

A Study of Strategies for Translating English Idioms in Subtitles from Riverdale Series into Thai

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Abstract

This qualitative research examines the strategies employed in translating English idioms in the subtitles of the TV series "Riverdale" into Thai. The aim of the study is to investigate the strategies utilized by translators to interpret idiomatic expressions, as well as to determine the frequency of each strategy and its applicability to the context of Thai subtitles. A total of 510 idioms were analyzed using Baker's Taxonomy (1992) as the theoretical framework. The findings reveal that six out of the eight identified strategies were manifested in the translation of English idioms. The most frequently used strategy was translation by paraphrase using unrelated words (43.73%), followed by translation by cultural substitution (26.86%) and translation by paraphrase using a related word (19.80%). Translation by a more neutral/less expressive word (5.49%), translation by omission (2.16%), and translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation (1.96%) were also observed. However, translation by a more general word and translation by illustration were not found in this study. The results shed light on the strategies employed by translators in conveying the meaning of English idioms in Thai subtitles, highlighting the importance of linguistic and cultural considerations. The findings underscore the importance of cultural relevance and linguistic precision in audiovisual translation, offering insights that can inform future translation practices and enhance the effectiveness of subtitles in conveying idiomatic meaning to Thai audiences.

Keywords: Translation Strategy, Baker's Taxonomy, English idioms, Netflix, Subtitles, TV series, Riverdale

1. Introduction

The contemporary era of globalization has ushered in substantial changes compared to the past. The rapid advancement of technology has led to an interconnected global community, resulting in the emergence of multicultural societies, as highlighted by Thipmontien (2016). These societies encompass diverse cultures, value systems, worldviews, lifestyles, and linguistic practices. Consequently, individuals hailing from various ethnic backgrounds find themselves compelled to engage in communication for a multitude of purposes, including trade negotiations, diplomatic agreements, and more. Translation serves as a vital instrument in the realm of cross-cultural communication, aimed at enhancing the comprehensibility and effectiveness of intergroup interactions involving individuals with disparate languages and cultural backgrounds (Robinson, 1997; Sahu, 2020).

Translation is fundamentally concerned with the task of rendering a message in the target language in a manner that closely resembles the source language while appearing natural. In essence, it revolves around a delicate balance between two pivotal elements: form and meaning. Overemphasizing the adherence to the source text's structure may lead to inaccuracies in interpretation. Conversely, a hyperfocus on meaning might result in alterations to the word's formal aspects (Baker, 1992). As articulated by Nida (1964), the translator faces a formidable challenge in attempting to navigate the intricacies of preserving both the formal structure and the entirety of the original language's intended meaning when translating any given text. The process of translation is regarded as both a science and an art. It is viewed that translation is an analytical matter that can be studied and written as a theory with principles and explanations. Moreover, it is imperative for translators not to rely solely on rule-based learning, even though the artistic dimension is undeniably significant. Furthermore, they must not overlook the importance of practical experience in honing their translation skills. According to Kunasaraphan (2006), the translator must know both the source language and beyond. To effectively interpret the intended meaning for the recipient, translators draw upon a range of expertise encompassing linguistics, communication, cultural understanding, and another specialized knowledge.

In the realm of societal communication, particularly in the routine interpersonal exchanges that transpire daily, idiomatic expressions play a pivotal role in elevating the comprehension and enjoyment of conversations. From a translation perspective, idioms represent a domain in which translators must exercise utmost prudence, given that each society's linguistic and cultural idiosyncrasies entail distinct features that pose challenges for non-native speakers. This phenomenon arises because frequently used idiomatic expressions often deviate from the literal meanings of their constituent words.

In the Thai context, where language and culture intertwine intricately, the translation of English idioms presents a fascinating area of study.

Thai, renowned for its rich vocabulary and nuanced expressions, offers a fertile ground for exploring how idiomatic meanings are transposed from English into Thai. This research seeks to bridge a crucial gap by investigating the translation techniques employed in rendering English idiomatic expressions from the "Riverdale" series into Thai subtitles. Through a comprehensive analysis of translator methodologies, this study endeavors to reveal the nuances of idiomatic translation within the Thai linguistic and cultural framework. Through this exploration, it endeavors to offer valuable insights into the linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic factors influencing the translation endeavor.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

Examining the intricacies of subtitle translation and the rendition of English idioms from the 'Riverdale' series into Thai constitutes the core focus of this study. The research delves into the techniques and strategies employed to convey intercultural idioms present in English TV series subtitles into the Thai language, a task particularly crucial given the prevalence of these idiomatic expressions in everyday discourse. Because these idioms are important variables in conveying the ideas, views, and culture of the English language. Idioms are expressed through the use of language models in real situations so that the results can reflect the natural images of contemporary American society and culture. Moreover, it can also serve as a framework for further study of the translation of subtitles in other movies, TV series, as well as various print media.

