

Best-Selling Youth Literature Titles: Cross-Cultural Translation from English to Thai Through Linguistic and Cognitive Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the translation methods employed in best-selling youth literature titles translated from English to Thai. The study adopts a descriptive-qualitative approach. The analysis is based on 173 pairs of original and translated titles collected from Thai online bookstores. Using Newmark's global translation approach, functional-typological grammar, cognitive semantics, and prototype theory as analytical frameworks, the findings suggest that communicative translation is the most prevalent method, followed by free and semantic translation. Other methods identified include faithful and idiomatic translation, with the latter being the least frequently observed. Additionally, certain methods go beyond Newmark's criteria, namely, transliteration and the retention of English components alongside Thai translation. By incorporating both linguistic and cognitive perspectives, this study presents findings on translation practices within the context of youth literature. These insights may be useful for translation pedagogy and for enhancing intercultural adaptation strategies.

Keywords: Youth Literature Titles; Cross-Cultural Translation; English–Thai Translation; Linguistic and Cognitive Perspectives

INTRODUCTION

Human communication transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries. This positions translation as a vital tool for cross-cultural understanding. Translation is generally considered more than a linguistic exercise. It is a cognitive and cultural process that requires sensitivity to both language structure and social context. Effective translation ensures that meaning is preserved and adapted appropriately for the target audience, especially when navigating diverse cultural landscapes (Iemtom, 2022). Lakoff's (1987) cognitive linguistics framework supports this view by emphasising conceptual structures that influence meaning beyond surface-level equivalence.

Building on this foundation, recent translation studies have examined various domains to understand how cultural perspectives influence meaning-making. These include song lyrics (Al Rousan & Hassan, 2025; Disa, 2024; Leelasoorayakan et al., 2024), movie subtitles (Sahari, 2024; Settanyakan & Wongwattana, 2023; Thongin, 2021), advertising slogans (Thi Lan Nguyen et al., 2024), and public signs (Thi Lan Nguyen, 2024). Other areas of focus include titles in dramas (Farghal & Bazzi, 2017; Jeerakamol, 2022;), movies (Iemtom & Wongwattana, 2023), and books (Laicharoen, 2024; Salami et al., 2024). These studies highlight the importance of culturally adaptive translation methods that extend beyond literal equivalence.

Focusing specifically on the translation of titles, these elements serve a strategic function in shaping reader expectations and engagement. They are intended to be engaging, suggestive, and culturally resonant (Newmark, 1988). Therefore, translating them involves more than linguistic accuracy. It requires balancing linguistic accuracy with preservation of tone and appeal for target

audiences. For example, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was translated into Thai as แฮร์รี่ พอตเตอร์ กับศิลาอาถรรพ์ (*Hæ-rîi Phót-tâo kàp Sì-laa Aa-thán*). This version maintains both the magical tone and brand identity. Similarly, *The Hunger Games* became เกมล่าชีวิต (*Game lâa chii-wít*), which means *Life-Hunting Game* in Thai. This version highlights the narrative's intensity through culturally familiar concepts. These examples illustrate the significance of cultural and narrative considerations in the translation of the title. Such considerations are likely important to broader translation practices within the Thai literary context.

In Thailand, translated literature provides access for young Thai readers to global literary content. These works not only enrich literary exposure but also provide valuable material for studying translation practices. The tradition of literary translation in Thailand dates to the Sukhothai Period. This reflects a long-standing engagement with both Eastern and Western texts (Promathatavedi, 2012, p. 125). Given the cultural complexity of youth literature, research into translation methods in this genre appears relevant.

Theoretically, Newmark (1988) distinguishes between source language-emphasised and target language-emphasised translation methods. This approach emphasises the function and communicative purpose of the text. It aligns with functional-typological grammar and offers insights into how translators interpret and adapt meaning across languages. This framework may be beneficial for analysing youth literature titles. Such texts often require a balance between fidelity to the original and cultural appropriateness for Thai readers.

Despite previous studies examining title translation across various fields, youth literature titles remain relatively underexplored from linguistic and cognitive perspectives. This gap appears significant given the specific challenges these texts present. Moreover, existing studies appear to have limited integration of multiple theoretical perspectives for comprehensively examining the translation process. The present study addresses this limitation by applying an integrated framework combining cognitive linguistics, Newmark's translation theory, functional-typological grammar, cognitive semantics, and prototype theory to analyse 173 best-selling youth literature titles translated into Thai. The findings may inform book-naming practices that resonate with young Thai readers and support translation pedagogy, particularly in literary translation contexts. Moreover, they may serve as guidelines for applying linguistic concepts to translation, with potential broader applications to other translation domains.

