A STUDY ON THE TRANSLATION INTO VIETNAMESE OF CULTURE-SPECIFIC ITEMS IN THE NOVEL
TO KILL A MOCKING BIRD

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Abstract: This study analyzes the translation into Vietnamese of culture-specific items of proper names and common expressions in the novel *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to conduct the study, and the data gathered provide insights into the pattern of translation strategies, including preservation, addition, omission, globalization, localization and transformation. Of 345 culture-specific items found, 265 are proper names, 80 are common expressions. The results indicate that all of these six strategies were applied by the translators to different extents. The most frequently used strategy is preservation, whereas the least frequently employed strategy is omission.
Keywords: Culture-specific items, translation strategies, American culture

1. Introduction

As language and culture are intertwined, it goes without saying that in doing their job, translators have to deal with both. In fact, there is a cultural aspect of translation that has long been the focus of much attention in the translation studies academia. This cultural aspect of translation is the general theme covering this study. More specifically, it aims at shedding further light on the nature of culture-specific items (CSIs) and the challenges that they might cause for translators, as well as how these challenges can be tackled using certain strategies and procedures. Consequently, the study will reaffirm that translation requires more than just competence over two languages, and that the role that the translator plays is not only that of a linguistic converter but also that of a cultural mediator.

To reach those goals, this study examines CSIs and their treatment in Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mocking Bird* and its Vietnamese translation made by Pham Viem Phuong and Huynh Thi Kim Oanh. Specifically, it identifies CSIs that are present in the novel and analyzes how these items were translated with reference to the taxonomy suggested by Eirlys Davies (2014).

1. What strategies in Davies' taxonomy were used to translate CSIs in the novel *To Kill a Mocking Bird* into Vietnamese?

2. How were the strategies in Davies' taxonomy used to translate CSIs in the novel *To Kill a Mocking Bird* into Vietnamese?

2. Literature review

2.1. Translation and culture

Nida (1984) defined translation as a process "consists of producing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent to the message of the source language, first in meaning

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and second in style" (p. 83). A similar definition was given by Bell (1991), according to whom translation is "the replacement of a representation of a text in one language by a representation of an equivalent text in a second language" (p. 20). In both of these definitions, as well as in others, translation is seen primarily as a process involving two languages, between which is the translator acting as a mediator.

This may lead to the dangerous belief that translation is a task "within the competence of anyone with a basic grounding in a language other than their own" (Bassnett, 2002, p. 13), a belief that many scholars of translation studies have refuted. To translate a text requires a great deal more, and in considering what else is involved in the act of translation, one should not overlook its cultural aspect, which has in fact been the emphasis of a great deal of scholarly research in translation studies. According to Bassnett (2002), "translation today is perceived as an inter-disciplinary field of study and the indissoluble connection between language and way of life has become a focal point of scholarly attention" (p. 2). It is also Bassnett (2002) who considered the translator as a creative artist mediating between not only languages but also cultures.

2.2. Culture-specific items

The close relationship between language and culture is most clearly manifested when a word or a phrase is used to designate a cultural entity. Such words and phrases, although called in a variety of different ways such as *cultural words* (Newmark, 2010), *culturemes* (Nord, 1997) or *culture-bound phenomena* (Robinson, 1997), are most widely termed *culture-specific items* (Davies, 2003).

Nord (1997, p. 34) viewed a CSI as "a cultural phenomenon that is present in culture X but not present (in the same way) in culture Y" implying that CSIs are born out of the disparity between two cultures. Sharing this idea is Baker (1992), who also pointed out the many forms and types that CSIs can take:

> …the source-language 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).

Meanwhile, Aixela (1997) defined CSIs as:

> …those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text (p. 58).

A systematic and comprehensive analysis of CSIs in the novel *To Kill a Mocking Bird* requires that these items be thoroughly categorized. In fact, many attempts have been made at categorizing CSIs. In this study, CSIs will be preliminarily divided, following Aixela' categorization, into (1) *proper names* and (2) *common expressions* (Aixela, 1997).

2.3. Strategies for translating culture-specific items

Eirlys Davies proposed a set of strategies that can be used to handle CSIs. They include: preservation, addition, omission, globalization, localization, and transformation and creation. In this paper, only the six first strategies will be employed to analyze the translation of CSIs in the novel *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, with the last strategy, namely creation, excluded. First of all, as Aixela (1997) has suggested, this strategy is very rarely used. Moreover, it is essentially in conflict with the method employed in this study. While creation means adding to the target text a CSI not present in the source text, this study's analysis of how a CSI was translated is based, first and foremost, on that CSI's presence in the source text.