2. Literature Review

Idioms are characteristics of language used in society (Amos & Abas, 2021). So, it has appeared in various media, such as newspapers, books, novels, and multimedia, which reflect the use of idioms in the present and the most popular is movies. In the past, the primary mode of watching movies was through cinemas due to limited technological advancements. Over the years, cinemas have served as the main avenue for movie consumption among Thai audiences for over a century (Chayeenate & Sae-wang, 2019). However, with the advent of globalization and the widespread use of the Internet in daily life, accessing movies has become significantly easier. Today, individuals can effortlessly stream movies online through various applications and web browsers, eliminating the need to visit cinemas or purchase physical copies (Mehta et al., 2020). As the film industry adapts to meet evolving audience preferences, streaming services have gained popularity, leading to a decline in DVD sales and production. Netflix, a leading subscription-based Internet entertainment service, has emerged as a prominent player in this digital landscape, boasting millions of subscribers globally. Offering a vast library of content without advertisements, Netflix appeals to a wide range of age groups and provides accessibility to diverse genres (Pereira et al., 2015; Chan et al., 2022; Statista, 2023). Since its launch in Thailand in 2016, Netflix has gained traction in the market, offering Thai subtitles and dubbing for select shows and enabling viewers to access original series simultaneously with global audiences (Samsaraiy, 2020; Riewpungul, 2019). Consequently, Netflix has reshaped movie consumption habits in Thailand and disrupted the traditional cinematic culture, underscoring the importance of subtitles in effectively disseminating content to diverse audiences.

Subtitle translation has garnered significant attention in recent years, primarily owing to its role in enabling a broader audience to access content across linguistic boundaries. In this specialized form of translation, the paramount objective is to faithfully convey the meaning of the original source material while ensuring the resulting translation is not only accurate but also resonates as natural and harmonious in the target language, facilitating comprehension by the audience. Furthermore, the task of subtitling translators encompasses the nuanced conveyance of emotions and sentiments, aligning with the emotional tone of the source language (Sontisawang et al., 2020). However, a formidable challenge encountered by subtitle translators is the issue of non-equivalence at the lexical level. This dilemma arises when the target language lacks a precise counterpart for a word or term found within the source text, a phenomenon discussed by Baker (2011). Consequently, subtitling translators are tasked with a set of multifaceted responsibilities, including precision, timeliness, conciseness, clarity, consistency, cultural sensitivity, and meticulous editing and proofreading. In addition, Hajmohammadi (2004) states that integral to their role is the assurance that their translations effectively communicate the intended message of the original text, possess accurate timing for on-screen display, and adhere to appropriate length constraints. Furthermore, they are compelled to employ straightforward language, eschew cultural references and idiomatic expressions, and maintain unwavering consistency in style and terminology throughout the entirety of the content. By attentively addressing these factors, subtitle translators can engender high-quality translations that proficiently convey content to a diverse and expansive audience.

Baker's Taxonomy (1992) should be employed as a framework for the study because it offers a systematic way to categorize and analyze translation strategies, particularly in the context of idiomatic expressions. By referencing Baker's Taxonomy, the paragraph establishes a theoretical foundation for the analysis, indicating that the translation strategies are not arbitrary but are based on established principles in translation studies. Furthermore, Baker's Taxonomy provides a framework for understanding how translators approach the translation of idiomatic expressions, which can vary based on linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors. By incorporating Baker's Taxonomy into the study, it demonstrates a methodological rigor and scholarly approach to analyzing subtitle translation.

In Baker's (1992) research on translation, investigation into non-equivalence at the word level reveals eight strategies. These include utilizing more general or neutral terms, cultural substitutions, loan words, paraphrasing, omission, and illustration. These strategies serve as valuable tools for translators when faced with unfamiliar texts, offering guidance on navigating linguistic discrepancies effectively (Khongbumpen, 2008; Narata & Rakpa, 2020).

The translation of idiomatic expressions poses a substantial challenge for subtitlers. Idioms typically carry figurative meanings deeply intertwined with the nuances of a language and its culture, rendering them intricate to accurately convey. Translators are tasked with

comprehending not only the cultural context and regional variations of the source language but also the figurative essence of the idiom. They must then devise effective means of communication within the spatial and temporal constraints imposed by subtitles (Sae Ong et al., 2017; Wongchui & Roongrattanakool, 2020). Nonetheless, Sangtrakarnkit (2017) has highlighted that the study of translating has primarily focused on methods employed in the translation of books, novels, and literary works. Consequently, the pool of idioms examined may lack diversity, and the language style may not adequately capture the variations and modernity required. This limitation arises from the fact that a significant portion of the studied literature either dates back several decades or is oriented towards children and young adults. To better reflect the linguistic and cultural dynamics of diverse societies, it becomes intriguing to investigate the strategies employed in translating idioms within contemporary media accessible to younger generations, free from age-related restrictions.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

The research design for "A study of strategies for translating English idioms in subtitles from the Riverdale series into Thai" takes a structured approach to delve into how translators tackle the nuances of idiomatic expressions in TV series subtitles. Initially, the study compiles a robust collection of English idioms extracted from the dialogue of the Riverdale series, ensuring a diverse and representative sample. Following this, each idiom and its corresponding Thai translation undergo qualitative analysis to uncover the specific translation strategy employed. This entails a deep dive into linguistic and cultural contexts surrounding each idiom, considering factors such as semantic equivalence, cultural resonance, and audience comprehension. Moreover, the frequency of each translation strategy is quantitatively assessed to discern patterns and trends in the translation process. Through this meticulous research design, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the intricate art of translating idiomatic expressions in the context of TV series subtitles, offering guidance for future subtitle translation endeavors.

