

# Culture-Bound Elements in Thai Literary Translation: A Case Study of Marcel Barang's Thai-English Translation Strategies

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was twofold: a) to create and propose a typology of culture-bound elements in two Thai literary texts that were translated into English by the non-Thai literary translator, Marcel Barang; and b) to deeply explore and propose a taxonomy of translation strategies that the translator adopted when dealing with culture-bound elements. The findings revealed eleven types of culture-bound elements, including: 1) Buddhism, comprising nine subcategories; 2) proper names, consisting of eight subcategories; 3) cultural artifacts; 4) figurative language, consisting of four subcategories; 5) onomatopoeic words; 6) sex, containing three subcategories; 7) swearwords; 8) music and arts; 9) greeting expressions; 10) units of measurement; and 11) others. Four types of culture-bound elements emerged from this study: figurative language, onomatopoeic words, sex, and swearwords. Regarding translation strategies, it was found that the translator adopted eleven strategies: 1) description, 2) transposition, 3) combined strategies, 4) superordinate, 5) literal translation, 6) definition, 7) transliteration, 8) reduction, 9) subordinate, 10) omission, and 11) alteration.

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The analysis of translation strategies demonstrated that foreignizing strategies were dominantly adopted in the transference of the culture-bound elements in the selected literary texts while domesticating strategies were used infrequently. It could be summarized that the translator tended to adopt a target-text-oriented style as shown in a series of efforts to facilitate the target audiences by not allowing the foreignness or strangeness of the source culture to affect their enjoyment.

**Keywords:** Literary Translation, Culture-bound Elements, Translation Strategies

# ข้อความที่มีนัยเกี่ยวโยงทางวัฒนธรรมในการแปล งานวรรณกรรมไทย: กรณีศึกษากลวิธีการแปลนวนิยาย จากภาษาไทยเป็นภาษาอังกฤษของมาร์แชล บาร์ริงส์

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## บทคัดย่อ

กรณีศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อจำแนกข้อความที่มีนัยเกี่ยวโยงทางวัฒนธรรมที่ปรากฏในงานวรรณกรรมไทยสองเรื่องที่แปลเป็นภาษาอังกฤษโดยมาร์แชล บาร์ริงส์ และเพื่อนำเสนอกลวิธีการแปลที่นักแปลใช้ในการถ่ายโอนข้อความที่มีนัยเกี่ยวโยงทางวัฒนธรรม ผลการศึกษาพบว่าในงานวรรณกรรมดังกล่าวปรากฏข้อความที่มีนัยเกี่ยวโยงทางวัฒนธรรมซึ่งสามารถจำแนกออกเป็น 11 ประเภท ได้แก่ 1) ข้อความที่เกี่ยวข้องกับศาสนาพุทธ ซึ่งประกอบด้วย 4 หมวดย่อย 2) นามเฉพาะ ซึ่งสามารถแบ่งเป็น 8 หมวดย่อย 3) วัตถุทางวัฒนธรรม 4) ภาษาภาพพจน์ 5) คำศัพท์เลียนเสียงธรรมชาติ 6) เพศ ซึ่งประกอบด้วย 3 หมวดย่อย 7) คำสบล 8) ดนตรีและศิลปะ 9) ส่วนวนในการตกทาย 10) หน่วยวัด และ 11) ประเภทอื่น ๆ ผู้วิจัยพบว่าข้อความที่มีนัยเกี่ยวโยงทางวัฒนธรรม 4 ประเภทเป็นข้อค้นพบใหม่ ประกอบด้วย ภาษาภาพพจน์ คำศัพท์เลียนเสียงธรรมชาติ เพศ และ คำสบล เนื่องจากข้อความกลุ่มเหล่านี้ไม่ปรากฏในการจัดหมวดหมู่ของนักวิจัยคนอื่น ๆ ที่ใช้ในการรอบแนวคิดการวิจัย ในส่วนของกลวิธีการแปล ผลการวิจัยพบว่า นักแปลใช้กลวิธีการแปลข้อความที่มีนัยเกี่ยวโยงทางวัฒนธรรมทั้งหมด 11 กลวิธี ได้แก่ 1) การขยายความ 2) การแทนที่ทางวัฒนธรรม 3) การใช้กลวิธีร่วม 4) การใช้คำที่มีความหมายกว้าง 5) การแปลตรงตัว 6) การบอกความหมาย 7) การเขียนทับศัพท์ 8) การลดข้อความ 9) การใช้คำที่มีความหมายแคบ 10) การละไว้ไม่แปล และ 11) การเปลี่ยนความหมาย ผลการวิจัยยังชี้ให้เห็นว่านักแปลใช้กลวิธีการแปลที่เน้นสร้างความเข้าใจแก่ผู้อ่านวรรณกรรมแปล และเพื่อไม่ให้ความแปร่งทางภาษาที่เกิดจากวัฒนธรรมต้นทางมีผลกระทบต่ออรรถรสในการอ่านของผู้อ่านภาษาปลายทาง

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## 1. Introduction

Literary translation is the process of decoding and interpreting the text through interaction with the author and the text. The process, therefore, is unavoidably fraught with a wide array of challenges. To illustrate, it is acknowledged that this type of translation is burdened with countless intricacies, e.g., diverse literary genres, linguistic disparities between the source and target languages, and publishers and their translating policies. As a result, literary translators are required to possess a solid understanding of the source culture in addition to a strong command of both the source and target languages in order to grapple with cultural issues ranging from lexical to discourse levels. This is due to the fact that at the heart of translation lies a thorough understanding of cultural and linguistic differences.

The translation task becomes far more complicated when translators have to deal with unmatched elements of culture, which is frequently regarded as one of the main problems encountered by literary translators. The rendition of culture-bound elements is an issue that has long been at the forefront of the discipline. As mentioned by Baker (1992), the lack of cultural concepts in the target language poses a hardship for translators. She refers to a culture-related word or expression as a culture specific item and defines it as:

The source-culture word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food. Such concepts are often referred to as 'culture-specific'. (p. 21)

Given that cultural translation in general is by no means a simple task, the translation of culture-bound elements in literary texts is even more complicated and needs to be operated with great care. This is due to the fact that literary texts possess several linguistic peculiarities, finely blended with both society and culture. In other words, it can be said that literary translation is one of the major channels for communicating across cultures. Guerra (2012) asserts that one of the underlying factors that contribute to the translator's difficulty in transferring cultural concepts lies in the fact that "some words or phrases denoting objects, facts, phenomena,

etc. are so deeply rooted in their source culture and so specific (perhaps exclusive or unique) to the culture that produces them that they have no equivalent in the target culture, be it because they are unknown, or because they are not yet codified in the target language” (p. 1). Within the same line of thought, Nida (1964) highlights some challenges commonly encountered by the translator, concluding that differences between cultures may lead to more severe complications for the translator than differences in language structure do.

Due to the rise of cultural issues in translation studies, translation scholars and researchers have shifted their attention away from the comparative study of words and their larger units of phrases, clauses, and sentences between two languages and started to mark out the extended territory that encompasses other academic disciplines such as culture, sociology, or literary studies. The sheer bulk of research that has been carried out in order to gain a deeper insight into translation strategies used in transferring culture and classifications of culture-bound elements is indicative of increased awareness of culture and the role it plays in translation. Particularly in the translation of literary works, the translator is more likely to come across words that are culturally specific, such as taboo words, proverbs, metaphorical and idiomatic expressions. The translator’s task is, then, to transfer the source culture to the readers of the target text, which is considered one of the most challenging aspects of translation (Baker, 1996; Larson, 1984). As contended by Al-Masri (2009), literary translation involves not only the transfer of linguistic structures and the equivalence of meaning; rather, it is a multi-level study of content, context, semantics, and pragmatics. To date, several translation scholars have postulated different strategies to cope with culture-bound elements. Several taxonomies of translation strategies have been developed and proposed. These include Baker’s (1992) eight strategies, Newmark’s (1988) eighteen strategies, Guerra’s (2012) fifteen strategies, Chesterman’s (1997) thirty strategies, Díaz-Cintas and Ramel’s (2007) nine strategies, and Ranzato’s (2013) ten strategies. Each classification of strategies is elaborated in greater detail in the second chapter.

In Thailand, despite a huge number of studies that have been done on translation strategies, there are very few studies examining the translation strategies used, particularly in the field of literary translation (Asawawongkasem, 2015; Kebboonkerd, 2014; Prateepachitti, 2014). Likewise, a dearth of attention has been paid to strategies adopted in rendering culture-bound elements when compared to the analysis of translation strategies in other spheres. Few researchers have conducted research and analysis to better understand how translators deal with culturally rooted words, and the number of those who have examined Thai literary works translated into English is relatively small.

Among those working on Thai-English translation, Manketwit (2010) analyzed culture-bound elements in the novel *Si Phaendin* and its translation, *Four Reigns* (translated into English by Tulachandra). His analysis of translation strategies drew mainly on Nord's Discord Analysis and Venuti's concepts of foreignization and domestication, and his classification of culture-bound elements was based solely on Newmark's (1988) classification. The findings revealed 18 cultural themes and four main translation strategies. The most frequently used strategy was transliteration and the least was cultural substitution. However, restrictions were placed on his excessive reliance on a particular taxonomy or classification, thereby limiting the way he interpreted the data. Moreover, despite several advantages, Newmark's (1988) classification has been castigated for being too rigid and for its lack of contextualization (Kwieciński, 2001; Mailhac, 1996). If the researcher had incorporated other taxonomies and classifications into his research study, he might have gained deeper insights into the topic.

To shed a new light on the typology of culture-bound elements in Thai literary texts and the classification of translation strategies, the researcher conducted this case study with the aim of categorizing culture-bound elements existing in Chart's Korbjitti's literary works, and analyzing how those culture-bound elements were transferred across cultural barriers by the non-Thai translator, Marcel Barang. The first text that was scrutinized along with its translation is *Khamphiphaksa* –first published in Thailand in 1981 and translated into English under the title *The Judgment* (2007).

The novel won the S.E.A. Write Award in 1981. The second text is a short novel called *Ma Nao Loi Nam*, first published in Thailand in 1987 and translated into English under the title *Carrion Floating By* (2010). Specially grounded in Thai culture, the selected literary works in this study are truly like two mirrors that reflect people's lives in urban and rural societies. Regarding the translator, Marcel Barang was a famed literary translator who contributed markedly to the promotion of Thai literary works in the global arena, helping open the door to a wider readership in the English and French languages. In this case study, the researcher also explored Marcel Barang's translation ideology to see whether he, as a non-Thai translator, tended to subscribe to the idea of domestication or foreignization. Through a thorough analysis of the strategies he adopted when dealing with culture-bound elements in the source texts, the researcher could, to some degree, detect the translator's ideologies and preferences.

