

TRANSLATION QUALITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWO TRANSLATED VERSIONS OF THE LONELY LADY

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Abstract

This research aimed to analyze two Thai translated versions: *เจรีลีจอมโลภกี้ย์* (*JeriLee, the lustful lady*) by Pramoon Unahatoo and *เดี่ยวดาย* (*Lonely*) by Nida of the novel, *The Lonely Lady* written by Harold Robbins so as to assess the translation quality of both versions. Nevertheless, only Chapter 2 (Small Town), Chapter 3 (Big Town) and Chapter 19 (Big Town) of these two versions were analyzed and compared with the original, sentence by sentence, to find whether there were any discrepancies in translation from English to Thai. Then each discrepancy was analyzed employing the theoretical framework of seven standards of textuality proposed by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) consisting of cohesion, coherence, intentionality,

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situationality, informativity, intertextuality and acceptability. The study found 11 discrepancies in Unahatoop's version, and 18 discrepancies in Nida's. The results of the study show that the translation quality in Unahatoop's version is considered more acceptable than Nida's when assessed by de Beaugrande and Dressler theoretical framework.

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเปรียบเทียบงานแปลในนวนิยายเรื่อง *The lonely lady* ของ Harold Robbins เพื่อประเมินคุณภาพงานแปลนวนิยายสองฉบับ ได้แก่ *เจริลีจอมโลเกีย* โดยประมุข อุดมธุป และ *เด็วดาย* โดย "นิตา" การเปรียบเทียบผลงานแปลสองฉบับใช้ทฤษฎี Seven standards of textuality ของ de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) ซึ่งประกอบด้วย Cohesion, Coherence, Intentionality, Situationality, Informativity, Intertextuality และ Acceptability การวิเคราะห์บทแปลทั้งสองฉบับใช้วิธีการเปรียบเทียบเฉพาะบทที่ 2 (เมืองเล็ก) บทที่ 3 (เมืองใหญ่) และบทที่ 19 (เมืองใหญ่) ของบทแปลทั้งสองฉบับกับต้นฉบับแบบประโยคต่อประโยคเพื่อหาความคลาดเคลื่อนในการแปลจากต้นฉบับภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาไทย ผลการศึกษาพบความคลาดเคลื่อน 11 แห่งในบทแปลของประมุข อุดมธุป และ 18 แห่งในบทแปลของ "นิตา" จึงกล่าวได้ว่าผลงานแปลนวนิยายเรื่อง *The Lonely Lady* ของประมุข อุดมธุป น่าจะมีคุณภาพตามทฤษฎี Seven standards of textuality ของ de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) มากกว่า

Introduction

Now we are in the age of globalization and high technology which enables each country in the world to communicate with one another rapidly. Since there are many languages spoken all over the world, translation becomes a necessary tool to transfer knowledge, information, and literature from one group of people to the other groups of people in the world. In general practice, a lot of knowledge and information were transferred through translation in academic and artistic fields. In terms of artistic endeavour, novels are a typical literary work translated to entertain readers. Generally, the authors of novels aim to express thoughts, ideas, feelings, imagination, and aesthetic use of language in the novels, which act as mirrors reflecting lives, experience, values and cultures of a certain group of people. Some teach moral lessons and suggest solutions to problems which might recur in anyone's life. The translators are generally considered as important as the novelists because they are transferring ideas and the linguistic beauty intended from the original writer to the target audience.

It is a maxim that translators have several ways to translate a novel. And accordingly, as there is no single way to translate a novel, it is not always a general practice that there is only one version of translated work. Actually, there might well be

many different versions of a translated work of a certain novel. The job of the translator is to do his/her best in his/her translation so that he/she will get good recognition and stay in the career as long as possible.

Siwasariyanon (1975) says that novel translation is an art. Practically, a well-translated novel is well accepted by the readers. However, most readers are oblivious to the background to what they read in this respect. They only want to entertain themselves with a good plot written in beautiful language. If the translated work suits their taste, it will be well-accepted. As a result, the translator may make a lot of money from their endeavors.