3.2 Research Instrument

The study utilized a set of research tools, which included 30 selected episodes from the TV series "Riverdale" that were chosen through simple random drawing. The analysis of subtitles served as the primary data source for the study, and Baker's Taxonomy (1992) provided the theoretical framework for the research by offering a set of strategies for translating English idioms into Thai. Popularity ranking websites were consulted to identify "Riverdale" as the most suitable series for analysis, given its contemporary vocabulary and relevance to everyday situations.

Baker's taxonomy is comprehensive and covers different types of translation, including novel translation, script translation, film translation, song translation, etc. Therefore, it is considered a valid framework that can be applied to various types of translation texts. In this research, Baker's taxonomy will be utilized as the framework and instrument for the study.

According to Baker's taxonomy, the translation strategies can be summarized into eight types as follows:

Table 1. Eight of Baker's translation strategies

Strategies	Concept	Example
Translation by a more general word	A type of translation where a specific term in the source language is replaced by a more general word in the target language. This type of translation aims to convey the meaning of the original text using a broader or more general term in the target language.	The term "chair" in the source language could be translated as "furniture" in the target language, where the specific type of chair is not important. This type of translation is often used when the specific word used in the source language does not have a direct equivalent in the target language, or when the context does not require a specific term to be used.
Translation by a more neutral/less expressive word	A type of translation where a less emotive or neutral word is used to replace a more loaded or emotive term in the source language. This type of translation aims to convey the meaning of the original text without the same level of emotional impact.	The term "murder" in the source language could be translated as "killing" in the target language, where the intention behind the act is not important. This type of translation is often used in cases where the original text might have a strong emotional tone, and the translator wants to convey the meaning without the same level of emotional impact in the target language.
Translation by cultural substitution	A type of translation where a culturally specific term in the source language is replaced by a culturally appropriate term in the target language. This type of translation aims to convey the same meaning as the original text, while also taking into account cultural differences and expectations of the target audience.	The English phrase "break a leg" into Thai as "โชคดี" (pronounced "choke dee"). In English, the phrase "break a leg" is a common expression used to wish someone good luck, especially in the performing arts, but in Thai culture, it would not be appropriate to use a phrase that implies injury or harm. Instead, the Thai translation "โชคดี" (choke dee) conveys a similar sentiment of good luck and well-wishes without using a phrase that would be considered culturally inappropriate.
Translation	A type of translation where a word or phrase	The English word "computer" into Thai as "คอมพิวเตอร์"

<p>using a loan word or loan word plus explanation</p>	<p>from the source language is borrowed and either used as is in the target language or explained to clarify its meaning. This type of translation aims to convey the same meaning as the original text while preserving the cultural context and specificity of the source language.</p>	<p>(pronounced "kom-piu-tor"). In this case, the Thai language borrows the English term "computer" as a loanword, but adds Thai pronunciation and spelling to the word to create a new Thai word that retains the same meaning as the English original.</p>
<p>Translation by paraphrase using a related word</p>	<p>A type of translation where a word or phrase in the source language is paraphrased using a related word or phrase in the target language. This type of translation aims to convey the meaning of the original text using a similar or related term in the target language.</p>	<p>The English word "ambitious" into Thai as "มีความปรารถนาสูง" (pronounced "mee-kwaam-pra-ta-nah-soong"), which literally means "having high aspirations" or "having high desires". In this case, the Thai translator has used a related word ("ปรารถนา" - pronounced "pra-ta-nah") which means "aspiration" or "desire" and added the qualifier "สูง" (soong) which means "high" to convey the meaning of the original term "ambitious". The resulting Thai phrase, "มีความปรารถนาสูง", conveys the same basic meaning as the English word "ambitious" but uses a different set of words to do so.</p>
<p>Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words</p>	<p>A type of translation where a word or phrase in the source language is paraphrased using a related word or phrase in the target language. This type of translation aims to convey the meaning of the original text using a similar or related term in the target language.</p>	<p>The English idiom "to be a piece of cake" into Thai as "ง่ายเหลือเกิน" (pronounced "ngai-leua-geon"), which literally means "easy beyond belief". In this case, the Thai translator has used an unrelated phrase "ง่ายเหลือเกิน" which means "easy beyond belief" to create a new phrase that conveys the same meaning as the English idiom "to be a piece of cake".</p>
<p>Translation by omission</p>	<p>A type of translation where a word or phrase in the source language is intentionally left out of the target language. This type of translation aims to convey the meaning of the original text while omitting certain words or phrases that may not be relevant to the target audience or that may be difficult to translate.</p>	<p>If a source language text contains a phrase that is considered culturally insensitive in the target language, the translator may choose to omit that phrase from the target language translation. This type of translation is often used when a direct translation of a word or phrase is not appropriate or when certain elements of the source text may be offensive or confusing to the target audience.</p>
<p>Translation by illustration</p>	<p>A type of translation where a word or phrase in the source language is translated through the use of visual aids or illustrations. This type of translation aims to convey the meaning of the original text using images or diagrams that illustrate the concept being conveyed.</p>	<p>If a source language text describes a complex scientific process, the translator may use a diagram or flowchart to help the target audience understand the process. This type of translation is often used when the meaning of the text can be more easily conveyed through visual aids or when the target audience may have difficulty understanding complex written explanations.</p>

