

## **Source-Text Adherent Translation in Translations of Official Documents**

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### **Abstract**

Most studies of translation strategies in the Thai translation context strive to provide solutions to solve problems arising from linguistic and cultural differences. However, the ways in which translations are examined to be close to the source texts could be seen underexplored. This research thus aims to find out whether the translations from Thai into English of the notifications and announcements made by Mae Fah Luang University remain close to the source-text language or not. To achieve this aim, the research adopts the concept of formal and dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1964) and links them with the concept of target-text and source-text oriented translation. The concept is centrally applied in the analysis with the help of the word equivalence concept and its translation strategies proposed by Mona Baker (1992). As for material, as the notifications and announcements are official documents, the translations of words or phrases need to be accurate according to the intended aims of the source texts. Thus, words or phrases in the notifications and announcements at Mae Fah Luang University are used for the analysis. Lastly, the analysis reveals that the translations are close to the source texts due to the high frequencies of the source-text adherent translation

strategies. Five translation strategies which are identified in the translations include addition, omission, target-text explicitation, generalization and literal translation. The identified translation strategies can also benefit the teaching of translation of official document text genre.

**Keywords:** Thai into English translations, translation equivalence, translation strategies, source-text adherent translation, official documents

## **Introduction**

Translation strategy has been an important topic of translation studies in the past few decades. As pointed out by most translation researchers, translation strategy is studied to solve translation problems that arise from linguistic and cultural differences between source and target texts (see Newmark, 1988; Nida, 1964; Nida & Taber, 1969). Considering that translation is a communicative act (Hermans, 2002), translation problems need to be dealt with by target-text translators so that communications between source and target language are to most extent successful.

From the point of view of translation studies in Thailand, there are some past studies on translation strategies as well. It can be seen that, up to recent times, many of them have remained proposing translation strategies that deal with translation strategies to solve such translation problems that arise due to linguistic and cultural differences between English and Thai, in various text types and genres (see Khanjanavisittaphol, 2018; Kulthamrong, 2014; Leenakitti & Pongpairroj, 2019; Mata, 2016; Suksalee, 2018; Sukwises, 2019; Tretrapetch, Tipayasuparat, & Webb, 2017). However, it can be seen that most studies, especially studies on translations of official documents, remain underexplored and do not extend beyond proposing translation strategies to solve translation problems from English and Thai or vice versa.

Following the illustrated gap, specifically, it is also interesting to investigate, for example, the ways in which these translation strategies are studied in conjunction with the source texts, e.g. how and to what extent translation strategies are close to the source text language and/or how they are classified based on source-text and target-text oriented translation concept. It can be seen that these areas are left unexplored, particularly from the point of view of translations from English into Thai (or vice versa). As translation strategies are an integral part of translations, they are topical concepts to which most translators pay attention to while solving linguistic and cultural problems in the target language. As a result, translation strategies are important for further study, especially in the study of translations in the Thai translation context.

With the focus on translation strategy, the main aim of the research is to find out whether translations of official document genre are source-text oriented translation or not. Specifically, the research aims to find out whether the translators who were commissioned for the translations of the notifications/announcements made by Mae Fah Luang University paid attention to the source texts and, then, used translation strategies that adhere to the meanings and forms of the source-text language highly closely or not. With this aim in mind, the research hypothesizes that the translations from Thai into English of the notifications/announcements made by Mae Fah Luang University are, presumably, source-text oriented. To answer this hypothesis, the research questions are created as follows: 1) do the translations from Thai into English of the notifications and announcements released by Mae Fah Luang University adhere closely to the source-text language? and 2) If so, through what translation strategies and what are the extent to which they are used? In sum, the answers to these research questions shall reveal the ways in which the translators who were commissioned for the translations treat the Thai notifications/announcements published by

Mae Fah Luang University into English. This would yield a more in-depth knowledge of the official document translation genre as well.

This article is structured as follows. The article begins with an introduction that gives readers an overall picture of translation strategy and its importance. In this section, the aim, hypothesis and research questions are formed and introduced. The review of related literature is then followed in the next section and it explores related studies in the past that are used as a basis to form a theoretical framework that is applied in each stage of the analysis. Later, the article goes on to discuss the material and methods in the following section. It introduces the notifications and announcements of Mae Fah Luang University and their translations as materials in the present study and then continues to present the methods, e.g. the extraction of words or phrases in the notifications and announcements and their target-text equivalents, the applications of the adapted translation strategies, the methods to find out whether the identified translation strategies adhere to source or target texts, et cetera, required for the analysis. Later, the outcomes are presented to demonstrate the answers to the research questions and hypothesis. Lastly, the conclusion section restates the aim and research questions, including the key findings.