Generally, translators choose to translate bestsellers because these books are popular and are well liked by general public readers. The translators are likely to make easy money if they translate them well. In general practice, English best-selling novels may be translated by several translators. Each translator has his/her own unique way in choosing words, expressions, styles and levels of language to transfer the original text to the target language. For example, there are three Thai translated versions of *The lonely lady* by Robbins (1977):

เดี่ยวดาย (*Lonely*) by Nida (1981).

โลนลี่ เลดี้ (a transliteration in Thai-*Lonely Lady*) by Suwit Khaoplod (1986), and

เจริลีจอมโลกียี่ (*JeriLee, the lustful lady*) by Pramoon Unahatoop (1978).

All of these famous professional translators are well recognized by Thai readers. The three translated works are different in several respects in spite of the fact that all are translated from the same original novel, and each translator did the translation approximately, more or less, over the same period of time. The readers have to decide whose translated work is worth reading. Some readers may choose to read their favorite translator. Some may choose the translated version that suits their taste. However, the readers should consider the overall quality of the work.

Actually, it is hard to evaluate translated works and to weigh which one is of higher or lower quality. Linguists have proposed many theories to evaluate them. Each theory places importance on different aspects such as correctness and accuracy in grammar, meaning, sentence structure, styles, use of words, the responses of the readers and etc.

De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) define communicative text as a text which meets seven standards of textuality. If any of these standards is not satisfactory, the text will not be communicative. According to de Beaugrande and Dressler, the seven standards of textuality are cohesion, coherence, intentionality,

informativity, situationality, intertextuality and acceptability.

In the researcher's point of view, de Beaugrande and Dressler's theoretical framework considers not only the text itself, but also the producer and the receiver of it. Moreover, it is a useful theoretical framework that can be applied to analyze a text of any type including a translated text. Therefore, de Beaugrande and Dressler's theory has been deemed appropriate and applicable to evaluate the quality of translated works in this study.

Objective

This research attempted to study the translation quality of two Thai translated versions of *The Lonely Lady* by Robbins, Harold (1977): *เจรีลีจอมโลเกียร์ (Jerilee, the lustful lady)* by Pramoon Unahatoop (1978), and *เดี่ยวดาย (Lonely)* by Nida (1981) within de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) theoretical framework.

Review of the Related Literature

The review includes the following:

Translation Quality Approaches

Different approaches to the analysis of translation quality have been proposed. Some significant ones are as follows:

1. The five parameters for translating and revision mentioned by Wiwatsorn (2002)

These five parameters are used to consider whether a text is entirely translated accurately, whether the text is written with

grammatically and mechanically correct usage of language, whether the text is correctly and clearly written using correct idiomatic expression, whether the text keeps the tone of the original version, and whether the text is audience-oriented. If the translated text meets these five-parameter criteria, it is a good translated work evaluated by editorial staff or those who are responsible for evaluating the text.

2. The assessment model proposed by House (1997)

The model is based on Hallidayan systemic-functional theory. It provides an analysis and a comparison of an original and its translation on three different levels: the levels of language/text, register (field, mode and tenor) and genre. The basic concept for equivalence in this model is that the translation should have a function which is equivalent to that of the original and employs equivalent pragmatic means to achieve that function.

An advantage of House's (1997) translation quality assessment concept is that the source and the target language are analyzed by the same criterion. However, the translation quality depends on some other factors such as covert-overt translation, and cultural filter. The quality of translated text is judged by the density of mismatch when compared to the source and the target text. Therefore, the model proposed by House

(1997) might be unworkable to analyze translation in detail.

According to House (2002), the choices or strategies translators choose influence the quality of translation. Translation quality assessment requires continual development. Translation from and into many different languages must be analyzed in order to formulate a hypothesis about why, how and at what degree one translated text is better than the other.

