next researcher can take other translation works of Zaw Tun to be the materials.

3. For further studies, the next researcher can conduct another study related to translation in order to make a comparison with this study.

In conclusion, it is hoped that this study is a reference to improve knowledge about the material of Myanmar-English Translation subject as there are so many techniques or procedures on how to translate to be able to produce a good and comprehensible translation.

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