The findings of this study could broaden perspectives on the complexity of culture-bound elements in Thai literary texts and provide new insights to the act of transferring cultural concepts to the target readership. Up to the present, there have been a dearth of research undertaken to explore translation strategies used in translating Thai fiction into English with a focus on the source and target cultures. However, there have not been any studies done to examine the translation strategies adopted by a foreign translator who rendered Thai literary works into English. Additionally, in the researcher's viewpoint it is intriguing to explore whether there is a tendency for the French born translator to adopt translation strategies that fall under the umbrella of domestication to facilitate the target audience in the West.

## 2. Research Questions

RQ1. What types of culture-bound elements are used by the author of the selected novels?

RQ2. What strategies are employed in the translation of Thai culture-bound elements in the selected novels into English?

### 3. Review of Literature

#### 3.1 Culture-bound Element Defined

When it comes to the process of defining the term '*culture-bound element*' to distinguish it from words in general, there is a great variation in the way it is viewed and defined. Several scholars have based their definitions on the lack or non-existence of cultural concepts in the target language and the sense of culture is deeply rooted in a particular cultural system (Aixela, 1996; Baker, 1992). To fully comprehend the meaning of a culture-bound element, we must return to its definition when discussing it. As Aixela (1996) defines:

a culture-specific reference is defined as a textually actualized item whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the non-existence of the referred items or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text. (p. 58)

Based on the definition above, challenges in translating cultural concepts are attributed to two factors indicated at the end of his definition: the non-existence of the referred items and its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the target-text reader.

In the same vein, Olk (2013) offers a broad definition with a heavy focus on the non-existence of objects or concepts in the target culture. He adopts the term "cultural reference" and refers to it as

those lexical items in a source text which, at a given point in time, refer to objects or concepts which do not exist in a specific target culture or which deviate in their textual function significantly in denotation from lexical equivalents available in the target culture. (p. 234)

Another term that is widely used among several scholars (Johnson, 1976; Cuddon & Preston, 1999; Ranzato, 2013) to refer to the cultural concept pertaining



to translation is ‘*allusion*’. As defined by the Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms, a broad definition of allusion is as follows:

An implicit reference, perhaps to another work of literature...it is often a kind of appeal to a reader to share some experience with the writer. An allusion may enrich the work by association (q.v.) and give it depth. When using allusions, a writer tends to assume an established literary tradition, a body of common knowledge with an audience sharing that tradition, and an ability on the part of the audience to pick up the reference. (Cuddon & Preston, 1999)

Furthermore, Johnson (1976) highlights that the importance of allusions in literature lies in the ability to form new literature based on the old one. Ranzato (2013) expands on the concept, stating that allusions engage the reader in a reconstruction by alluding to partially hidden meanings that the reader should be able to get and then use in order to gain a deeper understanding of the work. It is believed that once readers become accustomed to an allusion, they tend to gain deeper insight into a text—meaning that they, in some ways, take part in the process of creating the text. The readers’ role, then, is equal to that of the author. In relation to cultural concepts, culture-bound elements or culture-specific items are subsumed under allusions (Kosunen & Väisänen, 2001).

Drawing on the above definitions, the operational definition of a culture-bound element in this study was crafted as follows:

*Culture-bound elements refer to culturally marked lexicons denoting objects or concepts (e.g., art, social events, values, customs, beliefs, practices, ideas, plants, animals, places, people and institutions) which are peculiar to the source culture or whose meanings deviate, to a certain degree, from their counterparts in the target culture—thus leading to a variety of complications in translating them into the target language. These elements also include such culture-bound linguistic expressions as metaphors, slang, idioms, proverbs, swear words, offensive and taboo words, euphemisms, onomatopoeic*

*words, proper names, and wordplay, which cannot be literally translated to the target language.*

### 3.2 Classifications of Culture-bound Elements

In relation with the classification of culture-bound elements, it is worth noting that every proposed classification has its own merits and demerits, and the purpose of this study is not to seek the perfect classification. Rather, it was aimed at developing a comprehensive one that can be applied to the analysis of Thai literary translation. As mentioned by Pedersen (2007), striving to formulate an exhaustive classification of culture-bound elements is nothing but a utopian and futile act. Variations in taxonomies are largely due to theorists' perspectives on cultural elements and their purposes. Below are classifications of culture-bound elements that have been put forward by well-known translation scholars and researchers.

To begin with, Newmark (1988) divides culture-bound elements into five categories: 1) ecology (including flora, fauna, and geography); 2) material culture (including food, clothing, housing, town, and transportation); 3) social culture (i.e. leisure activities, sports, and games); 4) social organization (i.e. historical terms, international terms, religious terms, and artistic terms); and 5) gestures and habits.

The second categorization was put forward by Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007). It comprises three main categories, including: 1) geographical references (which were further split into physical geography, geographical objects, animal and plant species); 2) ethnographical references (including objects used in daily life, work, art and culture, descent, and measures); and 3) socio-political references (including administrative units, institutions and functions, socio-cultural life, and military institutions and objects).

Third, Pedersen (2007) proposed twelve categories: 1) weights and measures; 2) proper names (i.e. personal names; geographical names; institutional names; and brand names); 3) professional titles; 4) food and beverages; 5) literature; 6) government; 7) entertainment; 8) education; 9) sports; 10) currency; 11) technical materials; and 12) others.

The fourth categorization was postulated by Antonini and Chiaro (2005). It is composed of ten categories: 1) institutions; 2) education (schools, tests, grading systems, sororities, cheerleaders); 3) names of places; 4) measurement; 5) monetary systems; 6) national sports and pastimes; 7) food and drinks; 8) holidays and festivities; 9) books, films, and TV programs; and 10) celebrities and personalities.

The next categorization, by Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), comprises four categories: 1) geography (i.e. geography, meteorology, biology, cultural geography); 2) history (buildings, events, and people); 3) society (i.e. industrial level or economy, social conditions, ways of life or customs); and 4) culture (i.e. religion, education, media, and leisure activities).

The last categorization was presented by Manketwit (2010). It consists of eighteen categories, including: 1) music; 2) objects; 3) arts; 4) colors; 5) food; 6) politics; 7) social conduct; 8) beliefs; 9) people; 10) costumes; 11) rituals and traditions; 12) geography; 13) royal words; 14) religion; 15) currency; 16) exclamation; 17) places or locations; and 18) others.

### **3.3 Conceptual Framework for the Categorization of Culture-bound Elements**

As can be seen above, culture-bound elements encompass a variety of aspects of human life, ranging from tangible to intangible entities. To investigate the translation of culture-bound elements, it is necessary for the researcher to break them into smaller and more manageable units. It is patently clear that there are several overlapping categories in the categorizations proposed by the aforementioned scholars. To cope with these overlaps, the researcher based his classification on Aixela's (1997) broad categorization, which separates culture-bound elements into two major groups, namely proper names and common expressions. The former includes names that do not have meanings as well as names with historical and cultural connotations. The latter category "covers the world of objects, institutions, habits, and opinions restricted to each culture and cannot be included in the field of proper names" (p. 59).

Upon completion of consolidating proper names proposed by the scholars and researchers above, they were divided into eleven categories based primarily on their shared attributes, including: 1) geography; 2) places and location; 3) plants and animals; 4) people; 5) leisure activities; 6) food and drinks; 7) institutions; 8) entertainment; 9) occupation; 10) rituals and ceremonies; and 11) others. Each category was consolidated from existing categories proposed by scholars and researchers in the field, namely Newmark (1988), Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007), Pedersen (2007), Antonini and Chiaro (2005), Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), and Manketwit (2010).

In relation with common expressions, the classification was based on the preconceived categorizations by taking their similarities and differences into consideration. Newly developed categories of common expression were used as the framework for the categorization of culture-bound elements in this study. Upon completion of the analysis, common expressions were divided into eight categories as follows: 1) society; 2) education; 3) religion; 4) music and art; 5) units of measurement; 6) cultural artifacts; 7) politics; and 8) others. Like the categorization of proper names, each category was developed from existing categories proposed by scholars and researchers in the field, namely Newmark (1988), Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007), Pedersen (2007), Antonini and Chiaro (2005), Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), and Manketwit (2010).

### 3.4 Translation Strategy Defined

The concept of translation strategy is still regarded as vague and unsettled. Although extensive research has been carried out on the topic, it seems that theorists and researchers in the field of translation have not yet reached a consensus on its definition and scope (Chesterman, 1997; Hejwowski, 2004; Lörscher, 1991). The complication lies in the fact that the term '*translation strategy*' per se is used to describe different concepts, and in the meantime, there are several terms being used to express the same meaning.

According to Krings (1986), translation strategy is defined as “the translator’s potentially conscious plan for solving concrete translation problems in the framework of a concrete translation task” (p. 18). In a similar vein, Lörcher (1991) defines a translation strategy as “a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language to another” (p. 76). By such a definition, the notion of consciousness plays a role in the translator’s choice of translation strategies. Later, the definition is expanded by Hejwowski (2004), who construes translation strategy as “a translator’s (consciously or unconsciously) preferred procedure within an entire text or its significant passages” (p. 76). What is interesting in the above definitions is the bond between conscious procedures and tasks of problem solving. He further makes a distinction between the terms ‘*translation strategy*’ and ‘*method*’, stating that the latter involves “the choice of a solution to a specific problem encountered during the translation process”. The terms method and procedure are employed by the following scholars: Vinay and Darbelnet (2000), and Newmark (1988). Focusing on the former, translation method is subdivided into literal translation and oblique translation. As mentioned in the previous section, the latter enumerates eight translation methods which are subsumed under two opposing poles: semantic translation and communicative translation.

For the purposes of this study, the operational definition of translation strategy is as follows:

*A translation strategy is defined as a conscious or unconscious procedure whereby the translator analyzes culture-bound elements in the source text and seeks proper solutions to transfer the intended message to the target text readers.*

### 3.5 Classifications of Translation Strategies

Over the past decades, a substantial effort has been made to develop the most comprehensive taxonomy of translation strategies. There have been a vast number of studies focusing on categorizing translation strategies used for

the transfer of culture-bound elements. A number of translation scholars have proposed their taxonomies of translation strategies that can be applied to overcome cultural challenges in translation.

The first taxonomy was developed by Newmark (1988). Eighteen strategies are included, namely 1) transference; 2) naturalization; 3) cultural equivalent; 4) functional equivalent; 5) descriptive equivalent; 6) synonymy; 7) through-translation or calque; 8) shifts or transpositions; 9) modulation; 10) recognized translation; 11) translation label; 12) compensation; 13) componential analysis; 14) reduction and expansion; 15) paraphrase; 16) couplets; 17) notes, additions, and glosses; and 18) other procedures.

Secondly, Baker's (1992) taxonomy is composed of eight strategies, including: 1) superordinate; 2) neutral or less expressive words; 3) cultural substitution; 4) loan words or loan words plus explanation; 5) paraphrase (related words); 6) paraphrase (unrelated words); 7) omission; and 8) illustration.

