The Differences of Online News Translations with Different Translation Applications

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were 1) to identify differences of grammatical structures and language use in translating news by using different translation applications, and 2) to identify the differences of translation between sentences and paragraphs levels. This study collected 40 online news from airlines of Thailand about COVID-19, published in both Thai and English from January 1 to July 30, 2021. These collected data were transcribed by using two mobile applications: Google Translate and Microsoft Translator according to the popularity and accessibility on Android and IOS operating systems. The results showed that both applications provided similar results when translating online news from English to Thai. Furthermore, we found that when comparing the translation of both applications at sentence-levels, there were seven differences in grammatical structures and language use: 1. Sentences structure 2. Division and Punctuation 3. Register 4. Mismatching of words and their meaning 5. Spelling 6. Tenses 7. Capital Letter. The implications of the study were discussed in this paper.

Keywords: Translation Application, Google Translate, Microsoft Translator

Introduction

In the digital disruption era, technology such as mobile phones and applications are becoming increasingly necessary in daily life. Recently, it is obviously clear how technology has been more integrated into many areas. Many applications have been created to use in a variety of fields, including communication, entertainment, health care, business and education. For educational purpose, mobile applications make our lives easier to

communicate and comprehend various languages. A translation application is one of the empirical evidence. For example, the use of Machine Translation software (MT) refers to automatic translation by using computer from natural language to another. In other words, it is the process of translating text or speech from natural language into another automatically by computer. To get a clear picture of translation, the definition of translation, the use of machine translation in Thailand, and problems are discussed as follows:

Meaning of Translation

Kopsiripat (2005) defined that "the translation is the transmission of ideas, knowledge and experience from the source language to the target language, and is cross-language, and cross-cultural communication" (cited in Wongprom & Thitthongkham, 2018, p. 3). The accuracy and completeness of the translation must be considered when transferring meaning from the original to the translated versions. In other words, the key principles for concern how skillful translators can use both languages, must use simple and understand both languages to convey meaning. These translators must be familiar with both the culture of the source text and that of the target language. Importantly, the translator must be familiar with the language's nuances. We, therefore, can conclude that translation is the meaning transfer from one language to another. The translator must keep the meaning as the original as well as possible.

Machine Translation in Thailand

Chulalongkorn University, Thailand and Grenoble University, France, started translation research and development in Thailand in 1981. In this research project, many languages were translated into Thai by using machine translation. Currently, the application is being developed by using a machine translation system. The example of the development is such as translation software for a chat system in the Grab app, or the automatic translation system of posts or comments on Facebook, Instagram, as well as Youtube. These are one of the assistances to help users to interact more effectively around the world.

Problems when using the translation application

According to Kamon Kate-Phan and Waraporn Sripetpun (2016) investigating participants' attitudes, behaviors, and problems in using Google Translate, the results showed that the problems in using Google Translate were: 1) issues of insufficient vocabulary data in the target language, especially Thai, and 2) cultural issues and 3) vocabulary issues. Although there are some minor issues in translating complex sentences from one language to other, learners,

teachers and translators have confirmed that Google Translate is likely the best application. It can translate words, phrases and paragraphs.

Translation application can make it easier for general users; however, there are some problematic issues that need to be considered. Hence, this paper aims to examine the differences of translation by two translation applications when translating at sentence and paragraph levels.

Objectives

1. To examine the differences of translation applications from online news of Thai airlines concerning COVID-19.

2. To examine the differences in translations at sentence and paragraph levels to propose a guideline for using translation applications.

Literature Review

In addition to the problems of translations from English to Thai, the translation errors are classified into two major categories: language use and grammatical structures (Pinmanee, 2019)

1. Language Use

Language use can be divided into 11 sub-categories as follows:

1.1 Mismatching of words and their meanings: polysemy is a word that can have multiple meanings. In translation, words must be matched with their meanings and the contexts.

1.2 Registers: the style and use of a language that is suitable for a specific context which is referred to as language style for one purpose.

1.3 Levels of politeness and formality: the levels of politeness and formality can be divided into two levels, formal and informal. It is the choice of translators to choose depending on the situation.