These strategies will now be looked at in more detail, with examples of their application drawn from the translation of the Harry Potter series into other languages.

a. Preservation

Preservation happens when "faced with a reference to an entity which has no close equivalent in the target culture, a translator may simply decide to maintain the source term in the translation" (Davies, 2003, pp. 72-73). In preserving a CSI, the translator can choose to keep its form, in which case *preservation of form*, or *formal preservation*, happens. Alternatively, where the actual CSI is not preserved but receives a literal translation with no further explanation, *preservation of meaning*, or *semantic preservation*, takes place.

These two variations of preservation can be illustrated by looking at the treatment of proper names in the Harry Potter series. The name of the protagonist, *Harry Potter*, tended to be kept unchanged, which is an instance of formal preservation (Davies, 2003). As the name is "the majoring label for the series, and indeed a registered trademark" (Davies, 2003, p. 75), keeping it creates a fixed reference by which readers from all over the world can relate to, no matter what language version of the books they read. Names of Harry Potter's friends were not always treated the same way. When dealing with a name that has "clearly recognizable descriptive elements" (Davies, 2003, p. 75), semantic preservation was usually resorted to. For example, *Wormtail* was translated into German as *Wurmschwanz* and *Moony* became *Luna* in Norwegian (Davies, 2003).

The decision to opt for formal preservation or semantic preservation "may be influenced by the differing translation conventions of the different target cultures and differences in audience expectation" (Davies, 2003, p. 76).

b. Addition

When simple preservation of a CSI brings risks of obscurity, "the translator may decide to keep the original item but supplement the text with whatever information is judged necessary" (Davies, 2003, p. 77). Davies (2003) called this strategy *addition*.

When an insertion is made to the text, the informative value it brings usually comes at the price of the narrative being held up and the readers burdened with irritating details. To reduce such risks, "short adjectival or adverbial phrases" are preferred over "notes or explanatory sentences" (Davies, 2003, p. 77). Alternatively, an experienced translator can integrate the

additional information unobtrusively into the text by making it part of the text itself. For example, to explain the meaning of *prefect* to French readers of the *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* book, the translator Menard made one character asking another for clarification regarding this concept, thus adding into the text an explanatory exchange which would easily pass for as being written by the author herself (Davies, 2003, p. 77).

Additions can also be made outside the text as footnotes. For example, "the mainland Chinese translators make extensive use of footnotes to explain English terms which are simply transliterated in the text" (Davies, 2003, p. 77). Davies (2003) also observed that "the choice of this method is of course made within a whole translation tradition" (p. 78) as some cultures might consider it normal for readers to have to consult footnotes while reading whereas others might be less accepting of this. Overall, "the choice of how and when to incorporate additions into the translation must take into account the expectations of the particular target audience" (Davies, 2003, p. 78).

c. Omission

The third strategy in Davies' taxonomy is omission, which takes place when CSIs, especially ones which are problematic, are completely omitted, so that no trace of their existence is found in the translation (Davies, 2003, p. 79). A translator may decide to omit a CSI from his translation for several reasons. The simplest among such reasons could be that he is unable to find an adequate way to render the CSI into the target language, or that he cannot make sense of the term at all. Even when providing an equivalent is within the translator's ability, he can still decide not to do so and omit the term if he judges that the efforts that this solution requires from either himself or his readers are not well justified (Davies, 2003). Alternatively, a translator might arrive at the decision of omitting a CSI if explaining or paraphrasing the term in the translation "will give it a prominence it did not possess in the original, and thus distort the original emphasis" (Davies, 2003, p. 80).

An example of this strategy is the translation into French of the description of the Christmas dinner in the *Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone* book (Davies, 2003, p. 80):

English	French	Back Translation
A hundred fat, roast turkeys, mountains of roast and boiled potatoes, platters of fat chipolatas, tureens of buttered peas, silver boats of thick, rich gravy and cranberry sauce...	Dindes rôties, saucisses grillées, sauces onctueuses, confiture d'airelles...	Roast turkeys, grilled sausages, rich sauces, cranberry sauce...