### **Literature Review**

A legal document is considered as a specific text genre that most translators strive to adhere to the source texts closely, both in terms of linguistic structures and meanings (see Homhuan, 1984, p. 95; Kraiwichien, 2003, p. 27). To elaborate, in the view of Cao (2007), legal translation is special because it deals with the language of the laws that could have legal impacts and consequences. Similarly, most Thai legal translation scholars also view that, in legal translation from English into Thai (e.g. in fire excess of the loss reinsurance agreement, insurance policy and UN conventions) (see Kusonpattana, 2016; Mongkol, 2019; Wongwanich, 2015), translators shall also maintain the accuracy of the source texts by

adhering to the terms and linguistic structures of the source-text legal documents closely.

This points out that practitioners of legal translation in Thailand pay attention to the source texts and strive to maintain linguistic and semantic equivalence of the source texts as well. In this light, it can also be considered that legal translation is quite special and should be produced in the target language that remains close to the source texts as much as possible (Šarcevic, 2000).

The ways in which translators adhere closely to the source-text legal documents can be done through maintaining close equivalence to the source texts. With the focus on textual differences between source and target text, Nida (1964) proposes translation strategies that are linked with translation equivalence between languages – one is the source-text oriented translation that aims to save meanings and forms of the source text and the target-text oriented one that attempts to move close to the target-text language. Specifically, Nida (1964) views that there are two ends of translation equivalence – formal and dynamic equivalence. According to him, formal equivalence pays attention to the source-text meanings and forms that should be closely adhered to by the translated versions as it strives to maintain accuracy and correctness (Nida, 1964, p. 159). On the opposite end, he also proposes dynamic equivalence that aims to match source-text meanings with the target-text ones while producing naturalness in the translated version (Nida, 1964, p. 159). In paying attention to the target-text language, Nida (1964, p. 159) states that dynamic equivalence allows translators to shift linguistic forms of the source text so that the translations are read naturally in the target culture (e.g. the translated versions make sense, deliver an atmosphere of the source texts, read naturally in the target culture, and have a close response to the source texts (Ibid.). In sum, source-text oriented translation is linked with Nida's (1964, p. 159) formal equivalence, while target-text equivalence is linked with dynamic equivalence (ibid.).

The concept of formal equivalence (Nida, 1964) benefits the present research despite some criticisms. In the following work that focuses on the Bible translation, Nida and Taber (1969, p. 24) propose translation systems that emphasize dynamic equivalence, for example, to overcome linguistic problems that occur due to differences between source and target texts. However, as the concept of equivalence emphasizes linguistic differences between source and target texts, some translation scholars criticize that the concept is hard to be defined and concluded based on the linguistic elements between source and target languages (see Bassnett, 1991; Dickins, Hervey, & Higgins, 2002; Stine, 2004). Later, in 1990, the equivalence concept that is used to examine linguistic approach in translations is expanded to include cultural elements that could affect translations in the translation processes (Bassnett, 1998; Lefevere, 1992). Specifically, it is demonstrated that decisions to choose translation strategies that are source-text or target-text oriented approach could be affected by cultural and ideological elements that appear as part of cultural and social systems of both source- and target-text language (see Lefevere's (1992, pp. 15–17)) dominant poetics and patronage). To elaborate, this demonstrates that translators do not only attempt to search for linguistic equivalence between source and target language but, instead, the manipulations of translations could be affected by cultural and social elements, such as ideologies and dominant linguistic systems of the target culture, for example (Lefevere, 1992, pp. 15–17). However, considering the present study, as it wants to search for source-text oriented translation strategies and the extent to which they are applied in the translations at the linguistic level, it can be considered that the concept of formal equivalence benefits the research: firstly, it provides a systematic way to search for linguistic equivalence between Thai and English and, secondly, it provides a framework for searching translation strategies that strive to adhere closely to the source-text documents and do not include the effects of

other social and cultural elements at this stage. For this reason, the concept of formal equivalence (Nida, 1964) is applicable as an overall framework for the present study.

