Original Research Article(Thesis)

Translation Used in Photo Captions and Cartoons

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Abstract

The study identifies translation strategies and linguistic gaps in translated photo captions and cartoons in the Rising Nepal and the Kathmandu Post from their Nepalese equivalent, the Gorkhapatra and the Kantipur national dailies. The researcher considered 55 photo captions (20 each) from The Rising Nepal and The Kathmandu Post and 15 cartoon captions from the Kathmandu Post. The study uncovered three translation strategies as literal, free and paraphrasing where literal and free translation were equally found and paraphrasing, the least found strategy. There were not any paraphrasing in cartoon section. The three linguistic gaps - phonological, lexical and structural gaps were found in all three sections: the Rising Nepal, the Kathmandu Post and The Cartoons while phonological gaps were found in sound level, lexical into words level and the structural into the sentence level. Since no two languages are similar and linguistic gaps are inevitable, the researcher found the use of the nearest equivalent terms to fulfill these gaps. Findings of this study will contribute to the language pedagogy, further research including journalists, editors and publishers, translation professionals as it gives a synopsis of translation strategies employed by a translator with clear understanding on linguistic gaps in translation.

Keywords: Translation, photo captions, cartoons, strategies, linguistic gaps

INTRODUCTION:

Translation: Translation is a bilingual activity, which transfers knowledge and thoughts from one language to another. The first language in translation is called the Source Text (ST) while the second is the Target Text (TT), which is done in two different ways: written and spoken. [1] The first one is translation itself and the second is known as interpretation. Everything is translatable. However, as translation is never finished, there is no such thing as a perfect, ideal or correct translation. As a means of communication, translation is used for multilingual notions, instructions, official documents such as treaties and contracts, for reports, papers, articles, correspondence, textbooks to convey information, advice and recommendations for every branch of knowledge. It's volume has been increased with the rise of mass media, the increase in the number of independent countries and the growing recognition of the importance of linguistic minorities in all the countries of the world. [2] The term translation in Nepalese context, invariably applies to the tradition and technique of information transfer from English to Nepali and vice-versa. Translation is an important tool for transmission of knowledge across geographical and linguistic boundaries. [3]

Mass Media: Mass media refers to the print Medias such as newspapers and magazines, books and advertisements, and electronic Medias such as radio and television, internet, films and recorded music that refer to the large number of people. [4] Though English is mostly used language in mass media, translation is being used to translate messages into several languages for better understanding of the people from different language groups.

Photo caption: Photo caption refers to the written material that is related to and placed near photograph or photographic representation. It provides additional information which is not obvious to the viewers.

Strategies in translation:
Strategies in translation refer to the process or the strategies adopted by the translator to achieve the nearest equivalence between the translation units of source language (SL) and the target language (TL). Mainly, three translation strategies as literal, paraphrasing and free translation have been considered in this study.

Literal translation is a technique in which the translator follows the syntax and semantics of the Source Language Text (SLT) very closely showing greater faithfulness towards it. Literal translation is the easiest and simplest form of translation that it occurs whenever word by word replacement is possible without breaking the rules in the target language. This, however, is quite rare unless the two languages are very closely related. [5] "Literal translation is correct and must not be avoided if it secures referential and pragmatic equivalence for the original. [6]

Paraphrasing explains the meaning of the source language texts while translating into target language texts using different words to make it easier to understand. It is usually larger than original where a translator gives descriptive and/or functional equivalence of the SL term. [7]

Free translation reproduces the matter without manner or the content without the form of the original. Usually, it is a paraphrase much longer than the original, so-called intralingual translation, often prolix and pretensions and not translation at all. [8]

Gaps in translation: Translation is bilingual and bicultural activity, and thus a translator has to undergo various difficulties, not only at linguistic label but also at extra-linguistic levels. [7] However, any translator should maintain translation equivalents while translating from SL to TL.