LITERATURE REVIEW

DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF YOUTH LITERATURE

Youth literature refers to written works targeting readers aged approximately 12 to 18, characterised by age-appropriate language and themes reflecting adolescent interests and cognitive development (Mosikarat & Liqueun, 2016; Rungseang, 2021). Thai book retailers classify youth literature based on narrative style, language simplicity, and relevance to adolescent experiences. This study adopts publisher and retailer categorisations of youth literature.

TRANSLATION METHODS FOR LITERATURE TITLES

Research on title translation reveals varying approaches across different genres and audiences.

Salami et al. (2024) examined translation strategies used for English book titles translated into Persian. The study compared approaches applied to children's and adult literature, using Newmark's translation framework. Their analysis of 200 titles revealed that communicative translation was dominant in children's books, accounting for 74% of the cases. In contrast, semantic translation was preferred for adult literature, with a frequency of 75%.

These findings suggest that children's literature may require more creative and engaging translation strategies to effectively capture the attention of young readers.

Farghal and Bazzi (2017) conducted an analysis of English fiction titles translated into Arabic. Their findings revealed that literal translation was the most frequently used method (60%), followed by adaptation (20%). The study suggested that literal translation was effective for culturally transparent titles. In contrast, adaptation tended to be preferred when dealing with culture-specific content, with commercial factors noted as potential influences on translation choices. Laicharoen (2024) examined the translation of 241 Korean book titles into Thai.

The study identified four primary translation methods: renaming, direct translation, partial translation, and transliteration. It was found that psychology books were translated most frequently. This trend may reflect Thai readers' growing interest in personal development content.

TRANSLATION METHODS FOR YOUTH-ORIENTED MEDIA

Studies of youth-oriented media provide relevant insights for the translation of literature titles.

Jeerakamol (2022) examined Korean drama title translations on Netflix. The study used Newmark's framework to analyse 261 titles. The study found that adaptation was the most used method (49.81%), while literal translation was the least frequent (0.77%).

These findings suggest that adaptation helps improve cultural relevance. It also increases appeal for Thai audiences.

Iemtom and Wongwattana (2023) analysed English-to-Thai movie title translation strategies. They used functional-typological grammar and Newmark's approach. Their analysis of 215 titles identified free, communicative, idiomatic, semantic, and faithful translation as dominant strategies. Free and communicative methods were particularly prevalent for episode titles. This suggested that these methods may improve cultural relevance. They may also help engage the audience more effectively.

These studies show that translation methods vary according to genre, target audience, and cultural context. However, previous research seems to have primarily relied on single theoretical approaches. This may potentially limit a comprehensive understanding of title translation mechanisms. To examine these methods systematically, the present study applies multiple theoretical frameworks. These frameworks are explained in the next section.

METHODOLOGY

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This study applies four theoretical perspectives to analyse translation methods used in youth literature titles:

1) Newmark's (1988) Global Translation Approach

This framework classifies translation methods based on their focus on either the source language (word-for-word, literal, faithful, semantic) or the target language (adaptation, free, idiomatic, communicative). It provides a systematic way to identify and categorise translation strategies. This makes it suitable for analysing youth literature titles.

2) Functional-typological grammar (Givón, 2001; Wongwattana, 2022)

This approach examines how grammatical structures serve communicative functions. It analyses semantic roles, grammatical relations, and clause transitivity. This framework helps explain how structural differences between English and Thai may influence translation decisions.

3) Cognitive semantics (Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

This theory explores how conceptual metaphors and embodied meanings shape cross-cultural understanding. It is useful for analysing how cultural concepts affect title translation, especially in youth literature, where emotional appeal plays a key role.

4) Classification and prototype theory (Givón, 2001)

This framework focuses on how concepts are categorised and interpreted across languages. It considers prototypical features and flexible boundaries. This helps to understand how Thai readers perceive and interpret translated titles.

These four frameworks offer a comprehensive approach to analysing both linguistic structure and reader interpretation. They provide valuable insights into how youth literature titles are adapted for Thai audiences.

DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected in January 2024 from four main Thai online bookstores: Amarinbooks, Chulabook, Naiin, and Se-ed. The study focused on literary works that have English titles with their corresponding Thai translated titles. Therefore, 60 pairs were selected from each store's youth literature best-seller lists. Selection was based on ranking order from highest to lowest position on each platform's best-seller list as displayed in January 2024. This process yielded a total of 240 title pairs. The titles were then arranged alphabetically, and 67 duplicates were identified and removed. The final dataset comprised 173 unique title pairs for analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis employed Newmark's (1988) translation approach categorisation alongside functional-typological grammar frameworks (Givón, 2001; Wongwattana, 2022) to examine grammatical and syntactic adjustments. Cognitive semantics concepts (Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) were applied to identify conceptual metaphors and cultural perceptions. Prototype theory (Givón, 2001) supported categorisation and interpretation based on prototypical features. Moreover, synopses were examined to identify the title translation methods. Statistical analysis using percentages quantified the findings.