In the Thai translation contexts, multiple studies strive to explore translation strategies of translations from English into Thai and vice versa in literary and other text genres (see Khanjanavisittaphol, 2018; Leenakitti & Pongpairoj, 2019; Mata, 2016; Suksalee, 2018; Sukwises, 2019; Treetrapietch et al., 2017). Specifically, for example, Treetrapietch et al. (2017) propose translation techniques that are used in the American film comedy, Leenakitti & Pongpairoj (2019) explore the translations of relative clauses in the Thai literary translations, and Sukwises (2019) also studies translation techniques used in the translation of Thai novel, *Love Destiny*, to name but a few. In addition, there are also past studies that specifically focus on legal translation. For instance, the translation of a legal textbook and its analysis of translation strategies (Inphen, 2010), the translation of an insurance policy (Kusonpattana, 2016), the translations of legal terminology on legal convention (Wongwanich, 2015), the translation of a reinsurance agreement (Mongkol, 2019), et cetera. However, significantly, most translation studies in the Thai translation context are mostly proposing translation strategies that are applicable for solving translation problems between English and Thai. Considering that legal translation is technical and source-text oriented, these past studies mostly did not systematically explore source-text oriented translation strategies including the ways in which they are employed in the translations. In other words, they did not explicitly connect translation strategies with source-text oriented translation and did not explore the extent to which they remain close or far from the source texts. Thus, considering the aim of this research, the ways in which translation strategies were employed in the translations of notification and announcements are important because they are to a large extent assumed to reflect the ways in which the translators paid attention to the source-text meanings and forms. This will shed more light on the extent to which source-text

oriented translation strategy takes place in translation practices in the Thai legal translation context.

As pointed out earlier, as the present study attempts to find out and explore the extent to which source-text oriented translation strategies are adopted in the translations of official documents (that appear at a textual level only), there is a need to find a framework that helps to identify translation strategies used at the linguistic level in the translations between English and Thai and vice versa. Following the concept of equivalence (Nida, 1964; Nida & Taber, 1969) above, in her book “In other words: a coursebook on translation”, Baker (1992) also bases her study on the equivalence concept. However, she categorizes equivalence into at word and above word level. At lexical level, Baker (1992, pp. 26–42) proposes seven translation strategies that aim to solve translation problems at word or lexical level. The proposed translation strategies include 1) translation by a more general word (superordinate), 2) translation by a more neutral/less expressive word, 3) translation by cultural substitution, 4) translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation, 5) translation by paraphrase using a related word, 5) translation by paraphrase using unrelated words, 6) translation by omission and 7) translation by illustration. Considering that the current analysis focuses on the translations from Thai into English of words or phrases that appear in the notifications and announcements of Mae Fah Luang University, Baker’s (1992, pp. 26–42) concept of equivalence and her proposed translation strategies can be used to create the overall method framework for the present research. Also, as the main focus of the present research is on the translations from Thai into English, the proposed translation strategies remain useful for analyzing translation problems that arise due to lexical differences. However, Baker’s (1992) translation strategies cannot be directly applied in the analysis due to their limited applicability. For example, in other words, her translation strategies mainly deal with equivalence between English and Arabic and focus more on translations of lexical items that



are culture-bound. Thus, the concept of equivalence at word level is used to provide the framework for identifying and creating translation strategies on a data-driven basis (see Amer-Yahia, Leroy, Termier, Kirchgessner, & Omidvar-Tehrani, 2015). This method framework and how each translation strategy is defined will be fully discussed in the material and methods chapters.

As illustrated earlier, legal translation is rather different from the translation of other text genres, such as literary translation, and it mainly strives to maintain adherence to the source texts. For example, Hatim and Mason (1996, p.16 as cited in Pinmanee (2014) states that text-centered translation is mostly suitable for legal translation because it focuses on the contents and details of the legal source texts and it helps translators to maintain source-text linguistic and semantic structures. Considering that the material of this study is official notifications and announcements of Mae Fah Laung University, the idea of source-text oriented translation that is used in legal translation is also seen applicable. To elaborate, the official notifications and announcements mostly share basic characteristics with legal documents, e.g. the official notifications and announcements usually contain words or phrases that require accuracy and clarity for the audience.

More specifically, translation problems that arise from linguistic differences of words or phrases between Thai and English could create challenges to target-culture translators as they strive to mediate such translation problems with translation strategies that stay close to the source texts during the course of translation. Even though there have been attempts to propose translation strategies in legal translations in the past studies, source-text oriented translation strategies remain under-explored, i.e. what translation strategy is classified as source-text oriented and what is the extent to which it is used in the translations. This makes the present research important in the field of translation studies, especially regarding legal translation and its other similar text genres. With this idea in mind, Nida's (1964) formal

equivalence is adopted as the overall framework of the present study, while Baker's (1992) translation strategies are focal in the analysis due to their applicability that deals with equivalence at word level.