The third was proposed by Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007). It consists of seven strategies: 1) loan words; 2) calque; 3) explication; 4) substitution; 5) transposition; 6) lexical recreation; 7) compensation; 8) omission; and 9) addition.

Fourthly, eleven strategies are included in Ranzato's (2013) taxonomy, namely 1) loanwords, 2) official translation, 3) calque, 4) explication, 5) generalization by hypernym, 6) hyponym, 7) substitution, 8) lexical recreation, 9) compensation, 10) elimination, and 11) creative addition.

The last category was developed by Pinmanee (2019). It comprises nine strategies: 1) transliteration (being further divided into three subcategories: transliteration with a definition in the text, and transliteration with a definition in brackets, transliteration with an explanation in the text); 2) calque or literal translation; 3) condensing or omitting; 4) addition; 5) generalization; 6) particularization; 7) equivalence; 8) cultural substitution; and 9) notes or glossaries.

### 3.6 Conceptual Framework for the Classification of Translation Strategies

As shown in the taxonomies presented above, many translation strategies have been proposed by notable scholars in the field, including Newmark (1988), Baker (1992), Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007), Ranzato (2013), and Pinmanee (2019). However, there appears to be a substantial overlap between many of these strategies. Several of them bear a high degree of resemblance but are labeled differently. Some are further divided into several subcategories. Taking their similarities into consideration, the researcher formulated a conceptual framework for the classification of translation strategies in this study based on the existing taxonomies. The description of each translation strategy is presented below.

The first strategy was consolidated from Baker's (1992) paraphrase by using unrelated words, Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2007) compensation and addition, Pinmanee's (2019) addition and notes, Ranzato's (2013) compensation, and Newmark's (1988) functional equivalent, paraphrase, expansion, compensation, and notes and additions. This strategy is used primarily to facilitate target-text readers by providing them with additional information does not appear in the source text. The term **description** is used throughout this study.

In consideration of their shared attributes, Newmark's (1988) transference, Baker's (1992) loan words, Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2007) loan words, Ranzato's (2013) loan words, and Pinmanee's (2019) transliteration can be clustered into one strategy since all of them are aimed at expressing how words in the source language are pronounced by using the alphabet of the target language. The term **transliteration** is used throughout this study.

**Literal translation** involves a range of strategies that are used to translate culture-bound elements in a literal or word-for-word way. These strategies include Newmark's (1988) through-translation (calque) and recognized translation, Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2007) calque, Ranzato's (2013) official translation and calque, and Pinmanee's (2019) calque or literal translation.

**Transposition** entails the replacement of a culture-bound element (e.g., an idiomatic expression, a proverb, or a metaphor) in the source text with the one that is rooted in the target culture. Taking their function into consideration, Newmark's (1988) cultural equivalent, Baker's (1992) cultural substitution, Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2007) transposition, Ranzato's (2013) substitution, and Pinmanee's (2019) cultural substitution can be grouped under the same category.

**Superordinate** is concerned with the translator's use of a term whose meaning is broader than the original. Four strategies proposed fall under this category, including Baker's (1992) superordinate, Ranzato's (2013) generalization by hypernym, Pinmanee's (2019) generalization, and Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2007) explication.

**Subordinate** involves the use of a word or expression in the target language that has a less expressive or specific meaning. This strategy was developed based on three strategies: Baker's (1992) neutral or less expressive words, Ranzato's (2013) hyponym, and Pinmanee's (2019) particularization.

**Omission** is included in Baker's (1992) and Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2007) taxonomies of translation strategies. This strategy functions in the same way as Ranzato's (2013) elimination and Pinmanee's (2019) omitting. Though labeled differently, all of them occur when the source text is not transferred to the target-text reader.

**Definition** occurs when the translator provides the meaning of a word deemed to be specific to the source culture. It is based on Ranzato's (2013) explication, Pinmanee's (2019) glossaries, and Newmark's (1988) glosses.

Newmark's (1988) reduction and Pinmanee's (2019) condensing can be grouped together since both of them involve the condensation of the source text into a relatively shorter target text. This means that the source text is partially translated. The term **reduction** is used throughout this study.

**Lexical recreation** involves the coining of a new term or expression. This strategy is used when there is no equivalent term in target language. It was developed from Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2007) and Ranzato's (2013) lexical recreation.



**Others** include the translation strategies that cannot be included in the above-mentioned strategies. Each of them is used differently for a specific purpose. Though not classified as the main strategies, they will still be considered and used as guidelines in data classification processes. The strategies that fall under this strategy include: Newmark's (1988) naturalization, synonymy, shifts or transpositions, modulation, translation label, componential analysis, and couplets; Baker's (1992) illustration; Ranzato's (2013) creative addition; and Pinmanee's (2019) equivalence.

All of the translation strategies presented in this section have been developed with the aim of transferring cultural concepts inherent in the source text to the target audience. They range wildly from the strictest strategy, which attempts to adhere to the source language's syntactic structures and lexicons, to the freest translation strategy like description or transposition. All of the strategies presented above were developed based on the preexisting ones and will be used as the framework for the analysis of translation strategies in this study.

### 3.7 Previous Studies

This section is concerned with previous research studies that have been carried out to explore translation strategies used in tackling problems caused by culture-bound elements. Key findings of studies conducted in Thailand and elsewhere were summarized and presented below.

White (2016) investigated the English translation of culture-bound elements in the subtitles of Francophone films selected from France, Quebec, and Senegal. The study also entails difficulties encountered by the translators when dealing with culture-bound elements that are specific to the French, Quebec, and Senegalese cultures. One of the researcher's purposes is to seek out the appropriate strategies that the translators utilized in order to preserve the original meaning of the source text. A typology of culture-bound elements was developed as part of the theoretical framework, consisting of eight categories as follows: 1) food references; 2) historical references; 3) political references; 4) educational references;

5) pop culture references; 6) vulgar language; 7) sexual references; and 8) linguistic differences. Further, four types of translation strategies or solutions (i.e. literal translation, equivalence, omission, and keeping the original) were presented and used in the coding of the elements.

All of the culture-bound elements were extracted from the subtitles and then coded according to their types and translation strategies. With respect to the rendering of food references, it was found that literal translation is used the most and the least frequently used strategy is omission. Regarding historical references, it was found that the strategy of keeping the original ranks first—followed by equivalence, omission, and literal translation. Interestingly, equivalence is the most frequently used strategy in the translation of vulgar language and references related to politics, education, and sex. Keeping the original is the least used strategy for the translation of vulgar language and references relating to politics and sex. Conversely, it is employed the most in the translation of pop culture references. Despite its high frequency of use in the translation of food references, literal translation is not used at all in rendering pop culture references.

In 2012, Bendus investigated cultural bumps in animated movies dubbed from English to Ukrainian. The dubbing scripts from five American movies were analyzed with a heavy focus on the transfer of extra-linguistic culture-bound elements. It was found that in addition to the common types of references existing in several previous studies, i.e. geographical, historical, or social studies, the researcher uncovered ‘intertextual references with other texts from the original context’. These include the commonplace expressions, paralinguistic issues, and non-verbal codes. This finding broadens the concept of extra-linguistic typologies in which greater emphasis has been placed upon the investigation of written texts, not oral texts. Added to this, several functions of extra-linguistic culture-bound elements were found in the films. These functions include geographical, historical, folklore, fable, and fairy-tale anchoring (the basic function of ECRs: they set the story in its geographical and historical contexts); characterization (e.g., idiosyncratic characters) and; humor (created through the use of intertextuality, situational context, etc.).

In relation to translation strategies, the findings revealed five strategies adopted in rendering extra-linguistic references, namely retention, direct or literal translation, generalization, substitution, and omission. Among others, retention is regarded as the most source language-oriented strategy with high fidelity to the source language. However, there might be some adjustments in order to meet the target language's conventions. The findings indicated that a vast majority of proper names in the movies were translated via this strategy. The second strategy, direct or literal translation, is frequently used for transferring the names of organizations, governmental entities, or technical gadgetry. In this study, its frequency of use ranks first in two movies: *Ratatouille* and *How to Train Your Dragon*. Regarding the third strategy, generalization basically refers to the use of words that are more general in the target language. The findings revealed a few instances being translated by this strategy. Next, substitution is the most frequently used strategy in this study. It involves either removing the extra-linguistic culture-bound element in the source language or replacing it with an extra-linguistic culture-bound element existing in the target language. The target language readers are familiar with the elements used in translations and feel the naturalness of the language. Hence, it is directed toward the domestication approach. Lastly, the omission strategy involves the replacement of the source text with nothing. Its frequency of use throughout the whole five films is very low. In general, this strategy is used only when other strategies do not seem to work effectively or in some special cases, e.g., translating taboo or obscene lexical items.

To explore local studies that focused on the analysis of strategies used in translating varying types of culture-bound elements, four studies conducted by Thai researchers were reviewed below. In her dissertation, Kebboonkerd (2014) investigates translation strategies used in transferring the Afghan culture existing in the Thai version of *The Kite Runner*, the novel translated from English into Thai. In addition, the translator's opinions and attitudes towards the issue of culture in literary translation were also scrutinized. The investigation relied primarily on Nord's (1997) functional approach to translation (focusing especially on extratextual and intratextual factors), Larson's (1984) translation approach and Tomlinson and

Lynch-Brown's (as cited in Kebboonkerd, 2014) notions of children's literature. In her study, 142 culture-bound words were systematically analyzed. The researcher classified the culture-bound elements into four themes based on the category of culture created by the Office of the National Culture Commission: humanities, arts, domestic arts, and sports and recreation.

It was found that two major translation strategies were employed: using loan words and cultural substitution. The former (n=68) could be further divided into two sub-strategies, including the use of loan words blended with Thai modifications or the loan-blend strategy (n=17) and the use of loan words without Thai modifications (n=51). Some examples of the loan-blend strategy are as follows. The religious term *Dhul-Hijjah* was translated into Thai as 'เทศกาลดัลฮิยะห์' (back-translated as Dhul-Hijjah Festival). Another example is the translation of the term *Shirini-khori*, which was rendered into Thai as 'พิธีชิริณี-โฮรี' (back-translated as *Shirini-khori Ceremony*). Clearly, the words 'เทศกาล' (literally, festival) and 'พิธี' (ceremony) were added to the ceremony's name in an attempt to provide the target text readers with a clearer picture of the culture presented. The latter strategy involves cultural substitution (n=16). The researcher found that certain Afghan culture-bound elements could be substituted with Thai words. For instance, the term 'ครับ' (a particle for male speakers that is used to indicate politeness) was used in place of the word '*balay*' in the source text. Furthermore, the term '*namaz*' was translated as 'การละหมาด' (which literally means the Islamic prayer in the Thai Muslim context). Both words refer to the same religious practice that is regarded as a form of worshiping Allah. In fact, the practice is widely seen in Muslim communities in Thailand (mainly in the three southernmost provinces of the country). As clearly illustrated in the frequency of strategies used in translation, the use of loan words, which falls under the foreignization approach, constitutes 35.9% while strategies under domestication (i.e. the loan-blend strategy and cultural substitution) make up 11.9% and 11.2% of the total culture-bound elements being translated. It can be stated that the translator's preference rests on foreignizing and retaining the sense of Afghan culture in his translation.