EXAMPLES OF DATA ANALYSIS

Examples of data analysis are presented in (1), (2), and (3). Each example shows the original English title followed by the Thai translation, with a detailed word-by-word analysis in the following format: *Thai word (romanisation, literal English meaning)* provided in parentheses. This format helps illustrate the translation methodology.

(1) The Magic Finger → นิ้ววิเศษ

The source title employs a definite article with a compound noun structure (adjective + noun). The Thai title นิ้ววิเศษ (*niw-wi-set*, magic finger) maintains the core semantic content. It also adapts to the grammatical norms of the target language by omitting the article. The conceptual metaphor of supernatural agency remains intact. Both languages categorise the finger as an instrument capable of extraordinary action. The noun phrase structure functions identically in both languages. It preserves the patient's role as the magical object. This is an example of *faithful translation*. In this case, meaning accuracy is more important than changing the structure.

(2) Papelucho → ปาเปลูโช เด็กชายเศษกระดาษ

The source title presents a proper noun functioning as agent identification. The Thai title retains the original designation. It supplements descriptive categorisation through compound noun construction (เด็กชาย + เศษกระดาษ). The Thai title ปาเปลูโช เด็กชายเศษกระดาษ (*Pa-pe-lu-cho dek-chai-set-kra-da-at*, Papelucho the scrap paper boy) creates semantic expansion from simple agent reference to agent- attribute specification. The cognitive framework shifts from singular character identification to categorical placement within familiar literary prototypes. This example is considered *communicative translation* because it provides contextual anchoring for the target audience's comprehension.

(3) Pollyanna → โลกนี้ไม่มีสิ้นหวัง

The source title functions as an agent-centred proper noun construction. The Thai title reconstructs this through existential negative construction (โลกนี้ + ไม่มี + สิ้นหวัง). The Thai title โลกนี้ไม่มีสิ้นหวัง (*lok-nii mai-mii sin-wang*, this world has no hopelessness) shows grammatical transformation from a noun phrase to a complete clause with a negated predicate. Cognitive emphasis shifts from character prototype to philosophical worldview. This represents conceptual reframing rather than direct semantic transfer. The translation exemplifies *free translation*, which prioritises thematic essence over structural preservation.

In summary, this study combines theoretical approaches to examine how English youth literature titles are translated into Thai. By integrating linguistic, cognitive, and cultural frameworks and analysing a carefully selected dataset, the research aims to uncover patterns and methods in title translation. The following section presents the results of this analysis in detail.

FINDINGS

From the analysis of 173 translation pairs of best-selling youth literature titles translated from English to Thai, several translation methods based on Newmark's (1988) global translation approach were identified and categorised by frequency of use. These methods, in descending

order of frequency, include: 1) *communicative translation* (27.75%), 2) *free translation* (23.70%), 3) *semantic translation* (23.10%), 4) *faithful translation* (10.98%), 5) *idiomatic translation* (4.62%), and methods beyond Newmark's criteria (9.83%). Interestingly, these methods occurred more frequently than the idiomatic translation method. These methods took two main forms: *transliteration* and *English element retention alongside Thai translation*.

EXAMPLES OF TRANSLATION METHODS

This study identifies five main translation methods within Newmark's framework. The methods range from source language-emphasised to target language-emphasised methods:

1) faithful translation, 2) semantic translation, 3) communicative translation, 4) idiomatic translation, and 5) free translation. Moreover, methods beyond Newmark's criteria are categorised separately. Examples below follow the previously established analytical format (*romanisation*, literal meaning).

FAITHFUL TRANSLATION

The purpose of *faithful translation* is to translate the meaning of the source language into the target language in a way that seems natural. It employs the target language's grammatical structure while completely maintaining the meanings of the words and the context, as seen in examples (4), (5) and (6):

(4) Holes → หลุม

Both titles function as concrete noun references with spatial-physical semantic fields. The source employs plural morphology, while the target หลุม (*lum*, hole) maintains an unmarked singular form. This reflects typological differences in number marking systems. The conceptual categorisation of void spaces remains consistent across languages. The simple transitive relationship between title and narrative content operates identically in both linguistic contexts.

(5) Rainbow Valley → หุบเขาสายรุ้ง

The source constructs a compound spatial reference through a modifier-head arrangement (*Rainbow + Valley*). The target หุบเขาสายรุ้ง (*hup-khao sai-rung*, rainbow valley) preserves this structure with a head-modifier sequence following Thai syntactic patterns. Both titles employ locative semantic roles with identical cognitive mapping of natural phenomena. The visual-spatial metaphor maintains conceptual integrity through direct lexical correspondence.

(6) The Little Prince → เจ้าชายน้อย

The source utilises a definite article + adjective + noun construction with hierarchical social categorisation. The target เจ้าชายน้อย (*jao-chai-noi*, little prince) adapts through a noun + adjective sequence while preserving semantic roles and social prototype characteristics. The agent function remains constant despite syntactic reordering. Cultural concepts of royalty and diminutive status translate directly between linguistic systems.