## **Material and Methods**

The material of this study includes words or phrases that are extracted from the translations of notifications and announcements of Mae Fah Luang University from 2016 to 2019. The reason that these periods are focused is due to the high numbers of published notifications and announcements. Specifically, 43 notifications and announcements were translated from Thai into English during these four years. Notifications and announcements that are focused in the present study refer to any notification or announcement that is made public, whether in the form of formal or informal notifications or announcements, by any internal office or sector, such as the Office of Registrar Office, the Division of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Development, the School of Liberal Arts, of Mae Fah Luang University. As the documents are meant for the public, the name of the organization can be revealed. Given the fact that notifications and announcements are documents that aim to inform the audience of information/circumstances that require attention, they to a great extent are similar to, for example, legal documents that are informative and accurate in terms of language use (see also Inphen, 2010). Specifically, this means that the source-text language used in the notifications and announcements is rather concise and clear to ensure similar or mutual understanding among the audience. Given the fact that accuracy and conciseness are what the notification and announcements are aimed at, words or phrases that appear in them are thus important.

Words or phrases that appear in the notifications and announcements are central in the translations from Thai into English. Particularly, words or phrases are centrally used in the

official documents to inform the contents that need to be conveyed to the audience. For example, in tracing previous studies of legal translations in Thailand, source-text words or phrases are integral parts of lexical and semantic structures of the source language and must be transferred to precisely and accurately in legal translations (see Inphen, 2010; Wongwanich, 2015). As a result, it could also be inferred that words or phrases that appear in the notifications and announcements also require accuracy and preciseness as those of legal documents.

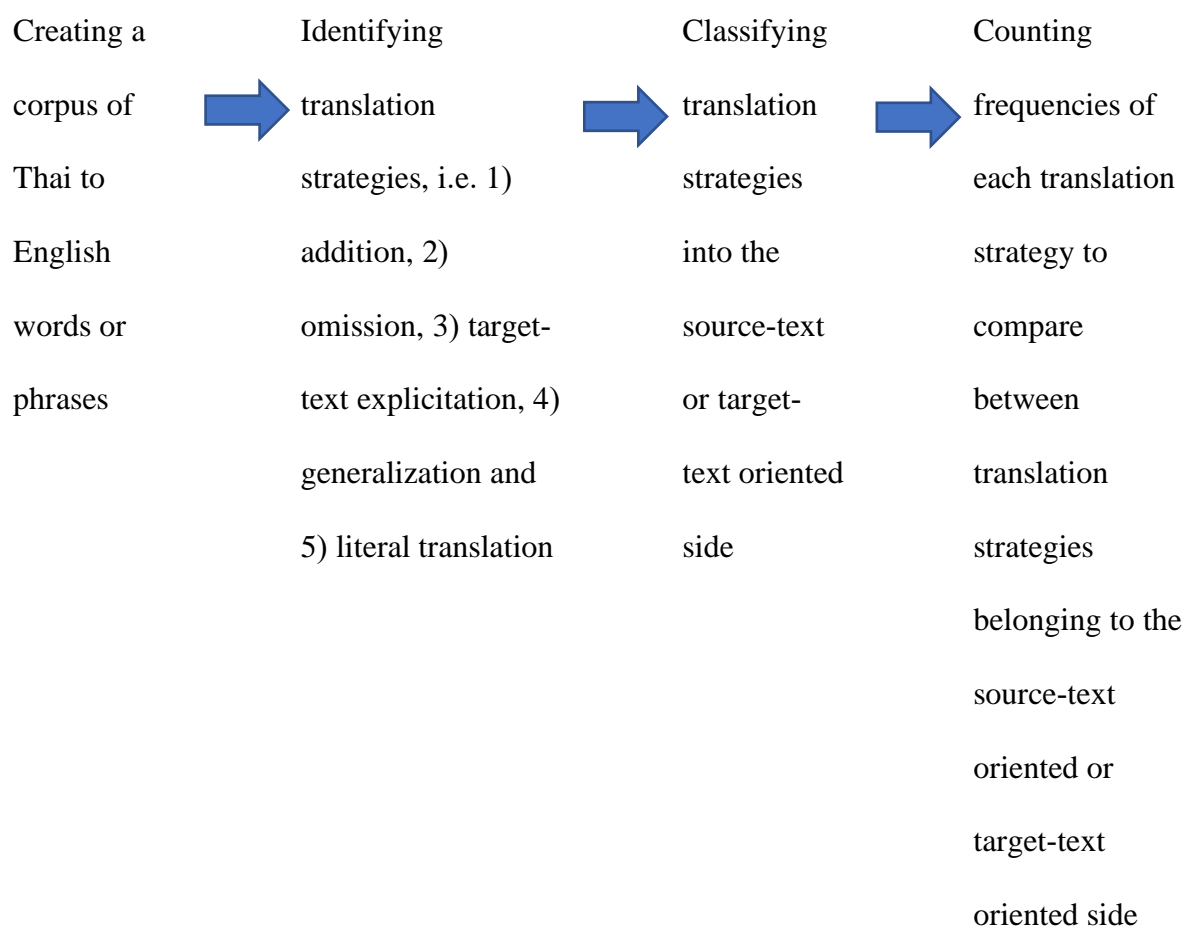
Following the above idea, words or phrases are selected from the notifications/announcements of Mae Fah Luang University. In total, there are 1204 words or phrases extracted from 43 notifications and announcements. However, as the study is a small-scale research project, 50 percent of the extracted words/phrases are selected due to project feasibility. The sampling process was carried out with a sampling frame that the words/phrases are similar and/or equal in terms of grammatical function in the source texts. Thus, they can be selected randomly (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013, p. 71). On this basis, the random process was carried out with the help of a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (using random values assigned by the Excel formula) and, later, 602 source-text words/phrases have been randomized and saved on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for further action. The selected source-text words/phrases are seen to constitute a corpus that is a representative of the data and is sufficient for both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