Another attempt to categorize culture-bound elements and classify translation strategies was made by Sahaphongse (2011). In her study, the analysis was based on strategies used in translating culture-bound elements in the children's literature *Little House Series*. The novel was translated from English into Thai by Sukhontharot. A total of 193 culture-bound elements and their respective translations were detected and analyzed to identify the translator's strategies. The categorization of culture-bound elements was based on Newmark's (1988) taxonomy of translation strategies. In a similar fashion to Kebboonkerd (2014), the researcher adopted Nord's functional approach to translation and Larson's translation approach as the theoretical framework.

The findings revealed four main strategies, including transference or loan words (48%), neutralization (28%), cultural substitution (14%) and literal translation (9%). The use of transference (n=159) is subdivided into two types: transferences used with and without Thai modifications, which constitute 41% and 7% respectively. Literal translation (n=29) is the least used strategy. According to Sahaphongse (2011), the use of transference plus explanation plays a key role in bridging the gap between the two cultures and helps the target text readers absorb the intended message better than the use of transference or loan words alone. However, both strategies serve as tools to preserve the local color of the word in the source language. Further, literal translation is relatively unpopular and tends to pose major challenges to readers, especially when contextual clues are not provided in the text.

Another study that focused on the translation of culture-bound elements in Thai literature was undertaken by Manketwit (2010). In his study, culture-bound elements in the novel *Four Reigns (Si Phaendin)* and its respective translations were analyzed to identify the translator's strategies. His analysis was based primarily on Nord's Discourse Analysis and Venuti's translation approach, i.e. foreignization and domestication. In his study, a total of 205 culture-bound elements were analyzed and put into categories. To achieve this, Newmark's (1988) typology of culture-bound elements was adopted; however, several thematic topics were established to make his analysis more comprehensive. As mentioned earlier in the previous section,

this classification includes 18 thematic topics, including music, objects, arts, colors, food, politics, social conduct, beliefs, people, costumes, rituals, and traditions, geography, royal words, religion, currency, exclamation, places or locations, and others.

Regarding translation strategies, it was found that four main strategies were used in rendering culture-bound elements. These strategies include literal translation (8%), transliteration or loan words (74%), cultural substitution (7%) and explanation (11%). It appears that the translator's translational ideology is geared towards a foreignization approach. The vast majority (n=152) of culture-bound elements were translated using the transliteration method. Fundamentally, the essence of foreignization rests on resisting the cultural dominance of the target culture and retaining certain values in the source culture. In this case, the translator's underlying reasons might be that he prefers to keep the cultural sense of the source text and convey certain cultural aspects to the target text readers rather than facilitate their flow of reading.

In 2009, Charoennitniyom undertook a study to investigate translation strategies used in conveying Thai cultural words and phrases in Phillip Cornwel-Smith's *Very Thai: Everyday Popular Culture*. In her study, the researcher compiled 341 words and phrases related to Thai culture. The cultural elements investigated in this study involve not only terms related to food or traditions, but also general principles and values in daily life. The findings revealed four main strategies used in conveying Thai culture including description, word-for-word or literal translation, cultural substitution, and transliteration. The most frequently used strategy is description—constituting 36.8% of the total, and the least frequently used is transliteration, which represents 15.29%. The frequency of the other two strategies, i.e. literal translation and cultural substitution, is 17.7% and 30.1% respectively. The description technique presented in this study involves the use of generic words to describe the element's characteristics or functions. In some cases, further explanation or contextual clues may be provided to ensure that the intended readers fully understand the element. The example of this strategy is presented as follows: "Kathoeey, derived from the Khmer word for 'different', originally embraced all

sexual minorities, including transvestites, hermaphrodites, and lesbians. Since the 1970s, that definition has progressively narrowed to mean extreme effeminacy” (p. 76). The information in quotation marks is presented not only to provide essential clues to the readers to help them grasp the concept, but also trace the origin and development of the term. In relation to literal translation, it was reported that this translation strategy is often used in combination with other strategies since it tends to fail to convey the intended meaning if used alone. For instance, the writer uses the term ‘*thaokae*’ in the text and provides its meaning in brackets as follows: “My *thaokae* (a Chinese shop owner) is responsible for all costs.” Transliteration, as defined in this study, involves the use of Thai words plus adjectives or nouns to modify the element. The use of loan words alone is not subsumed under this strategy. As shown in the following examples: ‘*nang kwak lady talisman*’, ‘*jongkraben sarong*’ and ‘*krabi-krabong stick-wielding*’, Thai terms are presented in italics, and the underlined parts are added to provide definitions or explanations in English.

Obviously, the vast majority of culture-bound elements were foreignized by using transliteration or loan words. This strategy was adopted widely in three studies undertaken by Kebboonkerd (2014), Sahaphongse (2011) and Manketwit (2010). As a foreignizing strategy, transliteration basically aims to express how culture-bound elements in the source language are pronounced by using the alphabet of the target language, not to convey the author’s intended message. However, in Kebboonkerd’s (2014) study there was an attempt to lessen the degree of foreignization, as shown in the use of loan words blended with Thai modifications. It is interesting that a small portion of domestication (cultural substitution, explanation, and description) was adopted by Thai translators. The findings from the above studies shed light on the translators’ orientation, which tends to retain the color of the source culture and makes the readers realize that they are reading a text translated from another language, not an original text. Therefore, naturalness and fluency might not be their priorities.

Based on the literature review, it appears that more research should be conducted to shed new light on Thai-English literary translations. What stands out

in this case study lies in the translator's identity—born, raised, and educated mainly in the target culture. It is worth exploring whether Marcel Barang tended to adopt domesticating strategies (e.g., replacing unfamiliar elements in the selected novels with domestic variants) to help his readers approach the texts with ease and familiarity or to preserve the color of the original texts and disregard any potential barriers of reception.

## 4. Methodology

To answer the first and second questions (*RQ1. What types of culture-bound elements are used by the author of the selected novels?* and *RQ2. What strategies are employed in the translation of culture-bound elements in the selected novels from Thai to English?*), two conceptual frameworks were developed from existing categories of culture-bound elements and classifications of translation strategies that were proposed by famed scholars and researchers in the field.

### 4.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

After completing the development of the two conceptual frameworks, the researcher conducted a content analysis of the source text to identify and categorize Thai culture-bound elements in the two novels. The same analysis method was then applied to analyze the culture-bound elements and their respective translations, with the aim of identifying and classifying the translation strategies that were adopted by the translator.

In general, qualitative content analysis can be divided into three different approaches: conventional, directed, and summative (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Having considered the pros and cons of each approach, the researcher decided to adopt the directed approach as the main method for categorizing culture-bound elements in Thai literary texts and for classifying translation strategies adopted by the translator. As a deductive approach, directed content analysis relies largely on an existing theory or framework. Essentially, it utilizes data to support or build upon that theory. Coding was utilized as a primary tool for this qualitative content analysis. In the categorization of culture-bound elements, the predetermined codes



(i.e. categories and subcategories of culture-bound elements listed in the categorization framework) were assigned to culture-bound elements that were extracted from the texts. Those that cannot be coded, because they cannot be put under any category, were identified, analyzed, and developed into a new category or a subcategory of an existing one. In a similar vein, in the classification of translation strategies, the predetermined codes included translation strategies in the classification framework. Preexisting and open codes were utilized during the process of strategy identification. The former included translation strategies listed in the framework while the latter included those that emerged out of the data. Through the discovery of new categories and strategies, the typology of culture-bound elements and the taxonomy of translation strategies proposed in this study would be a true reflection of Thai culture in literary texts and the ways in which the translator handles it.

#### **4.2 Data Collection**

In this case study, the qualitative data to be collected were separated into two main parts: 1) data for the categorization of culture-bound elements; and 2) data for the classification of translation strategies. The collection of both types of data involved the examination of texts under investigation. To collect the former type of data, the researcher familiarized himself with the data by reading the original texts thoroughly. A data mining method was employed to extract culture-bound elements from the two novels. While reading, particular attention was paid to any choices of words or expressions that were specific to Thai culture. The words or expressions that were deemed to be in accordance with the operational definition of a culture-bound element were highlighted and extracted. All of the extracted words and expressions were arranged in order of occurrence and used as raw data in the process of measuring intercoder reliability.

Since the identification of culture-bound elements was conceived of as an intuitive and subjective process, the researcher employed inter-coder reliability or inter-coder agreement as a primary tool to distinguish culture-bound elements from general words. The assessment form was developed in order to measure intercoder

reliability. It consisted of a total of 249 words and expressions extracted from the texts being analyzed. Next, the researcher contacted two qualified lecturers working at different universities and asked whether they were interested in joining this research project as examiners. Both of them were willing to be part of this study. They were informed about the background and objectives of this study. Detailed descriptions and procedures pertaining to the identification of culture-bound elements were particularly emphasized. Upon receiving the assessment form, the examiners were then asked to read and analyze each of the words and expressions and decide whether it concurred with the operational definition. During the marking process, the examiners were strongly encouraged to ask the researcher anytime problems arose or when in doubt. The words or expressions that were concurred upon by the two examiners were labeled as culture-bound elements and were later used in the process of classifying translation strategies. Those that were agreed upon by only one examiner were discussed by the researcher and the two examiners to reach a mutual agreement on whether to label them as culture-bound elements or discard them. The words or expressions that were not agreed upon by any examiner were discarded from the list. Inter-coder reliability could be a valid research instrument and yield reliable outcomes in the final stage. Each of the derived culture-bound elements was used as a unit of analysis in the data analysis process.

With respect to the collection of data for the classification of translation strategies, the culture-bound elements and their corresponding translations were under investigation. At the initial stage, the researcher worked through two sets of data (the original novels and their translated versions) line by line to detect parts that were translated from Thai culture-bound elements. The translated texts were coded at word, phrase, and sentence levels, depending largely on the source texts (i.e. culture-bound elements) which ranged from the word to the sentence level. Once all the target texts had been coded and extracted, they were placed side by side with their respective source texts. Each pair of a culture-bound element and its translation was utilized as a unit of analysis in the data analysis process.

### 4.3 Data Analysis

To recapitulate, the themes assigned to emerging codes were firmly based on the framework. The treatment of open codes was different as they could not be subsumed under any translation strategy in the framework. Open codes were analyzed and combined, if necessary, in order to form overarching themes. Derived themes were defined and reviewed to ascertain that there were clear distinctions between themes.