SEMANTIC TRANSLATION

Compared to the faithful translation, *semantic translation* places greater emphasis on the beauty and naturalness of the target language. To achieve a more sophisticated and pleasurable expression, it often requires adjusting vocabulary or phrase structures as necessary for appropriateness. This approach can be observed in the following examples, where translators make deliberate lexical and structural choices to preserve meaning while enhancing stylistic quality. See examples (7), (8) and (9):

(7) New Dawn on Rocky Ridge → อรุณรุ่งครึ่งใหม่ในร็อกกี้ริดจ์

The source presents a temporal-locative metaphorical construction. The target อรุณรุ่งครึ่งใหม่ในร็อกกี้ริดจ์ (*a-run-rung khrang-mai nai Rocky Ridge*, new dawn at Rocky Ridge) elevates lexical register through formal vocabulary selection (อรุณรุ่ง for dawn, ครึ่งใหม่ for new occurrence). The formal phrasing adds poetic tone while preserving the original structure. The cognitive metaphor of renewal and beginning maintains conceptual coherence while enhancing aesthetic quality. Grammatical relations preserve prepositional-locative structure with place-name transliteration. The translation prioritises refined expression over literal correspondence.

(8) The Fall of Gondolin → การล่มสลายของกอนโดลิน

The source employs a nominalised event construction (*Fall + of + proper noun*). The target การล่มสลายของกอนโดลิน (*kaan-lom-sa-laai khong Gondolin*, the fall/collapse of Gondolin) mirrors this with abstract noun formation and possessive structure (การ...ของ...). The formal register adds literary tone, while preserving the event's semantic roles. The translation maintains structural and conceptual parallels. This highlights the emotional and stylistic depth achieved through semantic translation.

(9) The Long Winter → ฤดูหนาวอันยาวนาน

The source uses an adjective + noun construction to refer to a prolonged seasonal condition. The target ฤดูหนาวอันยาวนาน (*rue-duu-naao an yaao-naan*, the winter that lasts long) conveys the same temporal-environmental reference with intensified emphasis (อัน + ยาวนาน). The modifier อันยาวนาน adds poetic tone, while preserving the head-modifier relationship. The translation maintains semantic roles and enhances descriptive specificity. This reflects the enduring nature of the season.

COMMUNICATIVE TRANSLATION

Communicative translation adapts source language content to target language linguistic, cultural, and contextual standards to provide priority to the target audience. In contrast to semantic translation, which emphasises aesthetics, communicative translation may involve modifying the text by adding or omitting context-specific details to help the target audience understand the message. Examples (10), (11), and (12) show how this can be done.

(10) Babe → เบ๊บ หมูเลี้ยงแกะ

The source functions as a simple agent designation through a proper noun. The target เบ๊บ หมูเลี้ยงแกะ (*Babe muu-liang-gae*, Babe the pig who herds sheep) supplements with a descriptive agent-action-patient construction (หมู + เลี้ยง + แกะ). The character is presented through a more explicit functional role. The structure emphasises narrative action and categorisation over name-based reference.

(11) George's Marvelous Medicine → ยาวิเศษ

The source constructs a possessive-adjective-object phrase with agent emphasis. The target ยาวิเศษ (*yaa-wi-set*, magic medicine) reduces to an adjective-object construction. It eliminates personal possession while maintaining object centrality. The semantic focus is placed on the object's inherent properties rather than its association with the character. The structure is simplified by omitting culturally specific elements while retaining the core meaning.

(12) Watership Down → ยุทธการทุ่งวอเตอร์ชิป

The source presents a simple locative designation. The target ยุทธการทุ่งวอเตอร์ชิป (*yut-tha-kaan thung Watership*, the battle of Watership field) introduces an event-locative construction with a conflict semantic field. The structure changes from a place reference to an action-location association. Narrative themes are presented through both event and geographical anchoring.

IDIOMATIC TRANSLATION

Idiomatic translation uses idioms or colloquial terms to translate and appear natural in the target language. The source language, the target language, or both may be the genesis of these idioms. It is essential to communicate the meaning in a form that is culturally relevant to the target language audience. Sometimes, this requires changing the structure of the source language, as seen in examples (13), (14) and (15):

(13) Anxious People → ยอดมนุษย์ว้ายป่วน

The source describes a psychological state through an adjective-noun construction. The target ยอดมนุษย์ว้ายป่วน (*yot-ma-nut waai-puang*, extraordinary chaotic people) employs an idiomatic expression combining a superlative (ยอด) with a colloquial descriptor (ว้ายป่วน) to convey both emotional and behavioural characteristics. The cognitive categorisation shifts from clinical terminology to a culturally specific social evaluation.