In the next stage, there is a need to create a parallel corpus of the source- and target-text words or phrases. Particularly, the selected source-text words or phrases (the Thai source texts) need to be matched with the target-text translated words or phrases (the English target texts) that appear in the English translations of the notifications and announcements. Therefore, the source-text words or phrases are compared with their translations to find their target-text equivalents. Later, the source-text words or phrases and their target-text

equivalents are then transferred to the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for further analysis. To proceed, Figure 1 below helps to demonstrate the methodological process.

**Figure 1**

*Methodological Process*



Following the process, there is also a need to create a framework that suits the data and is applicable for the present analysis. In answering the first research question, the analysis strives to identify translation strategies that the translators used in the English translations of the notifications and announcements. This will lead to a discovery of how close the translations are to the source texts. Later, in answering the second research question, the identified translation strategies are then used as a foundation to discuss the extent to

which the translations are close to the source texts. Following this idea, the analysis has adopted Mona Baker's (1992) concept of equivalence at word level. Baker's (1992, pp. 26–42) idea is suitable for the analysis because it proposes translation strategies that aim to solve translation problems that arise from language differences at lexical level. In considering the present research data, the selected words/phrases are lexical items that pose challenges, in terms of translation problems arising due to differences between English and Thai, to the translators. On this basis, Baker's (1992, pp. 26–42) concept of equivalence at word level and the proposed translation strategies are applicable for the analysis.


In the next stage, based on Baker's (1992, pp. 26–42) framework, translation strategies are defined to best accommodate the data. Given the fact that Baker's (1992) translation strategies are broadly defined to best explain the translations from English into Arabic, and, in contrast, the present research focuses on the translations from Thai into English, thus the proposed translation strategies need to be adapted or re-defined for a practicality purpose. For this reason, the translation strategies used in the analysis of words or phrases from the official announcements are defined based on the concept of equivalence at word level by Baker (1992) and are data-driven. The data-driven analysis is made based on the parallel corpus created earlier. According to Amer-Yahia et al. (2015), data-driven research is the way in which the data are stored and related to reveal correlations. On this basis, Baker's (1992) concept of translation equivalence at word level is used as a foundation to find out translation strategies used in the present study. In analyzing the source-text words or phrases and their English translations, the translation strategies found in the translations include 1) addition, 2) omission, 3) target-text explicitation, 4) generalization and 5) literal translation. The details are fully discussed in the Findings section.

Once translation strategies are defined, to find out adherence to which the translations are produced, there is a need to classify whether these translation strategies belong to formal

or dynamic translation category (Nida, 1964). To explain, the translation strategies that are close to the source-text forms and meanings are classified as formal equivalent translation (Nida, 1964, p. 159). On the other hand, the translation strategies that aim to make adjustments to the translated versions so that they are more familiar or readable in the target texts are then classified as dynamic equivalent translation (ibid.). The classification is shown in the table below.

**Table 1**

*Target and Source-Text Oriented Translation Strategies on the Formal Equivalence Scale*

Degree of formal equivalence					
Translation strategy	Addition	Omission	Generalization	Target-text explication	Literal translation

Considering the classification in the above table, it can be explained that translation strategies that aim to follow source-text forms and meanings are seen to demonstrate a high degree of formal equivalence (see Inphen, 2020). The translation strategies include literal translation and target-text explication. This means that literal translation and target-text explication mostly strive to preserve the source-text words or phrases in the translations. On the other hand, addition, omission and generalization are seen as the translation strategies that allow translators to replace or even remove source-text words or phrases from translations. Thus, these translation strategies to most extent follow the linguistics and culture of the target text and, as a result, demonstrate a lesser degree of formal equivalence (ibid.). To sum up, literal translation and target-text explication are considered to adhere to formal equivalence, while addition, omission and generalization have a lesser degree of formal equivalence due to their target-text oriented nature.