To ensure the reliability of the strategy identification, when strategies had been assigned to all of the units of analysis, the researcher worked collaboratively with a co-examiner whose qualifications were set as follows: 1) having completed a master's degree in Translation Studies, Linguistics, or a related field; 2) having at least two years of translation experience, either as a freelancer or a professional translator.

From the outset, the assessment form, which contained 225 units of analysis, translation strategies and operational definitions, was given to the co-examiner. Next, the co-examiner was briefed by the researcher about the procedures. Then she was asked to assess if the translation strategy assigned to each translation was appropriate. The assessment was based on the definitions of translation strategies.

Upon completion of the assessment process, the researcher analyzed the results obtained from the co-examiner. In each case, if the strategy was agreed upon by the co-examiner, it was retained. On the other hand, in any controversial case whereby the strategy determined by the researcher was not agreed upon by the co-examiner, there was a pair discussion in which the researcher and the co-examiner talked, expressed their stances and sought ways to reach a mutual agreement. If a joint decision was not reached, the strategy labelled in that case was changed by the researcher. Any change made to the unsettled case was based on the researcher's and the co-examiner's ideas being discussed during the discussion. By using this method, it could be ensured that the derived taxonomy of translation strategies would be of high reliability and represent the actual strategies that the translator adopted.

Lastly, the findings were reported in frequency and percentage formats. In addition, strategies used in translating each type of culture-bound element were presented along with their descriptions and salient examples.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 The Categorization of Culture-Bound Elements

To answer Research Question 1 (*RQ1. What types of culture-bound elements are used by the author of the selected novels?*), the researcher sorted 225 culture-bound elements (hereinafter referred to as ‘CBE’) into categories by looking closely at their shared attributes, considering how they were similar and what headings they should fall under. The categorization was based firmly on the conceptual framework which divided CBEs into two main groups: proper names and common expressions. Upon completion of the analysis, the results were shown in the table below.

Table 1 The Categorization of Culture-bound Elements

No.	Categories	Freq.	%
	Terms associated with Buddhism	78	34.6
	Proper names	72	32
	Cultural artifacts	15	6.6
	Figurative language	13	5.7
	Onomatopoeia	12	5.3
	Sex	10	4.4
	Swearwords	7	3.1
	Music and arts	6	2.6
	Greeting expressions	2	0.8
	Units of measurement	2	0.8
	Others	8	3.5
Total		225	100

The table above presents the breakdown of CBEs in the selected Thai novels. Such CBEs were classified into eleven categories based on their shared attributes. In the analyzed corpus (consisting of a total of 225 CBEs), the vast majority of the CBEs were in connection with Buddhism (34.6%). The number of CBEs labelled as proper names was 72 (32%). The numbers of CBEs that were grouped into ‘cultural artifacts’, ‘figurative language’, ‘onomatopoeia’, ‘sex’, ‘swearwords’, and ‘music and arts’ were 15 (6.6%), 13 (5.7%), 12 (5.3%), 10 (4.4%), 7 (3.1%), and 6 (2.6%) respectively. The other two categories (i.e. greeting expressions and units of measurement) had the smallest number of CBEs (n=2), each of which constituted only 0.8% of the total instances. Greater details of each category were illustrated in the diagrams below.

### 5.1.1 Culture-bound Elements Related to Buddhism

The first category involves Buddhism-related CBEs. As mentioned earlier, the religion category was developed based on the preexisting categories proposed by Manketwit (2010), Newmark (1988), and Nedergaard-Larsen (1993). It essentially involves CBEs used to refer to religious people, activities, and objects. However, in the finding above the name of this category was adapted since the main and only religion in the two novels was Buddhism. As such, all of the CBEs found in this study were placed under the category of Buddhism.

As can be seen above, the largest portion of the CBEs in this study fell under this category.

The CBEs under this category were split into nine subcategories, including: 1) architecture; 2) people; 3) activities; 4) objects; 5) beliefs; 6) days or periods of time; 7) principles; 8) institutions; and 9) prayers. As shown above, 22 CBEs (28.2%) were in connection with religious activities, which was closely followed by the CLBs used to denote ‘religious objects’ (23%), ‘architecture’ (17.9%), ‘beliefs’ (13%), ‘days or periods of time’ (7.6%), and ‘people’ (6.4%). Four remaining CBEs were grouped under the following categories: Buddhist principles (n =2), institutions (n=1), and prayers (n=1).

### 5.1.2 Culture-bound Elements Related to Proper Names

The second category entails all types of proper names, ranging from names of people, plants, animals, food and beverages, places and roads, performances, games and sports, and brand names. The categorization of proper names in this study was based firmly on the categories presented in the framework for the categorization of proper names. Basically, proper names are used to denote people, places, objects or animals. From the analysis, a total of 72 proper names in the selected Thai novels could be classified into eight categories based on their shared attributes. It was found that slightly more than half of the proper names (55.5%) were names of characters in the selected texts, all of which were preceded by a range of Thai addressing terms. The second largest segment represented proper names associated with food and beverages. There were 14 CBEs under this category, which constituted 19.4% of the total proper names. Some examples included ‘ต้มยำ’ (*a Thai-style spicy and sour soup*), and ‘เหล้าขาว’ (*Thai rice whisky*). Other categories included names of plants (6.9%), e.g., ‘จาก’ (*nipa palm*) and ‘พลับพลึง’ (*crinum lily*), places and roads (5.5%), e.g., ‘กรุงเทพฯ’ (*Krung Thep or Bangkok*), brand names (5.5%) e.g., ‘แม่โขง’ (literally, *the Mekong River*, but in *Khampipaksa* it was used as the name of a Thai whisky brand), games and sports (2.7%), animals (2.7%), and local performance (1.3%).

In relation with personal names, they were further divided into seven subcategories based on the prefixes used, which indicated a myriad of relationships or statuses. The vast majority of the prefixes found in this study were used to indicate the character's kinship or seniority. In total, 18 CBEs relevant to kinship or seniority were found. To illustrate the usage of kinship or seniority addressing prefixes in Thai language and culture, this type of prefix is used to indicate the speaker's age in comparison with his or her interlocutor. Generally, it can be employed in two different ways. Firstly, it is used with siblings or relatives to indicate that the speaker is younger or older than the person with whom he or she is speaking. The second usage involves non-relatives. To elaborate, Thais are inclined to use a wide range of addressing terms, e.g., ‘พี่’ (*elder sister or brother*), ‘น้อง’ (*younger sister or brother*),

and ‘ลุง’ (*uncle*) with those who are not their actual relatives. In Thai culture, the ways people use addressing terms vary greatly, depending upon their gender, social status, intimacy, and the relationship between the speaker and his or her interlocutor. As such, addressing someone without an improper addressing term or without consideration of the above-mentioned factors may cause a problem in communication. The second largest segment, totaling 15% of the cases, involved the characters’ jobs, for instance, ‘กำนัน’ (*a sub-district headman*), ‘ผู้ใหญ่บ้าน’ (*a village headman*), ‘ครู’ (*a teacher*), and ‘สัปเหร่อ’ (*an undertaker*). The third-largest segment represented titles denoting Buddhist ordination experience. In Thailand, once a monk, aged 20 and upwards, leaves monkhood, the prefix ‘ทิด’ is used with his name to indicate that the person has been ordained as a monk. However, this prefix is seldom used in the present-day context. The fourth type of prefix was used to indicate the monk’s seniority. The usage of these prefixes varies depending on the monk’s age. For those who are senior monks or have been ordained for a long time, their names are usually preceded by one of the following prefixes: ‘หลวงตา’ (*Reverend Grandfather*), ‘หลวงพ่อ’ (*Reverend Father*), or ‘หลวงพี่’ (*Reverend Elder Brother*). From the analysis, four prefixes in this subcategory were found to be used in combination with personal names, including ‘หลวงตาฟ่อน’ (*Reverend Grandfather Phon*), ‘หลวงตามือก’ (*Reverend Grandfather Muek*), ‘หลวงตาจั่น’ (*Reverend Grandfather Jun*), and ‘หลวงพี่แดง’ (*Reverend Elder Brother Daeng*). The fifth entailed the prefix ‘พระ’ (pronounced as ‘Phra’ and shortened from ‘Phra Song’). When used with a personal name, this prefix indicates the person’s monkhood. There were three instances found in this study, including ‘พระโมคคัลลา’ (*Mokkalana*, one of the Buddha’s major disciples), ‘พระสารีบุตร’ (*Sareebutr*, one of the Buddha’s major disciples), and ‘องคุลิมาล’ (shortened from ‘พระองคุลิมาล’, basically referring to *Angulimala*, another major disciple whose garland was made of fingers). The sixth involved derogatory prefixes. Only one prefix was found in this study, namely ‘ไอ้’ (used with a man), and two instances were found, including ‘ไอ้ฟัก’ and ‘ไอ้เกลียว’. However, this prefix does not indicate derogatoriness when used among close friends. Rather, it indicates a close bond between the speaker and the hearer or the third person. The last included prefixes which indicate the character’s marital

status. Two prefixes found in this study included ‘ม่าย’ (literally ‘widow’) as in ‘ม่ายสมทรง’ (*Widow Somsong*) and ‘สาว’ (referring to ‘a young or single woman’) as in ‘สาวละม้าย’ (*Lady Lamai*).

To sum up, personal names in this study were further classified into seven subcategories based on the varying types of prefixes used. The author employed these prefixes to denote: 1) derogatoriness or intimacy; 2) marital status; 3) kinship or seniority; 4) monk’s seniority; 5) reverend monks; 6) Buddhist ordination experience; and 7) occupation. The analysis of personal names in combination with their prefixes shines a light on some linguistic features inherent in the source language that have not been investigated by other researchers.

### 5.1.3 Culture-bound Elements Related to Cultural Artifacts

Cultural artifacts refer to terms denoting geographical objects that are used in daily life. This category was developed based on Díaz-Cintas and Rymańczyk’s (2007) clothing, Newmark’s (1988) clothing and transport, and Manketwit’s (2010) costumes. Upon completion of the analysis, it was found that fifteen CBEs were used to denote culturally rooted objects that are specific to Thai culture. The number of CBEs in this category constituted 6.6% of the total instances. Out of 15, four CBEs were related to Thai style clothing, namely ‘เสื้อพระราชทาน’ (*Raj pattern, a Thai men’s traditional shirt*), ‘ผ้าถุง’ (*a Thai sarong, usually for women*), ‘ผ้าถุง’ (*a Thai costume*), and ‘ผ้าขาวม้า’ (*a Thai style loincloth, usually for men*). Two CBEs were associated with Thai style vehicles, including ‘เรือโยง’ (*a tugboat*) and ‘รถสองแถว’ (literally *a minibus with two seat rows*). Other CBEs which could not be grouped under the above categories included ‘ยาใบจาก’ (*tobacco wrapped in nipa leaves*), ‘เตาถ่าน’ (*a Thai style stove*), ‘ปิ่นโต’ (*a food container*), ‘แคร่’ (*a Thai style wooden litter*), ‘ตะไล’ (*a circular rocket*), ‘ตะเกียงกระป๋อง’ (*a gasoline lamp*), ‘เก๋งจีน’ (*a Chinese-style architecture*), and ‘สำรับ’ (*a Thai traditional set of meals*).