3. The seven standards of textuality proposed by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981)

According to de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), a communicative text should have characteristics that meet all seven standards comprising cohesion, coherence, intentionality, situationality, informativity, intertextuality and acceptability. If any of these standards is not satisfied, the text is considered unable to fulfill its function and not to be communicative. This theoretical framework is suitable for analyzing any text type, including a translated text, because it emphasizes both the text-based approach (coherence and cohesion) and the response-based approach (intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality).

Implementation of Translation Quality Approaches

Studies on translation quality assessment within different theoretical

frameworks have been conducted by some researchers such as Thawornlerdratt (1987), Sudprakonkate(2000), and Chuangsuvanich (2002).

Thawornlerdratt (1987) compared two translated versions of *The lonely lady* by Harold Robbins (1977), using the translation theories proposed by Nida (1964), Newmark (1981), and Saibua (1982) as guidelines. The first version was translated by Nida (penname), and the second one by Suwit Khawplod. In the comparative study, five aspects were considered: translation techniques and expressions, the maintenance of completeness and equivalence of meaning, the accuracy of meaning, the maintenance of writing style, and the popularity between the two versions. Two forms of questionnaire were distributed to 100 informants to evaluate the meaning and style maintenance and also the popularity among informants.

The findings revealed that both versions maintain the meaning correctly close to the original version. However, the readers' responses to Nida's version were better than Khawplod's because of the more beautiful style of writing.

Sudprakonkate (2002) studied the style, techniques and register used in Nida's translated work of *The Queen's Confession* by Victoria, Holt (1992). The findings have revealed that the arrangement of ideas and thoughts in the translated version is different

from the original. Nida employs free translation as her style. Ideas, images, emotions and feelings in the original version are adjusted to Thai culture without changing the theme and plot. Some details are omitted in her translated version with no effect on the main theme. Furthermore, register used in the translated version is appropriate to the social role of each character and relevant to the flavor and tone of the novel.

Chuangsuwanich (2002) analyzed translation quality of the two Thai versions of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* within the theoretical framework proposed by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). The first version was translated by M.R.Kukrit Pramoj, the second by Chanwit Kasetsiri. The findings revealed the most important problem of the two translated versions concerned intentionality of the source text. Other problems were situational, informativity, intertextuality, cohesion and coherence. The first version by M.R.Kukrit Pramoj was considered more acceptable than the second one.

Methodology

This study attempted to compare two translated versions of *The Lonely lady* to the original novel in order to weigh which version was more acceptable within the theoretical framework proposed by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981).

Data

The data in this study were selected from the following texts:

1 The original version *The lonely lady* by Robbins, Harold (1977)

2 The translated versions

2.1 เจริลีจอมโลเกีย. (*JeriLee, the lustful lady*) by Pramoon Unahatoop (1978)

2.2 เดี่ยวดาย (*Lonely*) by Nida (penname), (1981)

Procedures

1 Three chapters: Chapter 2 (Small Town), Chapter 3 (Big Town), and Chapter 19 (Big Town) of *The Lonely Lady*, were selected so that an equal proportion of descriptions and dialogues was studied to reveal the style of language used in translating the different text types.

2 The original novel of *The lonely lady* by Robbins, Harold was studied in detail.

3 The first Thai translated version, *เดี่ยวดาย (lonely)* by Nida (penname) and the second Thai translated version, *เจริญจอมโลเกีย (JeriLee, the lustful lady)* by Pramoon Unahatoop were analyzed according to the attributes of seven standards of textuality proposed by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981).

4 In order to facilitate the analysis, Chapter 2 (Small Town), 3 (Big Town), and 19 (Big Town) of the two Thai translations were segmented into sentences similar to those in the original text. Each sentence was

segmented by //. The abbreviations used were as follows:

ST: stands for source text,

UV: stands for Unahatoop's version,

and

NV: stands for Nida's version.

5 Each chapter was compared with the original to find if there were any discrepancies. If any discrepancies were found in any chapter, they were underlined and excerpted. Then they were discussed within de Beaugrande and Dressler's (1981) theoretical framework.