(14) Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days → ไดอารี่ของเด็กไม่เอาถ่าน ตอน ปิดเทอมสุดป่วน

The source uses a possessive construction with a temporal metaphor (*Dog Days* indicating hot summer period). The target ไดอารี่ของเด็กไม่เอาถ่าน ตอน ปิดเทอมสุดป่วน (*diary khong dek mai ao thaanton pit-therm sut-puang*, diary of a good-for-nothing kid: the most chaotic school break) adapts “*Wimpy Kid*” through a cultural idiom (เด็กไม่เอาถ่าน, useless kid) and transforms the temporal reference to a contextually relevant seasonal description (ปิดเทอมสุดป่วน, most chaotic break). Both versions categorise the protagonist within familiar cultural prototypes while maintaining narrative timing references.

(15) Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel → ไดอารี่ของเด็กไม่เอาถ่าน ตอน ส่วนเกิน

The source employs metaphorical social positioning (*Third Wheel* indicating unwanted presence). The target ไดอารี่ของเด็กไม่เอาถ่าน ตอน ส่วนเกิน (*diary khong dek mai ao tha-an ton suan-ger-n*, diary of a good-for-nothing kid: the excess one) maintains idiomatic character designation while adapting the social metaphor to ส่วนเกิน (excess/surplus element). Both languages express similar cognitive concepts of social exclusion through culturally appropriate metaphorical frameworks.

FREE TRANSLATION

Free translation conveys the meaning of the source language while adhering to the grammatical structure of the target language. Unlike faithful or semantic translation, this method does not maintain literal word meanings. However, it differs from adaptation by preserving the original essence rather than straying into distant interpretations. While adaptation often lacks a direct connection to the source text, free translation maintains thematic coherence through alternative perspectives. In youth literature titles, free translation can be categorised into five types: 1) de-emphasis of character, 2) de-emphasis of place, 3) de-emphasis of object, 4) de-emphasis of event, and 5) de-emphasis of emotion. Each type is explained below:

1) De-emphasis of character

This refers to shifting the emphasis from the main character to other elements, as shown in examples (16), (17), and (18):

(16) Dragon Master → โลกของมังกร

The source emphasises an agent-function relationship through a compound noun. The target โลกของมังกร (*lok khong mang-korn*, world of dragons) shifts to a locative-possessive construction. This prioritises the environmental setting over individual agency. The cognitive focus transforms from character prototype to spatial categorisation.

(17) Moominpappa at Sea → มูมินออกทะเล

The source foregrounds individual character identity (Moominpappa) with locative context. The target มูมินออกทะเล (*Moomin ok tha-le*, Moomin goes to sea) prioritises the action-destination relationship (going to sea) over character specification. It reduces “*Moominpappa*” to the simpler “*Moomin*.” This de-emphasises character individuality while foregrounding narrative action and spatial movement.

(18) The Prophet → ปรัชญาชีวิต

The source presents agent identification through a definite article plus role designation. The target ปรัชญาชีวิต (*prat-cha-yaa chii-wit*, life philosophy) abstracts to a conceptual-application construction. This shifts from personal agency to philosophical categorisation.

2) De-emphasis of place

This refers to shifting the emphasis from a place to other elements, as shown in examples (19), (20), (21):

(19) A Place Called Perfect → สงครามซอมบี้ที่เพอร์เฟกต์

The source emphasises locative designation through naming construction. The target สงครามซอมบี้ที่เพอร์เฟกต์ (*song-khraam zombie thii Perfect*, zombie war at Perfect) introduces an event-agent focus while maintaining locative function. This transforms spatial emphasis into an action-centred narrative.

(20) On the Banks of Plum Creek → บ้านเล็กริมห้วย

The source specifies exact locative positioning through a prepositional phrase. The target บ้านเล็กริมห้วย (*baan-lek rim-huai*, little house by the creek) shifts the house as the primary referent. This transforms location-focused to object-focused, while retaining spatial relationship through the modifier ริมห้วย (by the creek).

(21) The Secret Garden → ในสวนลับ

The source uses a definite locative noun phrase. The target ในสวนลับ (*nai suan lap*, in the secret garden) transforms into a prepositional-locative structure. This shifts from object designation to spatial relationship emphasis.

3) De-emphasis of the object

This refers to shifting the emphasis from an object (both concrete and abstract) to other elements, as in examples (22), (23), and (24):

(22) The Night Diary → ถ้าแม่ฟังอยู่ โปรดรู้ว่าหนูคิดถึง

The source employs a temporal-object construction. The target ถ้าแม่ฟังอยู่ โปรดรู้ว่าหนูคิดถึง (*thaa mae fang yuu prot ruu waa nuu khit-thueng*, if mother is listening, please know that I miss you) reconstructs as a conditional-communicative structure. This eliminates object reference in favour of emotional expression and interpersonal communication.