### 5.1.4 Culture-bound Elements Related to Figurative Language

Figurative language was not included in the conceptual framework because none of the scholars and researchers incorporated it into their categories. CBEs in



this category were regarded as open codes or new findings that emerged from this study. In essence, figurative language refers to any figure of speech whose meaning is different from its meaning in literal language. As such, it requires the reader to understand its cultural background (e.g., some extra nuances, contexts, and allusions) in order to grasp the second meaning. There are several forms of figurative language, including simile (a comparison between two different things via the use of connecting words, i.e. ‘like’ and ‘as’), metaphor (a comparison between two things that are considered to have similar characteristics), paradox (a statement that is considered self-contradictory), hyperbole (the use of obvious and deliberate exaggeration), personification (the act of giving a non-human thing human characteristics), and rhetorical questions (a question asked merely to create a certain effect or to emphasize a point with no answer expected).

Based on the finding, the CBEs deemed figurative language fell into four categories: hyperboles (15.2%); similes (7.6%); idiomatic expressions (69.2%); and proverbs (7.6%). To begin with, two hyperboles found in the analysis included ‘คนกินผัว’ and ‘จ้องจะกินเลือดกินเนื้อ’. The former could be translated literally as ‘*a woman who eats her husbands*’; however, when used as a figurative language, this CBE is meant to describe a woman whose husband(s) died after getting married to her. The second hyperbole could be rendered literally as ‘*to stare at someone as if you were going to eat his or her flesh*’. This phrasal verb is equivalent to the verb ‘*to glower*’ in the English language. The only CBE that was categorized as a simile was ‘ดียังกะพระ’ (literally, *as good as a monk*). The expression is used to describe someone who has a good moral quality. It signifies the positive status of Buddhist monks in Thai culture and society. In general, Thai monks have long been revered by Buddhist laypeople in the country as a symbol of virtue.

Five idiomatic expressions were detected from the two literary texts. Some examples included ‘พาดเคราะห์’ (*to throw off bad luck or to sacrifice or lose something in order to get rid of bad luck*), ‘โกรธจนหน้าเขียว’ (literally, *to get so angry that your face turns green*; equivalent to the idiom ‘*to turn blue with rage*’), and ‘ฝนจะตก ขี้จะแตก ลูกจะออก พระจะสึก ส้อย่างนี้ห้ามกันไม่ได้’ (literally, ‘*the rain will pour*;

*the shit will out; the baby will be born; and the monk will disrobe. All of these cannot be stopped*”; when used idiomatically, the statement refers to something inexorable or impossible to stop from happening).

Lastly, there was only one Thai proverb, that is, ‘จงเอาเยี่ยงกา แต่อย่าเอาอย่างกา’, literally ‘*be like a crow, but don’t act like it*’. Basically, this Thai proverb is intended to give advice or teach some morals to the reader. In this case, a crow has both good and bad manners. To illustrate, its positive side lies in the fact that it gets up early; however, its negative side is that it is notorious for stealing food. The proverb, therefore, teaches us that an individual is liable to perform both virtuous and evil acts and that we should follow only the positive one.

#### 5.1.5 Culture-bound Elements Related to Onomatopoeia

Like figurative language, onomatopoeia was not included in the conceptual framework. All of the CBEs under this category were regarded as open codes that emerged from this current study. Onomatopoeia basically refers to a word whose sound mimics the sound of the thing it describes. There were 12 CBEs classified under this category (5.3%), the majority of which were used to describe the sounds of people hitting different parts of the protagonist’s body. Ten onomatopoeic words were used to describe a series of sounds when the main character’s body parts were beaten (e.g., ‘พลั่ว’, pronounced ‘*plua*’, possibly the sound of kicking, smacking, or punching). The other two onomatopoeic words are ‘ตึก-ตึก-ตึก-ตึก’ (‘*tik taek tik taek*’, the sound of a car’s turn signal) and ‘ก๊อ๊กก๊อ๊ก’ (‘*kok kaek*’, the sound of a metal object dropping on a metal tray).

#### 5.1.6 Culture-bound Elements Related to Sex

In the same vein as figurative language and onomatopoeia, sex was an open code newly found in this study. This category involves sexual euphemisms. In general, sexual euphemisms refer to words or phrases used to describe sexual intercourse, reproductive organs, and other sexual activities in a less offensive way. In Thai culture, mentioning these sexual activities in public is deemed rude and unacceptable. The author, therefore, opted for milder words or expressions to describe these body

parts and activities. There were ten CBEs relevant to sex, including those referring to: 1) sexual intercourse; 2) the male or female sex organ; and 3) the house of prostitution. Some examples of these subcategories included ‘ได้เสียกัน’ (meaning ‘to have sex’), ‘กินน้ำชา’ (literally, ‘to drink tea’; however, when used euphemistically, this means ‘to have sex’), and ‘ถั่วปากอ้า’ (word-for-word translation: ‘open-mouthed beans’, basically it means ‘fava beans’; however, in this context, it refers to the female sex organ).

### 5.1.7 Culture-bound Elements Related to Swearwords

Swearwords were another category that emerged from this study. The finding revealed seven CBEs associated with vulgarity (constituting 3.1%), a majority of which were preceded by the prefix ‘ไอ้’ (pronounced ‘ai’) in order to show derogatoriness, namely ‘ไอ้ห่า’ (the underlined part literally means ‘cholera’), ‘ไอ้ห่าเอี้ย’ (the underlined part literally means ‘cholera’), ‘ไอ้เหี้ย’ (the underlined part literally means ‘a water monitor’), and ‘ไอ้สัตว์’ (the underlined part literally means ‘an animal’). Four swearwords in this study contained the word ‘ห่า’ as in ‘ไอ้ห่า’, ‘ไอ้ห่าเอี้ย, ‘คนห่า ๆ’, and ‘ตายห่า’. Each conveys a negative sense since it literally means *cholera*, a serious and widespread disease that killed a substantial number of people in the past. As a result, this term has been used as a vulgar or insulting word.

### 5.1.8 Culture-bound Elements Related to Music and Arts

Based on the findings, this category consisted of six CBEs associated with music and arts. From the analysis, four CBEs were the names of musical instruments, including: 1) ‘ปี่พาทย์’ (a Thai style orchestra, consisting mainly of percussion instruments); 2) ‘ปี่พาทย์มอญ’ (a Mon style orchestra); 3) ‘แตรวง’ (a brass band); and 4) ‘กลองยาว’ (a tall, narrow drum). The other two CBEs were associated with arts, namely ‘ลวดลายกระหนก’ and ‘กระຈັง’. Both of them are generally used in traditional Thai art, referring basically to traditional Thai motifs or patterns.

### 5.1.9 Culture-bound Elements Related to Greeting Expressions

Two greeting expressions were found in the source texts, including ‘ไปไหนมา’ (literally, ‘Where have you been?’) and ‘กินข้าวหรือยัง’ (meaning ‘Have you eaten yet?’). Generally, these expressions are used after greetings and the speaker does not expect the hearer to tell the actual place where he or she has been or whether he or she has eaten.

### 5.1.10 CBEs Related to Units of Measurement

There were two CBEs related to local units of measurement, constituting 2% of the total instances. The finding revealed one culture-bound element related to the Thai old currency unit, namely ‘เฟื้อง’ (pronounced ‘fueang’ and equivalent to ‘0.125 Baht’). The second unit of measurement was related to time. The time phrase ‘สี่โมง’ is translated literally as ‘four o’clock’. In Thai culture, however, this phrase refers to ten o’clock in the morning according to the traditional time measurement.

### 5.1.11 Others

The last category consisted of eight CBEs that cannot be subsumed under the categories mentioned above. Such CBEs included: 1) ‘บุญเชยิต’ (the sixtieth anniversary celebration); 2) ‘เถ้าแก่’ (a business owner, usually referring to a Chinese man); 3) ‘ไหว้’ (to place the palms together at chest level as a non-verbal greeting); 4) ‘รับพระราชทานปริญญาบัตร’ (to receive a degree certificate, usually conferred by a member of the royal family); 5) ‘เฮีย’ (an older brother, commonly used among Chinese people in Thailand); 6) ‘เกรงใจ’ (to be considerate of others); 7) ‘จังหวัด’ (a division of a country; equivalent to the term ‘province’); and 8) ‘วันสงกรานต์’ (the traditional Thai New Year).

## 5.2 The Classification of Translation Strategies

To answer the second research question (*What strategies are employed in the translation of Thai culture-bound elements in the selected novels into English*), the researcher analyzed and identified the strategy that the translator adopted when rendering each CBE. In the identification process, the researcher drew primarily

on the conceptual framework for identifying translation strategies, which was developed from Newmark's (1988) taxonomy of eighteen strategies, Baker's (1992) eight strategies, Díaz-Cintas and Ramel's (2007) nine strategies, Ranzato's (2013) eleven strategies, and Pinmanee's (2019) nine strategies.

Upon completion of the analysis and identification process, ten strategies were found to be adopted by the translator, including: 1) description; 2) transposition; 3) combined strategies; 4) superordinate; 5) literal translation; 6) definition; 7) transliteration; 8) reduction; 9) subordinate; 10) omission; and 11) alteration. When the reliability validation with the co-examiner was completed, all of the CBEs were clustered based on their translation strategies. The findings are illustrated in the table below.

**Table 2:** The Classification of Translation Strategies

No.	Categories	Freq.	%
1	Description	52	23.1
2	Transposition	48	21.3
3	Combined Strategies	39	17.3
4	Superordinate	32	14.2
5	Literal Translation	23	10.2
6	Definition	10	4.4
7	Transliteration	8	3.5
8	Reduction	5	2.2
9	Subordinate	4	1.7
10	Omission	3	1.3
11	Alteration	1	0.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>225</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above provides a detailed description of the translation strategies employed by the translator. After completion of the data analysis, a total of 11 translation strategies were found to have been adopted by the translator.

The findings revealed that a significant majority of the CBEs (23.1%) were rendered by the description strategy. Less frequent strategies included transposition, combined strategies, superordinate, literal translation, definition, transliteration, reduction, subordinate, and omission respectively. The least adopted strategy was alteration. In regard to the translator's orientations, it was observed that most of the strategies adopted were domesticating strategies (description, transposition, and definition, for instance). This signifies that the translator was inclined to domesticate the texts he translated by using a multitude of domesticating strategies to create texts that were readable for the target-text audience, particularly those who have limited exposure to the source culture. Though small in number, foreignizing strategies (e.g., literal translation and transliteration) were also adopted. In addition, it could be observed that foreignizing strategies were used in combination with other strategies, thereby being labelled as combined strategies.