6 The findings were discussed

7 Conclusions were drawn from the findings and recommendations were made for further studies.

Data Analysis

Chapter 2,3 and 19 of the two Thai Translated versions, , *เดียวดาย (lonely)* by Nida (penname) and the second Thai translated version, *เจรีลีจอมโลเกีย (JeriLee, the lustful lady)* by Pramoon Unahatoop were analyzed within the theoretical framework of the seven standards of textuality proposed by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). The seven standards of textuality are the following:

1 Cohesion

Cohesion refers to relations of meaning that exist within a text. It is the connection which results when the interpretation of a textual element is dependent upon another

element in the text. Cohesion can be distinguished into two main categories: grammatical cohesion (substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, reference) and lexical cohesion. Lexical cohesion does not deal with grammatical or semantic connections but with connections based on the words used. It is achieved by selection of vocabulary, using semantically close items.

2 Coherence

Coherence can be defined as the continuity of senses in a text. What makes a text coherent is the use of related words. This relation is provided when there is causality, reason, purpose, time, and enablement in the text. To relate sentences to each other in a meaningful way, items in the text must not be irrelevant. For example, if the topic is about sports and yet the body of the text focuses on some irrelevant subject matter other than sports, the text cannot be considered a coherent text.

3 Intentionality

The producer of a text brings his/her words together to achieve a specific goal. This may be the expression of oneself, informing others, criticizing, etc. Whatever the aim is, the text must be produced in a cohesive and coherent way so that it serves for the text-producer's intention. A message that the producer delivers has a specific intention in his/her communicative action, so a text without

an intention cannot be a real text. For instance, in a scientific book, texts are written with the intention of giving technical information about particular subjects. The readers then read it for getting information about the specified topic.

4 Informativity

Informativity concerns how unexpected /expected or known/unknown are the occurrences in the text. There are three levels of informativity:

1 First order informativity: grammar rules. They are clear and there is no need to specify in a text to make it informative such as newspaper headline and road signs for example, coming soon, children first or no entrance.

2 Second order informativity: it is the surface structure in the text which enables us to understand the text meaningfully. It can be clearer by upgrading or unclear by downgrading the information.

3 Third order informativity: They are generally unknown for some receivers; so it should be made explicit through footnotes, some explanations, etc.

5 Situationality

The term situationality is a general design action for the factors which render a text relevant to a current recoverable situation of occurrence. Every semiotic element gains a

meaning in a specific context and in a specific situation. Then it is important to determine what is said, by whom, when, why, where, and how. For example: A woman raises a bottle of milk and says "More?" Then a boy nods and says "thanks". The use of language shows that they understand the occurrence of asking and answering about milk because they are in the same situation

6 Intertextuality

Intertextuality helps to build meaningful relations between various components of communication. For example; the name of the film "Back to the Future 2" means that there was another film displayed before. As such we can build meaningful links between two or more texts.

7 Acceptability

The readers of a text receive that text for various purposes. Reading a text means expecting something from it. Consequently, for the matching of readers' expectations with what is meant in the text, there must be a coherent and cohesive set of components which form it. A text should be organized or else it cannot be accepted by the receivers. The writer's intention is accepted by the readers by means of the schemas the readers have for such text type and their stored world knowledge about the things told so far. If there is no such frame of reference for this particular text type, then it should be made clear for the reader to provide

acceptability. According to de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), acceptability is the attitude of the readers towards six attributes of textuality. In other words, to evaluate whether each text is acceptable or not, the readers have to consider six standards of the text in accordance with their own background knowledge.

Findings

The findings of the study were presented in tabular forms

Table 1 Frequency of Each Standard of Textuality Affected Between the Two Thai Versions in Chapter 2 (Small Town)

Table 2 Frequency of Each Standard of Textuality Affected Between the Two Thai Versions in Chapter 3 (Big Town)

Table 3 Frequency of Each Standard of Textuality Affected Between the Two Thai Versions in Chapter 19 (Big Town)

Table 4 Frequency of Each Standard of Textuality Affected Between the Two Thai Versions in the Three Chapters.