The primary purpose of the description is to conjure up a picture of a plentiful feast at which children can enjoy all the savory and attractive foods. Therefore, the translator decided to omit from the French translation names of food that would not contribute to but even disrupt this impression because they are either not easily recognizable to French children, as in the case of *Yorkshire pudding*, or not particularly tasty for them, as in the case of *potatoes* or *peas* (Davies, 2003, pp. 80-81).

d. Globalization

Globalization is the process by which a CSI is replaced by one which is more neutral or general, making the term accessible to audiences from a wider range of cultural backgrounds (Davies, 2003). According to Davies (2003), "this is a convenient method of opening up the text to a wider audience, since it succeeds in conveying the essential characteristics of a referent while avoiding what might be disconcertingly unfamiliar" (p. 83). However, it should be noted that translators should be careful when employing this strategy as it very often results in the loss of cultural nuances that the source term possesses.

In translating the *Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone* book into French, the translator Menard frequently rendered names of distinctively British foods into terms that are more neutral and have less cultural associations. For example, *mint humbugs* became *bonbons à la menthe*, meaning "mint sweets"; *rock cakes* became *des biscuits maison*, meaning "home-made cookies"; and *a bun* was simply translated as *quelque chose à manger*, meaning "something to eat" (Davies, 2003). These are instances of globalization.

e. Localization

Opposite to globalization is localization, a strategy which, according to Davies (2003), can help avoid the loss of associations that globalization is apt to cause. Applying this strategy, the translator, instead of using a culture-free equivalent as in the case of globalization, tries to "anchor a reference firmly in the culture of the target audience" (Davies, 2003, pp. 83-84). A systematic and consistent employment of this method will result in the translated text sounding as if it originated from the culture of the target language.

For example, in translating *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, the translator Menard decided to convey names of foods that are popular in British culture but otherwise are too exotic and not particularly appetizing to French children by names of foods that are popular in French culture. Thus, *boiled and roast potatoes* became *gratin* and *pommes de terre sautées*, meaning "gratin" and "fried potatoes", while *trifle and jelly* was replaced by *babas*, a typical French dessert (Davies, 2003).

f. Transformation

When the "modification of a CSI seems to go beyond globalization or localization, and could be seen as an alternation or distortion of the original, transformation takes place" (Davies, 2003, p. 86). According to Davies (2003), the decision to transform a CSI "may be influenced by the translator's or editor's assessment of the target audience's flexibility, tolerance and willingness to wrestle with possible obscurity" (p. 86).

One obvious example of this strategy is the translation into French of the title of the first book the Harry Potter series. *Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone*, with its allusion to the concept of *the philosopher's stone*, a magical thing believed to allow its possessor to turn anything into gold and have an eternal life, was rendered more banal and down-to-earth into *Harry Potter à l'Ecole des Sorciers*, which means "Harry Potter at The Sorcerers' School" (Davies, 2003).

3. Research methods

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The quantitative method was used to determine the frequency with which a given translation strategy was used for the translation of CSIs in the novel. The data generated by this method are statistics that reveal the frequency of use of each strategy - which strategy was used most often and which strategy was used least often. Overall, this method uncovers the pattern of the translation of CSIs.

The qualitative method was used to determine how an individual CSI in the novel was translated. The data generated by this method are directional insights into which translation strategy was used to translate a given CSI, what the characteristics of the translated version of that CSI are, the translation process, the translators' motivation and reasoning behind their decision. Overall, this method allows understanding into the treatment of each individual CSI.

4. Research findings

To deal with such a large number of CSIs, all six strategies proposed in Davies' taxonomy were employed, though the frequencies with which they were resorted to are markedly different from one another. Chart 1 shows the distribution of the six strategies among the 345 CSIs.
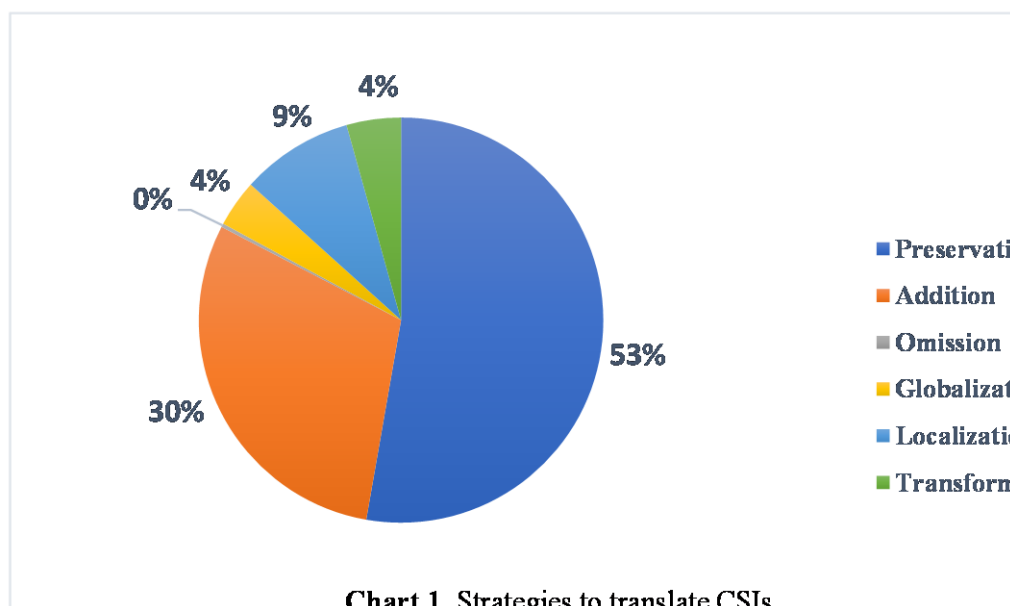