5.3 CBEs Translated by Each Strategy

Each translation strategy, together with the types of CBEs, is described in detail in the following sections. Some examples are also provided at the end to vividly show how each of the dominant strategies is used to overcome cultural barriers in the source texts.

Table 3: Culture-bound Elements Translated by Using Description

No.	Type of Culture-bound Element	Freq.	%
1	Terms associated with Buddhism	33	63.4
2	Proper names	9	17.3
3	Cultural artifacts	4	7.6
4	Figurative language	2	3.8
5	Sexual euphemism	1	1.9
6	Music/ Art	1	1.9
7	Others	2	3.8
Total		52	100

Table 3 presents the breakdown of CBEs that were translated using the description strategy. As stated in the previous table, out of 225, the total number of CBEs being translated by the description strategy was 52. The finding showed that most of the CBEs that were domesticated by description were related to Buddhism (63.4%). Other CBEs included nine proper names (17.3%), four CBEs related to cultural artifacts (7.6%), two idiomatic expressions (3.8%), one euphemism for sex (1.9%), one name of an art pattern (1.9%), and two CBEs in the ‘others’ category (3.8%). By and large, description is regarded as a domesticating strategy since it strives to reduce the foreignness and otherness of the source text and to enable target-text readers to gain full insight into the author’s intended meaning by supplementing information that does not exist in the source text. Considering the definition of this strategy, it can be said that the act of making up for an inevitable loss is equated with the concept of compensation, commonly used when the loss of the source-text meaning is compensated by adding extra information to the target text. In some cases, the translator may need to paraphrase or explain the meaning of a culture-bound element in great detail to carry the message across both linguistic and cultural barriers. As such, it is deemed inevitable for translators to provide the target-text readers with additional information that is instrumental in creating the readers’ understanding. As a dominant translation strategy, the description in this case study is in the same vein as Baker’s (1992) paraphrase by using unrelated words, Díaz-Cintas and Remael’s (2007) compensation and addition, Pinmanee’s (2019) addition and notes, Ranzato’s (2013) compensation, and Newmark’s (1988) functional equivalent, paraphrase, expansion, compensation, and notes and additions. However, this strategy is not matched with main strategies for translating culture-bound elements presented in the previous studies.

#### Example 1:

**Source text:** จวบจนกระทั่งออกพรรษาตัดบาตรเทโว

**Target text:** the special alms gathering that marked the end of Lend

**Analysis:** The phrase ‘ตัดบาตรเทโว’ (pronounced as *Tak Bat Devo*) can be broken into two parts: *Tak Bat* and *Devo*. Literally,

the former refers to the act of offering food to a Buddhist monk while the latter is shortened from Thevorana, which means 'The Buddha descends from heaven to earth'. As can be seen in the table above, the translator opted for the description strategy and delineated the event as 'the special alms gathering that marks the end of Lent'. Obviously, the original message was exaggerated in the translation in order to help the readers get closer to this almsgiving tradition easily.

**Table 4:** Culture-bound Elements Translated by Using Transposition

No.	Type of Culture-bound Element	Freq.	%
1	Terms associated with Buddhism	14	29.1
2	Onomatopoeia	10	20.8
3	Swear words	6	12.5
4	Sexual euphemism	4	8.3
5	Figurative language	4	8.3
6	Cultural artifacts	2	4.1
7	Music/ Art	2	4.1
8	Proper names	2	4.1
9	Greeting expressions	1	2
10	Units of measurement	1	2
11	Others	2	4.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 presents an overall picture of the CBEs translated by replacing culturally rooted terms in the source language with the ones available in the target language. As shown in the table above, transposition, the second in rank, was employed 48 times, constituting 21.3% of the total cases. To illustrate, most of the CBEs (29.1%) translated by using this strategy were associated with Buddhism.



Like description, transposition is generally regarded as the strategy with a relatively high degree of domestication, thus resulting in a translation that is pragmatically equivalent and making target-text readers feel as if they were reading a text written originally in their own language, not a translation. It plays a crucial role in domesticating texts through the use of CBEs that exist in the target language. The main benefit of this strategy lies in the translated text that reads smoothly and fluently to target-text readers without disturbing their enjoyment. On the other hand, the replacement of culture, which inevitably results in a high level of linguistic naturalness in the translated text, is highly liable to trigger numerous questions and issues about the text's transparency, whether it was written originally by the author or translated by the translator. Revolving around the replacement of a culture-bound in the source text with the one that is rooted in the target culture, transposition in this case study is equated with Newmark's (1988) cultural equivalent, Baker's (1992) cultural substitution, Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2007) transposition, Ranzato's (2013) substitution, and Pinmanee's (2019) cultural substitution can be grouped under the same category. The finding is also supported by research studies conducted by Bendus (2012), Kebboonkerd (2014), and White (2016).

### Example 2:

**Source text:** อย่างพื้ณะ ขนหน้าแข้งไม่ร่วง

**Target text:** ...it's chicken feed

**Analysis:** The second example contains figurative language that was localized under domestication ideology (transposition). The Thai idiom 'ขนหน้าแข้งไม่ร่วงหรือ' (literally, 'your leg hair won't fall') is metaphorically used to refer to a situation when a person buys or pays for something at a price that he or she can afford. The translator replaced the original sense with 'chicken feed', which means a small and not important amount of money.

**Table 5:** Culture-bound Elements Translated by Using Combined Strategies

No.	Type of Culture-bound Element	Freq.	%
1	Proper names	37	94.8
2	Figurative language	2	5.1
Total		39	100

The third most used strategy was combined strategies, whereby the translator adopted more than one strategy when translating a single CBE. As shown in the table above, there were a total of 39 CBEs (17.3%) that were translated by using combined strategies. Evidently, the lion's share of the CBEs translated by using more than one strategy were proper names (94.8%). As in most cases of personal names, the translator transcribed the characters' names and translated the prefixes or addressing terms literally. This strategy can be categorized either as a domesticating or a foreignizing strategy, depending greatly on the function of each strategy. To put it differently, provided that both strategies serve to facilitate the readers, creating a natural and fluent text, such combined strategies are labelled as domesticating strategies. In the opposite way, if both strategies are classified as foreignizing strategies (literal translation and transliteration, for instance), such combined strategies are labelled as foreignization. On the whole, the findings reveal that combined strategies were extensively employed by the translator when dealing with proper names, and two strategies that were frequently used together were transliteration and literal translation (when coping with a proper name and its title or addressing term respectively). The translator's adoption of combined strategies is in line with the strategy found by Kebboonkerd (2014), that is, using loan words with modifications.

### Example 3:

**Source text:** ตาเห่น

**Target text:** Uncle Nei

**Analysis:** The third example involves the translation of 'ตาเห่น' (pronounced as 'tah Nei'). This culture-bound element is

composed of two parts: ‘ตา’ (*tah*) and ‘เหน’ (*Neh*). The term ‘*tah*’ in Thai basically refers to the maternal grandfather. However, in some cases, it can also be used to refer to non-relatives who are approximately the same age as the grandfather. It was observed that the translator shifted the meaning of the source text by using the term ‘uncle’, which basically means the mother’s or father’s brother. The shift made by the translator had a profound impact on the meaning intended by the author. To some extent, this could prompt readers to picture ‘*Nei*’, a character in *The Judgment*, as a middle-aged man instead of a senior one. The character’s name, that is to say, ‘เหน’, was transcribed into English as ‘*Neh*’, thereby leading to the conclusion that the translator used combined strategies (i.e. alteration and transliteration) to cope with a single culture-bound element.

**Table 6:** Culture-bound Elements Translated by Using Superordinate

No.	Type of Culture-bound Element	Freq.	%
1	Terms associated with Buddhism	16	50
2	Proper names	10	31.2
3	Cultural artifacts	4	12.5
4	Sexual euphemism	1	3.1
5	Onomatopoeia	1	3.1
Total		32	100

The fourth most adopted strategy was superordinate. It was found that the translator replaced 32 CBEs (14.2%) with terms whose meanings are more general or neutral. As illustrated above, half of the CBEs translated by using this strategy were relevant to Buddhism, which were followed by proper names (31.2%) and those used to denote cultural artifacts (12.5%), sexual euphemisms (3.1%),

and onomatopoeic words (3.1%). Superordinate refers to the use of a hypernym or a broader word. Hypernym entails the use of an umbrella or blanket term instead of the less expressive one. This strategy is generally used in situations when the one-to-one equivalent in the target language does not exist and the translator opts for a term whose meaning is more general. Instead of transliterating or leaving the target readers wondering what such CBEs actually refer to, the translator resorted to umbrella terms with the aim of helping his readers understand the culture-bound elements more easily. This strategy is equivalent with Baker's (1992) superordinate, Ranzato's (2013) generalization by hypernym, Pinmanee's (2019) generalization, and Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2007) explicitation, and, to some degree, in the same vein as Bendus's (2012) generalization.

**Example 4:**

**Source text:** เหล้าก๊ก

**Target text:** whisky

**Analysis:** In the fourth example, the translator used the term '*whisky*', which is considered more general than the source text. The term 'เหล้าก๊ก' is basically composed of two elements: 'เหล้า', functioning as a head noun meaning '*whisky*', and 'ก๊ก', meaning a quarter of something. When combined together, the term refers specifically to a quarter of a dram of whisky. When taking the meanings of the source and the target texts into consideration, it can be concluded that the translated text has a broader meaning than the original term. The lack of an equivalent word which expresses a portion of whisky in the target language might be a factor that caused the translator to adopt the superordinate strategy.

**Table 7:** Culture-bound Elements Translated by Using Literal Translation

No.	Type of Culture-bound Element	Freq.	%
1	Terms associated with Buddhism	10	43.4
2	Figurative language	5	21.7
3	Sexual euphemism	2	8.6
4	Cultural artifacts	2	8.6
5	Music/ Art	1	4.3
6	Proper names	1	4.3
6	Greeting expressions	1	4.3
7	Others	1	4.3
Total		23	100

The fifth strategy was literal translation. As shown above, a total of 23 CBEs (10.2%) were translated in a literal fashion. It was found that ten Buddhism-related CBEs (43.4%) were translated literally. Literal translation is labelled as foreignization because it strives to preserve the source language's syntactical and lexical structures. It was also adopted when the translator dealt with personal names. In such cases, it was frequently adopted in combination with transliteration, where the prefixes or addressing terms were translated literally and the characters' names were transcribed in English. It was interesting that some idioms or metaphorical expressions, whose intended meanings are not necessarily based on their forms, were translated verbatim without the translator's clarification or explanation. This strategy is in the same vein as Newmark's (1988) through-translation (calque) and recognized translation, Díaz-Cintas and Remael's (2007) calque, Ranzato's (2013) official translation and calque, and Pinmanee's (2019) calque or literal translation. It is also equivalent to White's (2016) and Bendus's (2012) literal translation.