(23) The Graveyard Book → ผจญภัยในสุสาน

The source emphasises an object-locative relationship. The target ผจญภัยในสุสาน (*pha-jon-phai nai su-saan*, adventure in the graveyard) shifts to an action-locative construction. This prioritises narrative activity over object centrality.

(24) Charlotte's Web → ชาร์ลอตต์ แมงมุมเพื่อนรัก

The source constructs a possessive-object relationship. The target ชาร์ลอตต์ แมงมุมเพื่อนรัก (*Charlotte maeng-mum phuean-rak*, Charlotte the beloved spider) converts to an agent-characterisation-relationship structure. This emphasises character qualities over object possession.

4) De-emphasis of the event

This refers to shifting the emphasis from an event or a situation central to the story to other elements, as shown in examples (25), (26), and (27):

(25) Carve the Mark → ตรามรณะ

The source presents an action-object imperative construction. The target ตรามรณะ (*traa ma-ra-na*, mark of death) shifts to object-characterisation. This transforms a dynamic event reference into a static descriptive categorisation.

(26) Stay Where You Are and Then Leave → พ่อกับผมและบางสิ่งที่หายไปในสงคราม

The source employs complex sequential action commands. The target พ่อกับผมและบางสิ่งที่หายไปในสงคราม (*phoo kap phom lae baang-sing thii haai-pai nai song-khraam*, father and I and something lost in the war) reconstructs as a relationship-loss construction. This emphasises personal connections over commanded actions.

(27) There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom → บรัดเลย์ เด็กเกรหลังห้องเรียน

The source uses an existential-locative construction highlighting situational incongruity. The target บรัดเลย์ เด็กเกรหลังห้องเรียน (*Bradley dek-ge-re lang hong-rian*, Bradley the troublemaker at the back of the classroom) converts to an agent-characterisation-locative structure. This emphasises character identity over situational existence.

5) De-emphasis of emotion

This refers to shifting the emphasis from emotionally evocative elements to other aspects, as in examples (28), (29), and (30):

(28) Because of Mr. Terupt → ห้องเรียนมิสเตอร์ที่กับปีศาจมนตร์

The source employs a causal-agent construction indicating emotional attribution. The target ห้องเรียนมิสเตอร์ที่กับปีศาจมนตร์ (*hong-rian Mr. T kap pii tong-mon*, Mr. T's classroom and the enchanted year) shifts to a locative-agent-temporal characterisation. This neutralises causal emotion in favour of descriptive setting.

(29) Let It Snow Three Holiday Romances → ละออรัก

The source contains a complex event-quantification structure with seasonal emotional context. The target ละออรัก (*la-ong-rak*, particles of love) reduces to a metaphorical-emotional essence. This distils emotional content into a singular poetic expression.

(30) When We Were Very Young & Now We Are Six → วินนี่-เดอะ-พูห์

The source presents a temporally anchored emotional framework through nostalgic childhood references and growth progression. The target วินนี่-เดอะ-พูห์ (*win-nii dæ puuh*, Winnie-the-Pooh) shifts to neutral character identification. This removes nostalgic content and prioritises recognition over emotional resonance.

METHODS BEYOND NEWMARK'S FRAMEWORK (NEWMARK, 1988)

The methods beyond Newmark's criteria include transliteration and the retention of English elements alongside Thai translation.

Transliteration involves converting English sounds into Thai script, as shown in example (31):

(31) Peter Pan → ปีเตอร์แพน

The source and target ปีเตอร์แพน (*bpii-dtəə-phæen*) maintain identical semantic and phonological correspondence through systematic transliteration. Both languages preserve complete agent designation without semantic modification.

English element retention alongside Thai translation appears in examples (32) and (33):

(32) White Bird: A Wonder Story → White Bird: การเดินทางสุดมหัศจรรย์

The source employs a main title plus subtitle construction. The target preserves English elements while providing Thai translation การเดินทางสุดมหัศจรรย์ (*kaan-dern-thaang sut ma-hat-sa-jan*, the most wondrous journey) for the descriptive subtitle. This creates bilingual cognitive accessibility.

(33) The Trials of Apollo: The Tyrant's Tomb →

The Trials of Apollo: The Tyrant's Tomb สุสานทรราช

The source presents a complex series title with subtitle specification. The target maintains the complete English structure while supplementing a partial Thai translation สุสานทรราช (*su-saan thon-ra-raat*, tyrant's tomb). This creates a dual linguistic reference system.

The findings show that various translation methods were used. Each method adapted titles to fit the target language's context and audience. The next section discusses the implications of these strategies.

DISCUSSION

This discussion examines the translation methods observed in 173 English-to-Thai youth literature titles through four main perspectives. First, it analyses the distribution of translation methods and their theoretical implications within established frameworks. Second, it explores cognitive and cultural adaptation patterns that influence translation choices. Third, it compares these findings with previous research to identify similarities and differences across genres and language pairs. Finally, it evaluates the methodological contributions of integrating multiple theoretical frameworks in translation analysis.