1.4 Tone is the overall characteristics and attitude that reflect the thoughts and emotions of the authors or speakers.

1.5 Natural language: the language should be beautiful, precise, concise, expressive, styled appropriately for the situation and natural as the use of native speakers.

1.6 Idioms is a group of words that is combined with a specific semantic unit. It has different meaning from the original meaning such as metaphor.
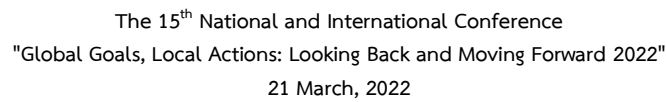
1.7 Over Expression is the use of words that are more than necessary. It can be the use of words that have the same or similar meanings overlapped in the same place or the

addition of words or phrases to a text without having additional meaning. Thai is the language that frequently uses words with overlapping meanings, which is considered regular usage.

1.8 Spelling of a word that differs from its standard spelling could happen on purpose, by accident or misunderstanding of translators.

1.9 Collocation is a pair of words that appear together regularly and naturally. Collocation is a matter of the natural use of the language by native speakers. Native speakers know which words are paired with which words and can use the words automatically.

1.10 Reduced and intensified meaning is the use of language in translation that does not have equal meaning as the original text. This generally happens. Sometimes translators can't find words of equal meaning to translate. As a result, readers may or may not understand the intense meaning of the original text.

1.11 Doublespeak is an accepted and commonly practiced way of communication. However, it can cause questionable connotations whether it is intended to disguise its true meaning or not such as turning bad things into good things.

2. Grammar and Structure

For this category, these translation errors in grammatical and structure involve:

2.1 Grammar, Structure and Translation: Grammar is a system of language that makes it understandable to communicate according to the same way and have a meaningful connection.

2.2 Fragments is the writing of only parts of a sentence. It is an unfinished sentence with no subject, no verb. It may have no conjugation of the verb or simply be a clause with no main sentence.

2.3 Run-on sentences is a sentence with more than one sentence or more, written in a row without any punctuation marks to show its end.

2.4 Subjects of sentence: a sentence must consist of a subject and at least a verb. It may contain an object or a compliment. A subject can be a noun, noun phrase, pronoun gerund, to infinitive and dummy subject.

2.5 Tenses: In Thai language, tenses are implied by words which tell time such as today, tomorrow, etc. However, there is none of conjugation of verbs according to tenses or to mark tenses in Thai, as English does.

2.6 Modifiers and clauses: Modifiers is a word or group of words that complements a noun or verb; an adjective modifies a noun, whereas an adverb modifies a verb and an adjective. Clause is a part of the sentence.

2.7 Voice, in English, can be divided into 2 types: active and passive voice.

2.8 Division and Punctuation: The use of incorrect punctuation is particularly problematic in Thai. In Thai, there are no gaps between words and punctuation marks to separate sentences which are different from English.

2.9 Miscellaneous: there are several problem of translation apart from grammar and structure mentioned earlier such as the use of pronoun, word order, etc.

Methodology

1. Data collection

Forty online news related to COVID-19 in Thailand from January 1 to July 30, 2021 were selected from 7 Thai airlines websites: Bangkok Airways, Nok Air, Air Asia, Thai Lion Air, Thai Airways, Thai Smile and Viet Jet Air.

2. Translation tools

Google Translate and Microsoft Translator were chosen due to the popularity and accessibility on Android and IOS operating systems. After that, the translation data were categorized and calculated by using Microsoft Excel.

3. Research procedure

The research process can be divided into six steps as follows:

1) Collect online news from 7 website of airlines in Thailand.

2) Divide the data into sentences and paragraphs

3) Translate the data by using Google Translate and Microsoft Translator to find the differences and similarities in using translation tools.

4) Analyze and summarize the results responding to the research objectives.

Results

There were 606 sentences and 127 paragraphs in Thai, and 638 sentences and 133 paragraphs in English.