#### Example 5:

**Source text:** แก่ไม่ยอมกินน้ำชาบ้างหรอ น้ำชาร้อนๆ กินแล้วเห็งม้นออกตินะ

**Target text:** to have some tea

**Analysis:** The phrase ‘กินน้ำชา’ (literally, ‘to drink tea’) was rendered into the target language as ‘to have some tea’. In fact, the original text was considered an idiom related to sexual activity. When used metaphorically, it means ‘to have sex’. However, the translator opted for a word-for-word translation as the main strategy to render this CBE into the target language. It is apparent that the cultural codes prevailing in the target language was disrupted, and the connotation of this expression was lost during the translation process. The underlying reason behind the translator’s decision might be because of the contextual clues given in the source text. After reading the entire paragraph, the readers are likely to surmise what the term actually refers to.

**Table 8:** Culture-bound Elements Translated by Using Definition

No.	Type of Culture-bound Element	Freq.	%
1	Terms associated with Buddhism	4	40
2	Proper names	3	30
3	Sexual euphemism	2	20
4	Music/ Art	1	10
Total		10	10

Table 8 presents four types of CBEs (i.e. Buddhist terms, proper names, sexual euphemisms, and music and arts) that were translated and their definitions were provided by the translator. Out of ten CBEs, four Buddhist terms (40%) and three proper names (30%) were domesticated into English by this strategy. Other CBEs that were made accessible to the readership by providing their definitions in footnotes included two sex-related expressions (20%), and one CBE related to music (10%). As a domesticating strategy, definition entails providing the CBE’s meaning, either in a footnote, dashes or commas, aiming to assist the readership in understanding the culturally rooted element better. It was found that all of the CBEs translated

by this strategy were asterisked, and their definitions were given in footnotes at the bottom of the pages. This strategy is, to a certain degree, equated with Ranzato’s (2013) explication, Pinmanee’s (2019) glossaries, and Newmark’s (1988) glosses. However, it was not adopted by the translators in the previous studies.

Example 6:

Source text:    ลี้เณ

Target text:    the *likei*\*  
(In the footnote: *\*open-air folk opera*)

Analysis:       In this example, the translator transferred the proper name directly, and its definition was supplemented in the footnote. Apparently, he adopted both domesticating (when he gave information to facilitate the readers) and foreignizing (when he transcribed the proper name) strategies. In this case, the term *likei* was retained, possibly because the translator wanted to give his readers a sense of exoticism or to add local color to his translation.

Table 9: Culture-bound Elements Translated by Using Transliteration

No.	Type of Culture-bound Element	Freq.	%
1	Proper names	5	62.5
2	Terms associated with Buddhism	1	12.5
3	Onomatopoeia	1	12.5
4	Cultural artifacts	1	12.5
Total		8	100

The seventh strategy, transliteration, was used as a single strategy for rendering nine CBEs, most of which (62.5%) were proper names (i.e. three names of principal disciples of Buddha, two names of places, and one name of sport). The other three CBEs were related to Buddhism, onomatopoeia, and cultural artifacts, each constituting 12.5 % of the total. When the researcher took its function into

consideration, transliteration was classified as a foreignizing strategy, particularly when it was not used in combination with another strategy. As a foreignizing strategy, transliteration acts as a conduit for the transmission of the sound of a culture-bound element into the target language. It basically involves the transference of a word from the alphabet of one language to another. Transliteration in this case study shares common characteristics with Newmark’s (1988) transference, Baker’s (1992) loan words, Díaz-Cintas and Remael’s (2007) loan words, Ranzato’s (2013) loan words, and Pinmanee’s (2019) transliteration. It was found to be widely used to deal with culture-bound elements by the translators in research studies conducted by White (2016), Bendus (2012), and Kebboonkerd (2014).

Table 10: Culture-bound Elements Translated by Using Reduction

No.	Type of Culture-bound Element	Freq.	%
1	Proper names	3	60
2	Cultural artifacts	2	40
Total		5	100

Table 10 displays two types of CBEs that were partially translated by the translator. Basically, reduction occurred when the translator decided not to convey all the meaning inherent in the source text to the readership, possibly because the entire chunk of the CBE was bound to be absent in the target culture or because the deleted part might not be essential for the readers’ comprehension. As shown above, five CBEs (two names of food, two names of cultural artifacts, and one name of a plant) were partially conveyed to target-text readers. As shown in the table above, five culture-bound elements were partially translated. The reason that underlines the translator’s decision is probably due to the fact that the deleted parts were deemed unnecessary, and such reductions were not likely to affect the core meanings of the source texts. This strategy is equated with Newmark’s (1988) reduction and Pinmanee’s (2019) condensing; it was not found to be used in the previous studies.



**Table 11:** Culture-bound Elements Translated by Using Subordinate

No.	Type of Culture-bound Element	Freq.	%
1	Units of measurement	1	25
2	Others	3	75
Total		4	100

The finding revealed that the translator adopted the subordinate strategy four times to render two types of CBEs, including two addressing terms, one CBE referring to a unit of measurement, and one CBE used to describe a manner that is highly specific to Thai culture. All of these were replaced by the target texts, whose meanings are more specific than those of the source texts. Subordinate involves the use of a more specialized and specific word or expression because the equivalent term does not exist in the target language. Subordinate is used in the same way as Baker's (1992) neutral or less expressive words, Ranzato's (2013) hyponym, and Pinmanee's (2019) particularization. Nevertheless, it is not equated with any strategies presented in the previous studies.

**Table 12:** Culture-bound Elements Translated by Using Omission

No.	Type of Culture-bound Element	Freq.	%
1	Swear words	1	33.3
2	Proper names	2	66.6
Total		3	100

Table 12 presents two types of CBEs that were omitted. As mentioned earlier, omission basically entails leaving out a CBE in the source text. It is generally used when the translator deems the deleted part unimportant or redundant, and if translated, it may cause the readers to be misled.

Based on the analysis of the CBEs that were not delivered to target-text readers, it was found that three CBEs were omitted by the translator. The first two CBEs were names of plants, and the last CBE was an insult. The translator's decision to not transfer the message to the readers may have been based on the fact

that such parts are considered minor details and are not necessary for comprehension; hence, omitting them poses no significant impact on the author’s intended message. This strategy functions in the same way as Ranzato’s (2013) elimination and Pinmanee’s (2019) omitting. Though labeled differently, all of them occur when the source text is not transferred to the target-text reader.

**Table 13:** Culture-bound Elements Translated by Using Alteration

No.	Type of Culture-bound Element	Freq.	%
1	Music/ Arts	1	100
Total		1	100

The last strategy adopted by the translator is alteration. It was found that there was one translation whose meaning was affected by the translator, as shown in the rendering of the term ‘ปี่พาทย์’ (pronounced ‘*peephat*’, referring to the Thai classical orchestra), which was translated into ‘musicians’. Obviously, the meaning intended by the author was distorted, and the readers were misled by the translated text. To put it differently, what they conceived after reading is different from what the readers of the original text had in their minds. In fact, alteration was also used in translating one of the personal names (i.e. ‘ตาเหน้’). However, since the translator used this strategy in combination with another strategy, viz., transliteration, the strategy used to translate this culture-bound element was thus labelled as combined strategies. This strategy is not included in the taxonomies of translation strategies in the literature review. Therefore, it is regarded as a newly emerging strategy found in this study. Also, it was not found to be used by the translators in the previous studies

In conclusion, a total of eleven strategies were used by the translator. Based on frequency of use, the adopted strategies were as follows: description (23.1%), transposition (21.3%), combined strategies (17.3%), superordinate (14.2%), literal translation (10.2%), definition (4.4%), transliteration (3.5%), reduction (2.2%), subordinate (1.7%), omission (1.3%), and alteration (0.4%). Upon taking types of CBEs into consideration, the researcher found that description was adopted most

often in the rendition of Buddhist CBEs, followed by superordinate and transposition respectively. Concerning the transfer of Thai proper names, the translator combined multiple strategies to convey the intended messages. Other significant strategies adopted included superordinate and description. Regarding the translation of cultural artifacts, the three strategies that were used most were description, superordinate, and transposition. A large portion of figurative language was rendered by using literal translation and transposition. The translator rendered most of the CBEs related to sex by using transposition, literal, and definition respectively. Likewise, when dealing with CBEs related to vulgarity, music, and arts, the most commonly adopted strategy was transposition. Two greeting expressions were rendered by transposition and literal translation, and two units of measurement were rendered by transposition and superordinate. In the ‘Others’ category, superordinate was used most, followed by transposition and description.

In essence, the findings of this case study throw a new light on the literary translator’s ideology in transferring Thai cultural texts to non-Thai readership. As shown in the classification of translation strategies (see Table 2), four main strategies adopted by the translator include: 1) description (23.1%); transposition (21.3%); combined strategies (17.3%); and superordinate (14.2%), all of which can be classified as domesticating strategies, aiming to foster communication rather than preserve the identity of the source text. Despite his efforts to stay close to the source text (as manifested in his translations of idioms, sexual euphemisms, and proper names), it appears that Marcel Barang subscribed to domestication, striving to move the text to the readers by bridging the gap between the source and the target cultures.

## **6. Recommendations**

### **6.1 Recommendations for Instruction**

As regards the didactics of translation, major findings of this dissertation (e.g., a typology of CBEs and a classification of translation strategies) yield benefits for teachers of translation in several aspects. For instance, in an English-Thai translation classroom, students’ awareness of cultural differences between the source and

target cultures should be highlighted. Students should be introduced to translation theories, and thoroughly familiarized with various strategies to overcome the challenges arising from cultural barriers. Moreover, they should also be trained to be sensitive to the source and the target cultures and the impacts that both cultures might pose on the quality of their translation. Cultural awareness, hence, should be instilled in students as part of the theoretical aspects of translation.

## **6.2 Recommendations for the Publishing Industry**

The findings also yield benefits for multiple players in the publishing industry, e.g., translators, editors, publishers, and literary agents. As mentioned by Munday (2001), those who play crucial roles in choosing the texts to be translated and commissioning the translations include publishers and editors. Their power in making decisions or launching policies has a great impact on the way in which the source text is rendered and contributes immensely to the level of readership. It could be said that translation policies prescribed by the publishers and editors are one of the significant factors that dictate the translator's strategies. Apparently, when literary texts are translated from foreign languages into Thai, and when circumstances permit, translators tend to adopt a myriad of strategies to facilitate their readers. The primary goal of translation is to produce translations with easy readability and the same rhetorical effect as the original. The act of translating in a fluent and invisible style, intentionally or unintentionally, results in a much lesser degree of foreignness in the target text. Domestication, however, is not a cure for everything. The concept of translator invisibility should therefore be introduced to all parties concerned to raise their awareness of the cultural impacts on the quality of translation.

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