Linguistic gaps:

Linguistic gaps are caused due to the lack of phonetic symbols, vocabulary and grammar between languages that are known as phonological, lexical and structural gaps, respectively. Phonology studies human speech sounds of a particular language that the sounds found in one language may be absent in another language causing **phonological gaps**. There are thirty-five phonemes in Nepali language but forty-four in English adding to the phonological gaps. **Lexical gaps** refer to the absence of lexical item that corresponds to a particular concept in another language. However, this does not necessarily mean that the concept is not available in the language, but the language may not have lexicalized that concept in its vocabulary causing lexical gaps. **Structural gaps** appear while a particular grammatical structure is available in one language but in another language such as **word order, ergative, prepositions, article, auxiliaries, and passivation. Word order** creates gaps in translation that for e.g., Nepali language follows subject – object – verb (S+O+V) pattern while English language follows subject – verb – object (S+V+O) pattern. English language has no use of **ergative** but Nepali language has, like *le, lai,* etc. Similarly, English language has **prepositions** as a separate particle before nouns whereas Nepali language has post-position after a noun as the same particle. Nepali language lacks **article** whereas English language has two types of articles: indefinite (a/an) and definite (the). **Auxiliaries** are totally absent in Nepali language despite there are twenty-four in English. Nepali and English languages also differ in **passivation** that there are three types of passive voices viz. *"kartri, karma and bhab bachya"* in Nepali language whereas there are only two voices – "active and passive" in English language causing gaps in translation. [7]

Methodology:

Primary sources of data: The primary sources of data were the translated photo captions and cartoons available in the two English dailies, the Kathmandu Post and the Rising Nepal from their corresponding Nepalese dailies – the Kantipur and the Gorkhapatra. The data were collected from January and February issues of the year 2006. Altogether, 110 photo captions were collected including 20 each from the Gorkhapatra and the Kantipur with their corresponding English dailies, the Rising Nepal and the Kathmandu Post. Amongst, 15 cartoon captions were taken from the Kathmandu Post with their equivalents in the Kantipur daily and analyzed. [9,10,11,12]

Secondary sources of data: The researcher consulted books, thesis articles, journals, etc. related to the research work in order to facilitate the study. Some of the books were Bhattarai (2000) [3], Newmark (1998) [6], Newmark, P. (1988) [2], Newmark, P. (1988) [8], Catford (1965) [1], Adhikari, B.R. (2003) [13], Sharma. B.K. (2004) [14], Rijal, IN (2006) [15], Singh Gyanendra Bahadur (2004) [16], Wagle Narayan Prasad (2004) [17].

Sampling procedure: Total, 110 photo captions and cartoons were collected on stratified random sampling basis in four different categories as: politics, religion, sports and others from the given dailies. (Cartoons do not represent this category).

Tools and process of data collection: Observation and recording of the translated photo captions were the major tools for data collection that the researcher collected (photographed) from the Central Library, Kirtipur. Then he transliterated all the Nepalese captions into Roman script.

Results:

Translation Strategies

Literal translation, paraphrasing and free translations were mostly found strategies in this study. Among the total 55 translated photo captions 20 each from 'The Rising Nepal' 'The Kathmandu Post' and 15 from Cartoons (from Kathmandu post), the researcher found 24 (43.63%) photo captions under the strategy of literal translation, 24 (43.63%) under free translation and 7(12.74%) at paraphrasing.

Table no 1: Total no of translated photo captions and the strategies occupied (all sectors)

SN	Strategies	Photo captions			Total no of photo captions	Percentage (%)
		The Rising Nepal	The Kathmandu Post	Cartoons (Kathmandu post)		
1	Literal translation	8	6	10	24	43.63
2	Free	7	12	5	24	43.63
3	Paraphrasing	5	2	-	7	12.74
	Total	20	20	15	55	100

The most literal translation was found in the Cartoons section while the most free translation and paraphrasing were made in the Kathmandu Post and the Rising Nepal, respectively. No paraphrasing was found in the cartoons section.

Linguistic gaps:

The linguistic gaps (phonological, lexical and structural gaps) were found in all three sectors viz. the Rising Nepal, the Kathmandu Post and the Cartoons. Phonological gaps were checked into sound level, lexical into the word level and the structural gaps at the sentence level.

Phonological gaps

Of the collected 55 photo captions from all 3 sections, total 12 phonological gaps (though overlapped across sections) were found where 4 gaps in The Rising Nepal, 6 in The Kathmandu Post and 2 were in the Cartoons. The phonological gaps were found in the transliteration of the texts.