Table 1 shows that the most dominant differences found in both applications were sentence structure, followed by register and tenses. These results are the same in both sentence levels and paragraph levels

Table 1: The frequency of translation differences from Thai into English between sentence levels and paragraph levels of Google Translate and Microsoft Translator

No.	Differences	Google Translate	Microsoft Translator
Grammar & Structure		Frq.	Frq.
1.	Structure of sentence	97	130
2.	Tenses	13	22
3.	Punctuation	11	8
4.	Capital Letter	8	3
Language Use		Frq.	Frq.
1.	Register	71	41
2.	Mismatching of words and their meaning	8	4

Table 2 shows that the most dominant differences found in both applications were sentence structure, followed by register and division at both sentence- and paragraph levels.

Table 2: The frequency of translation differences from English into Thai between sentence levels and paragraph levels of Google Translate and Microsoft Translator

No.	Difference	Google Translate	Microsoft Translator
Grammar & Structure		Frq.	Frq.
1.	Structure of sentence	70	69
2.	Division	4	12
Language Use		Frq.	Frq.
1.	Register	57	38
2.	Mismatching of words and their meaning	5	2
3.	Spelling	0	3

Table 3 shows the top three differences from Thai to English at the sentence levels, including structure of sentence, register and punctuation.

Table 3: The frequency of translation differences from Thai into English at the sentence levels between Microsoft Translator and Google Translate

No.	Differences	Frequency (Sentences)	No.	Difference	Frequency (Sentences)
Grammar & Structure			**Language Use**		
1.	Structure of sentence	511	**1.**	Register	326
2.	Punctuation	261	**2.**	Mismatching of words and their meaning	40
3.	Capital Letter	171			
4.	Tenses	75			

Table 4 shows the top three differences involving structure of sentence, register and division.

Table 4: The frequency of translation differences from English into Thai at the sentence levels between Microsoft Translator and Google Translate

No.	Difference	Frequency (Sentences)	No.	Difference	Frequency (Sentences)
Grammar & Structure					
1.	Structure of sentence	428	**1.**	Register	246
2.	Division	158	**2.**	Mismatching of words and their meaning	46
			3.	Spelling	20

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study show that there were some differences in sentence-levels translations when compared to paragraph-levels translations by using Microsoft Translator and Google Translate. The structure of sentences and registers usually varied when using different applications. One possible explanation for this may be the clearer and larger of texts at

paragraph-levels. In other words, the results of the study were consistent with Sasongkoar's study (2019), stating that if the number of words is too small, the meaning in the target language may be inaccurate.

Our results also reported seven differences in translations of both English into Thai and Thai into English which are as follows.

1. The structure of sentences in terms of style of writing is different, but retain the same meaning. However, the nature of English is different from Thai.

2. The differences in mismatching of words and their meanings are usually caused by insufficient vocabulary, similar to Kate-Phan and Sripetpun' study (2016).

3. Register is usually different because a word has many meanings and can be used interchangeably in different situations.

4. Capital Letter: if the translators make mistakes in understanding the spacing of the Thai source text, the English translation will be incorrect as well. For English, the new sentences usually begin with a capital letter. The capital letters of English are used at the beginning of a sentence, as a proper noun, as an abbreviation, or to emphasize a sentence. However, there is no capitalization in Thai therefore this might cause problems in translation (Patiyasevi, 2018).

5. Spelling: this problem may occur mostly in Thai language. Most of them are names of people or loan words. Because there are many characters in Thai language, which some of them are similarly pronounced, this may also cause misspelling.

6. Tenses: English is a language that focuses on tenses. If a translator does not understand the use of tenses, the meaning will be changed and may cause misunderstanding in communication. However, in Thai the tense structure is replaced with words or phrases that tell time.

7. Division and Punctuation: Thai language does not use punctuation marks like English. Therefore, there is a problem in translating from Thai to English.

The results of the study support previous studies (e.g.,)

Google Translate is unable to properly distinguish the intersection of sentences according to the original language. However, there is no clear sentence boundary in Thai compared to English. The difference in translations depends on many factors, such as the nature of language, text complexity and the reliability of translation tools.

In conclusion, translation applications can only be used for basic translations, especially in translating Thai into English and English into Thai. However, the users must adjust the language to be more accurate, readable, and keep the original meaning of the translated

texts. So the implications can be used to prepare students studying translation not relying solely on the translation tools, and to provide a guideline to develop the accuracy of online news translation.

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