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Series Selection

Due to the behavior of watching movies in this era is favored paying a monthly subscription to the streaming platform. The researcher explores by targeting a popular and easily accessible platform not only in Thailand but also around the world. Based on the website that has a popularity ranking of the streaming platform (Flixpatrol, 2023; Similarweb, 2023; CNET, 2023), it was found that the platform with the most interesting, popular series and its own originals was Netflix. The researcher then sought out a series with serious subject matter and current vocabulary that could be applied to everyday situations—targeting a variety of mystery and crime genres as a result. Riverdale was selected for the study due to its popularity on the widely accessible Netflix platform, its contemporary subject matter and vocabulary, and its thematic relevance to exploring idiomatic expressions applicable to daily life. As one of the top crime and mystery series according to Flixpatrol, Riverdale's portrayal of relatable scenarios and dialogue made it an ideal candidate for investigating translation strategies for English idioms into Thai subtitles.

3.3.2 Episodes Selection

Riverdale in the year 2023 has achieved a total of six seasons comprising 117 episodes, each season characterized by a distinct episode count. Employing a method of simple random sampling, the selection process is devoid of specificity to any particular episode. Within each season of the series, a specific subset of five episodes was chosen, with each episode ranging approximately between 40 to 60 minutes in duration. Consequently, the dataset under examination encompasses 30 episodes distributed across the series as follows: Season 1 (Episodes: 2, 3, 7, 10, and 13), Season 2 (Episodes: 4, 9, 14, 17, and 21), Season 3 (Episodes: 1, 5, 8, 17, and 22), Season 4 (Episodes: 2, 5, 7, 13, and 18), Season 5 (Episodes: 3, 6, 10, 13, and 15), and Season 6 (Episodes: 2, 9, 11, 14, and 17).

3.3.3 Idioms Selection

Idioms have a different meaning that is special and has other hidden meanings, taking on a metaphorical sense by comparing one thing to another in some way that is similar or different (Thipmontien, 2016). In conclusion, the Idioms translated from English to Thai used in this analysis refer to words with meanings that do not correspond to the language principle and have unique or other hidden meanings. In some sense, idioms are the transfer of one notion through words relating to another. In this case, it plays a role as a means of communication for the audience to be able to understand the ideas that the messenger wants to mention. Alternatively, an idiom also includes a word consisting of a verb followed by a preposition if it meets the definition of "idioms" as mentioned.

3.4 Procedure

The study commenced with a comprehensive review of the pertinent literature in order to situate and contextualize the research question. Subsequently, a rigorous data collection process was initiated in accordance with established research protocols. The gathered data subsequently underwent comprehensive and systematic analysis, employing suitable analytical methodologies and tools. This process involved the engagement of translation professionals and interraters to assess and validate the accuracy of the translations, thereby ensuring a robust evaluation. Finally, the findings were synthesized and presented in a scholarly report that sticks to recognized academic standards of clarity, objectivity, and preciseness. The completed research article was then submitted for peer review and potential publication in a reputable scholarly outlet.

4. Results

Within the scope of this investigation, a comprehensive compilation of 510 idioms was derived from English-to-Thai translated subtitles of Netflix series "Riverdale". By employing Baker's Taxonomy (1992) as a framework for examining translation strategies, it was determined that six of the eight identified strategies were manifested during the analysis.

Table 2. The Frequency of Types of Translation Strategies Found in "Riverdale"

Type of Translation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Translation by a more general word	-	-
Translation by a more neutral/ less expressive word	28	5.49
Translation by cultural substitution	137	26.86
Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation	10	1.96
Translation by paraphrase using a related word	101	19.80
Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words	223	43.73
Translation by omission	11	2.16
Translation by illustration	-	-
Total	510	100.00

According to table 2, translation by paraphrase using unrelated words was the most frequently used strategy with 223 times (43.73%). Second was translation by cultural substitution with 137 times (26.86%). Third was translation by paraphrase using a related word with 101 times (19.80%). Fourth was translation by a more neutral/ less expressive word with 28 times (5.49%). Fifth was translation by omission with 11 times (2.16%). And last was translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation with 10 times (1.96%). While translation by a more general word and translation by illustration was not found in this study.