Table 2: Phonological gaps found in photo captions

Sectors	SL Text	Source Language (SL) Phonology (Nepali)	Target Language (TL) Phonology (English)	Sound's Gaps
The Rising Nepal	Madhab	/Mādhāb/	/ma:ðə∨/	/dh/
	Ojha	/Ojhā/	/o:za:/	/jh/
	Kathmandu	/Kāṭhmāndau/	**/kætma:ndu:/**	/ṭh/
	Basantapur	/Basantapur/	/bəsəntəpu:r/	/t/
			Total	4
The Kathmandu Post	Bandha	/bandha/	/bənðə/	/dh/
	Kathmandu	/kāṭhmāndau/	**/kætma:ndu:/**	/ṭh/
	Tribhuvan	/tribhuvan/	/tri:vubən/	/t/
	Maghe	/māghe/	/ma:ge/	/gh/
	Hanumandhoka	/hanumānḍhokā	/hənu:ma:ndoka:/	**/ḍh/**
	Pokhara	/pokharā/	/pokəra:/	/kh/
			Total	6
The Cartoons	Kathmandu	/kāṭhmāndau/	**/kætma:ndu:/**	/ṭh/
	Dhyan	/dhyān/	/ðæn/	/dh/
			Total	2
			Total phonological gaps	12

The sounds /dh/, /jh/, /ṭh/, /t/, /gh/, /ḍh/ and /kh/ are absent in English sound system but avail in Nepali caused these phonological gaps in English language. It has also been found that the gaps were fulfilled by replacing the SL sounds with the nearest equivalent TL sounds such as /dh/ with /ð/, /jh/ with /z/, /ṭh/ with /t/, /t/ with /t/, /gh/ with /g/, /ḍh/ with /d/ and /kh/ with /k/ sounds.

Lexical gaps:

Lexical gaps were at the literal translation (word by word translation) where the researcher found 53 lexical gaps including 22 gaps in the Rising Nepal, 17 in the Kathmandu Post and 14 in the Cartoons section. In the four categories, the most gaps were found while translating religious texts and the least were in translating the texts of sports. Lexical gaps were compensated either with transliteration or with the nearest equivalent or sometimes they were omitted in the TT translation.

Table 3: Lexical gaps found in photo captions (Overall)

The Rising Nepal		The Kathmandu Post		The Cartoons	
Source Language (SL)	*Target language (TL) gaps/equivalent*	*Source Language (SL)*	*Target language (TL) gaps/ equivalent*	*Source Language (SL)*	*Target language (TL) gaps/equivalent*
Dabali	*Durbar square*	*Janajati*	*Federation of indigenous*	*Jwain*	*Transliteration*
Shraddalu bhaktajan	*Pilgrims*	*Mukta*	*Ex*	*Kancha*	*-*
Pat ra tapari	*Leaf plates*	*Prahar*	*Returns*	*Jetha*	*-*
Biheko lagan	*Wedding season*	*Upades*	*Discourse*	*Salkekole*	*-*
Dharmijhanki	*Cultural pageant*	*Ghuincho*	*Congregate*	*Whan*	*-*
Tardai	*Fried*	*Prachalan*	*Purchasing*	*Pahenlo bho*	*Turned yellow*
Bhanya	*-*	*Jado badhepachi*	*As mercury clips*	*Hola*	*-*
Aayog	*Panel*	*Sadhan nachalepachi*	*Vehicles stayed off the roads*	*Bhanya*	*-*
Chautari	*Transliteration*	*Alapatra*	*Stranded*	*Mildaina*	*Cannot*
Bel bibaha	*Transliteration*	*Sanchalan*	*Operating*	*Bhatij*	*Nephew*
Kamaiyas	*Transliteration*	*Tin din lagaera*	*After a three day walk*	*Lekhya lekhei chan*	*Reported*
Mahashivaratri	*Transliteration*	*Bandha*	*Transliteration*	*Tatwo*	*Group*
Maghejatra	*Transliteration*	*Basanta*	*Transliteration*	*Tyaita*	*Yeah*
Sahasra dhara	*Transliteration*	*Bandha*	*Transliteration*	*Satta*	*Regime*
Basanta panchami	*Transliteration*	*Basanta*	*Transliteration*		
Basanta srawan	*Transliteration*	*Pachami*	*Transliteration*		
Mahotsabh	*Transliteration*	*Shrawan*	*Transliteration*		
Prabhatpheri	*Transliteration*	*Bakar id*	*Transliteration*		
Sibha parbati	*Transliteration*	*Mahotsabh*	*Transliteration*		
Saraswati	*Transliteration*				
Swayambhu	*Transliteration*				
Dohoro	*-*				
Total	*22*		*17*		*14*
				Total lexical gaps	*53*

Out of 53 lexical gaps, 22 lexical gaps were transliterated, 8 were omitted and 23 were replaced with equivalent terms of the TT.