Chart 1. Strategies to translate CSIs

It is evident that the most prominent strategy is preservation, which was used to translate 182, accounting for up to 53%, of all the 345 CSIs analyzed. The second most common strategy is addition, used on 103 CSIs, equivalent to 30%. Meanwhile, the least frequently used strategy is omission, which was employed to translate only 1 CSI. The other three strategies, namely globalization, localization and transformation, were used quite sporadically, to translate only 13, 31 and 15 CSIs, equivalent to 4%, 9% and 4% respectively.

It is noticeable that the prevalence or scantiness of a strategy when it is considered in the whole of 345 CSIs does not correspond to the prevalence or scantiness of that strategy if it is considered in one of the two subgroups of CSIs. In fact, how the six strategies are distributed among the 265 proper name CSIs is different from how they are distributed among 80 common expression CSIs.

As specified in 2.2, the study attempted to find the translation strategies for CSIs in the novel under categories of proper names and common expressions, the rest of the paper will be presented accordingly.

4.1. An overview

The prevalence of preservation and addition, together with the rarity of omission, indicates the translators' emphasis on conveying truthfully and adequately the cultural content of the source text for Vietnamese readers. That globalization and transformation were used not often reaffirms the translators' determination to retain the distinctive cultural colors of the source text. The number of CSIs translated by localization is not small. However, this figure proves disproportionate in comparison with the number of CSIs translated by preservation. It seems that between anchoring the foreign cultural references into the target language's culture and keeping their exoticness, the translators tended to favor the latter. In other words, rather than trying to make the translated text sound as if it originated from the Vietnamese culture, the translators decided to make readers aware that the novel they are reading is set in a culture different from theirs.

4.2. Translation of proper name CSIs

Of the 345 CSIs that are found throughout the novel, 265, or more than three-fourths, are proper names. In this section, the strategies used to transfer this type of CSI into Vietnamese.

a. Preservation

Preservation is found to be the most common method used to translate proper name CSIs in the novel *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, with 176 items subjected to this strategy. This strategy was particularly often employed in the translation of names of characters or places that do not bear any significant historical or cultural associations. Names such as *Jem*, *Dill* or *Boo Radley* clearly do not have any special historical or cultural associations with them, although the way they sound to English-speaking readers must be different from the way they sound to readers who do not speak English. Some people may argue that place names such as *Boston* or *Montgomery* may have certain implications, especially in an American context. However, in this novel these names are taken as mere place names, and whether or not readers could decipher any associations there are in these names does not interfere with their reading experience. As a result, the translators opted to preserve all these names in the target text.

It is noteworthy that the names were kept completely intact, without them being adapted to the standard of Vietnamese writing or being changed in order to facilitate their pronunciation by Vietnamese readers. However, in the past, the conventional way of translating proper names into Vietnamese used to be preserving the names but at the same time adapting them to the domestic standard for writing names originating from foreign cultures. It could be said that as

globalization takes place at an increasing speed and Vietnamese people experience more exposure to Western cultures in general and American culture in particular, people feel more comfortable reading texts with names that are not Vietnamese and therefore the need for translators to adapt the names has become less relevant.

In his taxonomy, Davies (2003) distinguished between two types of preservation: *formal preservation* and *semantic preservation*. The general rule seems to be that if a name or part of a name has meaning, it will be semantically preserved, whereas if it does not have any meaning, it will be formally preserved. Therefore, *Little Three-Eyes* became *Ba Mắt nhỏ* and *Deer's Pasture* became *Bãi Hoẵng*. Meanwhile, *Crazy Addie* became *Addie điên* and *Barker's Eddy* became *vũng xoáy Barker*, with their meaningful part semantically preserved, whereas their unmeaningful part formally preserved.

b. Addition

Addition was usually employed when simple preservation of the CSIs would cause obscurity in meaning. By providing readers with more background information, addition helps to ensure that readers are well informed enough to have a comfortable reading experience.