5. Result Analysis Example

5.1 Translation by a More Neutral/ Less Expressive Word

Idiom: what the hell

Meaning: an exclamation used to emphasize surprise, shock, anger, disgust, etc. In this phrase, "the hell" is used as an intensifier (The free dictionary by Farlex, 2023).

Source Language: Jughead: Look, I saw you guys. She's messing with you, man. And she's messing with your mind.

Archie: What the hell do you know about it, Jughead? Or about me, even?

Target Language: จ๊อคเฮด: ฟังนะ ฉันเห็นพวกนาย เธอบั่นหัวนายอยู่นะ พวกเล่นกับจิตใจนาย

อาร์ชี: แล้วนายมารู้อะไรเรื่องนั้น จ๊อคเฮด หรือแม่แต่เรื่องฉัน

(Riverdale season 1; episode 2)

Clarification: The incident where Archie had an affair with a music teacher. Results in Archie and Jughead having an argument. In conversation, Archie says "what the hell" which is an informal phrase used to express dissatisfaction. In the context of Archie and Jughead's argument, the expression "what the hell" used by Archie to convey dissatisfaction or frustration might not have a direct translation in Thai that captures the exact informal tone while maintaining the same intensity of emotion. Thai language often employs more neutral or culturally appropriate expressions in similar situations. Translators in this scenario might opt for a more neutral or culturally fitting phrase to convey Archie's sentiment without the harshness associated with "what the hell." They might use phrases like "นายมารู้อะไร" (pronounced "naai maa ruu a rai"), which translates more literally to "in what manner" or "how come." While it doesn't replicate the exact tone and informality of "what the hell," it helps convey Archie's dissatisfaction or confusion in a culturally appropriate manner. This substitution allows the translators to maintain the essence of Archie's expression of frustration while adhering to the appropriate tone and cultural norms in Thai communication. It's a compromise to soften the language but still convey the intended

meaning effectively within the context of the conversation between Archie and Jughead.

5.2 Translation by Cultural Substitution

Idiom: soulmate

Meaning: Someone who is an ideal match for one and complements them in a fundamental way. Usually said of a romantic partner (The free dictionary by Farlex, 2023).

Source Language: Veronica: They're each other's soul mates. Good for them, don't you think?

Target Language: เวอโรนิกา: พวกเขาเป็นเนื้อคู่ของกันและกัน ดีแล้วเนอะ ว่ามั๊ย

(Riverdale season 1; episode 13)

Clarification: The incident where Archie and Veronica see Jughead and Betty cuddle each other. Veronica said: They're each other's "soul mates". If the idiom "soul mate" were to be translated directly into Thai, it would come out as "Friend's Spirit" which is not the true meaning that the source language intended to convey. Meanwhile, the word "เนื้อคู่" (pronounced "neua koo") can literally be translated into English as "twin meat". Obviously, both words cannot be directly substituted, it has the same cultural and connotation meaning though. Therefore, it can be classified as a translation by cultural substitution. In Thailand, the cultural interpretation of relationships and connections often holds significance. When using idiomatic expressions like "soul mates" in English, which emphasizes a deep, almost spiritual bond between two individuals, the direct translation into Thai as "เนื้อคู่" might seem quite literal as it means "twin meat". However, its contextual meaning in Thai culture reflects a similar depth of connection and closeness that goes beyond mere friendship. Thai culture places emphasis on relationships, often describing a profound bond between two people as "เนื้อคู่". This term denotes an inseparable connection, likening two individuals to a perfect pair or complement to each other. While the literal translation might seem unusual in English, within the Thai cultural context, it encapsulates the depth of a relationship that goes beyond mere friendship, akin to the idea of "soul mates" in English. So, when Veronica refers to Jughead and Betty as "soul mates," the Thai cultural equivalent "เนื้อคู่" helps convey the depth of their connection in a manner that aligns with Thai cultural nuances, emphasizing the closeness and almost destined bond between them.

5.3 Translation Using a Loan Word or Loan Word Plus Explanation

Idiom: zip your lip

Meaning: to say nothing or stop talking (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023).

Source Language: Alice: We don't have that money on hand. But if we get the money, we're done, right? You'll leave, no questions asked?

Darla: Zip my mouth and throw away the key.

Alice: Okay, we'll make a withdrawal.

Target Language: อลิซ: ตอนนี่เราไม่มีเงินในมือหรอก แต่ถ้าเรามีเงินให้เธอ ก็เลิกแล้วต่อกัน ໕໕໕໕ เธอจะไปโดยไมถามอะไรเลย ໕໕໕໕

ดาร์ลา: รูตซิปปากและโยนกุญแจทิ้งเลย

อลิซ: ก็ได้ เราจะไปถอนเงิน

(Riverdale season 2; episode 17)

Clarification: In this incident, Darla comes to Alice's house to demand a ransom in exchange for not blackmailing her secret. The utilization of the idiom "zip your lip" within the Thai linguistic context is feasible due to the prevalent incorporation of the English word "zip" into Thai as "รูตซิปปาก" (pronounced "ruud zip paak"), rendering this idiom readily comprehensible to Thai speakers. The incorporation of English loanwords, such as "zip," into the Thai language is quite prevalent, making certain idiomatic expressions easily comprehensible to Thai speakers. In this case, the phrase "zip your lip" might be understood by many Thai speakers due to the familiarity with the word "zip," which refers to fastening or closing something securely, paired with the context of keeping one's mouth closed or silent.