Table 1 Frequency of Each Standard of Textuality Affected Between the Two Thai Versions in Chapter 2 (Small Town)

Standard of Textuality	Frequency of Discrepancy	
	UV	NV
1. Intentionality	1	4
2. Situationality	1	1
3. Informativity	1	0
4. Cohesion	0	1
5. Coherence	0	0
6. Intertextuality	0	0
Total	3	7

Table 1 reveals the frequency of each standard of textuality affected between the source text and the two Thai translated versions in Chapter 2 (Small Town). According to the table, Nida's version violates the standard of textuality seven times while Unahatoop's three times. The intentionality of the source text is violated four times in the former version and once in the latter. The discrepancies concerning the situationality and informativity are found once in both versions. Finally, in regards to coherence and intertextuality, no discrepancy is found in both versions.

Table 2 Frequency of Each Standard of Textuality Affected Between the Two Thai Versions in Chapter 3 (Big Town)

Standard of Textuality	Frequency of Discrepancy	
	UV	NV
1. Intentionality	0	1
2. Situationality	2	1
3. Informativity	1	0
4. Cohesion	1	1
5. Coherence	0	0
6. Intertextuality	0	0
Total	4	3

Table 2 reveals the frequency of each standard of textuality affected between the source text and the two Thai translated versions in Chapter 3 (Big Town). According to the table, Unahatooop violates the standard of textuality four times while Nida three times. The situationality of the source text is violated twice in Unahatooop's version and once in Nida's. The discrepancies concerning cohesion are found once in both versions. Regarding intentionality, the discrepancy is found once only in Nida's version. In terms of informativity, the discrepancy is found once only in Unahatooop's version. Finally, in regards to coherence and intertextuality, no discrepancy is found in both versions.

Table 3 Frequency of Each Standard of Textuality Affected Between the Two Thai Versions in Chapter 19 (Big Town)

Standard of Textuality	Frequency of Discrepancy	
	UV	NV
1. Intentionality	2	6
2. Situationality	0	1
3. Informativity	2	1
4. Cohesion	0	0
5. Coherence	0	0
6. Intertextuality	0	0
Total	4	8

Table 3 reveals the frequency of each standard of textuality affected between the source text and the two Thai translated versions in Chapter 19 (Big Town). According to the table, Unahatoop's version violates the standard of textuality four times while Nida eight. The intentionality of the source text is violated six times in Nida's version and twice in Unahatoop's. The discrepancies concerning the situationality are found once only in Nida's version. In terms of informativity, discrepancies are found twice in Unahatoop's versions and once in Nida's. Finally, in regards to cohesion, coherence and intertextuality, no discrepancy is found in both versions.

Table 4 Frequency of Each Standard of Textuality Affected Between the Two Thai Versions in the Three Chapters.

Standard of Textuality	Frequency of Discrepancy	
	UV	NV
1. Intentionality	3	11
2. Situationality	3	3
3. Informativity	4	2
4. Cohesion	1	2
5. Coherence	0	0
6. Intertextuality	0	0
Total	11	18

Table 4 reveals the frequency of each standard of textuality affected between the source text and the two Thai translated versions in the three chapters. According to the table, Unahatooop's version violates the standard of textuality 11 times while Nida 18 times. The intentionality of the source text is violated three times in the former version and 11 times in the latter. The discrepancies concerning the situationality are found three times in both versions. In terms of the informativity, the discrepancies are found four times in Unahatooop's version and twice in Nida's. Regarding cohesion, discrepancy is found once in Unahatooop's versions and twice in Nida's. Finally, in regards to coherence and intertextuality, no discrepancy is found in both versions.

Conclusion

In this study, Chapter 2 (Small Town), Chapter 3 (Big Town) and Chapter 19 (Big Town) of two translated versions : เจริญใจอมโลภกี้ยี่ (*JeriLee, the lustful lady*) by Pramoon Unahatooop and เดี่ยวดาย (*Lonely*) by Nida were analyzed within de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) theoretical framework. The original novel is the best-selling novel *The lonely lady* written by Harold Robbins

The objective of this study was to assess the translation quality of two Thai translated versions within the theoretical framework.