Information can be added inside the text or outside the text as a footnote. Footnotes were resorted to only when the references require lengthy explanations that cannot be incorporated into the text. For example, to enlighten readers about *The Battle of Hastings*, the translators added the following footnote: "Trận Hastings (1066): trận đánh quyết định trong cuộc chinh phục Anh quốc của người Norman (Pháp)". With 38 footnotes made for the total of 265 proper name CSIs, the translators seem to have been careful in opting for this method, which is understandable as too many footnotes may disturb readers' experience or, more dangerously, disengage them from the narrative.

The other 40 instances of addition were made inside the text. Most of the times, these additions are very brief because adding a lengthy note may cause divergence from the original and lead to discrepancy in length between the source text and the translation. Some additions are very simple, only specifying what kind the noun that they follow is. For example, *Tazan* became *vở Tazan*, informing readers that *Tazan* here is a play. Other additions are more cultural. For example, *Atticus* was translated into *bố Atticus*, with the additional *bố*. American children might find it normal calling their farther by his first name alone but for Vietnamese people this may sound somewhat strange, if not disrespectful. The addition was therefore made to avoid any possible misunderstanding.

c. Omission

Of the six strategies proposed by Davies, omission could be said to be the most radical one. While the other five strategies allow readers of the translated text to access, to varying degrees, to the cultural implications inherent in the original CSIs, omission totally stripes the readers of this opportunity by actually removing the CSIs from the translation.

No omission is found in the translation of a total of 265 proper name CSIs. Aware of the loss that this strategy may very likely cause, the translators must have tried their best to avoid it by opting for other strategies instead.

d. Globalization

There are totally 4 cases of globalization in the translation of proper name CSIs in *To Kill a Mocking Bird*.

With the application of globalization, a CSI is substituted by a more neutral, widely accessible term (Davies, 2003), thanks to which its essential meaning is kept and readers of the translation will not feel that something has been lost when they encounter the term. However, globalization does cause loss to the cultural and historical nuances of the CSIs on which it is applied. For example, *M.E Church*, a kind of church for a specific religious denomination in the United States, namely the Methodist Episcopalism (Methodist Episcopal Church, n.d.), simply became *nhà thờ*.

e. Localization

Localization has been rarely applied in the translation of proper name CSIs in *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, with only one CSI localized.

Model T is the name of a model of automobiles produced by Ford Motor Company in early 19th century. It is generally considered as the first affordable automobile that made travel accessible to middle-class American (Ford Model T, n.d.). The name was translated as *kiểu bình dân*, a Vietnamese slang usually used to denote the inexpensiveness of a product or service. Although the name of the model itself was omitted, readers can completely grasp the source term's associations from its localized translation.
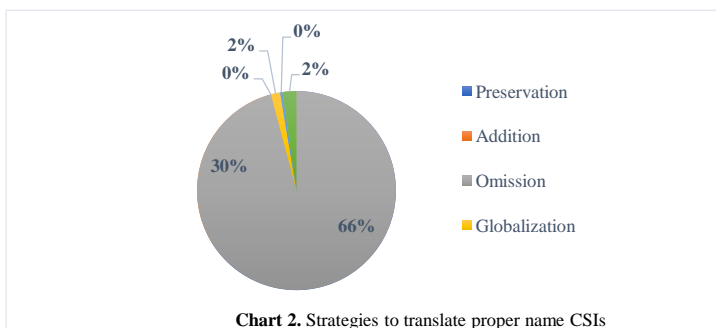
f. Transformation

Transformation was applied in an unsystematic way in the translation of proper name CSIs in *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, with only 6 cases found.

Cal, the shortened form of a character's name, became *Calpurnia*, the full form. In American communication culture, names can be shortened and calling someone by their shortened name indicates the intimacy between the addresser and the addressee, as is the case in this example. However, this convention does not exist in Vietnamese culture. Aware of this difference, the translators decided to switch the shortened name, *Cal*, back to its full form, *Calpurnia*, lest the name causes confusion to readers.