5.4 Translation by Paraphrase Using a Related Word

Idiom: what if?

Meaning: used to ask about something that could happen in the future, especially something bad (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023).

Source Language: Betty: This is a test. He said so himself. What if... the start of the test is to see what I do with the letter? Do I share it? Or not? Am I strong? Or am I weak? Am I worthy?

Kevin: He is a psychopath, Betty, and you are in high school, not the FBI.

Target Language: เบ็ตตี้: นี่คือการทดสอบ เขาบอกเอง ถ้าเกิดว่า... การทดสอบเริ่มด้วย การดูว่าฉันจะทำยังไงกับจดหมายนี้ล่ะ ฉันจะบอกใครมั๊ย หรือไม่บอก ฉันเข้มแข็งมั๊ย หรืออ่อนแอ ฉันมีค่าคู่ควรมั๊ย

เลวิน: เขาเป็นคนโรคจิตนะ เบ็ตตี้ และเธอเป็นเด็กนักเรียนม.ปลาย ไม่ใช่เอฟบีไอ

(Riverdale season 2; episode 4)

Clarification: In this scene, Betty is discussing a problem with Kevin about being sent threatening letters by a stalker. The idiom "What if" cannot be translated directly into Thai. However, translators have substituted some related words, namely "if" translate to "ถ้าเกิดว่า" (if it happens), it can retain the meaning from the source language. In Betty's conversation with Kevin regarding the threatening letters, the phrase "What if" in English typically introduces a hypothetical situation or expresses uncertainty. The Thai equivalent, "ถ้าเกิดว่า" ("thaa kert waa"), similarly serves to introduce a hypothetical scenario or situation, maintaining the essence of uncertainty or speculation within the conversation. In this context, the use of "ถ้าเกิดว่า" allows Betty to discuss potential scenarios or express her concerns about the threatening letters in a way that aligns with Thai language structure and conveys the essence of the English idiom "What if" effectively within the conversation.

5.5 Translation by Paraphrase Using Unrelated Words

Idiom: at the end of the day

Meaning: something that you say before you give the most important fact of a situation (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023).

Source Language: Mary: Well, let me remind you that there were no witnesses to the actual killing. There was no murder weapon. There is no motive. At the end of the day, all the prosecution has is cloudy testimony from unreliable people.

Target Language: แมรี่: ฉันขอชี้ว่าไม่มีพยานรู้เห็น ในเหตุฆาตกรรมที่เกิดขึ้นจริงๆ ไม่มีอาวุธสังหาร ไม่มีแรงจูงใจ สุดท้ายแล้ว การฟ้องร้องก็มีแค่ ทำให้การคลุมเครือจากคนที่เชื่อถือไม่ได้

(Riverdale season 3; episode 1)

Clarification: In this scene, Mary, an attorney by profession, assumes the role of legal counsel in the defense of Archie, who stands accused of homicide, and summarizes the speech using the idiom "at the end of the day" while summarizing her speech in defense of Archie, it implies emphasizing a fundamental point or reaching a conclusion after considering various aspects. The direct translation of this English idiom into Thai might not effectively convey the intended connotations. However, in the process of translation, the aim is to preserve the essence and meaning of the phrase. The translator might opt for a phrase like "สุดท้ายแล้ว" (pronounced "sut thaa laew"), which translates to "finally" or "in the end." While not a direct equivalent, this phrase encapsulates the idea of reaching a conclusion or emphasizing the ultimate point, similar to the English idiom "at the end of the day." By choosing "สุดท้ายแล้ว", the translator ensures that the essence of Mary's statement, highlighting a fundamental aspect or concluding an argument, is conveyed effectively to Thai speakers. While the literal translation might not match, this adaptation allows for the preservation of the intended meaning within the cultural and linguistic context of the Thai language.

5.6 Translation by Omission

Idiom: no matter what, when, why, etc.

Meaning: used to emphasize that something is always true, or that someone must do something (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023).

Source Language: Archie: My grandpa Artie founded Andrews Construction and passed it down to my dad. It's my legacy.

Hiram: Well, both of your businesses bear your father's name. You'll be keeping his legacy alive, no matter what.