Structural gaps:

The structural gaps were found in sentence level that were observed in terms of word order, ergative, preposition, article, auxiliaries and voice. Since English language follows S+V+O pattern, all the translated sentences lacked Nepali word order i.e., S+V+O. All ergatives used in Nepali sentences were left while translating them into English as there are not any ergative in English. The articles and auxiliaries were added in English translation while Nepali language doesn't have these structural units. Moreover, English language has prepositions before nouns, but Nepali language has post positions after nouns and pronouns. Some prepositions were added in the translation.

The researcher found that Nepali *kartri bachya (active voice)* and *karma bachya* (passive voice) were translated into English as active and passive voice, respectively though there were not uniformity in translating them into corresponding voices. Some *karma bachya* (active voice) were translated into passive voice instead of their equivalent term active voice and some *bhab bachya (passive voice)* into active voice. There is no equivalence of *bhab bachya* in English language that was found translated into active voice in English. Gaps due to word order, article and proposition were more than the gaps due to ergative, auxiliaries and voices. A total of 18 structural gaps were taken into account while these gaps were found in sentence level.

Table 4: Structural gaps (one for each section: The Rising Nepal, The Kathmandu Post and The Cartoons)

Structural Gaps	Sections		
	The Rising Nepal	*The Kathmandu Post*	*The Cartoons*
Word order	*SLT/Transliteration: biheko lagan sangai sāḍī prachalanmā pani bhīd badhna thāleko cha. Rājdhānīko nayā sadakko ek pasalmā grāhakharu bihekā lugā kindai (S+O+V)* *TLT: as wedding season is at the door, purchasing of sarees is on increase. In this picture, the sales women seem to buy in dealing with customers at a saree shop at capital. (S+V+O)*	*SLT/Transliteration: haliwud abhinetrī driu byārīmor las anjalsmā chalchitra 'mujik and liriks' primiyar kā abasarmā tasbir khichāudai. (S+O+V)* *TLT: Drew Barrymore, a cast member in the film 'Music and Lyrics' poses at the premiere of the film in Los Angels, Wednesday. (S+V+O)*	*SLT/ Transliteration: nayā sattāsangha purāno sattāko lāisin māgne? ... māphī māgnus ! (S+O+V)* *TLT: How dare you ask for an old regime's driving licence from the "new regime"...? Say sorry. (S+V+O)*
Ergative	*SLT/Transliteration: āyogkā adhyaksha Mādhav Prasād Ojhāle* *TLT: Panel chairman Madhav Prasad Ojha....*	*SLT/Transliteration: māobādī nikat yātāyat majdurle* *TLT: Workers associated with Maoists ....*	*SLT/ Transliteration: churot salkaudā jungā salkekole* *TLT: Moustache lost while lightening a cigarette...*
Preposition	*SLT/ Transliteration: shukrabār* *TLT: on Friday*	*SLT/Transliteration: ...chhināmakhubāta* *TLT: ...from Chhinamakhu*	*SLT/Transliteration: ... rājnaitik tatwoharusanga ...* *TLT: ... with political groups ...*
Articles	*SLT/Transliteration: astrelian opan ...* *TLT: The Australian open*	*SLT/Transliteration: bakaridko pahilo din sombār rājdhāniko ghantāgharsthit jāme masjidmā prārthanā gardai nepāli muslīmharu. Yo parba ṭin dinsamma manāincha.* *TLT: Nepali muslims offer prayer at Jame masjid at Ghantaghar, Kathmandu on the occasion of Bakarid on Monday.*	*SLT/Transliteration: ... damkal ...* *TLT: ... a fire engine ...*
Auxiliaries	*SLT/Transliteration: Akhil nepāl phutbal sanghadwārā budhabār sātdobātomā āyojit puraskār bitaraṇ kāryakrammā sahabhāgī huna āyekā phutbal khelādiharu jharīsangai pariraheko hiumā ramāudai.* *TLT: .... The players were gathered at the complex as the part of the prize distribution ceremony organized by ANFA.*	*SLT/Transliteration: āyojakle āndhīkholā thunera mahotsabh varkā lāgi dui watā dungā sanchālan garekā chan. TLT: The organizers of the ongoing festival are operating two boats for entertainment.*	*SLT/Transliteration: yasto arājakatā hunuhunna ...* *TLT: There mustn't be anarchy like this ...*
	SLT/Transliteration: kāṭhmāndauko	*SLT/Transliteration: aandolankārile*	*SLT/ Transliteration: ... rājnaitik*