In the final stage of the analysis, once the classification is complete, the frequency of each translation strategy is then counted to find out whether a formal or dynamic equivalent translation is used. This aims to find out whether the translations from Thai into English of the notifications/announcements of Mae Fah Luang University adhere to source-text linguistic structures and meanings or not.

## **Findings**

In order to answer the first and second research questions, the analysis is divided into two parts. The first part deals with finding translation strategies, including their adoption frequencies, that are used in the translations from Thai into English of the notifications and announcements of Mae Fah Luang University. Secondly, in the other part that follows, the analysis aims to explain the identified translation strategies and explore the extent they are used in the translations.

### ***The Identified Translation Strategies in the Translations***

Firstly, the analysis reveals that there are five translation strategies – addition, omission, target-text explicitation, generalization and literal translation – used in the English translations of the notifications and announcements of Mae Fah Luang University. The details of each translation strategy and the ways in which they are used are elaborated with examples from the data as the following.

**Addition.** “Addition” is a translation strategy that translators strive to add target-word words or phrases to make the translations recognizable in the target culture (see Davies' (2003, p. 77) addition; Leppihalme's (2001, p. 144) addition). Such additions aim to give more specific detail to the replacements. On this basis, “addition” in this study is defined to refer to a translation strategy that translators aim to replace source-text words or phrases with the target versions. However, such replacements contain additions in the forms of words or phrases in them. It is found out that there are 13 times of “addition” in the translations of the

notifications and announcements of Mae Fah Luang University. Addition was used in the following circumstance.

Example 1

Source text	ในกรณีที่มีการใช้สถานที่และเครื่องมือวิทยาศาสตร์ของศูนย์เครื่องมือวิทยาศาสตร์และเทคโนโลยีจะต้องได้รับความเห็นชอบจากผู้อำนวยการศูนย์ฯ ด้วย
Back translation of the source text	In case the facility or instrument of the Scientific and Technological Instrument Center is used, <u>permission</u> from the director of the center must be received as well.
Target text	If the research group needs to use any facility or instrument of the Scientific and Technological Instrument Centre, the research group must obtain <u>prior permission</u> from the Centre's Director.

Example 1 illustrates the English translation of a notification made by the Scientific and Technological Instrument Centre of Mae Fah Luang University. In the example, it shows that the word “ความเห็นชอบ” [back translation – permission] was translated into English as “prior permission”. It can be seen that the target-text word “prior” was added in the translation. It is presumed that the translators wanted to make it explicit in the translation that permission to use the facility and instrument of the Scientific and Technological Instrument Centre must be given before conducting any activity. In this light, the word “prior” was then added to the translation. Given that the translators decided to add a target-text word in the translation, it is thus classified as “addition” translation strategy accordingly.

**Omission.** “Omission”, as the name suggests, refers to a translation strategy that translators decide to erase source-text words or expressions from the translations when they see that such source-text words or expressions are not necessary and could create confusion to the target readers (see Baker's (1992, p. 40) omission; Davies' (2003, p. 83) omission; Leppihalme's (2001, pp. 142–144) omission). Following this idea, in the present analysis, “omission” thus refers to a method that translators remove source-text words or phrases from the translated versions. Even though there is an omission in the translations, the target-text



meanings are to most extent not affected. In the present study, the analysis shows that there are 9 times of omission in the English translations of the notifications/announcements.

Omission was used in the following situation.

Example 2

Source text	นักศึกษายื่นแบบคำขอผ่อนผันที่กรอกข้อมูลครบถ้วนแล้วที่ฝ่ายทุนการศึกษา ส่วนพัฒนานักศึกษา
Back translation of the source text	Students submit <u>the complete delay application form</u> to the Scholarship Department, Division of Student Development Affairs.
Target text	Students submit <u>the completed application form</u> to the Scholarship Department, Division of Student Development Affairs.

In considering Example 2, it is found out that there is an omission of the target-text word in the translated phrase that appears in the translation. Specifically, in other words, the source-text phrase “แบบคำขอผ่อนผันที่กรอกข้อมูลครบถ้วน” [back translation - the complete delay application form] was translated into English as “the complete delay application form”. This illustrates that the word “delay” was omitted in the translated phrase “the complete delay application form”. It is also presumed that the translators might perceive that the word “delay” does not affect the source-text meaning of “the complete application form”. On this basis, the word “delay” thus was omitted in the translation accordingly.