Target Language: อาร์ชี: ปู่อาร์ตี้เป็นคนก่อตั้งแอนดรูว์สคอนสตรัคชั่นขึ้นมา แล้วก็ส่งต่อให้พ่อผม มันเป็นมรดกผม

ไฮราม: ก็ธุรกิจทั้งสองอย่างตั้งชื่อตามพ่อนาย นายต้องรักษามรดกให้มันยังคงอยู่ต่อไปให้ได้

(Riverdale season 4; episode 13)

Clarification: In this incident, Archie seeks counsel from Hiram due to his constrained capacity to manage a multitude of business enterprises. Hiram answered using the idiom "no matter what". This idiom typically emphasizes an unwavering commitment or determination to proceed despite challenges or obstacles. In this scenario, the translator chooses not to directly translate the idiom into Thai, opting instead to convey the essence of Hiram's advice more concisely. By omitting the direct translation of "no matter what," the translator aims to maintain the flow and conciseness of the conversation in Thai, ensuring that the meaning and intention behind Hiram's advice to Archie regarding determination and commitment remain unchanged. This approach allows for a smoother transition of the dialogue without sacrificing the essence of the original message.

6. Discussion

Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words emerged as the most frequently used strategy in the translation of English idioms in the "Riverdale" series subtitles into Thai, with 223 instances (43.73%). This strategy involves expressing the meaning of an English idiom in Thai using different words that are not directly related to the original idiom. The prevalence of this strategy can be attributed to several contextual factors. Thai is a tonal language with a rich vocabulary, allowing translators to choose alternative words that convey a similar meaning. Additionally, Thai culture has its own set of idiomatic expressions, and translators may opt to use these culturally specific phrases instead of trying to find a direct equivalent for English idioms. This choice may also arise from the desire to maintain the natural

flow and idiomatic nature of the Thai language.

Translation by cultural substitution was the second most frequently employed strategy, appearing 137 times (26.86%) in the analysis. This strategy involves replacing an English idiom with a culturally equivalent Thai idiom to convey a similar meaning in the target language. The frequent use of cultural substitution can be explained by the importance of cultural relevance and understanding in translation. Translators aim to make the subtitles relatable to the target audience in Thailand by utilizing familiar idiomatic expressions that align with Thai culture. By employing culturally specific idioms, the translated subtitles maintain the intended meaning and retain the impact of the original English idioms within the Thai context.

Translation by paraphrase using a related word was observed 101 times (19.80%) in the analysis. This strategy involves conveying the meaning of the English idiom by using a related word or phrase in the target language. The usage of this strategy can be attributed to the translators' consideration of linguistic nuances in Thai. Translators may select words that are closely related to the original idiom to capture its essence while still providing an appropriate and meaningful translation in the Thai language. This strategy allows for a balance between conveying the idiomatic meaning and maintaining the linguistic and cultural integrity of the Thai subtitles.

Translation by a more neutral/less expressive word was observed in 28 instances (5.49%). This strategy involves substituting the original English idiom with a less expressive word in Thai, resulting in a more neutral translation. The limited use of this strategy can be influenced by various factors. In Thai culture, the use of vivid and expressive language is valued, especially in audiovisual media like TV series. Translators may prefer to preserve the impact and emotional tone of the original English idioms, leading to a less frequent application of this strategy. Additionally, the complexity of idiomatic expressions often requires nuanced translations, making it challenging to find equivalent Thai words that are both neutral and retain the intended meaning.

Translation by omission occurred 11 times (2.16%) in the analysis. This strategy involves omitting the English idiom in the Thai translation, potentially due to cultural or linguistic constraints. The infrequent use of this strategy can be attributed to the translators' objective of providing a complete and comprehensive translation. However, certain idiomatic expressions may not have direct equivalents in Thai or may require extensive explanations, making their omission a practical choice. Additionally, cultural differences between English and Thai may render some idioms less relevant or understandable in the Thai context, leading to their exclusion in the subtitles.

Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation was observed 10 times (1.96%) in the analysis. This strategy involves incorporating a loan word from English into the Thai translation or using a loan word along with an explanation to bridge the linguistic gap. The limited usage of this strategy can be attributed to the desire to maintain linguistic coherence and ensure that the subtitles are easily understandable for the target audience. While loan words can be helpful in conveying the meaning of certain idioms, excessive use may disrupt the flow of the Thai language and create confusion. Therefore, translators may opt for alternative strategies that allow for a more seamless integration of idiomatic expressions into the Thai subtitles.

The absence of translation by a more general word in this study can be concluded to the following factors: 1) Idioms' complexity: English idioms are often complex, requiring precise translation to capture their intended meaning. Translating them with more general words may not effectively convey the idiomatic expression and could result in a loss of the original meaning. 2) Linguistic challenges: Translating idioms using more general words can be challenging due to the uniqueness and distinctiveness of idiomatic expressions. Finding a single, general word that adequately encompasses the entire meaning of an idiom can be difficult. Translators may have found it more feasible to employ other strategies, such as paraphrasing using related words or cultural substitution, to convey the idiomatic meaning more accurately. 3) Cultural context: The cultural context of Thailand also plays a role in the absence of the strategy. Thai language and culture may prioritize specificity and gentility in communication, favoring strategies that capture the essence of idiomatic expressions more precisely. Translating idioms with more general words may not align with the cultural preference for gentility and expressive language.