TRANSLATION METHOD DISTRIBUTION AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the quantitative analysis, *communicative translation* emerged as the most frequently employed method. This pattern aligns with functional-typological principles that emphasise communication effectiveness within specific cultural contexts (Givón, 2001; Wongwattana, 2022). Examples such as *Babe* becoming เบ๊บ หมูเลี้ยงแกะ (*Babe muu-liang-gae*, Babe the pig who

herds sheep) demonstrate how translators supplement minimal information with descriptive elements. This strategy reflects Givón's (2001) and Wongwattana's (2022) emphasis on grammatical structures serving communicative functions.

The prevalence of *free translation* indicates translators' tendency to prioritise thematic coherence over structural preservation. Titles such as *Pollyanna* transformed to โลกนี้ไม่มีสิ้นหวัง (*lôok-nîi mâi-mii sîn-wǎng*, this world doesn't have hopelessness) illustrate how cognitive semantic frameworks facilitate conceptual reframing while maintaining narrative essence. This approach appears consistent with cognitive semantic principles outlined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

The occurrence of *semantic translation* may reflect efforts to balance aesthetic enhancement with semantic accuracy. Examples such as *New Dawn on Rocky Ridge* translated as อรุณรุ่งครั้งใหม่ในร็อกกีริดจ์ (*a-run-rung khrang-mai nai Rocky Ridge*, new dawn at Rocky Ridge) illustrates this balance. The translator elevates the register through refined lexical choices while preserving the metaphorical structure. That is อรุณรุ่ง (*a-run-rung*, dawn) carries poetic connotations beyond simple "dawn." This finding supports prototype theory applications. Specifically, certain lexical choices represent more refined categories within the target language system (Givón, 2001).

Translation methods beyond Newmark's framework, *transliteration and retention of English elements* suggest emerging translational practices in these contexts. This may be because these practices accommodate specific globalised literary markets while maintaining cultural accessibility.

COGNITIVE AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION PATTERNS

The analysis reveals patterns in cognitive semantic adaptation. This is particularly evident regarding conceptual metaphors and cultural categorisation. *Free translation* subcategories demonstrate how translators manipulate emphasis across different semantic elements to align with target audience expectations.

The shift from *Dragon Master* to โลกของมังกร (*lok khong mang-korn*, world of dragons) reveals a fundamental reorientation from character-centred to environment-centred framing. This transformation reflects a preference for spatial conceptualisation over agentive focus. While this represents one translator's decision-making process, it raises intriguing questions about broader patterns in how Thai translators conceptualise narrative emphasis. Such patterns would require systematic investigation across larger datasets to establish their generalisability.

Idiomatic translation instances, though infrequent in this corpus, reveal cultural adaptation mechanisms. The translation of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* as ไดอารี่ของเด็กไม่เอาถ่าน (*dek mai ao thaan*, good-for-nothing kid) demonstrates how the translator navigates culture-specific expressions while maintaining comedic intent. This finding supports cognitive semantic principles regarding cultural schemas influencing linguistic categorisation, as outlined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

Lexical choices, such as เหย้า (*yâao*, home) over บ้าน (*bâan*, house) in translating *On the way home* to ตามทางสู่เหย้า (*taam-thaang sùu yâao*, on the way home), indicate preferences that emphasise emotional attachment and belonging over mere physical location. However, these cultural interpretations require empirical validation through reader reception studies or ethnographic research to establish patterns beyond this study.

COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS RESEARCH

SIMILARITIES WITH PREVIOUS RESEARCH

These results align with previous findings in several respects. Salami et al. (2024) identified *communicative translation* as common in children's literature. This is consistent with the current study's findings. However, this study reveals a balanced distribution across multiple methods. This suggests greater methodological diversity among Thai translators working with youth literature. Such diversity may help bridge cultural-linguistic gaps while maintaining accessibility for Thai young readers.

The identification of *hybrid methods* aligns with observations by Jeerakamol (2022) and Laicharoen (2024), who found similar strategies in Korean media translations. This convergence suggests broader trends in contemporary translation practices. Traditional single-strategy approaches may be insufficient for contemporary translation challenges. This limitation becomes particularly evident when working with culturally diverse, globalised content.

DIFFERENCES FROM PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The findings contrast with Farghal and Bazzi's (2017) study, where *literal translation* dominated English-Arabic fiction translations. The absence of literal translation as a primary strategy in this dataset suggests that Thai translators perceive greater cultural-linguistic distance between English and Thai. This necessitates more adaptive approaches. This difference may reflect typological distinctions between language pairs or varying cultural expectations.