**Target-Text Explication.** “Target-text explication” is a translation strategy that aims to make source-text words or phrases sound more familiar to the readers by adding a target-text word or phrase that explains the source texts (see Leppihalme's (2001, pp. 142–144) explication). Following this idea, “target-text explication”, in the present analysis, is a method that the translators replace source-text words or phrases with the target-text versions. However, such replacements contain an added word or phrase that aims to make the meanings of source texts to be explicit in the translated versions. Interestingly, in the present

study, the target-text explicitation translation strategy does appear 38 times. Below is an example of target-text explicitation with a detailed explanation.

Example 3

Source text	มหาวิทยาลัยแม่ฟ้าหลวงมีมาตรการป้องกันการคัดลอกวิทยานิพนธ์ /วิทยานิพนธ์ /สารนิพนธ์ การค้นคว้าอิสระ และผลงานตีพิมพ์ ของนักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษาของมหาวิทยาลัยแม่ฟ้าหลวง
Back translation of the source text	Mae Fah Luang University has a measure to prevent copying dissertations/ theses/ <u>thematic studies</u> / independent studies and publications of graduate students of Mae Fah Luang University.
Target text	Mae Fah Luang University has a strict policy to prevent its graduate students from committing any form of plagiarism in the writing of their independent studies, <u>master's projects</u> , theses, dissertation or any other publications.

Considering the statement in the above example, it is clear that the translators decided to substitute the word “วิทยานิพนธ์” [back translation – thematic studies] with the target-text phrase “master’s projects”. Interestingly, this illustrates that the translators wanted to make sure that the word “วิทยานิพนธ์” or “thematic studies” is made more explicit in the target text. In other words, the translators wanted to specifically point out that thematic studies are a project done at the master’s degree level by graduate students. As a result, the translators decided to add the phrase “master’s project” which was then added in the translation accordingly. This shows that the target-text version is more explicit in English.

**Generalization.** “Generalization” is a translation method that allows translators to use more neutral or general lexical items in target-text versions to reduce the specificity of the source-text items (see also Baker's (1992, p. 26) translation by a more general word; Davies' (2003, pp. 82–83) globalization). Following this idea, the ways in which the translators adopted or used target-text words or phrases that give general meanings of the words or phrases are seen as a “generalization” method. This translation strategy does appear in the translations 21 times. To give an example, generalization was used in the following situation.

Example 4

Source text	รายวิชาข้อ 4.4 ให้สำนักวิชาดำเนินการจัดสอบเมื่อนักศึกษาได้ลงทะเบียนครบทุกรายวิชาตามหลักสูตรแล้ว
Back translation of the source text	For <u>subjects</u> in 4.4, the school shall arrange the examination when students have enrolled in every subject according to the curriculum.
Target text	For <u>area</u> 4.4, the school will arrange the examination for those students who have passed all subjects required by the curriculum.

Example 4 demonstrates that the source-text word “รายวิชา” [back translation – subject] was translated into English as “area”. It thus can be seen that the specificity of the source-text word “รายวิชา” or “subject” has been reduced in the translation. To elaborate, the translators decided to replace the word “subject” with a more general word “area” in the target text. The word “area” is rather general as it refers to a more unspecified item/concept in the target language. In this light, it can be seen that the word “รายวิชา” or “subject” was generalized in the target version accordingly.

**Literal translation.** “Literal translation” is quite broad as it is a translation strategy where translators aim to follow the source-text linguistic structures and meanings closely (see Davies' (2003, p. 72) preservation). In the present analysis, “literal translation” is adapted from this idea in a narrower perspective and it refers to a translation strategy that the translators attempt to replace source-text words or phrases with close equivalences of the target texts. To elaborate, this means that the translators use related words or phrases to present close equivalents of the source texts in their translations while adhering very closely to the meanings and forms of the source texts. In the present analysis, it is found out that there are 499 times of literal translation strategy. Below is an example of literal translation with a detailed explanation.

## Example 5

Source text	ด้วยเห็นสมควรปรับปรุงหลักเกณฑ์การวัดผลการสอบวัดความรู้ก่อนสำเร็จการศึกษา ให้มีความเหมาะสมในทางปฏิบัติเพิ่มขึ้น และเพื่อให้เกิดประสิทธิภาพและประโยชน์สูงสุดกับบัณฑิต ที่จะสำเร็จการศึกษาต่อไป
Back translation of the source text	As seen appropriate to amend <u>the regulations of the examination before graduating</u> to be more appropriate in practice and to increase the effectiveness to the graduates who are going to complete their studies further
Target text	The following amendment has been made to <u>the regulations regarding the Exit Examination</u> in order to assure its practicality and effectiveness for the graduates.