The motivation for the transformation of other CSIs seems to be less evident. *The Radley Place* becoming *nhà Radley* and *the Buford Place* becoming *điền trang nhà Buford* are two cases where a general noun, *Place*, was transformed into a more specific one, *nhà* and *điền trang* respectively. Likewise, *Hoover carts*, a kind of vehicle named after Herbert Hoover, one of the United States' presidents (Bennett buggy, n.d.), was transformed into *những cỗ xe hai bánh*. In all of these examples, the application of transformation makes the terms more intelligible. However, applying this strategy to translate the term *Rice Christians* does not allow for more transparency in meaning. The original term, *Rice Christians*, meaning Christians who adopt their religion because of material benefits rather than true faith (Rice Christian, n.d.), was translated into *người Thiên chúa giáo thuộc thế giới thứ ba*, which still needs further explanation if it is to be easily understood by common readers.

Chart 2 shows the frequency with which each of Davies' six strategies was used to deal with these 265 CSIs.

2%
0%
0%
2%
30%
66%

- Preservation
- Addition
- Omission
- Globalization

Chart 2. Strategies to translate proper name CSIs

The prevailing method to translate proper name CSIs is preservation, which was used to translate 176, or 66%, of all the CSIs in this category. The second most common strategy is addition, employed for the translation of 78, equivalent to more than 30%, of the 265 CSIs. Meanwhile, only 4 and 6 CSIs, each accounting to almost 2% of the number of CSIs in this subgroup, were translated by globalization and transformation respectively. No CSI was omitted and only one was translated by localization.

4.3. Translation of common expression CSIs

The rest of the CSIs examined, which accounts to 80, are common expressions. The way that translation strategies used to render this type of CSI will be detailed in this section.

a. Preservation

There are 6 instances of preservation of common expression CSIs. And they were semantically, rather than formally, preserved. Accordingly, the form of the terms was not kept, but their literal meaning was retained. For example, *bought cotton* was literally translated into *mua bông vải*, which sounds obscure. However, this obscurity is resolved right away as the author has the term explained inside the text itself: "a polite term for doing nothing". The translation of other CSIs in this group is more complicated as they are not accompanied by an explanation and readers' understanding therefore depends completely on the translators. However, to translate *last-will-and-testament diction* into *kiểu ăn nói chúc-thư-và-ý-nguyện-cuối-cùng* does cause some difficulties for readers in deciphering the term. A more sensible solution might be to provide additional information inside the text or in the form of a footnote. Furthermore, *bam, bam, bam* and *qua-ack*, both of which are words to describe sound, were subjected to the same translation method. However, the effects that they create on readers are different. *Bam, bam, bam* is used in this context to describe the noise created when chesses collide to one another. *Qua-ack*, on the other hand, is used to describe the cry of a blue jay. Vietnamese readers can relate *qua-ack* to the sound made by a bird but probably do not know

what *bam* has to do with chesses. Therefore, to preserve *qua-ack* seems to be a successful solution, whereas *bam, bam, bam* should have been processed differently.

b. Addition

25 out of 80 items in this group were translated by addition. For example, *a back-porch listener* was translated into *người rình nghe ở hiên sau*, with the element *rình* inserted to the translation. Likewise, *the chair* was translated into *ghế điện*, with the addition of *điện*. However, both of these terms, which denote a metaphorical expression and a legal convention respectively, are highly culture-specific and the additions made, while adding useful information to the translations, do not ensure that readers can understand them fully. In these cases, making more substantial additions or using footnotes could be judged to be a better approach.

Among the 25 CSIs translated by addition, 17 were accompanied by a footnote. Generally speaking, in translating this novel, the translators seemed to have given a great deal of attention to religion-related terms, which appear quite often. Translating these terms is a demanding task because they require readers to have some background knowledge to be able to decipher them correctly. There are three such terms in this group. *A foot-washing Baptist* is a member of a sub-branch of Baptism, whereas *closed communion* is a way of organizing a religious community. Meanwhile, *let this cup pass from you* is taken directly from the Bible. For each of these three terms, a footnote was provided. Meanwhile, *counting his chickens* and *walked over my grave* are metaphorical expressions. Although translating them literally must have presented no difficulty to the translators, the products, *đếm gà* and *bước qua huyệt mộ của bác* do not make any sense for Vietnamese readers either. Therefore, additional information was provided through accompanying footnotes.

c. Omission

Omission happened to only one CSI where *gallon jug* was translated into *bình*, with the modifier *gallon* omitted. Gallon is a unit for measuring liquid which barely used in Vietnam and one gallon is equivalent to 3,785 liters (Gallon, n.d.). In the example's context, it is used to modify the noun *jug*. Without the term, the sentence still sounds totally intelligible to readers. Having it translated by conversing gallon into liter, which is the common liquid measure unit in Vietnam, on the other hand, will burden readers with unnecessary information. Furthermore, subjecting the term, which plays a very minor role in the source text, to such a meticulous translation "will give it a prominence it did not possess in the original, and thus distort the original emphasis" (Davies, 2003, p. 80). Omission therefore seems to be a sensible choice to make with this case.