While Jeerakamol (2022) found adaptation most frequent in Korean drama translations, this study found no instances of adaptation. This difference may reflect genre-specific expectations and the distinct nature of literary translation. According to Saenthaweesook and Khamchoo (2024, p.169), youth literature requires precise translations to ensure content reliability. Ali and Assaqaf (2016) suggest that preserving original titles respects the author's creative work and that literature readers expect authenticity and true representation of the original work. Unlike audiovisual media, where adaptation may be more acceptable for audience engagement, literary translation appears to prioritise fidelity to source texts.

The lower frequency of *idiomatic translation* compared to visual media studies may reflect cognitive developmental considerations specific to youth literature. According to Saengaramruang (2020, p.169), children's literature often contains fewer complex idioms because young readers may struggle to understand them. Wongthai (2019, p.144) notes that while metaphors are universal, they vary across cultures. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors and idioms rely on shared cultural knowledge and require sophisticated cognitive skills. Such skills may be less developed in youth audiences.

EXPLANATIONS FOR VARIATIONS

These variations may result from several factors. Language typological differences appear to influence translation strategy preferences. In this case, Thai and Arabic differ in structural similarity to English. These differences affect the viability of literal translation approaches.

Genre expectations also appear to play a role. Literature translation typically prioritises accuracy and cultural authenticity. In contrast, visual media translation emphasises marketing appeal and immediate audience engagement. These different priorities seem to create distinct methodological pressures that shape translator behaviour.

Cultural distance considerations may also influence adaptation frequency. The perceived cultural gap between source and target contexts appears to affect translators' willingness to modify content significantly.

METHODOLOGICAL INTEGRATION AND ANALYSIS

The integration of multiple theoretical frameworks appears to reveal translation decision-making complexity within this study. By combining different perspectives, it offers insights that may differ from those found in studies that rely on a single framework.

Functional-typological grammar analysis clarifies the syntactic dimensions of translation choices. That is, it suggests how structural differences between languages influence strategic decisions. Cognitive semantics describes conceptual metaphor modifications. More precisely, it illuminates how translators navigate differences in metaphorical systems and cultural categorisation. Prototype theory explains categorisation methods effectively. It demonstrates how translators choose terms based on their representativeness within target language categories.

The application of semantic role analysis reveals patterns in grammatical relation modifications. These patterns indicate that translation methods are influenced by typological differences in information structure between English and Thai. The analytical integration reveals translation as a complex cognitive process that often operates simultaneously across multiple linguistic and cultural dimensions. Single-framework approaches, while useful for particular objectives, may be limited in fully capturing this complex reality. The methodological synthesis utilised in this study offers a more comprehensive understanding of how translators manage the complex requirements of cross-cultural communication.

However, this study's scope remains limited to youth literature titles from specific online sources. The findings cannot be generalised to other text types or translation contexts. The cultural interpretations proposed require further empirical validation through ethnographic research or reader reception studies. Additionally, the analysis is based solely on titles rather than complete texts. This could result in fewer insights into all-encompassing translation tactics. To confirm these trends across many domains and language combinations, further investigation is required.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the translation methods employed in translating best-selling youth literature titles from English into Thai. It analysed 173 title pairs through an integrated theoretical lens that included Newmark's translation framework, functional-typological grammar, cognitive semantics, and prototype theory. The results indicated that communicative translation was the most frequently used method, followed by free and semantic translation. Less common methods included faithful and idiomatic translation, while some titles employed hybrid strategies, including transliteration and bilingual title construction.

The findings suggest that translation patterns may prioritise cultural adaptation and target audience accessibility. This happens particularly when addressing a youth readership. The prevalence of communicative and free translation methods appears to reflect efforts to preserve narrative tone, emotional appeal, and conceptual clarity within the Thai cultural context. These patterns underscore the potential importance of cognitive and cultural adaptation in translation. Such adaptation becomes especially crucial in contexts where titles serve both interpretive and promotional functions.

The scope of this study was limited to youth literature titles sourced from Thai online bookstores. This may limit generalisability to other contexts. However, the integration of multiple linguistic and cognitive frameworks presents a wide-ranging analytical process that may also be applied to other genres and combinations of languages. Results present initial evidence of translation decision-making patterns in the chosen setting. However, further research should uncover whether patterns are present beyond a narrower domain and linguistic context.

For further research opportunities, several directions may be valuable. These are comparisons of methods of cross-cultural translation between varieties of media types, exploration of the effects of translated book titles on the interest of readers, and investigation of the effects of commercially motivated translation decisions.

The results of this study contribute to translation research and teaching through an investigation of the complexities of adaptation across cultures in texts. With greater international literary exchange, it becomes increasingly worthwhile both theoretically and practically to understand how linguistic and cultural boundaries are mediated through translation. The translation from this study appears to function not only as a linguistic process but also as a process of cultural mediation. Of special interest with young audiences consuming international tales through locally mediated texts, such further applications are subject to empirical confirmation through reception research of the reader and through research across cultures.

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