In Example 5, the translators decided to translate the phrase “หลักเกณฑ์การวัดผลการสอบวัดความรู้ก่อนสำเร็จการศึกษา” [back translation - the regulations of the examination before graduating] into English as “the regulations regarding the Exit Examination”. This demonstrates that the translators adhered to the source-text language, both in linguistic structure and form, rather closely. On this basis, it can be seen that the source-text phrase was translated into English literally. It shows that the translators paid attention to the source-text language meanings and forms. It is then classified as “literal translation” accordingly.

***The Frequencies of the Adopted Translation Strategies on the Formal Equivalence Scale***

Once the translation strategies are identified, they are classified and counted in order to find out whether the translations adhere to the source texts or not. Specifically, to elaborate, adoption frequencies of each translation strategy are counted and then summed up to indicate the degree of formal equivalence to which the translation strategies incline. Below is the illustration.

**Table 2**

***The Occurrences of Translation Strategies on the Formal Equivalence Scale***

Degree of formal equivalence					
	Target-text oriented			Source-text oriented	
Translation strategy	Addition	Omission	Generalization	Target-text explicitation	Literal translation
Frequency	13	9	21	38	499
Percentage	2.2	1.6	3.6	6.6	86.0

Table 2 presents the adoption frequencies of the translation strategies identified in the Thai-to-English translations of the notifications and announcements of Mae Fah Luang University. Firstly, literal translation is the translation strategy that manifests the highest adoption frequency (499 of 580 times). This accounts for 86 percent of the total words/phrases selected. Secondly, target-text explicitation which is classified to have a lesser degree of formal equivalence after the literal translation was the second most adopted translation strategy (38 of 580 times). This accounts for 6.6 percent of the total words/phrases selected. On the other hand, the analysis further reveals that the translation strategies that aim to modify/shift the target-text words/phrases or incline toward dynamic equivalence methods (see Nida, 1964, p. 159) were less used in the translations in terms of adoption frequencies. Specifically, to begin with, the analysis reveals that omission is the least adopted translation strategy (9 of 580 times). This accounts for only 1.6 percent of the total words/phrases selected. Next, addition is the second least adopted translation strategy (13 of 580 times). This accounts for only 2.2 percent of the total words/phrases selected. Lastly, generalization is the third least adopted translation strategy (21 of 580 times). This accounts for only 3.6 percent of the total words/phrases selected. In sum, based on the adoption frequency of the translation strategies, literal translation is the most adopted translation strategy. This is followed by target-text explicitation which is the second-highest adopted translation strategy. The least adopted translation strategies include, from the least adopted frequencies to the higher adopted ones, omission, addition and generalization, respectively.

Lastly, based on the statistical data illustrated above, it is clear that the translators decided to adhere to source-text oriented translation which corresponds with the concept of formal equivalence proposed by Nida (1964). In other words, specifically, it can be seen that the translators dealing with the English translations of the notifications and announcements of Mae Fah Luang University to a great extent adhered to the translation strategies that pay

attention to formal equivalences. On this basis, given that there are higher frequencies of translation strategies that incline toward the side of source-text adherent translation, the Thai-to-English translations of the notifications and announcements of Mae Fah Luang University were translated close to the source texts through the adoptions of literal translation (86 percent) and target-text explicitation (3.6 percent), respectively. The statistical data confirms the hypothesis that the Thai-to-English translations of the notifications/announcements made by Mae Fah Luang University are source-text oriented.

### **Conclusions**

To conclude, the hypothesis is confirmed and research questions of the present research are fully answered. Firstly, in testing the hypothesis, the analysis illustrates that the Thai-to-English translations of the notifications and announcements made by Mae Fah Luang University are source-text oriented. Secondly, as for the research questions, based on the formal equivalence concept by Nida (1964), it is found out that the translations adhere closely to the source-text language linguistic structures due to the higher frequencies of adopted translation strategies that incline toward the source-text adherent translation pole. Additionally, the extent to which such translation strategies are adopted to solve translation problems that arise due to non-equivalence between Thai and English is also revealed. To elaborate, it is found out that there are five translation strategies that the translators adopted in the Thai-to-English translations. The five translation strategies include 1) addition, 2) omission, 3) target-text explicitation, 4) generalization and 5) source-text adherent translation. In considering these translation strategies on the bar of source-text and target-text adherent translation, the analysis shows that literal translation and target-text explicitation translation are on the source-text adherent side, while omission, addition and generalization are more on the target-text adherent translation side. Thus, following this idea, it can be seen that the translations from Thai into English of the notifications and announcements made by

Mae Fah Luang University, to a great extent, were highly close to the source-text language. Lastly, the findings of the research would benefit the teaching of official document translation in general. For example, students will be able to employ translation strategies to deal with translation problems arising at word level more efficiently.

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