The results revealed that the translation quality in Unahatooop's version was considered more acceptable than that of Nida.

Discussion

According to the findings, 29 discrepancies are found in the three chapters. 11 violated items of the standard of textuality are found in Unahatooop's version while 18 in Nida's. The frequencies of each standard of textuality affected in Unahatooop's version are as follows: informativity four times, intentionality and situationality three times each, and cohesion once. Nida's, on the other hand, are: intentionality 11 times, situationality three times, and informativity and cohesion two times each.

Regarding to Chapter 2 (Small Town) and Chapter 19 (Big Town), Unahatooop's version is more acceptable than Nida's since the proportion of each standard of textuality violation items between Unahatooop's version and Nida's are 3:7 and 4:8 respectively. However, Nida's version is more acceptable than Unahatooop's in Chapter 3 (Big Town) since the proportion of each standard of textuality violation items between Unahatooop's version and Nida's is 4:3.

The result of this study may correspond, or contrast, to previous research as follows :

1 The findings of this study corresponds to the findings of Thawornlerdratt's

(1987) and Sudprakonkate (2002) in regards to Nida's version.

Thawornlerdratt's (1987) compared two translated versions: เดี่ยวดาย (Lonely) by Nida and *The lonely lady* by Suwit Khawplod. The findings revealed that both versions maintained the meaning close to the original. However, readers responded to Nida's version better than Khawplod's because Nida's used a more stylish flair in her writing.

Sudprakonkate (2002) studied Nida's translated work *The queen's confession* by Victoria Holt. The findings revealed that Nida adjusts ideas, images, emotions and feelings more skillfully to establish that vital correspondence with Thai culture. The arrangements of ideas and thought are different from the original since her style of translation is free translation. Moreover, the registers used in her translated work are appropriate in the Thai cultural setting.

Regarding the findings of this study, Nida once again employs free translation. Some discrepancies in her version may not be considered maintaining the intentionality of the source text because her word choices depend mainly on the aesthetics of the language, adjusted to suit the taste of Thai people. For example, formal words tend to be used to replace abusive, vulgar and derogatory words in her version. In addition,

the orders of the sentences in descriptive parts of the novel are frequently rearranged. Therefore, readers may appreciate the novel more while reading Nida's version than Unahatoop's version. Nevertheless, the aesthetic dimension of the novel is more faithfully rendered in Nida's version because she is closer to the spirit of the original.

2 The findings of this study differ from the findings of Chuangsuvanich (2002) in terms of standards of textuality.

Chuangsuwanich (2002) analyzed two translated versions of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* within the theoretical framework proposed by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). The findings revealed that the most significant problem in respect of the two translated versions concern was the intentionality of the source text. Other problems were situationality, informativity, intertextuality, cohesion and coherence. However, in this study, the problems of each version are different, as follows.

In Nida's version, the most significant problem concerns intentionality of the source text. Other problems relate to situationality, cohesion, and informativity. In regards to Unahatoop's version, the most significant problem revolves around situationality and informativity, with intentionality and cohesion occasionally suffering.

Unahatoop, as previously mentioned, employs literal translation. Most of the discrepancies found in his translated work show that he might not provide the situationality and informativity of the text as effectively as one would like. Still, the intentionality of the source text in his version might be maintained better than in Nida's because of his translation method; he translates every word from the original to his translated work almost without omission. His version may be an excellent example of a word-by-word translation. The readers are unable to respond to his translated work as if they were reading a Thai novel. Punctuation marks such as periods, hyphens and commas maintained in Unahatoop's version which are similar to those in the original are not acceptable because such punctuation

marks do not exist in Thai. Furthermore, these punctuation marks may interfere with the reader's stream of thought and interpretative projection, thereby rendering the translated work less enjoyable.

Application

The finding of the study will be beneficial as follows:

1 The research results can be used by those who wish to access and assess good quality translated work.

2 Critics of translated novels can use the results of the study as guidelines to make critical evaluations of translated works.

3 Translators will be able to develop their translating skills and produce better quality translations.

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