The rationale for the neglect of translation by illustration in this study investigation can be concluded that: 1) Limitations of screen space: Subtitles, by their nature, have limited space and time to convey information. Translation by illustration typically involves using visual cues or images to depict the meaning of an idiom. This strategy may not be feasible or practical to implement within the constraints of subtitles, which primarily rely on textual representation. The visual element required for translation by illustration may not be effectively conveyed through subtitles alone. 2) Compatibility with Audiovisual Medium: Translation by illustration is more commonly associated with mediums that allow for visual representation, such as graphic novels or films with visual storytelling elements. While the "Riverdale" series is audiovisual in nature, subtitles primarily serve the purpose of conveying the dialogue and speech in a written form. The focus of subtitle translation is primarily on text-based comprehension. 3) Cultural and linguistic factors: Translating idioms through a more general word or illustration heavily relies on the cultural and linguistic context of both the source and target languages. It is possible that the idioms present in the "Riverdale" series required more specific and contextually relevant translations that couldn't be adequately captured through general words or visual representations. Additionally, Thai culture and language may not lend themselves easily to translation by illustration, as idiomatic expressions are often deeply embedded in linguistic and cultural nuances that may not be easily depicted visually.

The process of translating idiomatic expressions involves the utilization of language peculiar to each specific language, which may pose a greater challenge for non-native speakers due to the requirement of both linguistic proficiency and cultural comprehension. It is not possible to rely solely on a single strategy for translating idioms; rather, a combination of various strategies must be employed in order to retain the essence and cultural differences of the source language to the fullest extent possible.

7. Implications and Significance of the Findings

The study provides insights into the strategies employed by translators when translating English idioms into Thai in the context of TV series subtitles. By identifying and analyzing the strategies used, the research contributes to the understanding of effective translation approaches for idioms. The findings reveal the distribution and frequency of different translation strategies. Understanding the prevalence of each strategy can inform future translation practices and help translators make informed decisions based on the specific context and linguistic nuances of idioms.

The study highlights the significance of cultural relevance in translating idioms. The frequent use of strategies such as cultural substitution indicates the importance of selecting culturally appropriate expressions that convey similar meanings to the original idioms, enhancing the viewer's understanding and engagement with the subtitles. The absence of certain strategies, such as translation by a more general word and translation by illustration, in the analyzed subtitles suggests the limitations of employing these approaches within the constraints of subtitle translation. These findings highlight the need to adapt translation strategies to the specific medium and format being used.

8. Limitations of the Study

1) The research focused on analyzing English idioms in the subtitles of the TV series "Riverdale" translated into Thai. The choice of this specific TV series may limit the generalizability of the findings to other TV series or genres; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other similar series or contexts. Including a more diverse range of TV series could provide a broader perspective on the translation strategies employed for English idioms in Thai subtitles.

2) The research relied on the analysis of subtitles, which have inherent limitations in conveying the full range of meaning and nuance present in idiomatic expressions. Subtitles have space and time constraints, which may influence the choice of translation strategies and limit the accuracy and depth of idiomatic interpretation.

3) The research did not extensively explore the contextual factors that might influence the selection of specific translation strategies. Factors such as cultural norms, linguistic preferences, and target audience expectations could significantly impact the translators' decisions. Further investigation into these contextual aspects would provide a more comprehensive understanding of why certain strategies were employed more frequently or omitted in the translation of English idioms into Thai.

9. Conclusion

The findings of this research contribute to the field of translation studies by highlighting the strategies utilized in translating English idioms into Thai in the context of TV series subtitles. The insights gained can inform and guide translators in their practice, facilitating the effective translation of idiomatic expressions while considering linguistic nuances, cultural relevance, and the limitations of the medium. It is important to acknowledge that this study focused specifically on the "Riverdale" series and may not be fully generalizable to other TV series or language pairs. Further research could explore additional contexts to gain a more comprehensive understanding of translation strategies for idioms.

10. Recommendations for Future Research

1) An exploration of other modes of audiovisual translation, such as dubbing or voice-over, can be conducted to examine how English idioms are rendered in spoken language. This comparison between the strategies used in these modes and those employed in subtitles will provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and approaches in translating idiomatic expressions across different audiovisual translation techniques.

2) A comparative analysis of subtitle translations of English idioms into Thai from various TV series or movies could be conducted. This approach will offer a broader understanding of translation strategies employed across different contexts and genres, allowing for a more comprehensive examination of the practices and variations in translating idiomatic expressions.

3) An investigation into the audience's perception and reception of translated idioms in TV series subtitles could be undertaken. Surveys or interviews can be conducted to gather feedback from viewers regarding their understanding, interpretation, and acceptance of the translated idioms. This approach will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and cultural appropriateness of different translation strategies.

4) The research can be expanded to explore the translation of English idioms into other target languages apart from Thai. Investigating how idiomatic expressions are rendered in different languages will shed light on the influence of linguistic and cultural factors on translation strategies and provide insights into language-specific challenges and solutions.

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Authors contributions

Phattharaphon Chanthong contributed to the conceptualization, design, compilation of related research, data collection, and data analysis. Asst. Prof. Dr. Sukanya Kaowiwattanukul conducted the final verification of overall accuracy as an advisor. All authors read and approved

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