d. Globalization

There are 9 CSIs which underwent globalization in this group. Of these 9 CSIs, 4 were globalized by having a specific term replaced by a more general one. For example, *nho* is the translated counterpart of *scuppernongs*, a species of grape native to Southern United States and usually has greenish or bronze color (Scuppernong, n.d.). Meanwhile, *lumber jacket* was

translated into a more general term, *áo khoác*. Similarly, *pound cake* and *charlotte* were both globalized into *bánh nướng*.

In another example, *hidy do* was rendered into *chào*. While the source term is also a way of greeting, it conveys more about the attitude and manner of the speaker than the simple *chào* (To Kill a Mocking Bird - Glossary - Book drum, n.d.). However, it could be concluded that globalization was plausibly applied to the translation of these CSIs as a more detail translation would very likely have burdened readers with unnecessary information which is of little use to their understanding of the story.

e. Localization

With 30 items being localized, localization is the most commonly applied strategy for the translation of common expression CSIs.

Fhluck and *wheek, wheek* are words used to describe sounds. And because the same sounds are designated by different words in Vietnamese, to translate these words, the translators had to resort to localization. *Fhluck* is used for the sound made by clapping the lips together. It was translated into *phù*, the Vietnamese word for the same sound. Likewise, *wheek, wheek* is the noise made by different layers of cotton being swished against each other. It was accordingly translated into Vietnamese as *soạt*. Meanwhile, *my stars*, *what in the Sam holy hill*, *Jee crawling hova* and *Taah* are colloquial expressions of the English language. The translators translated them by giving the equivalent expressions used by Vietnamese people for the same purposes. *Pound*, the weight unit commonly used in the US, was converted into *kí*, the one commonly used in Vietnam. A metaphorical expression, *the last straw*, was translated into a Vietnamese metaphor which has the same meaning, *giọt nước cuối cùng làm tràn li*.

Putting a quintessentially Vietnamese reference into the purely American setting of the novel might cause confusion to readers or even disturb their reading experience. Therefore, while the CSIs were translated with localization, their localized counterparts do not sound too Vietnamese. Localization was applied here with a functional purpose rather than a cultural purpose: By employing this strategy, the translators aimed at rendering the CSIs into the Vietnamese terms which have the same function, rather than at incorporating elements of Vietnamese culture into the translation.

f. Transformation

There are 9 cases of transformation among the 80 common expression CSIs.

Tea cake refers to a kind of light yeast-based sweet bun containing dried fruit, typically served toasted, buttered and accompanied by tea (Teacake, n.d.). However, in traditional Vietnamese culture, cakes or cookies are not usually served with tea. A truthful translation would be disconcerting to readers, so the translators transformed the term into *bánh bơ*. Meanwhile, *J.P court* is a legal organization originated from Scotland in the 16th century (Justice of the peace court, n.d.). However, for common readers, these details are of little interest. The translation, *tòa án sơ thẩm*, fits well into the context of the sentence but at the same time sounds totally understandable to readers. In these two examples, the application of transformation seems to have been motivated by the fact that a transformed translation would

yield more semantic and cultural transparency than a truthful translation, which, though requiring more efforts from the translators, would very likely be confusing to readers.