Voice	*basantapursthit shibha pārbatī mandirko dabalimā bihibār sāmuhik bel bibāha garidai.* (**karma bachya/active voice**) *TLT: Bel bibaha, cultural marriage ceremony of Newar girls in group is being performed at Shiva Parbati temple in Basantapur Durbar Square in Kathmandu, Thursday.* (**Passive voice**)	*ḍhalkewarmā /rājmārga jām garepachi kāṭhmāndaubāta purbatarpha hideka karib ek darjan baskā sadhe tīnsaya yātru bihibārdekhi yahān alapatra parekā chan.* (**kartri bachya/active voice**) *TLT: Three hundred fifty passengers travelling in more than a dozen buses have been stranded in Bardibas due to the flare up off violence in the terai.* (**passive voice**)	*tatwoharusangamātra bārtā garincha.* (*karma bachya/ passive voice*) *TLT: We only hold talks with political groups.* (*Active voice*)

DISCUSSION:

Translation strategies (literal, free and paraphrasing) and linguistic gaps (phonological, lexical and structural) found in the translated photo captions were presented and analyzed in the study. The data suggests that literal translation and free translations were equally occupied strategies (43.63% each) whereas paraphrasing was the least used strategy (12.74%). However, no paraphrasing was observed in the cartoon section. The linguistic gaps were identified in sound, word and sentence levels where the researcher found 12 phonological and 53 lexical gaps. Total 18 structural gaps were taken into account while showing the structural gaps. Linguistic gaps are inevitable in translation, while these gaps were caused/found due to either absence of sounds, lexical items and structrures or the placement of certain grammatical structures differently between languages.

Only limited researches have been conducted in translation studies in Nepal. Previous studies such as 'In other words: sense versus words as a unit of literary translation (with special reference to Nepali-English poetic text)' by Dr. Gobinda Raj Bhattarai (1997) [18], 'The translation of technical terms, A case of text book of science of class IX by Bala Ram Adhikari (2003) [13], 'Strategies in translation' by Bal Krishna Sharma (2005) [14], 'Translation used in advertisements and notices' by Shanti Sharma (2006) [7]etc. highlight definition and the process of translation, strategies and gaps in translating technical and cultural terms, etc.

These results should be taken into account while considering how to minimize gaps in translating by opting the particular strategy and choosing the best nearest equivalent terms in translating SL to TL texts. The data presented in this study contributes to a clear understanding on how phonological, lexical and structural gaps occur in translation as no two languages are similar phonologically, lexically and structurally. However, a good translator can minimize the lexical gaps by opting the nearest equivalent terms or by transliteration of the ST, which have been found in this study. Though limited sampling size, the findings of the study has represented overall strategies and linguistic gaps precisely providing a clear understanding on the research area.

CONCLUSION:

A translator has to undergo various challenges while translating, particularly, to fulfill the gaps found in one language over another. S/he needs to be aware on the addition and omission of the concepts and meanings that violates the rules of translation. The addition questions the authenticity while omission limits the details. Though different translators were engaged in translating ST into TT, uniformity has been observed both in the Rising Nepal and the Kathmandu Post. However, the translator should not remove the details of the sports, esp. the scores given in the source texts. The translators must be careful about the mistranslation of the texts while they can utilize multiple sources like bilingual dictionary, thesaurus, dictionary of synonym and antonym and currently machine translation, etc. Since the study illustrates how different strategies can be occupied to overcome gaps in translation with clear understanding on phonological, lexical and structural gaps, it's very useful for language pedagogy, journalists, editors, publishers including researchers and translation professionals. Further studies are recommended on how gaps could be minimized in translation.

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