Meanwhile, *play keep-away*, which means to play a game called keep away, "a children's game in which two or more players must pass a ball to one another, while a player in the middle attempts to intercept it" (Keep away, n.d.), was translated into *không muốn chơi nữa*. *Apple-bobbing*, which does not mean *trò lăn táo* but a children's game in which players try by using their teeth to catch apples which have been put into a basin full of water (Apple bobbing, n.d.). The translation of these two cases could seemingly be judged to result from the translators' misunderstanding of the terms. Nonetheless, though not strictly truthful, the translators' choices fit well into their respective context and do not cause any confusion for the readers.
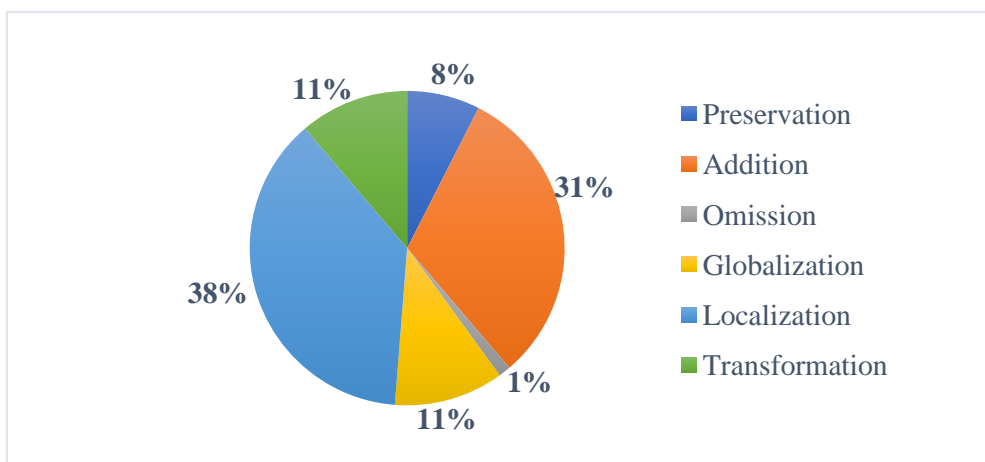
As indicated in Chart 3, the prevailing strategy for the translation of this group of CSIs is localization, with 30 CSIs, accounting to 38%, translated by this method. The second most commonly applied strategy is addition, which was used to translate 25 common expression CSIs, or 31% of the total number of CSIs in this group. Meanwhile, 9 is the number of common expression CSIs that were globalized. 9 is also the number of common expression CSIs subjected to transformation. Each of the two strategies therefore was used on 11% of the CSIs in this group. 8% of the common expression CSIs, or 6 CSIs, were preserved. Finally, only one common expression CSI was omitted.

5. Conclusion

From the findings of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Firstly, all of the six strategies proposed by Davies were applied in the translation of CSIs in the novel *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, though with different frequencies. If the target text could be placed on a scale going from foreignization to domestication, it is suggested by the results of this study that it lies nearer to the foreignization end than the domestication end. In other words, in translating the text, the translators opted to retain its exoticness and bring the target readers to the source culture rather than to domesticate the text and bring the source culture to the target readers.

Secondly, the strategy that was used on the smallest number of CSIs in both groups, namely proper name CSIs and common expression CSIs, is omission. However, it should be

noticed that the frequency of a strategy when it is considered in one of the two subgroups of CSIs is not always equal to the frequency of that very strategy when it is considered in the other subgroup of CSIs. This proves that the treatment of proper name CSIs and common expression CSIs have patterns that bear both similarities with and differences from each other.

Thirdly, the distribution of the six strategies among common expression CSIs is more even than the distribution of the six strategies among proper name CSIs. This said, a random common expression CSI is open to a wider range of translation strategies than a random proper name CSI, whose probability of being subjected to preservation is 66% ensured.

Fourthly, in dealing with CSIs in the novel, the translators made choices that are both systematic and idiosyncratic. For example, a footnote was usually added when dealing with a CSI that has significant cultural or historical implications and requires readers to have certain background knowledge to understand. A proper name CSI was often subjected to semantic preservation when the name is meaningful and formal preservation when it is arbitrary. However, other choices made by the translators are idiosyncratic and the motivation and reasoning behind them are usually not evident.

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NGHIÊN CỨU VIỆC DỊCH SANG TIẾNG VIỆT NHỮNG TỪ NGỮ VĂN HÓA TRONG TIỂU THUYẾT *GIẾT CON CHIM NHẠI*

Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này phân tích việc dịch sang tiếng Việt những từ ngữ văn hóa (culture-specific items), bao gồm các tên riêng (proper names) và diễn đạt thông thường (common expressions), trong tiểu thuyết *Giết con chim nhại*. Phương pháp định tính lẫn định lượng đã được sử dụng để tiến hành nghiên cứu, và dữ liệu thu thập được cung cấp thông tin về việc sử dụng các chiến lược dịch, bao gồm giữ nguyên (preservation), bổ sung (addition), lược bỏ (omission), khái quát (globalization), địa phương hóa (localization) và chuyển đổi (transformation). Trong số 345 từ ngữ văn hóa được tìm thấy, có 265 tên riêng, và 80 các diễn đạt thông thường. Kết quả chỉ ra rằng tất cả 6 chiến lược nêu trên đều được người dịch sử dụng với các tần suất khác nhau. Chiến lược được sử dùng nhiều nhất là giữ nguyên, và chiến lược được sử dụng ít nhất là lược bỏ.

Từ khóa: Từ ngữ văn hóa, chiến lược dịch, văn hóa Mỹ